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LEAGUE OF NATIONS

INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE TO REFUGEES

Report submitted by Sir Herbert Emerson, G.C.I.E., K.C.S.I., C.B.E.,
High Commissioner for Refugees

April 19th, 1943.

I. PRELIMINARY

This report is submitted in accordance with the resolution adopted by the Assembly of the League of Nations at its nineteenth ordinary session held in September 1938. I have delayed its submission because of developments relating to the general problems of refugees which occurred towards the end of 1942 and which have only now reached a definite stage. It was desirable that some account of these should be included in the report.

II. NANSEN REFUGEES

The previous report¹ drew attention to the fact that, owing to the extension of Axis occupation on the European Continent, the connection between the High Commissioner's office and the colonies of Russian and Armenian refugees had been severed. With the occupation of the Free French Zone, communication with Nansen refugee colonies in that territory has also ceased.

After the events of May-June 1940, the office of the High Commissioner's representative in France carried on independently from the London office, but with the approval of the Vichy Government, under the title "Haut Commissariat pour les Réfugiés—Service Nansen français." Subsequently, on January 15th, 1942, this office was abolished and its functions taken over by the French Foreign Office, which set up for the purpose a new section under the title "Bureau chargé des Intérêts des Apatrides." As already reported, the Vichy Government denounced, on December 13th, 1941, the Accord franco-belge signed at Geneva on June 30th, 1928. On December 2nd, 1942, the Vichy Government took the further step of notifying the Secretary-General of the League of Nations of its denunciation of the Convention concerning the International Status of Refugees, signed in Geneva on October 28th, 1933. This denunciation becomes effective one year after receipt of the notification—*i.e.*, on December 2nd, 1943.

In denouncing this diplomatic instrument, the French Government excepted Articles 1 and 2 of the Convention as well as Chapter XI. Article 1 defines the categories of refugees to which the Convention is to apply—*i.e.*, Russian, Armenian and assimilated refugees—and Article 2 contains the obligation to issue travel documents, so-called Nansen passports, which had been the subject of previous intergovernmental arrangements. Chapter XI contains the usual clauses regulating the general conditions under which the Convention is to operate—*i.e.*, registration, ratification, denunciation, etc. It would appear that, in excepting Articles 1 and 2, the Vichy Government intends

¹ Document C.25.M.25.1942.XII.

to continue to issue travel documents to Stateless refugees in order to facilitate their re-emigration. It is stated that it was the intention of the Vichy Government to substitute for the Conventional provisions a special law which will extend the benefits of the Convention to various other groups of Stateless persons not coming hitherto under the Convention. Thus, Articles 1 to 13 inclusive would be incorporated in the new law, with the exception of Article 7 relating to labour conditions.

Since the above was written, General de Gaulle and General Giraud have repudiated the action taken by the Vichy Government in withdrawing from the League of Nations.

As several representatives of the High Commissioner, accredited to their Governments, continued their work after the severance of their connection with the High Commissioner's office, it became necessary to clarify the position as affecting the financial liability of the High Commissioner. This was done through letters addressed to the representatives in Athens, Belgrade and Bucharest, copies being communicated to the Greek, Yugoslav and Roumanian authorities respectively. I take this opportunity of paying a tribute to the good work done by the representatives in question.

During the period under review, very little fresh information has come to hand regarding the material conditions of the Nansen refugees in the various occupied countries. Owing to the breakdown of communications, assistance was limited to a few cases of re-emigration from France, for which transit facilities were provided, and to grants out of the humanitarian fund for the benefit of Nansen refugees in Switzerland and Turkey.

III. THE HUMANITARIAN FUND

The statements attached to this report show the income and the expenditure of the Humanitarian Fund for the year 1942.

The balance of the Fund was, on January 1st, 1942:

- (i) Swiss francs 411,902.65 in the Humanitarian Fund, and
- (ii) Swiss francs 68,665.90 in the Saar account.

The balance of the Fund on January 1st, 1943, is:

- (i) Swiss francs 406,692.05 in the Humanitarian Fund, and
- (ii) Swiss francs 68,665.90 in the Saar account.

It will be noted that, in the balance shown under (i), an amount of Swiss francs 274,965.30 is included, which is blocked in a bank in Oslo.

As already mentioned, connections between the High Commissioner and his representatives were severed and control over the receipts of the Nansen stamps was lost.

