

STATEMENT TO PRESS CONFERENCE BY BRIGADIER-GENERAL WILLIAM A. O'DWYER,  
DIRECTOR OF WAR REFUGEE BOARD, WASHINGTON, JANUARY 31, 1945

Washington, January 31. (JTA) -- Brigadier-General William A. O'Dwyer, newly appointed director of the War Refugee Board, said today that he intended to press for action by the United Nations War Crimes Commission on crimes committed by the Axis nations against their nationals.

During his first press conference since he took over the job, General O'Dwyer was asked if he intended to continue the efforts of his predecessor, John W. Pehle, to have this "overnment issue a clear-cut statement serving notice on the Germans that crimes against German Jews would be punished. O'Dwyer said firmly: "I certainly do." He added that he felt that if people behind the enemy lines who commit mass murders are reminded of what President Roosevelt has said about the punishment of war criminals, their potential and present victims would be in less danger.

"From what I've seen," O'Dwyer said, "the War Refugee Board has done a magnificent job, but there is still a good deal to be done. I must learn the details, and discover just exactly what the job to be done is." He denied that the fact that he will combine the unpaid rescue job with his \$20,000-a-year post as Kings County District Attorney means that the work of the War Refugee Board has slackened. "On the contrary," he said, "I intend to go at it with renewed vigor." He said that 500,000 survivors, primarily Jews, are still in desperate need of help within enemy lines.

Declaring that he did not know whether or not the War Refugee Board would continue to function after the collapse of Germany, O'Dwyer said he had accepted the post "until the job is done or I am otherwise requested to leave." Congressional appropriations for the War Refugee Board extend only until June, 30.