

OF 3186  
Political Refugees  
July-Sept. 1940

3186

77/2/40

June 29, 1940

My dear Mr. Armstrong:

The President has asked me to acknowledge your telegram of June 18th and to inform you that since its receipt action has been taken which he hopes will aid certain distinguished political and intellectual refugees in Europe over whose safety you and other public spirited persons have expressed concern.

Since you, yourself, participated in conferences with the Special Assistant to the Secretary of State, Mr. Joseph E. Davies, and other officials of the Department of State, it is not necessary to review the facts leading up to the action referred to. I am glad to be able to advise you, on behalf of the President, however, that telegraphic instructions were transmitted by the Department of State to its representatives in Lisbon, Portugal and Marseille and Bordeaux, France on June 22d to give immediate consideration to applications for American visas should they be sought by any of the persons named in the list which you submitted to Mr. Davies under date of June 21st.

It is not necessary for me to add, I am sure, that the President has been deeply moved by the tragic plight confronting some of these great men and that he finds it heartening to see efforts being made by such forward-looking Americans as yourself to do something for their relief in these terrible circumstances.

Very sincerely yours,

Edwin M. Watson  
Secretary to the President

The Honorable  
Hamilton Fish Armstrong,  
Editor, Foreign Affairs,  
45 East Sixty-fifth Street,  
New York, New York.

\* PPT 6011  
\* J. C. M.

x 463-6

ADDRESS OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS TO  
THE SECRETARY OF STATE  
WASHINGTON, D. C.



DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

June 27, 1940

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

In compliance with your request of June 20, 1940, there is attached a proposed reply, for General Watson's signature, to the telegram from the Honorable Hamilton Fish Armstrong under date of June 18th, explaining the action taken on his request that aid be extended to certain distinguished political and intellectual refugees in Europe.

Enclosures:

From Mr. Armstrong,  
June 18, 1940;  
To Mr. Armstrong.

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

**Department of State**

June 20, 1940. *a*

BUREAU } SD  
DIVISION |-----

ENCLOSURE  
TO

MEMORANDUM FOR

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE *x20*

Letter drafted .....

ADDRESSED TO

Memorandum to the President

FOR PREPARATION OF REPLY  
FOR GENERAL WATSON'S SIGNATURE.

F. D. R.

Telegram from Hamilton Fish Armstrong, NYC, 6/18/40 to Miss LeHand, calling attention to the case of various individual political refugees now in immediate danger in France. Certain Italian, German, Spanish, Czech and Polish patriots are marked men because of their long leadership in the intellectual and political struggle against fascism and nazism. Suggests that the diplomatic and consular officials of the U.S. can be of assistance in this emergency in offering sanctuary and arranging transportation perhaps in cooperation with British authorities.

## TELEGRAM

NC292 WUC 143 D.L.

The White House  
12:15am  
Washington

NBN NEW YORK, N.Y., June 18, 1940.

MISS MARGUERITE LE HAND.

May I call the President's attention to the case of various individual political refugees now in immediate danger in France. Certain Italian, German, Spanish, Czech and Polish patriots are marked men because of their long leadership in the intellectual and political struggle against fascism and nazism.

Suggest that the diplomatic and consular officials of the United States can be of assistance in this emergency in offering sanctuary and arranging transportation perhaps in cooperation with British authorities.

If the lives of men like Sforza, Sikorski and Negrin are saved today they may be of immense usefulness to us in the future. I beg that officials of the State Department and other agencies be asked to consider legal problems involved sympathetically and promptly and to solve them in a manner fitting to the emergency and in accord with our deepest national interests.

HAMILTON FISH ARMSTRONG.

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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

July 3, 1940.

MEMORANDUM FOR E.R. *xpp72*

His suggestion may have all the merit in the world but it most certainly cannot be authorized or abetted by the Government of the United States.

In regard to his last paragraph, I will speak about it.

F.D.R.

