

# VAAD HATZALA

The only Jewish agency exclusively concerned with the religious aspects of rehabilitation.

## 'Danger or No Danger,' Vaad Hatzala Went Inside Enemy Lines for Rescues

"We [President's War Refugee Board] could not go inside the lines, but Vaad Hatzala, danger or no danger, went inside and took out rescued, those who had been put there by Hitler."

—Statement by Mayor William O'Dwyer of New York City, former Executive Director of the President's War Refugee Board, in a speech Dec. 17, 1945.

### ORPHANS SAVED FROM DEATH



Group of orphans brought from many countries during the war and placed in Vaad Hatzala home in Aix Les Bains, France.

*In the Heat of War  
AN OUTSTANDING RECORD  
For Today and Tomorrow  
AN INDISPENSABLE RECORD  
For the Physical and Spiritual  
Reclamation of Europe's Jews*

## They Have Seen Vaad Hatzala at Work

**JOHN W. PEHLE**

Former Director, War Refugee Board



"The Vaad Hatzala may not have had available to it the largest sums for rescue and relief work; it may not have had the greatest impact on public opinion; but for imaginative and constructive ideas, for courageous programs; for ingenuity and singleness of purpose your organization need have no name."

**HENRY MORGENTHAU, JR.**

Former Secretary of Treasury



"I know that many officials in Washington besides myself were impressed by the selflessness and zeal of your activities."

**MAYOR WILLIAM O'DWYER**

Former Director, War Refugee Board



"The vigorous efforts of the Vaad Hatzala now, as during the war, are indeed commendable and worthy of support. During the time I served as Executive Director of the War Refugee Board, I learned to admire the zeal of your directors and voluntary workers. Your Committee has, at all times, effectively cooperated with the Board in this vital task, resulting in the saving of many lives."

## For 1946, \$5,000,000 Is Critically Needed Overseas

- To Reclaim Hidden Children and Maintain Orphan Homes.
- To Provide Kosher Food and Spiritual Rehabilitation.
- To Rebuild Ruined Communities and Religious Institutions.
- To Re-establish Yeshivoth and Other Educational Facilities.
- To Train and Provide Teachers and Other Communal Leaders.



# ועד ההצלה - די רעטונגס ארגאניזאציע מיט א נשמה און גייס



## טויזענטער מענשען געראטעוועט

2 1/2 מיליאן דאלאר פארנוצט אין 1945

5 מיליאן דאלאר נויטיג פאר 1946

### ארבייטס-געביט פון ועד-ההצלה נעהמט אריין וויכטיגע צילען:

- (1) פארזאמלן מיט כשר'ע שפיטער, קליינע, פון די קאמפאקטן און רעליגיעזע, וואס זיי פארן, תפילה, מליצים, פדרים און חובשים צו די אידן וואס וואלנערן זיך אלץ אידן און די קאנפראנצאלענער פון די שטאט לאנד און אין אנדערע קארטירען לענדער פון אייראפע.
- (2) פארשפרייטן די ארבייט פון ארויסגעפירן די אידעס וועגן און אנדערע אידעס קעגן פון די נידעריגע אידעס וועגן און איינפארעם און אייראפע און די אוינגעבען און די יומביש-אשכנזישע און די וואס זיי האבן געהאלטן וואס זיי געזאגט פון אידן און אידעס וועגן און וואס זיי פלאגן נאך צו מאכן.
- (3) העלפן מיט אלע מיטל וועגן ארויספירן די אידעס וועגן און וואס זיי פלאגן נאך צו מאכן.
- (4) זייערע קינד ארויסגעפירן, שווארץ, און אנדערע מיטל, וואס זיי פלאגן נאך צו מאכן.
- (5) קאמפאקטן מיט און פארזאמלן די אידעס וועגן און וואס זיי פלאגן נאך צו מאכן.
- (6) פארשפרייטן די אידעס וועגן און וואס זיי פלאגן נאך צו מאכן.

**צו אלע השבוע פרעזידענטע און נכאים פון שווערע איבער'ן לאנד!**

אינעם וועגן וועגן נעמען צו העלפן וועגן און וואס זיי פלאגן נאך צו מאכן. די אידעס וועגן און וואס זיי פלאגן נאך צו מאכן. די אידעס וועגן און וואס זיי פלאגן נאך צו מאכן.