The balances held by the representatives on account of the Humanitarian Fund, previous to the breakdown of communications, are therefore the same as shown in the last year's report:

	Swiss francs
France (May 1940)	11,908.60
Greece (April 1941)	1,032.80
Roumania „	73.50
Yugoslavia „	10,823.50
Total	23,838.40

On January 1st, 1943, there were credits of:

		Swiss francs
Lloyds and National Provincial Foreign Bank, Ltd., London	Gold Bar	60,917.30
Lloyds and National Provincial Foreign Bank, Ltd., London	£300 3s. 7d.	5,200.10
Lloyds and National Provincial Foreign Bank, Ltd., Geneva		526.25
Lloyds and National Provincial Foreign Bank, Ltd., Geneva (<i>compte bloqué francs belges</i>)		126.35
Lloyds and National Provincial Foreign Bank, Ltd., Geneva (<i>compte bloqué dollars</i>)		947.50
Bank of London and South America, New York:		
Humanitarian Account	\$ 9,293.51	40,108.85
Saar Account	\$15,757.75	67,915.90
Bank of London and South America, Lisbon (held in trust by the American Joint Distribution Committee)		62.00
Den Norske Creditbank, Oslo	Kr. 274,965.27	274,965.30

The countries in Europe still collecting the Nansen stamp and remitting its product to the Humanitarian Fund are: Ireland, the United Kingdom and Switzerland.

Grants-in-aid to relief bodies in Switzerland are still made for assistance to destitute Nansen refugees in that country. Grants-in-aid have also been maintained to similar refugees in Turkey, through the good offices of the British Embassy and the Netherlands Legation in Ankara.

IV. REFUGEES FROM GREATER GERMANY

(a) *General*

During the past few months, the whole question of refugees has come under review and is now the subject of discussion between the Government of the United States of America and the British Government. It is hoped that this discussion will pave the way to action by the United Nations. The events leading up to this review were: first, the publication of the note of the Polish Government giving particulars of the extermination of the Jews in Poland; second, the Declaration of the United Nations made on December 17th, 1942; third, the reaction of the public in Great Britain, America and elsewhere. In England, the Declaration was made in the House of Commons and was the occasion of a spontaneous demonstration of sympathy with the victims, almost without precedent in the history of Parliament. The declaration that the guilty would be brought to justice was unanimously approved, but it was strongly and widely felt that there should also be immediate action to save as many persons as could be saved. It was soon realised that this could be done only through joint action by the United Nations and that this action should extend beyond the Jews to all those who could be saved, comprising persons of many races and diverse creeds. The British Government accordingly approached the Government of the United States of America and, at the beginning of March 1943, there was published the summary of the British suggestions and the reply of the Government of the United States of America. The latter contained the following proposals:

“The United States is of the opinion that further efforts to solve the problem may best be undertaken through the instrumentality already existing, the Executive Committee of the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees. To this end, it may be considered advisable, in order to facilitate action by the Committee, that a preliminary exploration of ways and means be undertaken informally by representatives designated by the Government of the United States and the British Government. Such exploration might be undertaken along the following lines:

“A. The refugee problem should not be considered as being confined to persons of any particular race or faith. Nazi measures against minorities have caused the flight of persons of various races and faiths as well as of other persons because of their political beliefs.

“B. Wheresoever practicable, intergovernmental collaboration should be sought in these times of transportation difficulty, shipping shortage and submarine menace to the end that arrangements may be determined for temporary asylum for refugees as near as possible to the areas in which those people find themselves at the present time and from which they may be returned to their homelands with the greatest expediency on the termination of hostilities.

“C. There should accordingly be considered plans for the maintenance in neutral countries in Europe of those refugees for whose removal provision may not be made. Their maintenance in neutral countries may involve the giving of assurances for their support until they can be repatriated, which support will necessarily come from the United Nations augmented by funds from private sources. It may also involve the giving of assurances in all possible cases by their Governments in exile for their prompt return to their native countries upon the termination of hostilities.

“D. The possibilities for the temporary asylum of the refugees with a view to their repatriation upon the termination of hostilities in countries other than neutral and their dependencies should be explored together with the question of the availability of shipping to effect their movement from Europe.”

The British Government has accepted the suggestion that there should be an informal discussion and, at the time of writing, this is taking place in Bermuda.

Meanwhile, the British Government has accepted in principle the following motion which was moved in the House of Lords on March 23rd, 1943, by the Archbishop of Canterbury:

“That, in view of the massacres and starvation of Jews and others in enemy and enemy-occupied countries, this House desires to assure His Majesty's Government of its fullest support for immediate measures, on the largest and most generous scale compatible with the requirements of military operations and security, for providing help and temporary asylum to persons in danger of massacre who are able to leave enemy and enemy-occupied countries.”

Lord Cranborne, the Leader of the House, in accepting the motion, reaffirmed the intention of the British Government to do what was possible in co-operation with other Governments; but, at the same time, he explained some of the difficulties in the way of action on a large scale under war conditions.

