

President's Secretary's Files
Departmental File
State Jan-March 1941
Box 70

PSF: State

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

*Call
Personnel*

January 9, 1941

MEMORANDUM FOR MRS. ROOSEVELT:

TO READ AND RETURN.

F.D.R.

*Return to the President
E.P.
Rood*

100-10000-2
PSF: *State*

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

January 6, 1941.

My dear Mr. President:

I am enclosing a memorandum on the refugee activities of the Department in the thought that you may desire the information which it presents. The memorandum is a factual review of the activities of the Department during the six-months' period, July 1st to December 31st, 1940--the period during which the problem became very acute and assumed a considerable importance.

Faithfully yours,



Enclosure:

Memorandum.
Press Release, No. 549,
December 18, 1940.

The President,
The White House.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ASSISTANT SECRETARY

A-L

January 6, 1941.

S

Mr. Secretary:

Refugees

This is a statement of the refugee visa work of the Department of State for the six months' period, July 1 to December 31 (1940). It was during these months the problem assumed emergency proportions.

Visas have been issued to 22,508

Visas authorized and outstanding but action on which not yet reported 2,432

Visas brought to Consul's attention for 1941 quotas (Russian territory)

1,500
26,430

- Not including 10,000 visas provided for British children, of which 3,500 were used.

Including British children 3,500
29,930

The figure 22,508 represents visas actually issued and is correct in Department's information as of December 31, 1940. More than that have been issued but reports of them had not been received in the Department up to December 31, 1940.

Some

-2-

Some of the 2,432 visas have also been issued but are unreported. The Quota Control officers collect the information from local officers in their respective jurisdictions with whom communication is usually delayed. On account of war conditions transmission of this information is frequently interrupted for periods. Consequently it is not possible for them to receive promptly the information so they can report the exact status on any given day. For that reason some reports are incomplete as to some Consulates for a period of weeks preceding the date of the control officer's statement. Therefore it is practically certain that some hundreds of the 2,432 authorized but unreported cases have been issued. However, the information in the Department as of December 31 is that 22,508 visas had been actually issued to persons, practically every one of whom is a refugee from German, Italian or Russian oppression and who originated in territory east of the Rhine.

These refugees

These refugees are geographically allocated as indicated below:

German (controlled, occupied or dominated) territory -	<u>Immigrant</u>	<u>Visitors and Transits</u>
Germany	13,685.....	339
Czechoslovakia	1,437.....	76
Norway	61.....	69
1/2 Poland	1,681.....	86
Denmark	65.....	71
Hungary	435.....	49
Rumania	188..17552....	22 712

Russian (controlled, occupied)

U.S.S.R.	256.....	63
1/2 Poland	1681.....	86
Lithuania	31.....	6
Latvia	2.....	1
Finland	67...2037....	109 265
Italy.....	199.....	66
Switzerland.....	<u>235.....</u>	<u>206</u>

Immigrant total.....	20,023.....	1,249
Visitors and transit in regular course.....	1,249	
Recommended as in particular danger for special consideration - analyzed on next page - authorized 3,268 of which reported issued.....	<u>1,236</u> 22,508	

Organizations Sponsoring Refugees

A number of organizations interested in refugees have recommended the names of political refugees in particular danger for special consideration in the issuance of visas. The following groups have been especially interested:

President's

	<u>Issued</u>	<u>Authorized</u>
<u>President's Advisory Committee</u>		
<u>on Political Refugees</u>		
Names received to Dec. 31, 1940		1224
(Of about 750 names submitted up to Nov. 15th, Consuls have reported issuance of visas as follows - Names submitted later, reports not received as of 12/31/40):		
Visitors'.....	266	
Immigration.....	87	
Transit Certificates...	22	
Type of visa not stated	<u>27</u>	
Total	402.....	402
(Reports have not yet been received from several offices)		
<u>American Federation of Labor</u>		
Names recommended (closed Oct. 1)		705
Reports indicate issued to	413.....	413
<u>Catholic Organizations</u>		
Names recommended		58
Reports indicate issued to approximately all	58.....	58
<u>Jewish Organizations</u>		
American Jewish Congress		
Agudas Chasidei Chabad		
Agudath Israel Youth Congress		
and other organizations, mostly in Russian controlled territory where many difficulties to exit, total		
		1,143
(The organizations are highly responsible and have selected the names from a much larger number as outstanding in their religion and in special danger. Many are in Soviet-occupied Lithuania and Poland and are experiencing difficulty in traveling.)		
Reports indicate issuance of visas to about	250.....	250
<u>American Unitarian Association</u>		
Names recommended		50
Visas have been issued to at least	25.....	25
<u>Dominican Republic Settlement Association (transit certificates)</u>		
	88	88
	<u>1236</u>	<u>3268</u>
	The persons	