**א דינענער ווענדונג צו אלע השבוע רבנים!**

די העלפן מיט אלע מיטל וועגן ארויספירן די אידעס וועגן און וואס זיי פלאגן נאך צו מאכן. די אידעס וועגן און וואס זיי פלאגן נאך צו מאכן.

### The Press Speaks

**NEW YORK Herald Tribune**  
**Millions Used by Agency Here To Bribe Nazis, Rescue Jews**

Thousands of Jews were rescued from German concentration camps through underground negotiations with Nazi leaders, including an \$8,500,000 bribe which was to have been paid to Heinrich Himmler and his cohorts. It was reported here last night by one of the men who arranged the deal.

He is Irving Bunim, co-ordinator of the Vaad Hatzala—or rescue agency—of the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada, which engineered the operations with the help of the United States government and some of its leaders, including Henry Morgenthau Jr., former Secretary of the Treasury.

Mr. Bunim, who lives at 135 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, said the arrangements were carried out through seven men, key agents based in Switzerland and through representatives in German-occupied territory who were in constant contact with Himmler's chief Gestapo chief Himmer himself.

The end of the war in Germany on May 8, 1945, interrupted and made unnecessary, he said, the biggest deal of all—a \$8,500,000 bribe for the release of 300,000 Jews in concentration camps.

"The Germans wanted to see each," Mr. Bunim related. "We arranged for a license from the State Department under which we put \$1,000,000 into Switzerland and put it before the Germans for bail. But not one penny of it was ever paid. Himmler saved the day."

Mr. Bunim said that it is difficult to estimate exactly how many Jews were brought out through the underground system but that 3,000 were taken across the border into Switzerland in the three months prior to V-E Day.

Negotiations had reached the point by February, 1944, he said, that the Germans openly agreed to transport the largest group of 1,300 by train from the Theresienstadt concentration camp in Czechoslovakia.

"By this time," Mr. Bunim related, "we were able to get cooperation from the Germans simply by suggesting that they were about to lose the war and it would help them in world opinion if they would release people from the concentration camp."

Mr. Bunim said he possesses a telegram sent by the Nazis themselves, reporting conditions in the Czechoslovakia concentration camp and preparing for the release of inmates.

One of the biggest boosts to the operation of the underground system in the latter days of the war, Mr. Bunim said, was arranged

through the Vaad Hatzala with the assistance of Mayor-elect William O'Dwyer, the director of the War Refugee Board.

"We got in touch with Mr. O'Dwyer," he said, "and prevailed upon him to contact General Eisenhower with the idea of putting pressure on the Germans. General Eisenhower then called on the Germans to ease mistreatment of concentration camp inmates or face the consequences after victory. The Nazis certainly listened up after that."

So tall the work, he said, was so easy. Shortly after the war's outbreak, he revealed, the organization planted agents in Germany, Hungary, Poland, Austria, Czechoslovakia and other parts of German-occupied territory.

"These people laid the foundation of the work," he said, "and they operated at the behest of their Mr."

The nucleus of the organization in Switzerland, he said, was formed by Jewish refugees who escaped Hitler before and just after the start of the war and who had made arrangements with Jews left behind to carry on contact after hostilities started.

Worked with Himmler

Eventually, he said, these people, with the aid of Swiss agents, were able to establish contact with Nazis in high places, who, though he did not identify them, he said were undoubtedly bona-fide representatives of Himmler.

With the ground-work laid, Mr. Bunim said, arrangements were then established with the War, State and Treasury Departments and with the International Red Cross so that "everything was aboveboard and the Army knew as much about it as we did."

Mr. Morgenthau paid tribute to "the splendid efforts" of Mr. O'Dwyer and Mr. Peble as heads of the War Refugee Board. The "energy and pertinacity" of Mr. O'Dwyer, he declared, resulted in food reaching "the starving prisoners at Dachau and other German slaughter-houses" and "enabled the Government to bring 1,400 refugees out of Germany to Switzerland in Army trucks."

Mr. Peble recommended the emergency efforts of the Vaad Hatzala to rescue Jews from concentration camps in Germany and Hitler-occupied countries. This was accomplished, he said, through "secret negotiations" by opening an escape route through Rumania and by the shipment from Tangiers of food parcels that reached concentration camps at Theresienstadt and Belzen.

Travel documents issued by Latin American diplomats stationed in Europe at the behest of the United States, although of doubtful legality, saved many Jews, Mr. Peble added.

"And thousands of others came out of the darkness and are alive today," Mr. Peble told the Vaad Hatzala, "only because our Government, at your instance, took the extraordinary measures that were the only hope of salvation for so many."

