

Algeria - Movement of Refugees

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Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

1 January 1945

Report on Movement of 234 Refugees from North African Refugee Center, Casablanca, Morocco, to Camp Jeanne D'Arc, Philippeville, Algeria, November 15 - 20, 1944.

The following report is an edited version of the running account I kept of the trip.

/s/ EMERSON M. BROWN

I left camp at 11:00 a.m. November 15, 1944, on one of Alband's trucks carrying miscellaneous supplies and staff luggage. We arrived at trainside at 11:20 to find Mr. Corcos awaiting us with the rations, and Sgt. Rinaldi with ten ISU personnel. The RTO had spotted six coaches for us, in the following order: two C 7s, one A2 B4, one C 7, and one B8. Alband started his gang loading the luggage he had brought on project trucks and in a van furnished by the ABS motor pool, and Mr. Corcos helped him supervise this operation. I directed the loading of the miscellaneous supplies and staff baggage into the A 2 B 4 which I had selected for the staff car because of its central location. I then made the rations allocation by coach, and Mr. Corcos took care of the loading of rations.

After making a chart of the coaches I discovered that we should be extremely crowded, since it was necessary to reserve three compartments for use as a hospital (we had one isolation case and three women suffering from various ailments who had been in the camp infirmary) and the large number of staff, five of whom were making a change of station and hence were carrying considerable baggage, required extra space. I reported the situation to Sgt. Shorter of the RTO and he made the arrangements necessary for our use of another A 2 B 4.

Alband loaded all the "hold" luggage and a considerable amount of supplies and equipment (one freight carload) into four 2-axle freight cars.

After lunch I spent an hour working on seating arrangements. On paper I found it feasible to load everyone in a routine way into the third class coaches, directing those whose names were on the medical list as needing special accommodations to the B 8 coach. I found that it was theoretically possible to load our entire complement on the five coaches, but I was very glad that the extra coach was available.

The Lister bags were in place when I returned from lunch, and Alband had lashed three Lister bag stands on the platform of one of the coaches, in the event that the coaches into which we were to transfer at Oujda should not have convenient places from which to hang the 300-lb. bags of water.

The Navy water truck, scheduled to arrive at 2:00 p.m., arrived at 2:10 and filled the Lister bags, Sgt. Rinaldi's detail helping out.

Of the staff making the trip, Trevor Pierce, Richard L. Brookbank, Frances MacQuarrie, and Dr. Evarts Loomis (the last two from Philippeville) arrived at trainside at 2:15. (Other staff making trip: Viviane Benlezrah, Carol H. Bettman, Evaline A. Cadbury, and Mrs. Kendall G. Kimberland of the AFSC, besides myself.) Pierce and Brookbank were assigned to handle seating; Corcos received the trucks at trainside; the doctor and nurse treated the



water in the Lister bags before stationing themselves in the hospital car to receive their four patients.

The first truck arrived at 2:35 and was immediately followed by a second. The seating routine was put into operation, and it was soon found that loading cars on paper was far simpler than the real thing. However, the situation was kept in hand by the expedient of holding people on trucks until they could be accommodated. One complication was the insistence of persons tagged for special accommodations on staying with their friends in the third class carriages. Another was the presence of several dogs; these were not allowed in the coaches, but were carried on the platforms in crates that had been made at the camp.

Loading went relatively smoothly, but I am willing to concede that this time our plan was too informal in contrast to the extremely formal plan followed with the Algiers movement. Persons who had been seated in third class coaches soon learned that there were better accommodations, and they descended from their assigned places and got in line again.

To say that the best plan would be a middle course would be an oversimplification. If exact seating accommodations could be known three days in advance, a very rigid seating plan would work out very well. Since such a happy state of affairs will probably never be the case for the next few years, I think the best arrangement would be to station competent personnel in each coach to act as conductors (by competent personnel I mean regular staff, or very, very excellent refugee personnel), and to have a director of seating send passengers to the proper coaches. In any case, seating refugees in railway coaches is a headache.

Personnel carriers stopped arriving about 4:30, and by that time Alband had loaded the last of the luggage and had sealed the freight cars. At 5:00 p.m. we started the ration distribution, Brookbank and Pierce supervising the distribution of two meals of C rations.

Because of early nightfall, we had loaded the coaches early, and there was the problem of keeping the passengers on the platform near the train during the interval between the evening meal and our scheduled time of departure. The MP detail of two Americans left for dinner at 5:00, and several of the passengers went to nearby bakeries to buy bread before MP replacements arrived. We soon corralled all the passengers with the exception of three, and established a picket line to prevent anyone leaving the train area. It was just a question of waiting until the train should leave for switching.

Many former residents of NARC came to the train to say goodbye, and a considerable line was formed of men waiting their turn to kiss Dora Poch goodbye. All passengers were in their places shortly before 8 p.m. At 8:30 the locomotive hooked on and at 8:33 we left for switching. At 9:15 we departed Casablanca.

By 9:30 some of the staff had retired. Dr. Loomis made a tour of the train and reported everything in reasonably good order. One family had rigged hammocks in a compartment and the children were having the time of their lives. By 10:30 virtually everyone was asleep.

The night passed without incident.



We arrived at Meknes at 8:30 a.m. Thursday, November 16, 1944. A representative of the French Red Cross came out to our coaches in the yard and told us that she had hot coffee, sandwiches and oranges for the refugees. A French military doctor presented himself and asked if we needed his services. Fortunately, we did not.

Brookbank and Pierce took care of the food distribution with the aid of refugees who performed well.

We departed Meknes at 9:00 a.m., the only reason for our stop having been the Red Cross distribution. We pulled out suddenly, and a hurried thanks was all I was able to give the good woman who had so capably managed the affair.

The ninety-five minute run to Fez was made more interesting by the choice of our train by a French aviator as a practice target. He buzzed us several times.

We arrived at Fez at 10:35 a.m. Passengers were allowed to descend, and it was discovered that a chicken was among our cargo. Two packages of cigarets enlisted the services of the station officials, and our cars were serviced with water and the Lister bags were filled. Dr. Loomis treated the water which was advertised non-potable. There was no trouble with the passengers - they were easily controlled. We departed Fez at 11:50, several hours late.

After we pulled out of Fez, Dr. Loomis began routine examinations of every refugee on the train.

We arrived at Taza at 4:10 p.m. The change of locomotives required some time and the train was left in the switchyards. Some passengers left the coaches but were soon herded back on the train. We departed Taza at 5 p.m.

After leaving Taza the staff conferred, and it was decided that the four men would police the Oujda transfer of passengers from Moroccan to Algerian coaches, and the five women would take care of the transfer of the ill and infirm. After the conference everybody retired, since our best information had it that we should change coaches as soon as we arrived at Oujda, 2:00 a.m.

I arose a little before 2:00 a.m., which was very fortunate, as we had made up time during the night and arrived at Oujda only slightly late. I immediately sought the RTO and learned that we were to change coaches, but not until seven in the morning. I passed this word along the coaches, and the passengers retired for the night.

I then returned to the RTO and inquired about our new coaches. I learned that 280 places had been provided: one A 3 B 5, two C 10's, and one C 9. I immediately pointed out to Sgt. Murray of the RTO that the hospital cases with which we had started and the cases that had developed en route (one of the very young babies developed a cold; another child developed diarrhea; Wulf Dainow developed a bronchial condition) because of the cold weather and the badly enclosed coaches made a fifth coach absolutely necessary. He agreed but stated that the extra car had to be ordered by Oran. We then agreed to attempt to load the entire complement into the four cars spotted, the understanding being that a fifth coach would be made available if absolutely necessary. After arranging with Sgt. Murray the details of spotting the coaches on parallel tracks, etc., I went to bed.



Up again at 6:45 a.m. Friday, November 17, 1944. I went to the RTO and again brought up the question of an extra car. We found that the new coaches had been spotted on the wrong track, and there was some delay while they were switched.

Shortly after 7:00 Madame Jacques of the French Red Cross appeared and offered us coffee and "petit pain" consisting of a bun-sized loaf of bread with a kind of chocolate filling. We agreed that the distribution should take place after the transfer had been made, and she worked out the details of the distribution with Brookbank.

The doctor inspected the train and decided to use one of the C 10's which was well enclosed as the hospital car, because of the high incidence of colds. Transfer of hospital cases to this car began at the same time as the transfer of regular passengers at the other end of the train.

The juxtaposition of the coaches meant that passengers who had occupied a third class coach from Casablanca transferred to a first and second class coach with some missing windows; passengers from the other third class coach transferred to third class coaches; occupants of the second class coach were transferred either to the hospital car or to the third class coach. When this transfer was completed, it was apparent that another coach would be needed, and Sgt. Murray did the necessary. The extra coach turned out to be a second class coach in poor condition, but the transferees from the A 2 B 4 did not complain.