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The persons to whom these visas have been issued originated in the territories specified, though many of them, including practically all of those on the lists of the President's Committee, and on that of the A. F. of L., were, at the time, in France, Portugal or Africa. Under the law they are chargeable to the country of their origin and are so indicated in this summary.

Many of these persons originated in Germany, fewer in Italy and Poland and retreated into France, either directly during the past few years or through Holland and Belgium where they remained temporarily until the German advance.

Others were still in Germany at the time they received visas.

Many of those whose visas have been authorized originated in Poland and retreated to the Baltic States or originated in the Baltic States. When those countries were absorbed into the military jurisdiction of Russia it became practically impossible for them to travel and consequently they are unable for the time being to claim the visas to which they are entitled. That situation largely accounts for the fact that of 1143 persons recommended by Jewish Organizations only 250 have actually received visas. We had only one Consulate in Russia during this period. It was at Moscow and intending emigrants have encountered

many

many difficulties to prevent travel to Moscow to approach the American Consulate. Conversely, the Russian Government refuses the privilege to Consular officers to visit other parts of the country to exercise the Consular function.

Likewise, a number of persons recommended by the President's Committee are under assumed names, or hiding from the Gestapo, or have moved out of the Consular district, or for similar reasons are either afraid to or prevented from approaching the American Consul in order to obtain their visas.

In addition to granting immigrant visas to persons originating east of the Rhine, there have been issued, within the quota, visas to persons originating in Belgium, France, Luxemburg and the Netherlands. The factual information in the Department is too fragmentary as regards those four territories to permit a factual statement in connection with them, but an estimate based on the best information available is submitted herewith:

Belgium.....	500	(estimated)
France.....	1543	(estimated)
Luxemburg.....	50	(estimated)
Netherlands.....	1100	(estimated)
Total - Western Europe.....	<u>3193</u>	
Total - East of Rhine.....	<u>26430</u>	
GRAND TOTAL	<u>29623</u>	

The policy

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The policy of the Department of State and the procedure adopted by it for dealing with the refugee immigrant problem was summarized in a press release issued on December 18, 1940.

Although the laws relating to the entry of aliens do not provide preferential treatment for refugees as such, administrative measures have been taken to meet the emergency. Consuls have been instructed to be as liberal as the law allows and to expedite action in the cases of qualified applicants when satisfied that they will not engage in activities inimical to the interests of the United States. In view of reports indicating that Nazi and other totalitarian agents are endeavoring to enter the United States in the guise of refugees, it has been considered essential in the national interest to scrutinize all applications carefully.


B. L.

A-L:BL:WA

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

FOR THE PRESS

DECEMBER 18, 1940
No. 549

CONFIDENTIAL RELEASE FOR PUBLICATION AT 9 P.M., E.S.T.,
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18, 1940. NOT TO BE PREVIOUSLY
PUBLISHED, QUOTED FROM OR USED IN ANY WAY.

POLITICAL REFUGEES

The refugee problem is inextricably involved with the question of visas.

Persons desiring to come to the United States under the immigration laws must first obtain a visa from a Consul of the United States abroad.

Persons coming for permanent residence must under the law secure Immigrant Visas; those coming for a temporary stay, Visitors' Visas; those who desire to pass through the country en route to another country, Transit Visas. The granting of visas is under the jurisdiction of the Department of State.

Persons arriving on Visitors' Visas are under the law permitted to remain a temporary period. Those arriving as transients are limited to sixty days. If the privilege is not extended the person is supposed to leave the United States or be deported. The extension of privilege and the steps looking to departure or deportation are under the jurisdiction of the Department of Justice.

Refugees developed into a definite problem after the invasion of France. Many persons had previously arrived in France to find asylum from persecution at the hands of the totalitarian states. To these were added several millions who fled from Holland and Belgium. They all became migrants again and their numbers were doubled or trebled by residents of France--all in flight before the advancing German armies and the Gestapo which followed in its wake. Most of these unfortunates, persons persecuted because of adherence to their political or religious beliefs, desired to come to the United States.