**VAAD HATZALA**  
**Emergency Committee**  
 121 Nassau St., New York 7, N. Y.  
 Rldg 3-4225

## REPLACING DESTROYED TORAHS



One of many shipments of Sifrei Torah and other religious articles sent to replace those destroyed by the Nazis.

### 1946 Proposed Budget

<b>I. FOOD AND RELIEF PROGRAM</b>	
a) CHILD RECLAMATION	
b) MAINTENANCE OF ESTABLISHED ORPHAN HOMES	
c) ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW HOMES AS NEEDED	
d) DISPLACED PERSONS RELIEF AND REHABILITATION	\$1,900,000
<b>II. RELIGIOUS REHABILITATION</b>	
a) RESCUE JEWS FROM APOSTASY AND RECLAIM THOUSANDS WHO ADOPTED OTHER FAITHS THROUGH FORCE OF CIRCUMSTANCES AND WHO AWAIT ASSISTANCE TO RETURN TO JUDAISM.	
b) PROVIDE BROTHER FOOD TO THOSE WHO ABIDE BY DIETARY LAWS.	
c) TO REBUILD TALMUD TORAH AND PARISHIAL SCHOOLS, AND REESTABLISH JEWISH EDUCATION.	
d) TO RECONSTRUCT JEWISH COMMUNITIES AND THE SYNAGOGUES WHICH EXISTED THEREIN.	
e) ESTABLISHMENT OF OFFICES OF THE CONTINENT TO REUNITE FAMILIES AND TO STUDY THE AGUNAH (BROOK ARISE) PROBLEM WITH A VIEW TO REMARRIAGE OF THE SURVIVORS.	
f) TO PROVIDE TORAH, PRAYER BOOKS, BIBLES AND OTHER NECESSARY RELIGIOUS OBJECTIVES FOR THE RECONSTRUCTED COMMUNITIES.	
g) TO PROVIDE TEACHERS, SCHWARTZ, MISHALIM, EDUCATORS AND ESPECIALLY TRAINED PERSONNEL FOR FIELD COMMITTEES IN EUROPE	1,100,000
<b>III. YESHIVAH</b>	
a) MAINTENANCE OF YESHIVAS IN EXILE	600,000
b) ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW YESHIVAS IN EUROPE AND ASIA	250,000
<b>IV. TRANSPORTATION AND RELOCATION</b>	
	400,000
<b>V. SUPPLIES AND CLOTHING</b>	
	150,000
<b>VI. ENCOURAGEMENT AND CONTRIBUTIONS</b>	
	300,000
<b>VII. ADMINISTRATION</b>	
	100,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	
	\$5,000,000

## QUOTA DOUBLED TO MEET EMERGENCY SITUATION

Increased Opportunities to Help Spur Goal of \$5,000,000

### Essential Tasks Ahead

- Men, women and children, including orphans, must continue to be maintained in our centers in many countries.
- Maintenance must be continued for Jews, mostly orphans, transferred to Switzerland.
- Schools must be opened throughout Europe, teachers provided and religious leaders appointed.
- Rabbis and scholars rescued from Poland must be transferred to a haven where they can continue to learn, teach and keep Torah alive.
- Thousands of orphans in non-Jewish homes must continue to be transferred to Jewish environments.
- Jewish seats of learning must be reestablished in Europe.
- Reestablishment of religious Jewish life requires supplies of Bibles and prayer books, Shocham and Mohalin.

The program outlined above will, if carried out through adequate financial support, go a long way towards solving the problems facing Europe's surviving 1,400,000 Jews.

It is not, of course, the complete answer, but the more that American Jews contribute, the more European Jews will be saved from starvation and rehabilitation for Judaism.

Our institutions and services— orphan homes, provision of kosher food, religious articles, support of Yeshivah, re-uniting families—are spread across Europe and Asia—from France to Iran, to Siberia and Shanghai.

Four orphan homes are functioning today in France. Yeshivah and other educational institutions are functioning in France, Belgium, Hungary, Poland, Turkestan, Bokhara—and even in the notorious Belsen concentration camp.

In 14 countries today—Germany, France, Holland, Belgium, Poland, Sweden, Palestine, Italy, Hungary, Roumania, Slovakia, Austria, Iran and China—Vaad Hatzala, with the help of American Jewry, extends its far flung services.

With many limitations removed and with various facilities—including transportation and goods—becoming more available, we call on the American Jewish community, the strongest in the world, to make possible the increased aid that Jewish war survivors in Europe need.