For some time before the events mentioned in the previous paragraph, I had been concerned with various aspects of the general problem. Indeed, the greater part of my work during the year 1942, and especially during the latter half of it, was concerned with the plight of refugees in Europe. The great majority of German and Austrian refugees are Jews, and problems concerning them are very closely related to the fate of Jews in general. Moreover, in Unoccupied France, Switzerland, Spain, Portugal and North Africa, the body of refugees includes many who are neither Jews nor Germans nor Austrians, but whose interests are, in most respects, the same as those of persons within my mandate. It is, in fact, not possible to isolate the question of German and Austrian refugees, and it is not in their interest to make the attempt. I have therefore necessarily been closely concerned with wider issues than are strictly within my authority.

(b) Position in Unoccupied France

In my last report, I gave some facts and figures regarding the position of refugees in Unoccupied France. There was subsequently some improvement in the conditions in the camps, and a considerable number of internees were released. The relief thus afforded was, however, only temporary, for the measures taken to deport certain classes of foreigners, including German and Austrian refugees, placed them in a position of great peril. Their discovery, arrest, detention and deportation were the occasion of very tragic events. The Vichy Government placed restrictions on the issue of exit permits. These became progressively more strict and, by the autumn of 1942, it was practically impossible for any adult German or Austrian refugee to obtain permission to leave the country. Thus, almost the last door was closed through which escape from Europe by lawful means could be effected. In these circumstances, the efforts of myself and many others were directed to three main objects: first, to obtain a relaxation of the general policy of the Vichy Government; secondly, when this failed, to obtain exit permits for children; and thirdly, to obtain asylum for as many children as possible. Representations were made by the Government of the United States of America through the Chargé d'Affaires at Vichy, who spared neither time nor trouble to obtain the release of children. The Vatican condemned both the policy and the means by which effect was given to it, and strove to obtain its modification. It gave a lead to the stand made by all the Churches in France in condemning the deportations and in giving shelter and assistance to those who were threatened. Those unofficial organisations which had access to Vichy were untiring in their efforts, and I would particularly mention the continuous work of the Joint Distribution Committee, the American Friends Service Committee and the Unitarian Service Committee, who worked together in close co-operation from their headquarters at Lisbon. The sympathy shown and practical help given by the French public proved that the traditional support of humanity and toleration of France is still alive.

There was a good response to the appeals made for visa facilities for children. The Government of the United States offered to take 5,000; Canada was willing to take 500, with a prospect of the same number being accepted later; the Argentine offered asylum to 1,000; the same number of certificates was available for Palestine; South Africa offered to take 250; and the British Government was prepared to admit those children who had close relatives in Great Britain. There were, in fact, adequate facilities to meet requirements had the children been allowed to leave. The difficulty was to obtain exit permits for them. As a result of long negotiations, the Vichy Government eventually agreed to issue permits for 500 children who were to go to the United States of America, but it would not commit itself to the issue of any more. Preparations were in train to get the children out, when the occupation of North Africa by the United Nations, and the consequent Axis occupation of the whole of France brought matters to a standstill. The permission previously given was withdrawn, and efforts to get it renewed have so far failed. Thus, so far as children in Unoccupied France are concerned, the obstacle has been the refusal of the Vichy Government to let them go and not any lack of asylum.

(c) Position in Spain

With the occupation of the whole of France by the Axis Powers, many refugees made their way to the Spanish frontier, across which there had previously been a comparatively small flow. Although the frontiers were closed, many were able to escape detection, and it was estimated that, during the month of November, about one hundred a day were able to cross. During the winter this number declined to thirty or forty a day, but it is likely to increase as the weather improves. Although the refugees include many Jews, they are by no means the only fugitives, and many nationalities besides German and Austrian are represented. Owing to the fact that some are in concealment and most of them are scattered, it has been difficult to make a close estimate of the total number, but it is probable that, in the middle of March 1943, there were about 15,000 in all who had obtained asylum in Spain; of whom not more than one-half were Jews and not more than one-quarter were Germans or Austrians. There were Poles, Czechs, Yugoslavs, French, Dutch and a certain number of Stateless Russians. The immediate action required was to ensure, first, the safety of those who did escape; and, secondly, that the Spanish Government should be relieved as far as possible of what might become too heavy a burden for it to bear. I made representations at once to the British Government and, through the Honourable Myron Taylor, to the Government of the United States of America, and I have been in close touch throughout with the measures taken by those Governments. I have also been in constant communication with the voluntary organisations at Lisbon, and I had full discussions with Dr. J. Schwartz, the executive head of the Joint Distribution Committee in Europe, who visited London towards the end of the year. The British Government and the Government of the United States of America, through the Embassies at Madrid, have given unremitting attention to the plight of the refugees in Spain and have afforded a great deal of help. The Spanish Government has shown humanity and sympathy towards them. No one who has succeeded in crossing the frontier has been expelled. Measures of internment and confinement have been relaxed as far as possible, and facilities have been given for relief. Meanwhile, there has been a fairly large outflow, although it has probably been less than the intake, and has not included many Germans and Austrians. The outflow continues, but it will be necessary to increase it as the inflow becomes greater. This, indeed, is one of the most urgent problems, since on its solution may depend the maintenance of the life-line through Spain, which is now the only channel of escape out of Western Europe. I have laid particular stress on this, in connection with the various proposals which I have submitted to the Governments of the United Kingdom and the United States of America for consideration during their joint discussions.