Obviously

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Obviously it was legally impossible to accept them all. The laws of this country prescribe the number of persons to be admitted as immigrants. Applications far in excess of the legal limit had already been made by other persons and from only a few countries of Europe were immigrant visas available. That, however, did not prevent the demand, but it did add to the congestion.

The American Consulates in Southern France, at Bordeaux, Marseille and Nice were swamped with applicants. The staffs were increased but even as enlarged were unable to deal with the crowding multitude of daily supplicants for admission to a haven of refuge. Branch offices of our Consulates were opened closer to the Spanish border as the horde moved south frenzied at the near approach of the hostile army and the agents of the Gestapo. Then Spain closed its border. Portugal apprehensive lest the food supply in Portugal and the accommodations available would be insufficient for the mass threatening to arrive, closed its own border. Conditions were imposed upon travel, transportation became disorganized, communications were interrupted. Fear, hunger, privation and over-crowding threatened disaster.

From Spain and the French Mediterranean ports many poor unfortunates escaped to North Africa and besieged our Consulates there. Casablanca in Africa and Lisbon in Portugal became eventually the places from which it was hoped passage might be obtained for America and consequently developed into the centers of the largest groups of refugees, though many, many thousands were caught in France behind the closed borders and many found themselves in Spain. Some reached Switzerland and a comparatively few reached Sweden.

In this mass of people were many men and women of intellectual superiority, persons of education, of culture, of character--brave men and women who had stood by their convictions and had, by reason of determined action, antagonized the totalitarian states to the point their lives were in danger.

Spontaneously there developed in this country movements to save to the world the brains, the character and the spirit which motivated these distraught persons and to facilitate their departure for this country. The names of some were well known to the American public because of their literary, musical or artistic achievements, their political doctrines, their scientific contributions or their capacity for organization--but there were many others whose names were not known who had been leaders of thought and directors of movements in entire accord with American social and political philosophies. The sentiment to save these persons from becoming derelicts or from death developed into committees organized by sympathetic and understanding Americans.

There were various of these committees among the members of which were persons well known to the public. They recommended lists of names to the Department of State with the view that visas of some kind be issued to the persons on them to come to this country and be safe.

At

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At this point it becomes necessary to recall that the law prescribes how many immigrants shall be admitted and that it prohibits admission for certain specified reasons.

The law also establishes standards prerequisite to the issuance of Visitors' Visas and Transit Visas.

Visitors' Visas are granted provided the person can return to the country of his origin or can leave for a third country; provided further that the person intends to do so-- for otherwise he would be an immigrant intending to live here; and that he will not become a public charge while here.

Consequently, the Committees requesting visas for certain persons were required to give assurances to the Department of State that they would make every effort to arrange for the departure of the person if admitted and that he would not become a public charge while here.

Transit Visas are granted to permit a leisurely stay in the United States while traveling to or awaiting accommodations to travel to another country and with similar conditions.

Consequently the Committees asking visas of that character were requested to give those assurances before the visa could be issued.

Those assurances were satisfactorily given in each case and the name and other essential data were telegraphed to the Consuls abroad. The various Committees recommended a total of about 2000 names. Each name was checked against official Government information lists and only about one dozen of those names were found to be of persons whose presence here would be prejudicial to the best interests of the United States. For the rest, visas were authorized. About 1000 have actually been issued abroad. Of the balance--some have been only recently dispatched, some applicants are in hiding or under assumed names for their own protection, some are inaccessible to the Consuls and some have removed from the Consular district to another district and are still being sought.

The Consul, under the law, is the official who must exercise the function of interviewing the applicant to determine his fitness to receive a visa considering, among other things, whether that particular person's entrance into the United States would be detrimental to the best interests of the United States.

It was necessary for the Department of State to be satisfied about these persons, particularly about their intentions while in the United States and their ability to leave this country for another place because if they could not leave the country they would be permanent residents and should come as immigrants--not as visitors--and the immigrant quotas were then full. And to admit them wholesale would be to set aside the immigration laws.

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As soon as the necessity for such action arose, the procedure as regards the immigrant quota lists was revised and the quotas are not full--except as to Germany and Poland, and even they will be open in a comparatively short time (about two months).

