

Horthy Offer

Proposal made in July 1944 by Hungarian leader, Miklos Horthy, to allow certain Hungarian Jews to leave Hungary, especially for Palestine. Horthy made his offer soon after he halted the deportation of Hungarian Jews to extermination camps.

Horthy proposed that 1,000 children, and 8,243 bearers of certificates of immigration and their families be allowed to go to Palestine. On July 17, a Hungarian delegate in Germany informed the International Red Cross of the offer, adding that the Germans had agreed to it (see also Red Cross, International).

The American and British governments officially responded in August with a commitment to take care of Hungarian Jewish emigrants. The United States tried to convince neutral European and Latin American governments to absorb any Jews who might manage to leave Hungary. The Latin American countries would not commit to helping, but Sweden and Switzerland promised to take in several thousand Hungarian Jews. Great Britain even agreed to accept into Palestine those Jews with immigration certificates. Tens of thousands of Jews in Budapest received safe-conduct passes from the representatives of the neutral governments. However, despite all these efforts, the Germans did not allow any Hungarian Jews to leave the country. The efforts were not totally worthless, though, because they spurred on the rescue activities in Hungary of neutral diplomats, and greatly enhanced the value of protective papers issued by neutral governments and agencies.