(d) Portugal

In contrast with Spain, the number of refugees in Portugal has greatly decreased, and at present amounts only to a few hundred. The Portuguese Government has continued to show much

practical sympathy towards those who have obtained temporary asylum in that country. Refugees reaching Portugal without a valid entrance permit, instead of being detained in prison, are now able to reside in *résidence forcée* in Ericeira, a small locality in the neighbourhood of Lisbon, under a régime similar to that obtaining in Caldas da Rainha, the residence of stranded destitute refugees who entered the country with a valid permit.

(e) *North Africa*

The entry of the United Nations into North Africa at once affected the position of political prisoners and internees, among whom were several thousand Germans and Austrians. An Inter-Allied Commission has been set up which will visit the various camps, examine each case and make appropriate recommendations to the French authorities. The latest information shows that the Commission is making satisfactory progress. Many detainees and internees have already been released, the conditions in the camps have been greatly improved, relief measures are in hand, and much has been done to absorb persons in useful employment as they are released. While it may take a little time completely to clear up the situation, there is no reason to doubt that this will be done, and the occupation of North Africa has already greatly improved the plight of the refugees. The abolition by the French administration of discriminatory laws and measures against the Jews is of direct interest to the majority of German and Austrian refugees.

(f) *Switzerland*

The refugee position in Switzerland has greatly altered in the course of 1942. At the beginning of the year there was still a residue of some 6,000 German and Austrian refugees who had found asylum in that country prior to the outbreak of war. Able-bodied men numbering about 900 were drafted into labour camps, where they were put on to road construction and reclamation work and maintained by the Federal Government under conditions similar to those prevailing in the Swiss Army. Thanks to the efforts of the Emigration Office of the Federal Police, approximately 2,000 persons were able to re-emigrate, most of them proceeding to the United States of America, and some to Palestine and the Latin-American States. To facilitate transit through the Free French Zone, the Swiss authorities, with the concurrence of the French authorities, organised collective transports through France under official Swiss escort. These arrangements broke down as a result of the occupation of the Free Zone and, despite efforts made by the Swiss Government, transit and re-emigration have not so far been resumed.

During the summer, the German occupation authorities in Holland, Belgium and France started a vigorous campaign of compulsory labour conscription, and arrests and deportation of Jews, which resulted in a growing influx of refugees without valid visas into Switzerland. Hitherto, the Swiss authorities have not applied rigidly the Ordinance of October 17th, 1939, giving the Federal Police full power to refuse admission to illegal entrants, and to reconduct to the frontier aliens having penetrated into Switzerland in a clandestine manner. However, the Federal Council, alarmed by the large numbers crossing the frontier, which took the character of an organised movement, sanctioned, on August 3rd, the closing of the frontier, mainly with a view to discouraging further influx. At the same time, illegal entrants who had reached Switzerland before August 13th were regularised, given refugee status and interned. Moreover, no resort was made to expulsion measures, so that illegal entrants who had managed to avoid the frontier control were authorised to stay in special reception camps.

By the end of the year, some 15,000 illegal entrants had thus obtained asylum on Swiss territory. A large number of reception camps were set up under the supervision of a special refugee commissioner, under the auspices of the Federal Department of Justice and Police. Able-bodied men are transferred to labour camps, children are placed in special children's houses where they can continue their schooling, women, invalids and elderly persons obtain assigned residence in hotels and boarding-houses.

The various refugee assistance bodies are grouped in the Schweizerische Zentralstelle für Flüchtlingshilfe, which works in close collaboration with the Federal authorities. Representatives of these bodies can visit the camps and administer supplementary relief.

While public opinion has throughout supported the liberal policy of the Federal Government, and even pressed for greater concessions, the authorities are much concerned with the future. Switzerland is not an immigration country of permanent settlement, her food position is precarious, and she has a relatively large percentage of permanent foreign population. With the occupation of the French Free Zone, she is at present unable to provide for even a small measure of re-emigration. She is therefore anxious to obtain assurances that she will be relieved of her burden after the end of hostilities.

(g) *Refugees in the United Kingdom*

In my last report, I referred to the progressive improvement that had taken place in the position of German and Austrian refugees in the United Kingdom. This improvement has continued and, although there has been a great deal of routine work in connection with them, comparatively few questions of principle have arisen. Among the latter, mention may be made of a new procedure which will, it is hoped, expedite the release of some internees. The great majority of the refugees interned in 1940 were released before the beginning of 1942 and are in useful employment. A few are still interned, the majority on personal grounds, and the rest because they have been unable to satisfy the requirements of any category qualifying for release. In some cases, difficulties have

been experienced in getting employment while they are in internment, either through official or private agencies and, in order to meet these difficulties, the British Government has agreed, in appropriate cases and where there is no objection on security grounds, to release the persons concerned even although at the time of release they have not obtained employment, it being understood that employment will be found within a reasonable time.