This has been accomplished by "unblocking" the quotas as fixed by law. By "unblocking" is meant that when a person's name is reached on the quota list he is given his visa if he has travel documents and an exit permit to allow him to leave that country so he can use the visa. Otherwise his name is passed and the next name is reached of the person on the list who has travel documents and an exit permit so he can use the visa. The applicant gets a visa. Under former practice the name at the top of the list stayed there even though he could not use the visa and the names below him on the list were "blocked".

However, quotas are now "unblocked". Refugees can now obtain Immigrant Visas if they want to come to America and if they are acceptable under the laws. In exceptional circumstances Visitors' Visas may still be useful in saving persons of exceptional merit, those of superior intellectual attainment, of indomitable spirit, experienced in vigorous support of the principles of liberal government and who are in danger of persecution or death at the hands of autocracy.

During this whole period the Department of State has given sympathetic assistance to these unfortunate people, has been fully conscious of the limitations imposed by law and has been careful and deliberate in its acts to prevent enemies without from becoming enemies within.

The procedure for recommending, checking and forwarding all these cases has been changed from time to time as the result of conferences between the Departments of State and Justice. The present procedure is, in order to facilitate the orderly consideration of cases of political refugees recommended by any committees operating in this country on their behalf, that an inter-departmental committee acts under an agreement between the Departments of State and Justice. For the primary purpose of having available all secret information in the possession of all departments of the Government, this committee is composed of representatives of the Departments of State and Justice and of the Army and the Navy. To it are referred the names of such political refugees. The Committee will check the names of such persons against Governmental lists in these Departments for the single purpose of discovering whether there is any objection already in the possession of any Department of the Government to the entry of such persons. The names passed by the Committee will be telegraphed by the Department of State to its consuls abroad for the consideration of applications for appropriate visas. In the event of refusals to grant visas the consul will report to the Department of State, submitting his reasons for such refusals. These reports will be submitted to the committee for its consideration.

The Department of State's representative on this committee is Mr. Avra N. Warren, Chief of the Visa Division of the Department.

No cases received from any committee are pending in the Department of State. It requires several days to check, study, draft cables concerning, card and index the names but there is no delay and cases are current.

PSF State Dept. Files

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

March 7, 1941.

MEMORANDUM FOR
THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE

I enclose letter from Secretary Ickes and letter from Dr. Frank Kingdon in regard to the people interned in France whom you wrote to me about on January 28th.

Send back.
Please read. It does not seem wholly to go along with State Department information.

F. D. R.

Letter from the Secretary of the Interior, 3/5/41 to the President, referring to papers forwarded to him (the Secretary) last week, from the Secretary of State, in re certain persons in behalf of whom, at the President's instance, representations had been made to the French Govt. by our State Dept. The Secretary at once communicated with Dr. Frank Kingdon, Chairman of the Emergency Rescue Committee, who had furnished the Secretary with the original information which he had forwarded to the President. Encloses reply from Dr. Kingdon, 3/4/41, with attached affidavits from Kurt Grossman, NYC, 2/1/41 in re Hans Tittel; Siegmund Hoffer, Providence, R.I.,
(over)

in re Mr. Tittel; Conrad Reisner, NYC, in re Hans Tittel and Siegfried Pfeffer; Solomon Monossohn-Schwarz, NYC, in re Siegfried Pfeffer; A.R.L. Gurland, NYC, in re Siegfried Pfeffer. The Secretary of the Interior, in his letter, states that the burden is distinctly upon those who hold these men in France at the risk of their health and in danger of their lives. Also attached is White House file, consisting of carbon of President's memorandum of 1/24/41 to the Secretary of State, "For necessary action. Let the Secretary of the Interior know", attached to which was note from the Secretary of the Interior 1/22/41 with accompanying memo to Harold Gram from Paul Hagen, brought to the Secretary's attention by Frank Kingdon, asking aid for Francois Boegler, Jean Tittel, Fritz Lamm, and Pfeffer, radiogram from Fry, Marseilles, 1/19/41 in re above letter from Hon. Sumner Welles, 1/20/41 to the President in re above, letter from Secretary of the Interior, 2/26/41, in reply to President's memorandum of 2/26/41 to the Secretary of the Interior, with which was transmitted copy of a letter from Secy. of State, 2/25/41, "What shall I tell Cordell? I don't like the smell of your friends in France", copy of Secy. Ickes' letter of 2/26/41 to Dr. Kingdon, telegram prepared by State to be sent to American Embassy at Vichy, dated 2/21/41, but which was not sent, and letter from Secy. Interior, 2/28/41 advising that Dr. Kingdon is making a full investigation of the matter.