After passengers had been transferred, volunteer refugees quickly transferred cases of rations and Lister bags. The Red Cross distribution went off smoothly and we gave the good ladies our sincere thanks in French and 1,000 francs. The complete transfer was finished by 10:00 a.m.; the French controleur of immigration made his appearance and was given a duplicate list of our passengers. The train was made up and ready to go.

We pulled out at 10:15 a.m. despite the absence of five refugees who had gone into town to buy bread. Their names were quickly ascertained and a telegram was sent at the next station. Soon afterward the train stopped at a little station and we succeeded in telephoning the Chef de Gare of the Oujda station. He informed us that the five men had been found and that they would overtake us on an express train that would pass us at Sidi-Bel-Abbes.

The fifth coach at Oujda gave us a total of 336 places for 243 persons, a passenger-place factor of 72%, in comparison with 316 places for a passenger-place factor of 76% from Casablanca to Oujda.

Out of Oujda one of the Lister bags ripped, and I replaced it with one of the spares.

Dr. Loomis, who by this time had his schedule of examinations in full swing, arranged the C 10 so that he had a compartment for use as a dispensary and examining room, a blanket being placed across the doorway when it was used for the latter purpose. The passengers welcomed his attention and looked forward to their turn, which was a valuable factor in relieving the boredom of the journey.

The scenery from Oujda to a few miles past Tlemcen is magnificent, and the passengers lined each window to observe it.



We arrived at Tlemcen at 2:35 p.m. Our train was left in the yards while the locomotives took on water. No passengers descended, as the duration of the stop was not known. We pulled out of Tlemcen at 3:25, over an hour late.

INSERTS AT OUJDA

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The transfer at Oujda November 17 took approximately twice as long as the transfer of roughly the same number of refugees October 15. The two most important reasons for the longer time, in my opinion, were the larger numbers of unaccompanied men and women, which made it difficult to compose units of 7 and 8 for each compartment, and also, it made groups, once assembled, very volatile and quick to disperse; and the late spotting of the fifth car--had it been spotted for emergency use, the transfer could have been accomplished much more smoothly and swiftly.

At Oujda, it was discovered that our livestock included one kitten secured to his master, a seven-year-old boy, by a length of 3/8-inch rope.

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The journey from Tlemcen to Sidi-Bel-abbes was uneventful.

We arrived at Sidi-Bel-Abbes at 6:45 p.m. and I immediately sought out the Chef de Gare for information concerning the Express that was to bring our five missing passengers. I climbed over the string of freight cars lying between our train and the station platform and met the French Red Cross head-on. The good women asked me about the French refugees and told me how they were going to give them hot coffee and sandwiches. I carefully explained to them that our refugees were apatrides, but that did not dampen the good women's enthusiasm. The passengers had just finished a meal of 4 rations and were not suffering from hunger, but it was obvious that nothing short of sawed-off shotguns could have stopped the good women from achieving their noble purpose, so I asked Brookbank and Pierce to handle our end of the distribution.

I then found the Chef de Gare who told me that the express would overtake us at Sidi-Bel-Abbes. About 7:40 p.m. his prognostication was confirmed and six not five, or our original complement rejoined the group. (welfare staff had prepared a list of passengers and their location in the train just after the incident of the missing refugees, and had found only five missing; having six turn up confirmed my belief that such a list was wasted effort.) They took their places in the coaches without attracting special attention, and appeared very contrite, as well they might have been - the express in which they had come from Oujda was much more crowded (with paying passengers!) than our coaches.

I thanked the Red Cross in the name of the group and made the customary 1,000-franc donation. It turned out that the hot coffee was very well received, and the sandwiches filled the need for bread that many of the refugees felt.

We departed Sid-Bel-abbes at 8:15 p.m. It had not been necessary to fill the Mlister bags.

I went forward and nailed some cardboard over a glass-less doorway in the leading coach. Most of the passengers had adjusted themselves to their new

environment - blankets had been hung for privacy, empty ration cases had been adapted as footstools, and several families had placed their smaller children in hammocks contrived from blankets and hung from the luggage racks. One compartment with nine passengers was found, and three of its occupants were removed to a compartment in the staff car that had been reserved for such emergencies.

We arrived at Saint Barb at 11:30 p.m. The change of locomotives was accomplished and we departed Saint Barb at 12:15 a.m. Saturday, November 18, 1944.

The night passed without event.

The staff arose shortly before 8:00 a.m. and breakfasted. The train was making only short stops at unimportant stations so there was no police problem.

We arrived at Orleansville at 9:55 a.m. Though our coaches ended up rather distant from the station platform, passengers were allowed to descend. Some had started to descend as soon as the train stopped, but they took their places readily when I told them that I had to find out how long the train would stay before I could tell them whether they might get down. Learning that the stop was scheduled for thirty minutes, I allowed them to descend, telling them to stay near the train (they had to: French military police would not let them out of the station enclosure). They behaved well and were back in their places by 10:20, five minutes before scheduled time of departure. The train departed Orleansville at 10:33 a.m.

Out of Orleansville the weather was hot, and water became the problem of the day. It was decided to fill the Lister bags at the next long stop, Affreville, where we were scheduled to be at 2:00 p.m.

We arrived at Affreville at 2:05 p.m. A water gang was organized, and during the hundred fifteen minute stay all the Lister bags were filled, including the replacement for the bag ripped earlier, and the new one hung on the extra coach obtained at Oujda. The refugee help performed creditably here.

Mrs. Kimberland phoned AFSC in Algiers to tell them that we should be at Maison Carree about 9 p.m., and to ask them to forward that message to Sophie Bessmertny, a former resident of AFSC, who was at the Russian Consulate at Algiers.

We departed Affreville at 4:00 p.m. for the run downhill to Blida and Maison Carree.

Arrived Maison Carree 9:00 a.m. The British RTO informed me that our cars were to remain in the yard until 3:00 a.m., when our train would pull out for Constantine. He also confirmed my belief that a water truck was ready to fill the Lister bags.

I found the French officer in charge of the military guard at the station and asked him to permit none of the group to leave the station during the night. Several passengers asked me for permission to go to Algiers to visit relatives, but all requests were answered in the negative.



Hadley, Kimberland, Mlle. Marin-Chancerelle, Ted Randall, Algiers representatives of UNRRA, AFSC, Service Sociale d'Aide aux Emigrants, AFSC, respectively, arrived at the station about 9:30. Mrs. Kimberland left the train and Ted Randall replaced her. Mlle. Marin-Chancerelle also boarded the train to accompany us to Philippeville.

I looked up our schedule and found that the train was not scheduled to leave until 4:48 a.m. Sunday, November 19, 1944.

Though passengers had been asked to remain in their coaches, many of them descended, and some were definitely testing the French sentinels, whom they found not wanting. All but a few returned to their seats when they found that there was no canteen or buvette at the station. (After having been served hot coffee three times between Casablanca and Oran, the passengers now came to expect such service, and inquired at each stop if there would be coffee.)

The Lister bags were filled in short order and the new passengers installed in the staff compartments of the hospital car. Since there was considerable traffic through the station, I decided to have a staff member on "police" duty throughout the night. Dr. Loomis took the trick from 10:30 to 12:30, Ted Randall from 12:30 to 2:30, and I took over at 2:30.

At 4:45 a.m. our train arrived and we started switching. At 5:30 a.m. Sunday, November 19, 1944, we departed Maison Carree.

The trip out of Maison Carree was uphill and was very slow and uneventful. Stops at even the very small villages were for long periods of time, and those passengers who wished to leave their coaches had plenty of time to buy wine, fill their water jugs, and wash at the hydrants found at each station.

The schedule I had seen had us arriving at Setif at 10:30 p.m. Sunday night, but we pulled in at 9:45, an almost unheard of event on a French railroad.

We departed Setif at 11:50 p.m.

The night passed without event.

We arrived at Constantine at 7:45 a.m. Monday, November 20, 1944. The train of which we were to be a part for the run to Philippeville was waiting for us, we were switched on and we departed at 8:15.

The run from Constantine to Philippeville is downhill, and we made good time. I went through the train, informing the passengers that we would arrive about noon, and to have their baggage ready. This news was universally well received: five days on the train made any change a welcome one.

It was interesting to note that passengers still left the train at each stop to wash, to buy wine, or to fill water jugs, in spite of the fact that we were to arrive at our destination within three hours.

At St. Charles I succeeded in calling Camp Jeanne d'Arc and was informed that the trucks had just left for the Philippeville station. The time was 11:20 a.m.

I made another trip through the train, requesting the passengers not to leave the train until I gave them the word.



We arrived at Philippeville at 12:10 p.m. November 20, 1944. I left the train to find the trucks, which turned up on the other side of the yard. I met Ned Campbell and learned the details of the off-loading operation.

The train was shunted to a siding where the passengers could walk from their coaches to a raised platform, on the other side of which were sixteen, count 'em, sixteen, trucks lined up ready to receive refugees and transport them to camp.