Letter from Varian Fry, Editor, Headline Books, Foreign Policy Association, 8 West 40th St., N.Y.C.,  
x 6/27/40 to Mrs. Roosevelt, asking aid to locate a suitable person to go to France to aid "intended victims of Hitler's chopping block" to get out of France. Mrs. Roosevelt's notation "FDR - What about this? E.R.". The last paragraph of the letter refers to matter of securing political asylum to the refugees of Europe in Latin America.

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203-A

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

July 27, 1940.

MEMORANDUM FOR

MISS RUTH B. SHIPLEY <sup>x</sup>  
x 20

Will you let me know  
what I can tell Mrs. Roosevelt?

F. D. R.

Letter from Varian Fry, Foreign Policy Association, 8 West 20th St., NYC, 7/17/40 to Mrs. Roosevelt. Asks aid in securing passport to go to France to make survey of the situation.

Mrs. Roosevelt's note to Miss LeHand reads as follows: "To ask the President if he can give a passport immediately. He wants to leave on Sunday. E.R."

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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

July 3, 1940.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE

SECRETARY OF STATE: x20

x159  
x159-A  
x87

I think you might consider the possibility of saying something at Havana in regard to the ancient principal of political asylum. I think the Latin American governments have long adhered to the principal. There will, undoubtedly, be many political refugees from many parts of Europe and it occurs to me that a kind word in behalf of these unfortunate people might be an act of humanity as well as being strictly correct under international law.

#

F.D.R.

No papers accompanied the original of this memorandum to the Secretary of State.

July 5, 1940

MLS

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Respectfully referred for consideration and acknowledgment, by memorandum.

EDWIN M. WATSON  
Secretary to the President

Telegrams to the President referred to the State Department: all in behalf of European refugees:

Taylor, Mrs. Bertram, New York, N. Y., 7/5/40.  
Harrison, Margery A., Bay Ave., Huntington, N. Y., 7/4/40.  
Hoffer, J. L., Midland, Texas, 7/4/40.  
Baldorston, John L., Beverly Hills, Calif., 7/3/40.  
Kankoy, S. T., 902 Pershing Square, Los Angeles, Calif., 7/3/40.  
Holon Deano, 680 Madison Ave., New York, N. Y., 7/4/40.  
Poabody, Endicott, Groton, Mass., 7/4/40.  
Lincoln, Anna Stewart, Middletown, N. Y., 7/4/40.  
Long, Joan Gray, New York, N. Y., 7/4/40.  
Long, J. Y., New York, N. Y., 7/4/40.  
Long, Joan, New York, N. Y., 7/4/40.  
Turnbull, Margaret, Hyannis, Mass., 7/4/40.  
Turnbull, Joan, Hyannis, Mass., 7/4/40.  
Stratton, Mrs. Sydney, Hyannis, Mass., 7/4/40.  
Collins, Hazel, New York, N. Y., 7/4/40.  
Rice, John P., University of Buffalo, Buffalo, N. Y., 7/4/40.  
Smith, Mrs. Everett, Mrs. Aliso Smith, Wilton, Conn., 7/4/40.  
Lavoie, Mr. and Mrs. Edmund, Yorktown Heights, N. Y., 7/4/40.  
Wilson, Kathleen, Yorktown Heights, N. Y., 7/4/40.  
Balphin, Marcia; Eshloman Alice; Eyo, N. Y., 7/3/40.  
Low, Lois C., New York, N. Y., 7/4/40.  
Comision Demas Ayuda Hino Espanol, Montevideo, 7/4/40.  
The Drownsville Chapter New York Peace Ass'n., Brooklyn, N. Y., 7/3/40.  
Progressive Millinery Group, 1113 Ward Ave., Bronx, N. Y., 7/3/40.  
Professors of New York University, Fritz, Charles A., Gossner, Robert,  
New York, N. Y., 7/3/40.

Telegrams to the President urging that we keep out of war:

Brooklyn Hebrew Orphan Asylum Chapter, Social Service Employees Union,  
Brooklyn, N. Y., 7/4/40.  
Gramercy Peace Group, New York, N. Y., 7/3/40.