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON

March 5, 1941.

My dear Mr. President:

You will remember that you forwarded to me last week a copy of the letter from the Secretary of State, with a personal inquiry attached, with reference to certain persons in behalf of whom, at your instance, representations had been made to the French Government by our State Department. I communicated at once with Dr. Frank Kingdon, Chairman of the Emergency Rescue Committee, who had furnished me with the original information which I forwarded to you. I now enclose his reply with attached affidavits. It would seem to me that on the face of the record as it now stands, the burden is distinctly upon those who hold these men in France at the risk of their health and in danger of their lives.

Sincerely yours,

Secretary of the Interior.

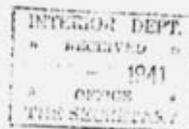
The President,
The White House.

Enc.

Emergency Rescue Committee
Incorporated

122 EAST 42nd STREET, NEW YORK, N. Y.

MURRAY HILL 3-4590



March 4, 1941

Chairman
Frank Kingdon
Vice Chairman
L. Hollingsworth Wood
Treasurer
David F. Seiferheld
Secretary
Mildred Adams
Executive Assistant to Chairman
Ingrid Werburg
National Committee
Mrs. Emmons Blaine
Elmer Davis
Dr. Robert Hutchins
Dr. Alvin Johnson
Mrs. Henry Goddard Leach
Dr. William Allen Neilson
Dr. Charles Seymour
Dr. George Shuster
Raymond Gram Swing
Dorothy Thompson

The Hon. Harold L. Ickes
Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C.

My dear Mr. Secretary:

In accordance with the promise which I made you in the telegram sent to you last week, I am now able to give you the first results of my inquiry into the cases of the four people in whose behalf I sought your help. The main criticism seems to be of the case of Jean (Hans) Tittel whose record, as reported by the French Government, was assumed to be "bad." As far as I can discover the basis of this judgment is inadequate. Let me tax your patience with an examination of the charges against him.

First, the French records say, as you wrote me, that Tittel "was in possession of explosives and of seditious tracts of the Fourth International in such circumstances as to lead to the suspicion that he was implicated in the Etoile bombing outrage." This bombing, according to the best information that I can get, was the work of cagoulards in September, 1937. I am enclosing with this letter two affidavits, both proving that Mr. Tittel was living in Asch, Czechoslovakia in 1937, that he was a respectable anti-Nazi immigrant and was there with the special permission of the Czechoslovakian Government and under the control of the Czech governmental refugee institutions supported by them. He did not leave Czechoslovakia before the end of July, 1938, thus he could not have been affiliated with the bombing of the Etoile. As far as I can discover, he has never been under any investigation of an accusation of having been connected with this crime.

Tittel applied for a French visa from Czechoslovakia in the early summer of 1939. At that time the inquiries about the bombing had already been closed in France. He certainly would not have been granted a visa to France if there had been any suspicion of his connection with that crime. At that time visitors' visas for German exiles

from Czechoslovakia to France were granted only to persons with especial permission from the French Foreign Office. The French Consulate in Prague had no general permission to grant such visas without authorization from Paris. Tittel, like all of the exiles in the same case, was carefully investigated before being granted the visa.

Secondly, I enclose an affidavit signed by Siegmund Hoffer who attests Tittel's political activities in Czechoslovakia. Further inquiry among the German exiles whom I trust informs me that Tittel was the object of attack by Nazis Communists and Trotskyites because of his democratic beliefs. He was connected with the local unions in the Sudetenland village of Asch where he was under the public control of the local labor movement and the Czech authorities who apparently liked him for his courageous stand against the growing Nazi and Henlein influence.

Thirdly, as far as I can discover, Tittel never used "Polish and German identity papers", the German papers being forged. Tittel, in fact, travelled from Czechoslovakia to France on a Czechoslovakian refugee passport. This fact is attested by the enclosed statement from Kurt Grossmann whose office obtained this passport. Concerning these passports Mr. Grossmann states "Such passports were issued only after a thorough prolonged police investigation of the reliability of the recipient."