I have continued to be Chairman of the Central Committee which administers the grant towards the maintenance and care of German and Austrian refugees. During the year, the approval of Government was obtained to the inclusion in the scheme of the Refugee Children's Movement, which took effect from October 1st, 1941. The Movement is a voluntary body which assumed responsibility for about 11,000 children, representing the great majority of the children who were given asylum in the United Kingdom previous to the war. It received a large grant from the Baldwin Fund (the proceeds of a national appeal made previous to the war on behalf of refugees) and this enabled it to finance the maintenance, welfare, and other expenditure for some years without assistance from public funds. The time came, however, when the balance in hand was sufficient only to meet the expenditure for another year. In these circumstances it was thought desirable to approach the Government so that, with public assistance, the private resources would be sufficient to tide over the period—roughly three years—within which the great majority of the children would be self-supporting. At the invitation of the Movement, I took part in the discussions with the Home Office, the result of which was a generous arrangement bringing the Movement within the general scheme. Although I was previously in touch with the work that was being done by the Movement, I have now been in much closer association with it, and I take the opportunity of expressing my very warm appreciation of the excellent work which has been and is being done by a comparatively small band of very devoted workers. The outstanding feature is the personal care devoted to each case and the continuous efforts to provide a useful career for each child. I consider the work done for the children to be among the most important features of refugee activities in this country. Here I would particularly mention the hospitality given to children by a large number of private families, many of whom have accepted full financial responsibility. When they undertook this liability, they regarded it as a temporary obligation, but the war has, in many cases, greatly extended the obligation and also reduced the ability of the sponsors to meet it. Nevertheless, the guarantors as a body have maintained their guarantees, there being very few cases in which they have asked to be absolved. The same is true of those who gave guarantees for adult refugees. Moreover, it is clear that, if and when it is possible to bring more children to this country, there will be no lack of private hospitality. The system of private sponsorship has greatly reduced the charges which would otherwise have fallen on public funds.

(h) Internees in Canada and Australia

It will be remembered that a number of internees were sent by the British Government to Canada and Australia. The various problems arising out of this action gave considerable trouble. Most of them have now been solved. In Australia, the Commonwealth Government decided early in 1942 to use, on a voluntary basis, the labour and skill of those civilian internees who wished to participate in the common effort. They agreed to enlist fit men of military age in labour units, to employ specialists and technicians in work of national importance, to release youths under the age of 18 to continue their education or to learn occupations, and to release aged and infirm internees. In pursuance of this liberal policy, over 500 men joined the labour units of the Australian military forces, and I have seen official reports giving very high testimony of their loyalty, keenness and conduct. Others have been released on account of age or infirmity, and some have found employment on technical work. Several hundreds have returned to the United Kingdom. Of those who still remain in internment on other than personal grounds, the great majority prefer to remain there until arrangements can be made for their emigration rather than to accept the opportunities of release open to them. There is little that can be done on their behalf.

Although the Canadian Government has not been able to open enlistment in the military forces to the refugees interned there, it has followed a liberal policy in releasing them for civil employment, especially for agriculture and other work. Many others have returned to this country either for release on arrival or for re-examination of their cases, this being followed in the majority of cases by release within a few weeks. Those still interned in Canada (less than 100, of whom the majority are interned on personal grounds) have been given the opportunity to return to the United Kingdom, where the question of release or otherwise would be decided on the merits of each case. The problem in Canada has thus been practically settled. Senator Cairine Wilson, as Chairman of the Central Committee for Interned Refugees, has continued to take an active interest in the refugees and she has kept me fully informed of developments. During the summer, Colonel Fordham, the Commissioner of internment camps, paid an official visit to England and, during the course of this visit, was good enough to meet representatives of the various voluntary organisations. He was not only able to give a reassuring account of the position, but impressed all whom he met with his practical interest and sympathy towards the refugees in his charge.