The refugees behaved very well, leaving the train and going to the trucks in an orderly fashion. Dr. Loomis supervised the transfer of the hospital cases. After the coaches were emptied of passengers, a process that lasted from 12:25 until 1:20, I checked the coaches, cut down the Lister bags, and threw out unused cases of C ration so that they might easily be picked up. At this time Mr. Walsh directed a truck to the car used by the staff and staff luggage and miscellaneous supplies were off-loaded.

Brookbank, Benlezzah, Bettman, and Pierce had left the train as soon as it had been switched, and gone to the camp to assist with registration. Dr. Loomis and Nurse MacQuarrie and Nurse Gadbury accompanied the ambulance cases (there were five) to the hospital. Randall and Marin-Chancerelle accompanied Philippeville staff to the camp.

I left the train at 2:00 p.m. and rode to the camp on the truck carrying staff luggage and miscellaneous supplies.

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia 3 January 1945

Some tentative suggestions in connection with rail movements of refugees.

The remarks that follow are the result of limited experience (movement of 495 refugees from Casablanca to Algiers, October 13-17, 1944; movement of 234 refugees from Casablanca to Philippeville, November 15 - 20, 1944) and are not supposed to be the definitive rules to be followed in moving refugees by rail. The information is given with the idea that, within its limitations, it may prove useful in planning and executing refugee movements which may soon become one of the most important functions of UNRRA.

/s/ EMERSON M. BROWN

I. ACCOMMODATIONS. The Army has found ordinary freight cars the most convenient and satisfactory means of transporting young and healthy men. Twenty to thirty men in a freight car with clean straw bedding and rations and water travel very comfortably. Most refugee groups will consist of very young and old people of both sexes, as well as the strong middle-aged men and women, and coaches should be provided for the transportation of such groups. Third class coaches are most satisfactory, having no upholstery, they are less likely to be infested, and their seating capacity is greatest. If possible, one class train should be made up, with one superior accommodation coach for use as a "hospital car;" a difficult seating problem is caused by the presence of more than one class accommodation.



In making up the train a load factor of about 85% should be kept in mind. Our load factor for 495 refugees was 82%; for 234 refugees it was 74%. By insisting on six seats for every five refugees much difficulty will be avoided.

Whether blankets should be provided depends on weather conditions.

The U.S. Army "C" and "K" rations are excellent for refugee movements. Since these rations are designed for fighting men, giving full rations to people who are merely riding a train is very wasteful: only 2/3 of a ration should be given adults, and 1/3 of a ration to children. If our refugees were typical, there will be a great demand for bread, whether full "C" and "K" rations are given them or not; this can most conveniently be met by allowing them to buy bread and sandwiches at station canteens, or by Red Cross distributions, which can be arranged in advance. Hot coffee was invariably welcomed at any hour. Evaporated milk can be mixed with water and distributed to babies; this also was welcomed by the refugees.

A satisfactory solution to the water problem is provided by Lister bags which usually can be hung without much trouble. However, a water supply for the hospital should be carried in cans, which are easily policed: it is difficult to control access to Lister bags, and water meant for drinking is often used for washing. Calcium hypochlorite ampoules of the correct size to treat the contents of a Lister bag are available from the U.S. Army.

Other items which should be carried are: brooms, lanterns and flashlights, a simple tool kit, waste rags for use as towels; and, for use of the staff, army cots.

II STAFF Since staff must be ready for any emergency at any time, it must have superior accommodations in order to rest well when off duty. Therefore, the accompanying staff should be as small in number as possible.

The extent of the need for medical personnel is obviously dependent on the size and vigor of the group; however, I should think one doctor and one nurse should be provided for any group movement of mixed composition, and that two doctors and two nurses could take care of the emergency needs of the largest movement practicable. If the state of health of a group is such that it should require more medical care than provided for above, the group probably should not be moved.

The administrative (or welfare) staff should consist of three persons: a convey leader to make all arrangements for the train, to negotiate with railway officials en route and with agencies such as the Red Cross who might meet the train at stations; and to have ultimate responsibility for all the details of the movement; and two others, one whose chief responsibility would be the seating arrangements, the other to have charge of ration distribution. All three should be sufficiently active and firm to handle "police" and discipline problems arising out of changing trains and the sheer boredom of a prolonged trip on a slow train. Since refugees are remarkably good linguists, an interpreter should not be included if that is to be his only job. A staff of three as outlined should be able to handle 1,000 refugees, which is probably as large a group that would be transported as a unit.



III. GENERAL Refugee hand luggage should be limited to that amount which each person can carry easily (repeat easily) for long distances in his own hands. This means that the presence of an invalid in the family group carries no luggage, and the rest of the group must adjust its luggage to carry the bare necessities of the invalid. Train changes may be frequent and unexpected and there will be no porters.

Seating arrangements are dependent on the knowledge of the make-up of the train; if definite information can be had, tickets should be issued and "conductors" should make sure each person is in his proper place. More often, however, the composition of the train will not be known sufficiently in advance to make such precise arrangements possible; in such a case, a conductor should be assigned to each car, the director of seating controlling the flow of refugees from trucks to the coaches, and the conductors taking care of the seating in each car. Once seated, passengers should be kept in their coaches until the seating operation is completed. Seating should be planned to leave the shortest possible interval between its completion and the departure of the train; keeping passengers on a stationary train is a very difficult police problem. When changing trains, passengers should be transferred coach by coach.

Passengers should not be allowed to descend from the coaches except when stops are of more than 30 minutes duration; passengers should only be allowed to descend when the coaches adjoin the station platform.

Refugees should be encouraged to carry canteens or water bottles as well as a cup and a spoon.

No distributions of clothing should be attempted during such a trip.

Sufficient space must be kept vacant in the "hospital" car for emergency use.

Transport of livestock such as cats, dogs, poultry, etc., should be discouraged.

The staff must at all times remain calm in the knowledge that, whatever the difficulties, however unreasonable the refugees and slow the train, time marches inexorably on and one day the trip will end.



*A-Do - Mrs. Deegan*  
*Mr. Fryer*

UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND REHABILITATION ADMINISTRATION  
NORTH AFRICAN REFUGEE CENTER  
APO 759

11 December 1944

AOM 94

TO: Mr. Fryer, Camps Division, UNRRA, Washington

SUBJECT: Report on Refugee Movement from Algiers to Port  
Said, Egypt, October 18 - 28, 1944.

With reference to Mr. Beckelman's letter to you, SP 9, of 2 November 1944, I am sending you herewith a copy of the report prepared by Emerson M. Brown after conversations with Dr. Edward L. Chambers, on the second portion of the refugee movement which left the NARC on 13 October. This second report covers the movement from the time it embarked in the port of Algiers until disembarkation at Port Said.

I believe that these two reports will be useful in planning other UNRRA movements of refugee groups.

*Low*  
Thomas Pym Cope  
Project Director

Enclosure: Brown to Beckelman, 24 Nov. 1944, "Report of Refugee Movement from Algiers, Algeria, to Port Said, Egypt, October 18 - 28, 1944."

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

WASH. D.C. 20250

TO: DIRECTOR, BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

FROM: SAC, ALBUQUERQUE (100-100000)

SUBJECT: [Illegible text]

RE: [Illegible text]

UNRRA MAIL ROOM

1944 DEC 14 PM 4 47

4 RECD

ENCLOSURE [Illegible text]



United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration  
North African Refugee Center

24 November 1944

To: M. W. Beckelman, Project Director  
From: Emerson M. Brown *Emerson M. Brown*  
Subject: Report of Refugee Movement from Algiers, Algeria,  
to Port Said, Egypt, October 18 - 28, 1944

The following account of the movement of 348 Sephardic refugees from Algiers, Algeria to Port Said, Egypt, October 18 - 28, 1944, is the result of an interview with Dr. Edward L. Chambers who, together with Dr. Andrew McQueeney, Mary Sears, and A. Moneera Finley, accompanied the group. Dr. Chambers edited the preliminary report that I wrote, corrected outright mistakes, filled in details, and added much information which he extracted from the diary he kept during the trip. My role, therefore, is that of typist, and author of the pump-priming report that resulted in the following account of the journey. Dr. Chambers has read the complete report, and nine-tenths of it is in his own language.

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Confusion/following embarkation at Algiers because of the misunderstanding concerning responsibility for the supervision and care of the group on the ship. The instructions Beckelman had received explicitly stated that only medical personnel should accompany the movement out of Algiers. The ship's officers assumed, however, that the group was in the hands of an officer in charge who would execute the instructions given by the ship's O.C., and arrange for messing, billeting, bedding, and every detail necessary in caring for the refugees. The medical escort party, who found the baby left on their doorstep, attempted to bridge the void between the two attitudes, and eventually, after an awkward interval, took over complete charge of the refugees.