Fourthly, I should question seriously the charge that Tittel was in possession of a secret radio transmitter in France as stated by the French police records. As a matter of fact, the stories of such secret transmitters were mostly bluff. During the summer of 1938, up to the beginning of the war in 1939, French authorities carefully controlled French territories and such a transmitter would have been found if in operation, but we have no evidence that Tittel was ever accused of using such an instrument.

Before the war Tittel was not molested by the French authorities. During the war, as you and I know, all German emigrants were under supervision. If Tittel had been under the slightest suspicion, he would have been sent to prison and not with other refugees to a detention camp. It looks to me as though the accusations against Tittel are a species of smoke screen, set up by police officers now under control of the very cagoulerds upon whom rested the chief responsibility for the 1937 bombing of the Etoile. I should add that the fact that Tittel has been transferred to the camp in Milles and that the French Government is ready to give him an exit permit is itself an indication that the accusations are doubtful.

Now a few words about the other three men. Your letter makes no reference to any bad record in their cases. I realize that the French authorities may keep certain other accusations in other files, but failing their production, I think we should continue our insistence that the French authorities allow these people to depart. I am glad to hear that

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none of them is on the extradition list. I gathered the information from your letter that this might be a point against them, perhaps as an indication of their not being "famous" enough. We have some difficulty in explaining why certain outstanding people among the thousands of Germans in France are on the list while others are not, but at any rate, we should be happy to get our friends out even though they do not bear the accolade of Nazi vengeance. These men whose names I have submitted to you have at least achieved the degree of fame that belongs to those who were the first to get out of France through the united efforts of our rescue organizations by boarding a boat in Marseilles, in company with certain respectable French and Belgian officers. They had the misfortune to be recaptured and sent back to the camp. For this attempted escape they were tried and acquitted but told that they must stay in camp for the duration of the war.

Franz Boegler was Secretary of the German Social Democratic Party in the Palatinate. He was a member of the Diet. He also escaped to Czechoslovakia and was, like Tittel, under the control of the Czech Government and came to France under similar conditions. He is backed here by the American Friends of German Freedom. His wife and child are already in this country so that it is unusually cruel to hold him in camp in France.

Fritz Lamm, backed by both the American Friends of German Freedom and the International Relief Association, used to be a youth leader in the Social Democratic Movement of Germany and has never been connected or affiliated or in sympathy with the Communist Party movement. Some of his friends are already here. He is not in good health and has been in the camp hospital most of the time so that his detention for the duration of the war would probably mean his death.

Siegfried Pfeffer was an organizer of the Social Democratic Youth Movement in Chemnitz. Information has just come to me that it is possible that the charges preferred against Tittel are in fact based on a dossier against Pfeffer. If there has been this confusion, let me say that certain charges were made against Pfeffer by the Communist group and in order to clear this matter up I am enclosing documents attesting the character and activities of Pfeffer during the period for which he was under fire.

The same conditions existed for these people as for Tittel when they went to France. All of them were carefully investigated. All of them got their visas through the Blum Government or its successor. The one or the other may have "a record" but let me say a word about French records. Among the millions of emigrants in France, thousands could not avoid getting on the record. If once a man was denounced by somebody as an enemy, the French system kept such denunciations in their files even though they were proven untrue. In some cases there was apparently no investigation. In other cases the accusation was proved untrue but the record remained. In every serious case we may be sure that there was not only an investigation but an indictment, but none of those for whom we are working was ever indicted during the time that democratic justice prevailed in France. To-day the new police facing criticism abroad and, as in these cases, facing official intervention from American sources, may be tempted to shock us and keep us

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away from further rescue and help. I do not think that we should give in to them too easily.

Let me say emphatically that neither I nor the Emergency Rescue Committee will lift a finger to help any Communist to get into this country. We have a group of reliable and intelligent people who know the Europeans and their past intimately. No name is submitted for a visa or for any other action until it has been scrutinized by this group. Please believe me, my dear Mr. Secretary, when I say that I count you as one of the first fighters for democracy in our time and that I am proud to be associated with you as a colleague in the struggle for liberty and justice.

Sincerely yours,

Frank Stanger

New York City, N.Y.