The 1946 goal of \$5,000,000 is twice the amount expended in 1945—and it is by no means enough to do all the things that need to be done in our religious rehabilitation work.

One of our biggest jobs is child reclamation. Thousands of Jewish war orphans were hidden in Christian homes, cloisters and monasteries, when their parents were seized by Nazis. Their past maintenance must be paid for and they must be returned to the Jewish fold. Messengers must go from house to house, from monastery to monastery to seek out these children and negotiate for their return. Maintenance alone for these children is \$300 a year.

In short, the entire field of Jewish religious and humanitarian activities—as indicated by the accompanying budget—is our responsibility for 1946.

How much—or more—if it is fulfilled depends on the sympathy and generosity of American Jews.

*Clothing and Food Collected by Talmud Torah Students*



# UNDERGROUND RING SAVED THOUSANDS DURING WAR

## A Dramatic Report of Rescue Work While Battles Raged

### Highlights of Past Achievements

- Thousands of Jews throughout Europe saved from Nazi gas chambers and transferred to Switzerland, others saved from danger zones and maintained in hiding.
- Thousands of men, women and children sheltered in Siberia with food and clothing, since the start of the war.
- Hundreds of scholars and rabbis rescued from Poland and maintained in Shanghai since 1940.
- Tons upon tons of kosher food and clothing distributed to refugees since V-E Day.
- Schools and homes for refugees established in Iran.
- Thousands of orphans removed from non-Jewish homes, housed and supported in Jewish environments in France, Belgium, Holland, Switzerland and Sweden.
- Centers established for vast numbers of children and adults in Sweden where kosher kitchens have been maintained for them.
- Five synagogue-ambulances sent to the notorious Bergen Belsen Concentration Camp, equipped with food, medication and religious articles.
- Three ambulances routed to Poland, loaded with necessities, including clothing.

The story of Vaad Hatzala—beginning in 1939—reads like a melodrama, except that real people and matters of life and death are concerned. All the devices of intrigue—underground activity, bribes, spying and the like—have been utilized and they all added up to the saving of Jewish lives. (Full details may be found in a reprint of a New York Herald Tribune article on page 4).

[Vaad Hatzala was formed by The Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the U. S. A. and Canada with the cooperation of the deans of European and American theological seminaries. The very nature of Vaad's work at once attracted the attention and cooperation of all rabbinical bodies and leading American organizations.]

Outstanding among these thrilling accomplishments of Vaad Hatzala was its penetration inside enemy lines, even into the impregnable Nazi concentration camps themselves, to feed and rescue imprisoned Jews. (Described by Mayor O'Dwyer of New York City, former Executive Director of the War Refugee Board, in a report in the New York Times, reprinted on page 4).

It is difficult to estimate just how many Jews were saved by the Vaad Hatzala underground system, but it is definitely known that 3,000 were taken into Switzerland in the three months before V-E Day.

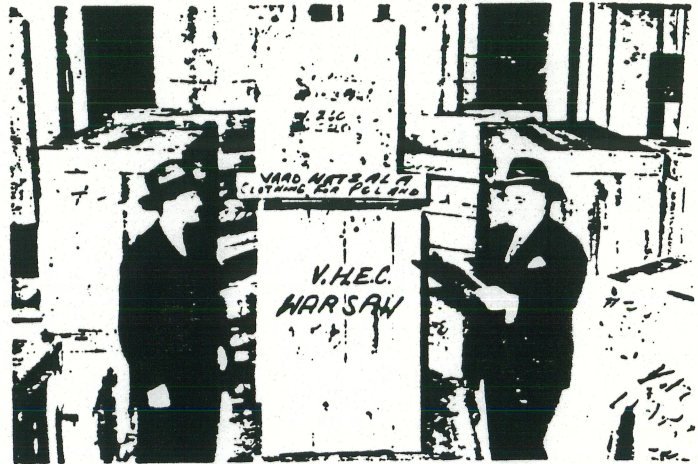
One of our most dramatic rescues was carried out in Hungary in December, 1944. A trainload of 1,775 Jews was headed for an extermination camp, but negotiations by us saved them. At a cost of \$300,000 for traveling documents, passports, and other necessities, we transferred these doomed souls to safe places.

Outstanding in our work among children was the initiation of religious rehabilitation for thousands of Sephardic children found roaming in Iran.