The attitude on the part of the ship's officers was fully understandable, since they had previously dealt only with troops, and the officers which always accompany troops assume complete responsibility. This misunderstanding had the unfortunate result of antagonizing the ship's officers to such an extent that they were utterly uncooperative throughout the trip to Naples, with the consequence that numerous avoidable difficulties arose.



The quarters provided were two large troopdecks, and two decks supplied with 45 canvas bunks each. Everyone messed on the troopdecks; the food was good.

Initially, when the ship's officers were working entirely on their own, they divided the group by sex, devised a group leaders system, and attempted to assign the elderly people to the decks with bunks. However, the group leader system fell through completely, due to wrong choice of leaders. Then again, the wrong people got into the bunks, and many of the refugees swarmed into decks assigned to troops. At this juncture, when everything was out of hand, the medical escort party entered the picture and had to disentangle the confusion by re-assigning quarters and obtaining several cabins for the most deserving cases. This was, of course, an arduous task. Hammocks and a limited supply of mattresses, together just sufficient to supply everyone, had been piled on each troopdeck, and the refugees grabbed their bedding at random. The result was that many appropriated far more than their share, so that about 40 persons had nothing. ~~This miserable situation was remedied only after an exhaustive inventory and re-allocation, and distribution of additional mattresses. It was also necessary to organize cleaning parties for the quarters. The O.C. made a daily inspection, and required a maximum of cleanliness. Since the troopdecks were also mess decks they rapidly became filthy during the course of a day.~~ This miserable situation was remedied only after an exhaustive inventory and re-allocation, and distribution of additional mattresses. It was also necessary to organize cleaning parties for the quarters. The O.C. made a daily inspection, and required a maximum of cleanliness. Since the troopdecks were also mess decks they rapidly became filthy during the course of a day.

The ship left Algiers October 18 and arrived at Naples October 20, 1944.

The disembarkation at Naples was the next major problem. It started at 12:15 p.m. October 20, and by 4:30 p.m. the same day the train departed from Naples with all luggage and refugees aboard. Transfer of hold luggage delayed the train's departure--transfer of the refugees from ship to train was completed in three hours.

Under the system of disembarkation used, worked out by us with the E.S.O., the names of families to make up groups of approximately twenty were announced over the ship's public address system. The groups were assembled at the gangplank and then allowed to descend. The cumbersome method of disembarkation adopted was really the only way of re-assembling the family groups under the circumstances. This offers a good reason why the families should not have been broken up, in addition to the extreme disgruntlement the separation caused among the refugees.

Each individual kept his luggage and a luggage party of 24 refugees (headed by Simi) was provided to assist those with excess baggage. The facilities at the port consisted of a steep step-ladder-like gangplank leading down to a pontoon, which was the end of a string of pontoons extending from the beach to the ship. Trucks were waiting on the beach to transport the refugees to their train.



At the precise time the disembarkation started a British major and two Greek civilian officials appeared, and immediately started working on separate systems of their own, neither of which took account of what we had done. Bedlam ensued, of course, and the baggage party went on strike as a protest against the major's policy. We squared things around only by telling the major and Greek officials to mind their own business in regard to the disembarkation, and by instructing the baggage party and other refugees assisting in the operation to ignore completely everyone but us.<sup>/1</sup>

The major was extremely impatient because the operation was moving so slowly. He was told he would have to provide a fatigue party if he wanted things to go faster. He finally promised us such a detail, but it never showed up.

After we got matters straightened out things moved fairly well, though rather slowly. This was due to the long, difficult walk from quarters on the ship, down the gangplank, and along the floating pier to the trucks; and to the excess personal luggage, so that even with a good baggage party of 24 men the task was hard to handle. About midway during the disembarkation six of the baggage party were sent to the station to assist there, and their places filled by Italian prisoners of war, whom we obtained from the ship's O.C. only after much wrangling.

As if the confusion existing outside the refugee group were not enough, one of the oldest refugees picked the time just before disembarkation to throw an epileptic fit.

Offloading hold luggage became the responsibility of the officers in charge--it was necessary for McQueeney to take a luggage party to a barge onto which was loaded the hold luggage. This was taken ashore, loaded into trucks, and taken to the train.

Moise and Sam Saltiel, the refugee youths who had been so helpful during the train trip from Casablanca to Algiers, continued to be by far the most helpful persons from among the refugee group. When it became apparent that some sort of refugee police group must be organized, elder men from among the group suggested that it might best be done by more mature persons. We talked this over

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/1 It should be noted that Dr. Chambers and Dr. McQueeney hold reserve commissions as first lieutenants in the USPHS.



with Moise and Sam, who agreed that age would carry with it some authority. The guard was made up of the SGI from NARC, together with numerous older members of the group, with the modification that Benico Refah, instead of Benjamin Hassid, supervised its operation. /2

The coaches for the night run from Naples to Taranto had no windows in them, nor had the missing windows been replaced by boards or other makeshifts. The trip was extremely uncomfortable because of the cold--there was snow on the mountains--but everyone lasted it through. A system of refugee guards was worked out to guard the four luggage cars.

At Taranto refugees and luggage had to be unloaded in fifteen minutes, since the train was going on to pick up troops. By having a parked train moved it was possible for the refugees to cross to the platform and stay in place opposite their coaches. The captain who met us at the station was specifically instructed not to allow anyone to board the trucks until after the aged had been cared for, and a system devised for the others.

No sooner had we turned our backs than he gave the order to load. The result was that everyone on the platform rushed simultaneously for the trucks--again bedlam. However, we got things in order after about half had been loaded. We had also informed the captain that we required the assistance of some soldiers, but he refused to provide any until the operation had almost been completed. (The captain later apologized for his errors!!) /3

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/2 Brown's observation of the behavior of the former members of the SGI during the train trip from Casablanca to Algiers caused him to form a very low opinion of their usefulness. During that trip most of the SGI remained very closely with their families, using whatever prestige they may have derived from their former position ~~XXX~~ in an attempt to gain little privileges such as leaving the coaches, helping distribute rations, and helping distribute hot coffee and sandwiches provided by the French Red Cross at several points. But probably the greatest factor in their not being used during the train trip was that they were never really needed--the only luggage to move was hand luggage, and policing the group in the narrow confines of a train or railroad station was relatively simple.

Chambers reports that the SGI, revised edition, under the direction of Revah, performed very creditably. A possible explanation is the corollary of the one given just above--when such a function was called for, the personnel was found from among the group to discharge the function, and a leader to supervise that personnel was also found.

/3 Again it is interesting to note that Chambers and McQueeney are first lieutenants.



The group was taken to a transient camp for an overnight stay. Here we worked hand in hand with the camp staff, with the result that everything went very smoothly. The heavy luggage was transferred from the railroad cars to lighters during the afternoon by the refugees, and a refugee guard was posted night and day.

During the night the guards thought they heard thieves on their way to steal the luggage, and one of them went off in search of reinforcements. He did not return for several hours and it was feared that he had met with foul play. Chambers said that when he went down to see how the guards were getting along he found them scared to death, and that he didn't blame them. The O.C. was finally persuaded to provide military guards for the night.

Before commencing the transfer to the ship at Taranto the understanding was reached that the escort party was to have exclusive charge. We then told the refugees to pile all luggage they could not easily carry in one spot. We also told them to keep blankets and mess kits with them. Then everyone was lined up and any luggage the individual could not easily carry with his two hands was taken and thrown on the pile. Further, all old and sick were separated and placed in another group. When the truck convoy arrived, everyone was lined up, the group of old and sick loaded first, and then the remainder. There was a little confusion here because we had failed to provide adequate refugee guards to hold the line. At the wharf everyone was told to remain in the trucks. Trucks were then unloaded one at a time, the old and sick being unloaded first and given seats in the boats. After much argument we had managed to get a party of soldiers to handle the pile of hand luggage.

An unfortunate incident at Taranto was a shortage of 84 blankets which was disclosed after the refugees had turned their blankets in. Those stolen could not be checked, since no list had been followed by the quartermaster in issuing the blankets.

As soon as the first lighter came to the ship's side, one of the escort party made a beeline for O.C. Troops, and the other, with a British sergeant whose goodwill we exploited by asking him to assist us, managed the unloading. The lighter was tied to a floating pontoon, and since the sea was fairly rough, the leap from lighter to pontoon was extremely hazardous. Even before the first lighter was unloaded complete arrangements for accommodations had been made, according to the plan devised by the escort staff. The ship's officers wanted division by sex, but we were adamant about leaving the family groups intact, and our attitude prevailed.