March 3, 1941

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

camp Verret

This is to state that I have known Mr. Siegfried Pfeffer of Chemnitz, Germany, now in prison in unoccupied France, ever since I first met him at Chemnitz in 1932 when I was associate chief editor of the Chemnitz Social Democratic daily, "Volksstimme". Mr. Pfeffer had headed the Social Democratic Youth Organization (Sozialistische Arbeiter-Jugend) of the Chemnitz region until the end of 1931, and although he had severed connections with the Social Democratic Party at that time, he was spoken of as a most honorable and gifted young man, and introduced to me, by outstanding leaders of the Social Democratic movement there. I also became acquainted with the Pfeffer family, relatives of close personal friends of mine, and visited several times at the Pfeffers' home where I met Siegfried Pfeffer's father and sisters. Mr. Pfeffer's father, who had joined the German Social Democratic Party when he came to Germany in his early youth, was a well-known hosiery manufacturer in Chemnitz and President of the Jewish Community there for a long time. The family was native of that part of Austria which later became Polish, but Siegfried Pfeffer was born at Chemnitz, Germany, and always thought of himself as a German. He had applied for German citizenship prior to 1933 and was granted the citizenship as a matter of principle some time before National Socialism came to power. He had not yet been given the German passport, though, and when he had to flee Nazi persecution, he was granted a Polish passport by the Polish Consulate. Nevertheless, he said he was a German refugee, which he was right in doing, when he emigrated to France. This accounts for the charges made against him by the French police, concerning what they call his "double citizenship" or "faked identity".

When I first met him, Mr. Pfeffer was in charge of the Chemnitz Youth Organization affiliated with the Socialist Workers' Party, a small group that had split off from the Social Democratic Party. Although we were not on quite friendly terms on this account politically, I had wide opportunity to admire Siegfried Pfeffer's sincere and genuine attachment to the ideals of Democracy and Freedom and his active participation in the political struggle both against Nazis and Communists. He often was in imminent danger of persecution by Nazi Storm Troopers and proved a courageous defender of democratic rights. After having left Germany in 1933 I met Siegfried Pfeffer again in Paris, France, some time in August, 1933, and kept close contacts with him ever since. I have known Siegfried Pfeffer as an active and outstanding member of the Socialist Workers' Party organization in exile; for a long time he was in charge of their contacts inside Germany. With some friends he separated from that Party around 1937 and then devoted himself entirely to his professional activities on the staff of "Bureau International de Documentation", a press-clippings service on Germany's social and economic developments well-known in this country as a reliable source of information. He never was member of any Communist organization, neither did he participate in any Trotskyite organizations. Contrariwise, he was a target of venomous Stalinist and also Trotskyite attacks, and I have reason to believe that any charges that might be made against him by French authorities are due to Stalinist denunciations. Siegfried Pfeffer never participated in French politics, either; he never had anything to do with subversive activities directed against the French Republican Government, and the French police had never any substantiated charges against him, nor did they ever indict him on any charges whatever.

I sincerely hope that Siegfried Pfeffer will be given the opportunity to escape police persecution in France as well as the danger of being extradited to Nazi authorities through being admitted to enter the United States.

Rubin Beyer
Rubin Beyer, Notary Public

N. Y. Co. Clk. No. 107, Reg. No. 17957
Ex. Co. Clk. No. 351, Reg. No. 17957

A. L. Gurland
A. L. Gurland, Ph.D.,

Research Associate, Institute of Social Research,

*PSF
State*

February 21, 1941.

AMERICAN EMBASSY,

VICHY.

Department's 78, January 25, 5 p.m.

Your 197, February 15, 2 p.m.

In view of the statements as to the reputation and records of Pfeffer and Tittel, which were not known to the American Government, you are authorized to withdraw intercession in their behalf.

A-L; BL; SRW

I, Conrad Reisner, former director of the Service Juridique et Social pour les Réfugiés Allemands, secretary of the exiled German group of the League for Human Rights in Paris, having served on the Advisory Committee for German Refugees at the Ministry of Interior and Secretary of the Federation of German Refugees in France herewith want to declare the following:

I have been informed that several charges have been made by the French police against the German refugee Hans Tittel.

From my occupation in Paris it is known to me that similar charges are supposed to have been made against the German refugee Siegfried (not Maurice) Pfeffer, but I never heard that such charges were ever made against Hans Tittel.