Another of our proud accomplishments was our work in the field of learning. One of Jewry's great losses in the war was the destruction of Yeshivoh and the extermination of its Rabbis and scholars. We were able to rescue a small remnant and since 1940 we have maintained more than 600 ages and students in Shanghai, even while the city was under Japanese domination.

For wanderers who finally settled in Siberia and other places in Asiatic Russia, we have supplied necessities to some 5,000 persons, mostly rabbis and scholars. We have, since 1940, sent food and religious articles from the U. S. A., Teheran and Palestine. In this work, with the cooperation of Russian War Relief, we received help from the Soviet Union, which shipped and admitted our supplies without any expense to us.

### WARMTH FOR SHRUNKEN BODIES



Regularly Vaad Hatzala sends kosher food and clothing—like the consignments shown here—to all parts of the world.

### 1945 Financial Statement

INCOME	
FROM APPEALS, CAMPAIGNS, WELFARE FUNDS & COMMUNITY CHESTS.	\$1,233,453.99
FROM JOINT DISTRIBUTION COMMITTEE . . . . .	137,108.00
ADVANCED BY JOINT DISTRIBUTION COMMITTEE AND RETURNED TO JOINT DISTRIBUTION COMMITTEE JULY 1945 . . . . .	800,000.00
REFUND OF FUNDS PREVIOUSLY EXPENDED FOR SPECIAL RESCUE VIA SWITZERLAND . . . . .	427,361.00
<b>TOTAL INCOME . . . . .</b>	<b>\$2,597,923.99</b>
EXPENSE - RELIEF PAID	
EUROPEAN RELIEF & RESCUE VIA SWITZERLAND (HUNGARY, SLOVAKIA, BELGIUM, FRANCE HOLLAND AND AMERICAN ZONE) . . . . .	\$1,021,446.60
POLAND . . . . .	51,000.00
MEDICAL SUPPLIES & AMBULANCES TO CAMPS & TO POLAND . . . . .	40,000.00
SHANGHAI . . . . .	193,230.72
PALESTINE . . . . .	49,617.76
SIBERIA ( MONEY ORDERS ) . . . . .	30,500.00
TEHERAN - FOR RELIEF IN RUSSIA, MIDDLE EAST AND FOR ACTIVITIES IN TEHERAN . . . . .	36,000.00
FOOD AND MEDICATION TO CAMPS IN GERMANY . . . . .	79,173.75
PACKAGES TO SIBERIA THRU TEHERAN . . . . .	90,473.33
PACKAGES TO SIBERIA VIA RUSSIAN WAR RELIEF . . . . .	26,327.50
PACKAGES TO PALESTINE . . . . .	10,150.00
COST OF PACKING AND SHIPPING 200,000 LBS. CLOTHING CONTRIBUTED BY ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS . . . . .	10,529.44
RESCUE IN LITHUANIA DURING NAZI OCCUPATION . . . . .	10,000.00
ITALY . . . . .	20,000.00
IMMIGRATION . . . . .	5,108.30
TRANSPORTATION . . . . .	7,662.44
MISCELLANEOUS GRANTS AND EMERGENCY RELIEF THROUGH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS . . . . .	12,770.75
RELIEF THRU OTHER ORGANIZATIONS . . . . .	3,950.00
BELGIUM - SPECIAL GRANT . . . . .	600.00
CABLES FOR RESCUE AND RELIEF . . . . .	6,808.43
<b>TOTAL RESCUE - RELIEF PAID . . . . .</b>	<b>\$1,705,469.02</b>
LESS EXPENSES OF FUND RAISING & ADMINISTRATION	
SALARIES . . . . .	\$43,027.19
RENT OF OFFICES . . . . .	3,127.00
ADVERTISING AND PUBLICITY . . . . .	13,399.73
TRAVELING, HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS, SECRETARIAL AND OTHER CAMPAIGN COSTS . . . . .	17,033.80
POSTAGE, PRINTING AND STATIONERY . . . . .	5,976.40
TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPH . . . . .	3,404.22
MISCELLANEOUS OFFICE EXPENSES . . . . .	280.76
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES PAID . . . . .</b>	<b>87,449.12</b>
ADVANCE REPAID TO JOINT DISTRIBUTION COMMITTEE . . . . .	800,000.00
1944 LOAN REPAID . . . . .	5,000.00
<b>TOTAL PAYMENTS . . . . .</b>	<b>2,597,923.14</b>
EXCESS PAYMENTS OVER RECEIPTS . . . . .	83.15



One of the synagogue ambulances that took help into concentration camps.