The ship's officers wanted all the refugees on troopdecks, but we asked for at least 40 good beds, ten of them in the hospital. We got forty hospital beds. The ship's officer wanted to give us only 50 mattresses, the remainder of the refugees to be accommodated in hammocks, but we asked for 150 mattresses and got them. Our success was due to our presentation to the ship's officers of a definite plan, before they themselves had worked up one. We also reached the understanding that the escort was to handle every detail concerning the care of the refugees.



for

This we arranged/their quarters, distributed bedding to them (mattresses this time were given out by a check list, and only to men over 50 and women over 40, and to special cases such as mothers with small babies, etc.), saw that quarters were properly cleaned daily, and that messing arrangements were properly carried out. The hand luggage, separated at the Taranto camp, was loaded from the lighters to the ship by the refugees (4), and re-distributed to the refugees. The heavy luggage was also loaded into the hold by the refugees, using a crane.

The voyage from Taranto to Port Said, Egypt, lasted from October 22 to October 28, 1944. Food on the ship was good. Policing quarters to meet the ship's standard of cleanliness was a chore, but was accomplished. Refugees were allowed the freedom of the ship, and enjoyed this privilege.

The night before disembarkation excess hand luggage was taken from the refugees and later unloaded with the hold luggage and transferred to a warehouse which the refugees guarded day and night during their stay.

The British military had made plans to transfer everyone by ordinary truck to a destination fifty miles away, and then by third class railroad coaches for ten hours into Palestine. We told them, however, that they must provide special accommodations for 30. This they did by producing two Red Cross buses and putting two ward cars on the train.

$\frac{3}{4}$  Before disembarkation took place complete plans were made and instructions handed down to the refugees, and the British military agreed that the escort party was to be in charge. Since it was not known when the luggage that had been taken from them would be given back, everyone had been told to keep his mess kit and sufficient blankets with him.

At Port Said the disembarkation went off like clockwork, due primarily to the understanding with the British military, an excellent refugee guard system organized by Mr. Revah, and no excess personal luggage.

Onward from Port Said the refugees travelled without escort, since we were inadvertently removed by AFHQ. Sam Saltiel and Benjamin Hassid (5) were put in charge of the whole group by us, and the most competent of the nurses aides was placed in charge of the sick.

Word has since been received that the refugees arrived safely at an UNRRA camp near Tel Aviv.

-30-

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4 The figure of 30 (shipping) tons ~~was~~ of hand luggage was given by a U.S. Army officer.

5 Hassid was selected instead of Revah because Hassid spoke English.



# UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND REHABILITATION ADMINISTRATION

8, SHARIA DAR EL-SHIFA, GARDEN CITY, CAIRO.

TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESS  
UNRRA-CAIRO

TELEPHONES:  
53170, 51421, 55439,  
41217, 43830

CAWA

CALO

879



6th October, 1945.

Mr. H. Lehman,  
U.N.R.R.A.,  
1344 Connecticut Avenue,  
Washington DC,  
U.S.A.

Total 13 refugees - destinations  
 { 8 - Iran  
 { 2 - Lebanon  
 { 1 each - Palestine, Iraq, Turkey

ATTENTION: Chief of Bureau of Services

(a) 10 sent to El Arish pending negotiations for their repatriation  
 (b) 3 continued on their journeys home on their own resources

Dear Sir:

Enclosed herewith for your information is copy of report on Civilian Displaced Persons from Toulon on board the S.S. "ASCANIA".

Yours faithfully,

T.T. Waddington  
 T.T. Waddington  
 Chief of Middle East Office

Originated by  
 Repatriation Division.

Encl: As mentioned above.

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REPORT ON CIVILIAN DISPLACED PERSONS  
FROM TOULON ON BOARD THE SS "ASCANIA"

Saturday afternoon on 28 August 1945, at the request of Miss Gifford, Director of Bureau of Services, I proceeded to Port Said with authority to act on behalf of 14 civilians on board the troopship SS "ASCANIA".

At the time of departure, the following information concerning this group was available in Cairo from Major Angliker:

Major Warren of Movements Headquarters, Port Said, had put through a call for help to Major Rolfe of Movements G.H.Q., Cairo, who asked our assistance. The information received over the telephone was vague, briefly that 14 civilians had been put on this British Troopship at Toulon, France, by Movements Toulon, authority Mov.ML.132, on 18 August 1945. They were fare paying passengers whose names appeared on the nominal roll but not on AFW 5169. Upon arrival at Port Said, the Egyptian authorities impounded the passports of two or three of them and refused to let any of the civilians off the ship. The ship was expected to be sailing soon and it would be obliged to take these people back to France (which they were loathe to do) unless UNRRA would help. As each of the civilians on board held a SHAEF Registration card, DP-1 and/or DP-2, these civilians might properly be considered eligible for UNRRA assistance.

Attached was a nominal roll under the heading of "Odd Group on the "ASCANIA" at Port Said arrived 24 August 1945", with additional information in pencil indicating that these refugees had been in American Displaced Persons Camp No. 7 at Toulon.

IN PORT SAID

I reached "PETRIA House" Headquarters, Port Said, at about 7:00 p.m. Major Warren was out, but he had left instructions with his Sergeant, who issued the necessary permit and assigned a man to accompany me to the boat. On the pier I met Capt PEGG, E.S.O., who worked with me on this matter throughout. We proceeded on board the SS "ASCANIA" where we met OC Troops, Major Reed, under whose care these refugees had travelled. Major Reed was friendly, sympathetic and helpful (and thoughtful of my comfort.) He arranged for a bit of supper and secured a cabin for me so that I remained on board overnight.

We were introduced to three of the members of the group, one of whom, Mr. Ordjanian, acted as interpreter, when necessary. He spoke English well and was an intelligent person. He undertook to assemble the



civilians in the lounge at about 8:00 p.m. From Major Reed we learned that there were only 13 civilians and not 14 (the list includes wife of Mr. Ordjanian, but he has none), and that they were not fare paying passengers. They were put on board by ESO at Toulon and were included in a group of some 300 Greeks. The Greek refugees were taken off at Taranto. Those left on board were Displaced Persons who were released by the Allied Occupation Forces from labour and Internment camps in German occupied areas, and since liberation had been moving about from place to place until they reached American Camp No. 7 at Toulon. Some of them had had very hard times and others had been en route from 2 to 4 months travelling on all kinds of vehicles.

The refugees were assembled in the lounge, and I interviewed each. We started at about 8:15 p.m. and finished at 10:40 p.m. that evening. They were a sorry looking group of people and showed evidence of having been through a lot of hardship and trouble. Their one desire was to reach a final place of destination as soon as possible. The interviews were conducted either in German or English. Most of them spoke German, some had limited knowledge of English.

Their individual stories and facts concerning each are attached. Most of them had only the clothes which they wore on their back, some had dilapidated looking suit cases or blankets, underwear, and some other articles of clothing tied in rags or old musette bags.

Sunday morning at 8:30, I conferred in the Orderly Room with Capt Pegg and Major Reed. Later, we called in Mr. Churchill of Thomas Cook and Son and the Egyptian Police. We were later joined by Major Warren.

FACTORS WHICH FORMED THE BASIS FOR SUBSEQUENT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It was evident from DP-1 and DP-2 SHAEF Registration cards, that these were displaced persons whose repatriation had been initiated by Allied Forces and possibly UNRRA on the continent. Therefore, UNRRA M.E. might properly have some responsibility for completing repatriation.
2. Immediate decision regarding disposition of these refugees had to be reached this day - as the ship would probably receive orders to sail tomorrow and the refugees would be returned to France, unless taken off by British Military or UNRRA.



3. The Egyptian authorities refused to admit them except as military to the British or into the custody of UNRRA as they all lacked either Egyptian visas, sufficient money, or travel documents required for completing their repatriation.
4. The group consisted of 9 men, 3 women and one child. Countries of destination were as follows:

8 For Iran  
2 " Lebanon  
1 " Palestine  
1 " Iraq  
1 " Turkey

Most of those for Iran were students who had been sent by their Governments to Germany in 1940 to study metallurgy and other scientific subjects. It would have been impossible to reach any of the Embassies or Consular offices, all of which are located in Cairo, before the ship sailed. Only three of the refugees were in possession of the necessary travel documents to proceed to their country of destination. Completing these documents would require time.

ACTION TAKEN

1. On behalf of the three civilians whose papers were in order, the following steps were taken:

OC Troops, Major Reed, agreed to exchange their currency into Egyptian money which made it possible for them to proceed as civilians. They agreed to proceed with Thomas Cook whose representative took them off the steamer in the early afternoon. This was after we had negotiated with the Egyptian Police for the return of their passports and had obtained for them appropriate government transit visa stamps for which they each had to pay P.T. 8. Mr. Ordjanian required some further assistance, which I believed he could obtain from the Iranian Consul in Cairo. I granted to him, therefore, permission to go back in the UNRRA car that afternoon giving instructions to the driver that he be taken to the Royal Oaks Hotel where he would spend the night. Mr. and Mrs. Karneef were entrained for Lebanon that afternoon.