V. POST-WAR PROBLEMS

I have spent much time on the consideration of post-war problems. Early in the year, I submitted a memorandum relating to them to the British Government and, through Mr. Myron Taylor, to the Department of State at Washington. This contained my personal views on various aspects of the subject and, in particular, I laid stress on the distinction between those who are only temporarily separated from their countries of origin and may be expected to return as soon

as they are able and, on the other hand, those who may be unable or unwilling to return because they are not assured of the protection of their Government. The latter, while they will have problems in common with those of the first class, will also have many difficulties peculiar to themselves, and these will require special measures for their solution. I have made suggestions concerning the lines along which I believe that a solution can be reached. Hitherto, the attention of the United Nations has been given more to the immediate problems of relief that will arise after the end of the war than to the solution of the long-term problems of Stateless persons. I hope that the latter question will be considered in the near future. At the request of different organisations, I have given a number of addresses on the subject, with special reference to the position after the war of refugees in the United Kingdom. The great majority of these were given temporary asylum as transitory migrants, and they and their friends are anxious regarding their future. Whilst little can be done at present to relieve their anxiety, since the British Government, in common with other Governments, is unable to state its intentions in anticipation of the uncertain conditions that may prevail after the war, I have found that the refugees themselves appreciate and welcome a frank discussion of the various issues involved, and that it helps to remove misunderstanding. The magnitude of the general problem after the war will largely depend on the extent to which the refugees will be willing to return to their own countries. It is clear that very few will return unless they have firm assurances of free and full citizenship and of protection of life and property, with a reasonable prospect that the assurances will achieve their objects. Given these conditions, it is probable that many of the political refugees will return. The position is much more doubtful in the case of the victims of racial and religious persecution and, in particular, of the Jews. There are comparatively few at present who would definitely commit themselves to return and, since compulsory repatriation would seem to be out of the question, this is likely to prove the least tractable of the many problems that will arise.

VI. THE WORK OF VOLUNTARY BODIES

This report would be incomplete without a tribute to the very fine work which voluntary organisations have done and are doing in occupied and neutral countries of Europe. The information which comes through is scanty, and little news is available of work in Holland, Belgium, Norway and Poland, but there is reason to suppose that many voluntary workers are still giving practical help of incalculable value wherever it is possible for them to do so. The need is so great and the scope so wide that they may be able to touch little more than the fringe of the problem, but they have been able to bring comfort and relief to many thousands. Their ability to do so has been largely due to the generosity of the American public and to the support of American organisations, among which special mention must be made of the Joint Distribution Committee, the American Friends Service Committee and the American Unitarian Service Committee. Until December 7th, 1941, when the United States entered the war, these bodies were able to give relief, either through their own workers or through local organisations, to tens of thousands. After that date, they continued their direct service in Unoccupied France until the Axis occupied the whole of that country. They are still giving it in the territories that are open to them—Spain, Portugal and North Africa. Even before the war, many of the local organisations working in France, Holland, Belgium and Switzerland were able to carry on their work only through the generosity of outside bodies. In particular, those concerned with Jewish refugees were dependent on subsidies given by the Joint Distribution Committee, which also financed the wide social activities among the Jews of Poland. During the first two years of the war, the Committee increased its assistance, but when America became a belligerent it was no longer able to make remittances. It had, however, anticipated the rupture of direct relations and had guaranteed for specific periods the commitments which local associations might have to incur. It believes and hopes that, even after the end of these periods, the latter will still be able to borrow money in the knowledge that the Joint Distribution Committee will honour the debts when relations are again restored. It has reserved funds for the purpose. In another case, it has relieved the Jewish organisation in a neutral country of the whole of its local obligations, so that the funds thus released may be available for relief in Poland. These examples, and many others that could be given, show that the light of humanitarian assistance, though dim, is not utterly quenched.

In a reference to the activities of voluntary bodies, the Red Cross deserves special mention. The Civilian Section of the War Prisoners' Agency of the International Red Cross in Geneva has spared no efforts to trace the whereabouts of deportees and persons drafted into labour gangs, on behalf of friends and relatives of these unfortunate people living in the United Nations or in neutral countries. Lately, a Refugee Section has been set up at the Headquarters of the International Red Cross. The International League of Red Cross Societies, which also carries out its work from Geneva, has worked in close collaboration with the various refugee bodies which were grouped before the German occupation in the Marseilles Co-ordinating Committee. Medical supplies have been sent to the concentration camps in the South of France and also to the ghettos in Poland. Dr. Wyss-Dunant, a delegate of the International Red Cross Committee, is working for alien refugees in North Africa and has been co-opted as a member of the Joint Commission set up in Algiers to investigate the position of alien refugees in the various camps and to make recommendations for their release.

The Foreign Relations Department of the British Red Cross has rendered assistance in tracing the whereabouts of refugees and deportees in Axis-occupied territories. It has also been instrumental in facilitating the sending of aid, in money and in kind, to refugees in Miranda Camp and elsewhere in Spain. The Spanish Red Cross has kindly consented to act for those refugees interned in Spain who cannot be claimed by the diplomatic representatives in Madrid. It has also acted as a distributing agent for various voluntary bodies which have headquarters in Lisbon.

VII. MISCELLANEOUS WORK

The previous report gave an outline of the conditions under which the High Commissioner was called upon to deal with individual cases. The aggravation of the position of refugees, and notably of Jews on the European Continent, has led in the period under review to a growing number of cases being submitted to his office.