Telegrams urging that we declare war on Germany:

Sorri, Theodore, Brooklyn, N. Y., 7/4/40.  
Lucas, James, Brooklyn, N. Y., 7/4/40.  
Dall, Philip, Brooklyn, N. Y., 7/4/40.

TELEGRAM

6WUAB 33 N.T.

The White House  
Washington

Kent, Ohio, July 8, 1940

Stephen Early:

Establishing refugee scholarship funds to bring worthy  
students from war stricken Europe to Kent State University  
by selling "refugee roses". Will the President buy the  
first one? When?

x x  
Robert Tait, Joseph Blair,  
State University,  
Kent, Ohio

3186

ack'd  
7-9-40  
EHC

July 9, 1940

My dear Mr. Tait:

I have received the message of July eighth from yourself and Mr. Joseph Blair, and regret that I am unable to send you an affirmative response.

I know, however, that you will appreciate, upon reflection, that the President is constantly being besieged by solicitations of a very worthy nature and that their volume precludes his compliance with all of them. Keeping in mind the need for strict impartiality he must, of necessity, adhere to the policy of declining them, however meritorious they may be. I am sure that you will understand.

Very sincerely yours,

STEPHEN EARLY  
Secretary to the President

Robert Tait, Esq.,  
State University,  
Kent,  
Ohio.

eke

August 13, 1940

3186

ORIGINAL RETIRED FOR PRESERVATION

Dear Malvina:

The enclosed speak for themselves. Madame Weiss is leaving Washington on Friday -- I imagine for New York. Naturally I know nothing about her or "her cause".

See you the end of the week.

Affectionately,

x p.p. 7  
2

mal/tmb

Let to Miss LeHand Aug. 13, 1940 from Madame Louise Weiss together with letter to Miss LeH. from R Count Rene de Chambrun introducing Mme Weiss and asking appt. for her with Mrs. Roosevelt re the need of relief to millions of innocent victims in France -- refugees. Mme Weiss is leading feminist in France and founded L'Europe Nouvelle magazine specializing in foreign affairs and then became most prominent woman social worker in France and was awarded the Legion of Honor.

3186

BK  
OK  
FAN  
9-18-40

September 18, 1940

ORIGINAL RETIRED FOR PRESERVATION

My dear Mr. President:

Secretary Hull has asked me to present to you the proposal to modify slightly the procedure we have followed in regard to recommendations from the President's Advisory Committee on Political Refugees.

~~Under the system that has been in operation since July 26 the Committee has satisfied itself as to various persons who were in the category of "political, intellectual or other refugees" in special peril in Europe. Having come to its own conclusion the Committee has recommended names. Their list is sent to the Department of Justice for checking against the files in that Department, and the list is then checked against our own records in order to determine whether or not there is any information in this country to indicate that the persons recommended would be undesirable as residents. Under the procedure we~~  
have then

x 133-A

x 10

The President,  
The White House.

-2-

have then cabled to our officers abroad more or less mandatory instructions to grant visas to those persons.

There has come to the attention of the Department substantial evidence to indicate that a number of the persons who have been passed in this manner have had records of activity abroad which indicate that their activities here would not be in entire accord with our policy and that for other reasons they were not properly within the category of intellectual leaders of the liberal movement in Europe and in imminent danger. It is reported to us that there are a number of persons who our officers abroad feel are not of the desirable element and against whom there is evident ground for doubt as to the propriety of their admissibility.

For instance, a German citizen recommended by the President's Committee who had resided in Paris for sixteen years was suspect to our officers because of various circumstances in her past activity. The question was raised as to whether she would be able to proceed to any country outside of the United States at the expiration of the temporary visitor's visa. She shortly returned to the Consulate with a letter from the German Legation in Lisbon stating that she would be able to return to Germany at the end of the period.

On the

ORIGINAL RETIRED FOR PRESERVATION

x198-A

-3-

On the face of it she was either not a refugee and in imminent danger or she was acting in the interests of the German Government.

Another instance was that of two French citizens who were recommended by the Committee and sponsored by substantial banking houses in this country. Under the existing procedure they obtained their visas in spite of the fact that certain documents which they ordinarily should have had were lacking. It subsequently appeared that their interests were in two Panamerican holding companies which it might be suggested were formed to avoid American legal requirements and control by the S.E.C.