2. I agreed to accept the 7 men, 2 women, and the child of two years for admission into UNRRA Camp, El Arish, on temporary

10 refugees  
to El Arish  
other 3 proceeded  
homeward on their  
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own resources.



✓ basis, pending negotiations with the necessary Embassies in Cairo. The Egyptian authorities accepted a letter from Major Warren stating that UNHRA was taking over responsibility for the 9 adults and one child for admission into an UNHRA camp pending the completion of their documents and transportation home.

3. Capt. Pegg arranged for transportation from the ship to the railroad station, issued the necessary travel warrant, and with the help of Major Warren obtained, after some difficulty, accommodation on the Palestine train going to El Arish that afternoon. There was some delay in transferring the passengers and baggage from the ship to the railroad station due to the fact that five huge heavy boxes of baggage owned by Mr. and Mrs. Bozorg-Zad had to be brought from the hold of the ship at the last moment. We had not known about this baggage until just before the party left. The baggage of the rest of the group was very poor and light enough for each to carry his own, e.g., Mr. Kafiti had nothing but the clothes he was wearing and the blankets wrapped in a yellow cloth which he carried in his hand.
4. With the help of the RTO at Port Said, the heavy baggage was routed directly to El Arish. The passengers changed at Kantara where we ferried across the canal, and after more than 5 hours wait at Kantara, connected with the Palestine train. The heavy baggage was inspected at Customs in Kantara. The Chief of the Customs who invited me into his office was very courteous and helpful. He spoke English well. We met with extreme courtesy on the part of RTO personnel at each change.

On the train leaving Kantara at midnight, the two women and the child were placed in 2nd class compartment, and the men in 3rd class. I had a seat in the 1st class compartment. At 4:00 a.m. we were met at El Arish by Capt. DACIC and some Yugoslavs from the Camp. They had brought some natives who helped with the baggage. The refugees slept on palliasses on the floor in the canteen and in the recreation room that night at El Arish. Beds were provided the following day. One of the huts was turned over to them for occupation.

I stayed on another day to check on their DP cards and to collect additional information. I brought back with me for our Cairo records duplicates of the DP-1 and DP-2 cards held by each and made out one on behalf of the Turkish man. I also took



✓ from them their Iranian passports and other documents necessary in handling these cases in Cairo and gave them receipts for same. The refugees were informed that an UNRRA worker will call on the Embassies and Consular offices and do everything possible to expedite the completion of their repatriation.

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION AND RECOMMENDATION

1. Major Warren informed me that he had received two signals regarding trioships expected to arrive in Egyptian ports shortly carrying civilians. No details are available at this time. It is very likely that the "ASCANIA" group represents the first of a series of displaced persons who will be shipped from the continent for repatriation to other countries. People destined for countries in the Middle East will very likely be putting in at Egyptian ports, such as Alexandria or Port Said, or at Haifa in Palestine.

Evidently Allied Armies of Occupation and UNRRA in Europe are desirous of expediting the return of displaced persons on the continent and will be obliged to embark such persons on steamers without complete documents. It may also be that there is inadequate staff in Europe skilled in assuring that each refugee so embarked is in possession of complete documents, including passports, transit visas and sufficient currency to make his entry into the country of final destination possible.

2. It may be contrary to UNRRA policy to accept responsibility for the care and repatriation of persons from countries other than those which have requested UNRRA to do so. Neither Iran, Iraq nor Turkey have made any such request to UNRRA.
3. In view of this experience, it is recommended that UNRRA review its policy regarding the care and repatriation of displaced persons passing in transit through the Middle East from the continent, particularly if such repatriation has been initiated by UNRRA or the Allied Forces in Europe.
4. It is obviously necessary for a qualified international organization such as UNRRA to accept responsibility for handling the problems of refugees en route at ports of entry in the Middle East. It needs to be an Agency with authority and resources who can co-ordinate the services required and act promptly and humanely.



5. UNRRA would seem to be the logical international agency to handle these problems. If UNRRA accepts such logical extension of its services, the following is recommended:

- a. A qualified person should be selected to serve as dock and port worker for UNRRA in the Middle East. Such worker should be one of good personality, who can think quickly and clearly and not be afraid to make independent decisions whenever necessary, and have authority to make decisions. She or he will need to learn how to read and interpret official papers and acquire knowledge of immigration material such as passports, visas, other travel documents and be well informed of the policies and background of UNRRA, to know about the resources to be called upon for assistance; how to work with the Military, the Embassies, the local Police, and the Egyptian authorities and understand procedures at ports, docks or piers, and be able to establish good working relationships with officials.
- b. Appropriate letters should be sent to ERO and offices concerned on the continent urging that no refugees be embarked until the documents for each are fully completed (I can list what is needed), and complete thru transportation to the country of destination. This applies particularly to refugees going to countries other than those with which UNRRA has working agreements carrying responsibility for repatriation.
- c. Regarding temporary care for displaced persons in transit, many of the refugees in transit will require temporary shelter until arrangements can be completed for proceeding to their countries of destination. It seems impractical, expensive and physically very trying to take such refugees from Port Said to Camp El Arish or El Shatt, e.g. the journey from Port Said to El Arish starts at 3:15 in the afternoon. There is a change in Kantara where it is necessary to cross the Canal by ferry, then a long 5 hours wait at the Railroad Station in order to connect with the Palestine train which gets into El Arish at 4:00 a.m. There are many difficulties in getting accommodations on the train, particularly as the Palestine trains are usually very crowded.

In spite of the fact that El Arish is in Egypt the trip is further complicated by having to pass thru border crossing requirements such as customs, re-examination of papers, etc.

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The alternative plan would be to take a late afternoon train for El Shatt with a change at Ismailia which would get the party into Port Tewfik after midnight. El Shatt would need to have transport available at Port Tewfik and make certain that there would be no difficulties in crossing the Canal at that hour in order to reach the camp.

Tolumat is more accessible for transients coming by way of Alexandria or Port Said and should therefore be considered as long as we have this Camp. Tolumat and El Shatt have further advantages in that they are each more accessible to Alexandria and Cairo respectively, in the event it is necessary for the refugees to appear personally before their Consular Offices or Embassies who are located only in Cairo or Alexandria. It is very much more difficult to have such persons brought in to Cairo from El Arish.

It is recommended also that consideration be given to plans for temporary shelter at a hostel or pension in Cairo or in port cities like Alexandria and Port Said for persons in transit, who could be routed on quickly and would not need to stay here more than a few days before shipment to country of destination.

Augusta MAYERSON  
Chief,  
Special Services Section.

Sept. 3, 1945.

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APPENDIX I

NOMINAL ROLL OF CIVILIAN DISPLACED PERSONS FROM  
TOULON ON BOARD SS "ASCANIA" - ARRIVED AT PORT  
SAID 24 AUGUST 1945.

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| <u>Name</u>          | <u>Age</u> | <u>Destination</u>   | <u>Documents held</u>   |
|----------------------|------------|--|---|
| * ORDJANIAN, Nikit   | 27         | Iran (Born in Russia)                                      | DP-1 and DP-2 cards -<br>Valid Iranian passport -<br>In-transit visas for Egypt,<br>Palestine and Iran -<br>(Needs in-transit visas for<br>Syria and Iraq). |
| KIRKATIANZ, Boghos   | 56         | Iran   | DP-1 and DP-2 cards -<br>Valid Iranian passport No.<br>6408 and residence permit for<br>France.<br>(Needs all in-transit visas).                            |
| AZARI, Nosratollah   | 31         | Iran   | DP-1 and DP-2 cards -<br>Valid Iranian passport of stu-<br>dent.<br>(Needs in-transit visas).   |
| * KARNEEF, Alexander | 48         | Lebanon  | ( All papers in order   |
| " Wadika (wife)      | ?          |  | (   |
| KAFITI, Louis        | 26         | Palestine (Born in<br>Berlin of Arab<br>Palestine parents) | DP-1 and DP-2 cards -<br>Letter from Ramp Camp No. 7,<br>Displaced Persons Section-<br>Residence permit for France.   |
| BARRAUDESCHOU, Aron  | 35         | Iraq   | DP-1 card<br>Identification card No. 00521<br>issued 16 June 1945 by Nourg-<br>meister in Friedrichstadt  |
| TSCHRAFTSCHI, Taghi  | 29         | Iran   | DP-1 and DP-2 cards -   |
| Monika (wife)        | 23         |  | Statement from Swiss Legation in<br>Belgium testifying that man's<br>passport is with Iranian Lega-<br>tion in Berne for prolongation.                      |

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RESORLI, Nias  
Alias NIAZI,  
Kutchup Hassan Ogbo

27 Turkey

Only paper is a mimeographed slip of paper about 4" x 7" which reads:  
"U.S. Army - PWIB France No. 202, rank civilian. Processed at CCE No. 14 ... One year in concentration camp...."