Numerous refugees have close relatives and friends in Greater Germany or in German-occupied territories. Many have been deported either to ghettos in the Protectorate or further east, or into labour camps. These unfortunate people are suddenly arrested, without knowing to what destination they will be removed, and have later on little chance of sending a Red Cross message in order to inform their relatives in neutral or belligerent countries. Thus, the tracing of the whereabouts of such people has become an urgent problem which the High Commissioner took up with the Civilian Department of the International Red Cross in Geneva. An arrangement was made whereby the Red Cross undertook to make enquiries, but, after a trial period of six months, Geneva was compelled to report that this work had to be suspended for the time being owing to the unwillingness of the German authorities to co-operate. The breakdown of this service extended also to the deportees from the former unoccupied French zone.

On the other hand, hope is not yet abandoned of organising measures of relief for ghetto inmates. Food parcels despatched from Portugal are said still to reach their destination in Polish ghettos, and, where the exact address was known, money remittances and shipments of medicaments from Switzerland have also reached the beneficiaries. In addition, the Joint Committee of the International Red Cross and the League of Red Cross Societies still pursues its efforts to bring relief to these unfortunate people within the framework of war and blockade restrictions. The High Commissioner, while following closely this situation, had enabled refugees in the United Kingdom to assist their relatives in occupied countries through other friends or relatives who act in conjunction with the great humanitarian bodies in Geneva.

German policy concerning intending emigrants underwent a radical change in the autumn of 1941. Whereas up to that time the German Government permitted and even encouraged, or in some cases carried out by force, the removal of Jewish people, a rigid ban on exit permits was enforced inside the Greater Reich and in German-occupied countries from that time onward, whether visas of final destination were available or not for a neutral European or overseas country. In fact, with very few exceptions, people who have managed to escape since that time have done so in a clandestine manner. The High Commissioner has had ample opportunity of ascertaining the rigid enforcement of this new policy by taking up, through the good offices of neutral countries, individual cases of intending emigrants in respect of whom visas of final destination, as well as of the necessary transit permits outside Axis-occupied lands, were available. Not a single successful case can be reported. Even people over 65 years of age whose maintenance was guaranteed in Switzerland for the rest of their lives, and in respect of whom the Swiss authorities granted entrance permits, were not able to avail themselves of these facilities. These facts need to be stressed, as public opinion does not seem to appreciate them fully.

So long as the so-called Free Zone remained unoccupied in France, the High Commissioner was called upon to deal with some individual cases of re-emigration from Switzerland and Unoccupied France, especially with regard to certain categories of refugees for whom transit facilities through Spain and Portugal were not available in the ordinary course. Thanks to the generous attitude of the authorities concerned, interventions were successful and transit facilities were granted.

The High Commissioner's Office has continued to operate a Civil Document Service for refugees under its mandate residing in the British Empire. Owing to the fact that re-emigration has practically come to a standstill, applications for birth certificates and police certificates of good conduct have sharply declined. On the other hand, there has been an increase in enquiries concerning divorce matters, and applications for duplicates of divorce decrees of German courts. To assist refugees, detailed information as to the present position of German divorce legislation was obtained. There is also an increase of applications relating to death certificates in respect of close relatives in Germany.

The number of denationalisation certificates issued by the High Commissioner's office has remained constant. As was pointed out in the previous report, certificates are issued only in cases of denationalisation by individual decree, when the names of the persons concerned can be traced in the German *Official Gazette*. By a Decree of November 25th, 1941, the German Government declared the *en masse* denationalisation of all German Jews who had taken up ordinary residence abroad, but, since this decree has not been recognised by the British Government, it has not been possible to extend the practice of issuing denationalisation certificates to persons claiming to have been affected by the decree. Although refugees of German and Austrian origin in the United Kingdom have the status of "enemy aliens" for the purposes of the Aliens Order 1920 and subsequent Amendments, denationalisation certificates have proved useful in matters relating to the civil status of refugees.

VIII. ADMINISTRATIVE ACCOUNT

The statement attached gives a summary of my administrative account for the year 1942. The figures are given in sterling only, since the whole of my transactions are now made through an English bank. The accounts up to the end of 1942 have been audited. My budget allotment for the year 1942 was 116,000 Swiss francs, equivalent to £6,686 at the exchange rate of 17.35 Swiss francs to the pound. My expenditure has again been kept at a minimum and there is no further scope for reduction. It was below the amount of the grant by £839, equivalent at the above rate of exchange to 14,600 Swiss francs approximately.

CONCLUSION

My thanks are due to Dr. Kullmann for his loyal support and unfailing assistance in dealing with many problems. His advice is always at the disposal of refugees and voluntary workers, and through his various contacts he is able to suggest and often himself to reach, solutions of personal questions of special difficulty. These are by no means confined to matters coming strictly within the mandate.