These are simply two of a number of instances which have been brought to the attention of the Department.

Under the circumstances we feel that in the interests of our national defense a more careful check should be made abroad by our officers in Europe of the persons whose names we send to them on the recommendation of the President's Advisory Committee. We feel that a more careful examination of the individuals abroad would contribute largely to closing the loopholes against the penetration of German agents or the use of the courtesy and hospitality of the United States for ulterior purposes.

I am attaching a letter drafted for the signature  
of the

ORIGINAL RETIRED FOR PRESERVATION

x 203-A

x 035

x 1661-A

-4-

of the Secretary addressed to Mr. McDonald, Chairman of the President's Advisory Committee on Political Refugees, indicating the change of procedure which the Department feels it desirable and advisable to adopt. The Secretary felt that you should be cognizant of it and, if you agree, give the matter contained in the letter your approval in as much as it was directed to the members of your Committee.

In closing may I say that since July 26 and up to September 17 we have authorized 2,583 visas over and above the quota (not including visas granted to children in Great Britain). This number was largely made up of:

x 142  
x 407  
a) A list of the American Federation of Labor, guaranteed by William Green, and consisting of labor leaders and their families to the number of 1,131. This list has been closed, and Mr. Green will not ask for any more.

x 76-C  
b) Two lists of Jewish Rabbis, alleged leaders of the intellectual thought of the Jewish religion and leading exponents of the Talmudic schools and colleges together with their families. One list consisted of 156 and another of 576 names. These lists have been closed and no further names are to be accepted.

c) The President's Advisory Committee on Political Refugees has submitted 561. These names are being augmented

ORIGINAL RETIRED FOR PRESERVATION

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augmented by a considerable number every week.

Considering that the other lists have been closed and that by this time most of the outstanding leaders of the liberal movement in Europe must have had their names on one or the other of these lists, it seems to us reasonable and desirable that the list of the President's Advisory Committee be closed for unlimited recommendation - except that names of refugees in imminent danger who are intellectual leaders of the liberal movement in Europe may continue to be presented by the Committee. This would continue the function of the Committee to pass upon outstanding intellectual refugees. Other refugees would apply in the usual manner to our Consuls, and the usual precaution would be taken in the future.

It seems that our Consular officers abroad who are on the ground and who have access to information which we do not have and who come in contact with the persons should be able to exercise their judgment as to whether or not the person desiring to come to the United States is, as a matter of fact, within the category you had in mind in setting up the President's Advisory Committee on Political Refugees.

In brief, it seems to us that there should be in the future some latitude of judgment left to our Consular officers

ORIGINAL RETIRED FOR PRESERVATION

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officers abroad rather than to send them mandatory instructions from here to admit persons who are known to very few people in this country and about whom there is no record here of their past activity.

If you approve the proposal, I shall be very glad to advise the Secretary so that he may sign the letter.

Faithfully yours,

BRECKINRIDGE LONG

x 20

Enclosure:  
Proposed letter to Mr. McDonald.

ORIGINAL RETIRED FOR PRESERVATION

In reply refer to  
VD 811.111 Refugees/260

My dear Mr. McDonald:

I refer to your letter of July 31, 1940 concerning the procedure agreed upon at a meeting in the Department on July 26, 1940 for the submission of names of political intellectuals and other refugees, approved by your Committee, to the Department of Justice, and to the Department of State for approval and for transmission to the appropriate consular officers.

The Department has received a considerable number of names of refugees which your Committee has approved after investigation, and which have received the approval of the Department of Justice. These names have been transmitted or are in process of being transmitted to the appropriate consular officers in the territories covered by the arrangement. If, as I think you will

Mr. James G. McDonald, Chairman,  
President's Advisory Committee  
On Political Refugees,  
122 East Twenty-second Street,  
New York, New York.