BOZORG-ZAD, Hassan 30 Iran  
Elfriede 26  
(wife)  
Siegfried or 2  
Freidoun (son)

DP-1 and DP-2 cards  
Valid Iranian Passport for man only.  
Egyptian visa.  
Lacks in-transit visas.

\* Note: These three people had sufficient funds and their papers were in order. After discussion with them and Thomas Cook they proceeded on their journey with the help of Thomas Cook.

The others were taken to UNRRA Camp El Arish.

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ORDJANIAN, Nikit

SHAEF DP-1 and DP-2 cards No. G09450536

Following facts were obtained from all his papers.

Born in Russia 27 years ago, is of Gregorian religion, has lived the better part of his life in Teheran, Iran, went to Prague several years ago only for the purpose of studying, sent there by his father to study Mining Engineering and Geology.

Father's name is Samson, mother's Marian Roustamian.

Nikit speaks German, Russian, Czech, Persian and English. Has Iranian passport obtained in Berne, Switzerland, which is valid until December, 1945.

He is one of 8,000 students from Czechoslovakia deported to Germany early in 1940, placed at Altenburg near Dresden, in labour camp. Worked as a common labourer in tin mines. Later on, when the Germans discovered that he had some ability, they transferred him to a "Bureau Markscheidererei", where he worked until 10 May 1945, until the Russians occupied it, at which time he was liberated and told by the Russian colonel that he might now go and do as he pleased. He was quite bewildered, but finally contacted some French people near Leipzig who were protected by the American and British Forces, from where he was finally sent to Paris and then on to Marseilles by the Americans, by trucks and trains.

His passport, which at the time I interviewed him in the hands of the Egyptian Police, has, he informed me, visas for Egypt, Palestine and Iran. The passport was being held by the Egyptian Police for the payment of P.T. 8, which he did not have since he had only foreign currency. He still needs the Syrian and Irakian visas, which his consul in Cairo can obtain for him.



KIRKARIANTZ, Boghos - No. GO9450528

Single, Born in Iran 1889. Gregorian religion. Claimed nationality Iranian. Desires to return to Tabriz, Iran. Holds DP-1 and DP-2 cards. His last permanent residence was Paris, France, where he lived for 20 years. His occupation was that of merchant. He speaks Turkish, Armenian and French. He refers to himself as having been a "political deportee". In 1943 he was deported from France to Germany and spent the first six months in prison - 5 months in Lemberg and one month in Stuttgart as a political deportee. He was then transferred to a labor camp and worked in a foundry as a common labourer. He lost all his papers along with all his worldly possessions. He was liberated by the American Army and holds an Iranian passport No. 6408 which was issued to him in Paris, May 18, 1945 and which is valid until May 18, 1946. He has a French residence visa. He has no money.

He looks quite beaten and frightened and was monosyllabic in his answers to questions. He has brothers and sisters in Iran who are prepared to receive him, and is terribly eager to get there as soon as possible. He was hoping that he could perhaps go by the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company transport. In checking with Major Warren I discovered it was not possible to do this. He had very little baggage and precious little clothing. He is the oldest member of the group and is one of the seven men who were taken to El Arish pending arrangements for transportation and completion of documents.

Case No. 2

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AZARI, Nosratollah - No. G09450519

This man is in possession of DP-1 and DP-2 cards.

• He is single, was born in Naime, Iran, May 3, 1911. Islam by religion. His father's name is Ismail and his mother's maiden name Zarauqiz.

He is eager to return to Teheran, Iran, where he had last permanent residence. He was one of 45 students who were sent by his government to study in German universities. His studies were in metallurgy. In 1940 he worked in the iron industry in Bayern. He was placed in internment camp by the Germans. He has an Iranian passport of a student, issued to him in Teheran on March 20, 1940 No. 4231. Validity of this passport was extended in Paris so that it is good until March 20, 1946. He has no Egyptian visa, no transit visa for any country and no money, other than 300 German marks. All his family is in Iran. He said that efforts had been made by his government to have the students, of which he was one, return to Iran as the war was extended, but it appeared to be too late and the students were unable to get out of Germany.

Case No. 3

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KARNEEF, Alexander and wife Wadika  
G0304460

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Mr. Karneef was born February 24, 1897 in Russia, is of orthodox religion. His father's name is Serge, his mother's name Marta Petrova.

He wishes to return with his wife to Beirut, Lebanon. His last permanent residence was Paris, France. He had lived in Paris since 1938 where he was employed in working with blue prints and technical drawings for architectural firms. He knows the following languages: Russian, French, German, Arabic. In 1945 he was deported from France to Germany placed in labor camp and employed as a common laborer on machines and engines. He holds a passport issued by the Legation of Lebanon in Paris May 15, 1945. His profession is given as "dessinateur". The passport is valid for one year. He has transit visa for Egypt, but lacks the transit visa for Palestine, through which country he must go en route to Lebanon. He has ample Syrian currency which by arrangements with the O.C. Troops on board was exchanged for Egyptian currency. This enabled him to travel with Thomas Cook to whom he was released. He and his wife therefore were able to make their own arrangements. Wife was born in Beirut, Lebanon.

Case No. 4

14718



KAFITI, Louis - No. G09450502

Had HP-1 and DP-2 cards. Single. Born in Zossen, Germany, 16 Nov. 1918. A Christian Arab of Palestinian Arabic parents who were residing in Berlin. Father's name Hanna, mother's name Fumiya Murkos. Eager to go on to Jerusalem where he has relatives, particularly a grandmother and 3 aunts. He lived in Jerusalem for 2 years as a child, otherwise has lived in Germany. Last permanent residence was in Zossen, Germany. Father had a tobacco factory there. Father died in 1938. The German police stripped him of his German papers and gave him "alien papers". He was placed in a labor camp in Rangsdorf where airplane material was manufactured. He worked as a book-keeper. He was constantly persecuted by the German police who on the basis of the fact that he looks Jewish did not believe that he was not a Jew. He is a dark, swarthy looking individual who was evidently suffering from boils and abscesses in the region of his right jaw. These were lanced by the ship's doctor. The impression of the worker was that this man had been so starved at the labor camp that after liberation, wherever he could get food, he probably overate. In the short time that she observed this man on the boat and en route, he seemed to be eating all the time.

He has no passport. The British consul in Paris has written to Palestine for contact with his relatives there, but he had been informed that it would be 4 months before an answer could be expected. Mr. Kafiti had great anxiety about getting to Palestine. Each time he saw a worker the question was raised and at each time he presented another idea as to how he might get into Palestine without having to stop in Egypt.

He has no clothes, except that he wore. It was khaki evidently given to him by the American Army. When he got off the boat he carried a parcel in a yellow cloth which consisted, he explained, of a blanket which had been issued to him. He has no money. He holds police authorization to reside in France which paper reads as follows:

"Provisional Authorization for Louis Kafiti, born 16.11.1918 at Zossen, Germany, of Palestinian nationality to reside in Paris to Sept. 3, 1945. Issued by the Police Prefect in Paris 2 July 1945. No. 161.946."

He has also a letter signed by the U.S. Army Commanding Officer, Frank Fox of Ramp Camp No. 7, Displaced Persons Section. Copy of this letter is attached. Speaks enough English to make himself understood and German. He was one of the seven men taken to El Arish pending completion of documents and transportation. He was advised to write directly to his relatives from camp which he did.

Case No. 5.

14718



BARRAUDESCHOU, Aron - G10014847

Single, of Assyrian nationality. Has only DP-1 SHAEF Registration card. Says DP-2 card was not given to him before departure. Was registered in Denmark.

This man has a history of escapes from German controlled areas. He was born in Mossul, Irak on 18 May 1910. Occupation, painter (house painter). He left Irak in 1920 when he accompanied his father to Poland where they remained until 1938, then went to France and stayed in Toulouse from 1938 to 1940. When it was taken over by the Germans he was deported to Aachen where he worked in the mines for two months. Later he was sent to Neuhammer by Berlin. He was prosecuted because he "looks Jewish" though he is orthodox by religion. He was placed in a "Strafflager". The Germans had blood test taken of him which proved him to be not Jewish, he says.

This man talks freely about his sufferings and escapes. In 1945 he escaped to Poland where he worked on a farm; was picked up by the German police and again sent to a labor camp. In the winter of 1945 he escaped from Germany to Denmark.

Barraudeschou has no papers; holds an identification card "Not Kennkarte" No. 00521, issued 16 June 1945 by the Burgmeister in Friedrichstadt with a typed memorandum saying that all his papers were destroyed by enemy action in Hannover. His signature is written in "old Hebrew". Otherwise he seems unable to read or write any language. He has a sister and two uncles in Irak, is Assyrian by nationality and wishes to go to Irak. He has no money and no clothes. He holds a statement from the Ministry of Prisoners, Deportees and Refugees, issued in Marseilles 16 August 1945, certifying that he is of Assyrian nationality.