During the year my personal secretary, Miss Muriel Jenkins, accepted a temporary post in the Colonial Service, and she is now serving in West Africa. She had been with the office since its establishment and has rendered service of great value. I wish to thank all the staff for the good work they have done.

SUMMARY OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS FOR THE YEAR 1942
(Administrative Account)

Budget allotment: Swiss francs 116,000—equivalent to £6,686 at the rate of 17.35.²

	Disbursements			Receipts		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
<i>Receipts</i>						
Received from the Treasury of the League of Nations				6,161	11	11
<i>Disbursements</i>						
(Appropriate deduction having been made in each item for sundry receipts —e.g., payment by Inter-governmental Committee for accommodation, etc.)						
High Commissioner's salary	2,262	0	0			
Head Office salaries	2,717	0	0			
London office: Rent, heating, cleaning, electricity	559	17	0			
Travelling expenses	39	13	9			
Office expenses (purchase of equipment, insurance, etc.)	97	6	8			
Petty cash	38	3	3			
Telephone and telegrams, postage stamps	104	2	8			
Banking expenses		16	0			
<i>Total expenditure</i>	5,818	19	4			
Excess of credits from Treasury over expenditure ¹	342	12	7			
	6,161	11	11	6,161	11	11

HUMANITARIAN ACCOUNT, 1942

<i>Receipts</i>		<i>Expenditure</i>	
	Swiss francs		Swiss francs
1. Balance in hand on January 1st, 1942	411,902.65	<i>Grants:</i>	
Less:		For Nansen refugees (other than refugees from the Saar)	5,730.05
Civil documents 1,012.20		Miscellaneous expenses:	
Miscellaneous 37.30		Bank charges	275.20
	1,049.50	Printing of Nansen stamps	
	410,853.15	Grants made but payment not confirmed	1,385.—
2. Income from Nansen stamps on account of:			7,390.25
1941	24.30	Balance in hand on December 31st, 1942	406,692.05
1942	72.20		414,082.30
	96.50		
3. Private contributions:			
(a) Refugees from Greater Germany	3.45	<i>Less:</i>	
(b) Fees for denationalisation certificates	312.30	Civil documents	727.95
		Deposit for cables	703.95
		Grants made, but payment not confirmed	1,385.—
			2,816.90
	411,265.40		411,265.40

I.T. (Note: This account has been audited.,

¹ In addition, the sum of Swiss francs 472.25, equivalent to £27 4s. 4d. at the rate of 17.25, was paid by the Treasury at Geneva in October 1942 on behalf of the High Commissioner. With this adjustment, the excess of credits is £315 8s. 3d.

² Including the above adjustment, expenditure was less than the budget allotment by £839, equivalent to Swiss francs 14,600 approximately.

SAAR ACCOUNT, 1942

(No change from statement for 1941)

<i>Receipts</i>		<i>Expenditure</i>	
	Swiss francs		Swiss francs
Balance in hand on January 1st, 1942:		Grants to Saar organisations in France	—
Bank	67,915.90	Miscellaneous expenses	—
Representative	750.—	Grant made in 1940, but payment not confirmed	750.—*
		Balance in hand on December 31st, 1942:	
		Bank	67,915.90
		Representative	750.00
			69,415.90
		<i>Less:</i>	
		Grant made in 1940 but payment not confirmed	750.—
	<u>68,665.90</u>		<u>68,665.90</u>

* Owing to interruption of communications, no notification has been received of payment to beneficiaries.

STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS FROM SALE OF NANSEN STAMPS, 1942

Country	1941 ¹ (Nansen stamps sold in 1941, but paid in 1942.)	1942
	Swiss francs	Swiss francs
Great Britain (surcharges)	17.35 (last quarter	65.05 (first three quarters)
India (surcharges)	—	7.15
Ireland	6.95	—
Switzerland	—	— (paid at the end of 1941: Sw. fr. 5,600)
	<u>24.30</u>	<u>72.20</u>
	Total: Sw. fr. 96.50	

STATEMENT OF GRANTS FOR 1942

Country	Russian	Armenian	Total
	Swiss francs	Swiss francs	Swiss francs
Switzerland	2,400.—	1,900.—	4,300.—
Turkey	1,430.05	—	1,430.05
	<u>3,830.05</u>	<u>1,900.—</u>	<u>5,730.05</u>

CHARACTER OF RELIEF

Country	Relief to aged, sick and infirm and miscellaneous grants-in-aid (1)	Vocational re-training (2)	Youth (3)	Total
	Swiss francs	Swiss francs	Swiss francs	Swiss francs
Switzerland	3,400.—	—	900.—	4,300.—
Turkey	1,430.05	—	—	1,430.05
	<u>4,830.05</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>900.—</u>	<u>5,730.05</u>