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will agree, sufficient time has been afforded for the presentation of the most pressing cases. I suggest that additional names should not be accepted by the Committee except, of course, of refugees in imminent danger who are intellectual leaders of the liberal movement in Europe. This would continue to make it advisable for your Committee to consider the case of an outstanding refugee intellectual which may be brought to your particular attention. Other refugees may, however, continue to take their cases up directly with the consuls for consideration under the usual visa procedure, and if they are able to establish their admissibility, they may be granted appropriate visas.

x67      Consular officers in considering the visa applications of aliens whether or not covered by the arrangement, must necessarily conduct such examination as may be considered essential to ascertain that the applicants had not been engaged in questionable activities in the past and if permitted to come to the United States, will not engage in activities inimical to the United States. While the information obtained by the Committee regarding the refugees before approving the cases is very helpful

and

ORIGINAL RETIRED FOR PRESERVATION

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and while the refugees will for the most part be found to be eligible for visas, you can readily understand that full information regarding them may not be available in this country and that consular officers must therefore in our national interests conduct such investigations abroad as may be considered necessary.

I shall be very glad to receive your views regarding the modified procedure in these cases.

Sincerely yours,

ORIGINAL RETIRED FOR PRESERVATION

3104

September 19, 1940

Gentlemen:

I am enclosing herewith the  
President's check in the amount of two  
hundred and forty dollars (\$240.00) for  
the transportation charges to bring the  
Klein children, in whom Muriel Martineau  
is interested, to this country.

x117352

Very truly yours,

M. A. LeHAND  
Private Secretary

The U. S. Committee for the Care x4054  
of European Children,  
215 Fourth Avenue,  
New York, New York.

tmb

ORIGINAL RETIRED FOR PRESERVATION

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

September 12, 1940

MEMORANDUM FOR MISS LEHAND:

The President has agreed to pay the transportation charges of \$240 to bring the Klein children to this country. These children are the ones in which Muriel Martineau is interested. The President's check should go directly to the U. S. Committee for the Care of European Children, 215 Fourth Avenue, New York City.

E.R.

xpp72

ORIGINAL RETIRED FOR PRESERVATION

VMB -

STATE, Dept. of  
July 20, 1940

Gen. Watson referred for draft of reply, a letter to the President July 18 from Senator M.M. Neely enclosing letter from Dr. A.M. Heese, of West Virginia University, re his views regarding anti-fascists exiles now in French concentration camps asking that every means be used to secure their release before these exiles are handed over to the German authorities for execution. -- Mr. Sumner Welles supplied draft July 25, 1940. -- The President on July 26 replied to Senator Neely explaining that the American diplomatic and consular officers abroad have no right or authority to extend protection to other than citizens or nationals of the U.S., except in event that this Government has undertaken to represent the interests of another country and of its nationals upon the specific request of the foreign government in question.

SEE - 1965

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HELSIG, Mr. Frank, Mgr.,  
Refugee Settlement Training Farm,  
Woodbine, N.J.  
July 23, 1940.

Writer is a German-Jewish refugee, and expresses his deep appreciation for President's humanitarian policy and congratulates him on his nomination to a third term.

See P.P.F.200-Congrat. on 3rd term nomination-"H"

br

3186

vah.

FIELD, Marshall,  
President, United States Committee for the Care of European Children,  
New York, N.Y.  
September 12, 1940

Sends Mr. Early, at Miss Thompson's suggestion, a proposed press release for his approval before releasing it. Mr. Field states that the release was prompted by a visit to their offices on the previous day by Mrs. Roosevelt, during which she expressed such interest in the case that they felt perhaps neither she nor the President would see any objection to their releasing a carefully worded story on the case.--- In his reply to the above letter, 9/18/40, Mr. Early stated that the news release is entirely agreeable and is approved for issuance. Mr. Early calls Mr. Field's attention to the fact that he has eliminated the third paragraph of the release "a cousin of the President", for the reason that "the President is not at all certain in his own mind that Mrs. Hon. Maurice Lubbock is his cousin."NOTE: Release in re two refugee children picked up by destroyer and taken to Eng. Relatives of Pres. in U.S.A. was to take care of the children.

See P.P.F. 75

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