Case No. 6

14718



TSEHRACTSCHI, Taghi - BLG\*22887  
TSCHRAGTSCHI, Monika BLG\*22886

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Hold DB-1 and DP-2 cards. They were registered in Brussels, Belgium. Their SHAEF Nos read BLG \*22886, BLG \*22887. The DP-1 card has on the top of it printed : "Emergency issue Liege AEF LG".

This man was born in Teheran, Iran on 6 July 1916. He is Mohammedan. Claims Iranian nationality and is eager to go with his wife to Iran where his family resides. Father's name Reza, mother's name Toubia Roubabi. He was one of the many students sent by his country to Germany. He studied metallurgy in Katowich (formerly Poland) also in Cologne and Breslau. He was subsequently interned in Rothenburg for a period of three months when he was released by the British troops. He was placed in an English camp on April 26, and has been en route since. He is a young looking man, pale; has no passport, no identification, other than a letter from the Swiss Legation in Belgium, testifying to the fact that he is an Iranian subject.

"The Swiss Legation in Belgiu, representing the Iranian interests, certifies hereby that the Iranian subject Taghi Tschragschi, born 16 July 1916, at Rey, Teheran, has submitted his Iranian passport No. 4221/50 issued at Teheran in 19th March 1940, expired since the 19/3/45, to this Legation. This document has been transmitted to the Imperial Iranian Legation at Berne, in order to prolong its validity. Bruxelles, the 23 June 1945. Swiss Legation in Belgium."

Wife Monika is pregnant and expects a baby in November. She told of her tragic loss of two children by bombs. She was born in Czechoslovakia 22 February 1922. Looks older. They were married 1942. Married in Wesermunde, February 17. She was a medical student. She has no paper except the DP-1 card. The couple has 1450 German Marks. They both look tired, worn and pale, very young and helpless. She says she lost all her family in Czechoslovakia in the terrific massacre which took place in Burgou, near Prague. This couple was taken to El Arish. I saw them after they had had some sleep and I spoke to the welfare worker at the camp who promised to get the woman some clothes, since she has nothing except the clothes she is wearing. She looked much more cheerful after she had had a good nights sleep at the camp and had had some food and seemed pleased to be in camp. She speaks German and Czechoslovakian. They left photographs with worker, four of each, to be taken to Cairo.



NIAZI, Kutchup Hassan Ogbo - FO0605876

On the nominal roll submitted to me by O.C. Troops, SS Ascania, his name appears as RESORLI and the first name as Niazi. This man has neither DP-1 or DP-2 card with him, but the men in the group testified to the fact that he was in camp No. 7 with them and that he therefore belongs with this group. The only thing he holds by way of identification is a slip of paper from "U.S. Army -PIWB France No. 202, rank civilian. Processed at CGE No. 14 on April 21, 1945. One year in concentration camp. Internment No. 51G (in print) 2905160."

This man speaks Turkish, Russian and a little German. He holds 4100 German Reichmarks. He tells the following story: he was born in Hopar, Turkey, near Russia on the first of May 1918 of Russian parents. In 1924 he went to Russia and lived in Batum. In 1940 or 1941 he was captured by the Germans while residing in Kiev and transported to a labor camp in Frankfurt and Main. He was placed in a concentration camp in 1944. Some time in 1945 he escaped from there to the "Keschper Banchof". Later he was arrested in this place and finally rescued by American troops and sent to a civilian camp in Limoges, France, from where he was transferred to Cherbourg - Toulouse, Marseilles. It was difficult to get an accurate story, because of language limitations and because he seemed to be somewhat confused.

He is of Mohammedan religion, an auto mechanic and chauffeur by occupation. His father's name is Hassan Niazi and his mother's name Kibarogli Shadia. He has absolutely no papers or identifications other than the report above and no money. He too was taken to El Arish.

Case No. 8

14718



BOZORG-ZAD, Hassan - G09450520.  
Elfriede (wife) G03044605  
Siegfried or  
Freidoun (son) G03044604

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Freidoun is the Iranian interpretation of the name Siegfried. Parents missed no opportunity to apologize for the name Siegfried because it sounded too German and they insisted on the Iranian interpretation, even though the son was christened Siegfried.

The man had DP-1 and DP-2 cards. For the woman and child there were only DP-1 cards. They had been told by the registrar in France that it was not necessary for the woman and child to have DP-2 cards since their names were included on the card of Mr. Hassan. He is a tall lanky pale man, thin, but seems of even and good disposition. In the course of our conversation I discovered that he had suffered from tuberculosis, while in Germany. He and his wife reassured me that the condition was cleared up completely.

Mr. Bozorg-Zad was born the 2nd February 1915. He is Islam by religion and claims Iranian nationality. Last permanent residence was Iran, and he is most eager to return there. He too was sent by his government to Germany to study "optic engineering", photo lenses, etc. He spent 2½ years in Jena. In May 1940 he was in Berlin, then he worked in Mazhutte Optical in Bayern and later in Duisberg. He met his wife in Jena. They were married on June 1st, 1945. A month later they left Jena and through the American Army were enabled to reach camp No. 7 from where they were eventually evacuated. The belated marriage is explained by the fact that they had not been permitted before that period to marry. Mr. Bozorg-Zad, during the first interview, said he had no money, later it was discovered he had some French Francs, something more than FFrs. 1000.

The wife Elfriede's maiden name is Gottstein. She is a very attractive, petite blonde. She was born in Germany of Czechoslovakian parents, was brought up by foster parents in Germany. Her father's name was Erich and her mother's name Anna. She has never been to Iran. Their child Siegfried or Freidoun was born on June 27, 1943, at Jena. A very attractive child, healthy looking and friendly. This family was taken to El Arish along with the others. Worker brought back with her the marriage certificate, photos of the man and woman, the child's birth certificate and the man's passport No. 4197, which had been issued in Teheran on March 19, 1940, the validity of which has been prolonged. The last extension was obtained in Paris from the Iranian Consulate and makes his passport valid to the 19th March 1946. He also has an Egyptian visa of transit, issued at Marseilles, but valid only for three days. Its number is 7, dated 15 August, 1945. Also a certificate from the Registrar's Office, Jena, saying that Engineer Abol Hassan Bozorg-Zad proved at his marriage ceremony 1 June 1945, that he has Iranian nationality.

His wife, Elfriede Bozorg-Zad, nee Gottstein was of Czechoslovakian nationality. For the Registrar (signature) Jena 9 June 1945.

14718



BOBORG-ZAD, Hassan  
 Elfrida (wife)  
 Elfrida or  
 Elfrida (son)  
 003044804  
 003044805  
 003044806

Elfrida is the Iranian interpretation of the name Elfrida. Parents  
 stated no opportunity to apologize for the name Elfrida because it  
 sounded too German and they insisted on the Iranian interpretation, even  
 though the son was christened Elfrida.

The man had DP-1 and DP-2 cards. For the woman and child there were only  
 DP-1 cards. They had been told by the registrar in France that it was  
 not necessary for the woman and child to have DP-2 cards since their  
 names were included on the card of Mr. Hassan. He is a tall, thin, pale  
 man, thin, but seems of even and good disposition. In the course of our  
 conversation I discovered that he had suffered from tuberculosis, while  
 in Germany. He and his wife reassured me that the condition was cleared  
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Mr. Boborg-Zad was born the 2nd February 1915. He is Iranian by religion  
 and claims Iranian nationality. Last permanent residence was Iran, and  
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 Germany to study "optic engineering", photo lenses, etc. He spent 2 1/2  
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 They were married on June 1st, 1945. A month later they left Jena and  
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 they were eventually evacuated. The delayed marriage is explained by the  
 fact that they had not been permitted before that period to marry. Mr.  
 Boborg-Zad, during the first interview, said he had no money, later it  
 was discovered he had a French franc, something more than FFrs. 1000.

The wife Elfrida's maiden name was Elfrida. She is a very attractive,  
 petite blonde. She was brought up by foster parents. Her father's name was Elfrida and  
 her mother's name was Elfrida. She was brought up by her mother. A very attractive  
 child, healthy looking, and along with the other children, her birth certificate and the  
 man's passport No. 4197, which was issued in Tehran on March 19,  
 1940, the validity of which has been prolonged. The last extension  
 was obtained in Paris from the Iranian Consulate and under his passport  
 valid to the 18th March 1946. He also has an Egyptian visa of transit,  
 issued at Marseille, but valid only for three days. His number is 7,  
 dated 15 August, 1945. Also a certificate from the Registrar's Office,  
 Jena, saying that Engineer Abdul Hassan Boborg-Zad proved at his marriage  
 ceremony 1 June 1945, that he has Iranian nationality.

His wife Elfrida Boborg-Zad, nee Gottstein was of Czechoslovakian nation-  
 ality. For the Registrar (signature) Jena 9 June 1945.

1478