Siegfried Pfeffer is known to me since 1933, when he fled from Chemnitz to Paris. I know that the French police became interested in him and I was myself in my capacity as secretary of several refugee organizations questioned about him by an inspector of the Political Police. I expressed my conviction that he is an authentic political refugee, a fighter against all forms of totalitarianism and a most honorable person. I had the impression that Pfeffer was denounced by political enemies, probably by communists who frequently used such means to involve people they hated in difficulties. Obviously none of the alleged charges could be held up, which was proven by the fact that the authorities gave Mr. Pfeffer a carte d'identité in 1937 or 1938. This card means that he was given an extendable permit to stay in France which was valid for three years and he even was given the right to work.

The French Government issued a decree on September 17, 1936 in connection with the convention at Geneva of July 4, 1936, according to which all persons who had fled from Germany because of the advent to power of the Nazis could apply for recognition as (political) refugees and for the

Conrad Reisner

issuance of a so-called refugee passport. To examine these applications an Advisory Committee was founded which worked with the Minister of the Interior and with which I worked as a secretary. This committee gave its opinion after the most thorough examination. It recognized Siegfried Pfeffer as a political refugee and the ministry evidently followed this decision by issuing the above-mentioned carte d'identité.

Since the beginning of the war Mr. Pfeffer has been interned in the Camp de Vernet. Before this time he spent only one day in police custody and this was on December 6, 1938 when the German Minister of Foreign Affairs, Joachim von Ribbentrop, visited Paris. A great number of German political refugees were arrested for one day at that time because the French police evidently feared demonstrations against the Nazi representative. It seems to me that there is an antagonism between this measure, which was taken against anti-Hitler refugees only and the charge that Pfeffer was not an authentic anti-Hitler emigrant.

I also want to point out, that there has never been a regular accusation against Pfeffer and that he never had to face any trial which would have been a matter of course had he really owned explosives or had he anything to do with the bombing-attempt at the Etoile etc.

It is a known fact that the bombing attempt at the Etoile has been staged by French Fascists some of whom have been arrested.

I know Siegfried Pfeffer very well and can declare with all certainty that he is a convinced and active opponent of the Nazi regime and that he never had the least bit to do with Fifth-Columnists. He also was never a member of the Communist or Trotzkyist Party but belonged to a socialist group which the Communists constantly fought against.

Courad Reimer

I made the acquaintance of Hans Tittel in Paris and he, too, is known to me to be a decided enemy of the Nazis and above all suspicion to ever have had contact with Fifth-Columnists.

March 4, 1941

Conrad Reiser
Conrad Reiser
839 West End Ave.
New York City

Rubin Berger

RUBIN BERGER, Notary Public
N. Y. Co. CH. No. 1655, Reg. No. 11937
Ex. Co. CH. No. 300, Reg. No. 312841
Term expires March 30, 1941

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*file
personal*

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

March 14, 1941

My dear Mr. President:

Owing to the absence of Under Secretary Welles, there has been some delay in responding to your memorandum under date of March 7 which enclosed a letter from Secretary Ickes and a letter from Dr. Frank Kingdon in regard to the persons interned in France by the names of Maurice Pfeffer, Jean (Hans) Tittel, Fritz Lamm and Francois Boegler.

In the absence of the Under Secretary and in order to expedite decision in the cases, this will advise that unless you disapprove a cable is being dispatched to Vichy setting forth that the information we received through Vichy from the French Government about these persons is challenged by trustworthy and sincere persons known to us who are supported by statements of political refugees who have been admitted to
the

The President,
The White House.

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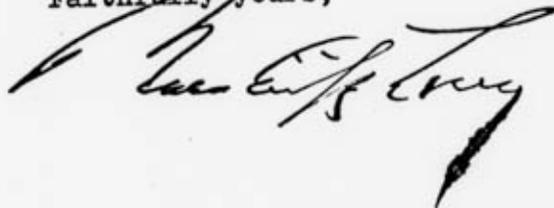
the United States on the recommendation of responsible committees which have been operating in conjunction with the Department during this trying period.

In the meantime our original telegram to the French Government under date of January 25 requesting transfer of these persons to Camp Milles still stands and the matter will be allowed to continue in that status until a report is received from Vichy covering specifically the points raised in the affidavits submitted through Secretary Ickes by Dr. Kingdon.

The Department has taken no action to negative or detract from the original request and will not take any such action until we hear further from Vichy and after submitting it again to you for instructions.

I am returning herewith the files which were enclosed in your memorandum under reference to Mr. Welles.

Faithfully yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Paul E. Taylor". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name "Paul E. Taylor".

Enclosures:

Original files.