

BIRNBAUM, DAVID -- HOLLAND

CROSS REFERENCE ON .....

FOR:

- Amendment to this License . . . . .
- Extension of this License . . . . .
- Renewal of this License . . . . .
- Correspondence concerning this application .
- Other (Specify)

Folder "as is" from Mr. Lesser's Files

SEE:

D. BIRNBAUM  
63 WALL STREET  
NEW YORK 5, N.Y.

November 20, 1944

Mr. Lawrence Lesser  
War Refugee Board  
Washington, D. C.

*Julius Siegfried B.  
Amsterdam, Sept. 21, 1921.*

Dear Mr. Lesser:

I am extremely sorry that I have heard nothing from you in many months, and I would not bother you were it not for a small item in the newspapers yesterday which interests me greatly and about which I would like to have some more information, if possible.

The item in question refers to the fact that there are about 200 "American" citizens in the exchange camp at Bergen Belsen. Is American citizenship in this case to be taken literally or does it apply, as I have been told, to others who at some time had a right to American citizenship or even protection?

My son, who is in the camp at Bergen Belsen, was eighteen years old at the time of the invasion of the Netherlands and after my arrival in the United States on July 8, 1940 he had a priority right for immigration into the United States. The necessary confirmation of this fact was cabled by the State Department to the United States Consul at Rotterdam who acknowledged its receipt and promised to issue a visa to my son as soon as he obtained a German exit permit. An impasse developed since the Germans would not issue the exit permit without the visa being first obtained.

Although he did not obtain the United States visa, he did get a passport from the Haitian government on or about December 7, 1941 with a letter stating that he was a naturalized Haitian subject. As

D. BIRNBAUM

TO Mr. Lawrence Lesser

PAGE II

DATE November 20, 1944

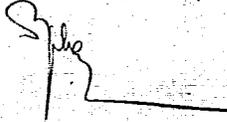
this passport only arrived about the day that war was declared between Germany and the United States (and also Haiti), he could not leave the Netherlands. It only gave him the advantage that he was sent to the exchange camp at Bergen Belsen.

My question is this: Since my son is now twenty-two years of age, is there anything that the United States government or the War Refugee Board can or will do for him?

Should you desire any further details, I shall, of course, be glad to furnish them. Your reply will be greatly appreciated.

With best regards, I remain

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'D. Birnbaum', with a horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the signature.

D. BIRNBAUM  
63 WALL STREET  
NEW YORK 5, N.Y.

*No ans req.*  
*Att. covered by D.B.*  
*7-5-44 R.H.*  
July 3, 1944

Mr. Lawrence S. Lesser  
Assistant Executive Director  
War Refugee Board  
U. S. Treasury Building  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Lesser:

Many thanks for your letter of June 27. It is very gratifying to learn from your letter that refugees in neutral countries can, and often do, convey to the representatives of the Board attached to the American missions in such countries any pertinent information they may have concerning persons in enemy-occupied areas. In my humble opinion, however, this does not quite dispose of the matter mentioned in my letter of June 19, 1944. I do not know whether all refugees, in countries like Switzerland and Sweden, are aware that they can contact the representatives of your Board and I am not convinced that all of them know of the Board's existence. Furthermore, it is probable and quite natural that the representatives of your Board are not interested in individual cases. I do still believe that, if the people in neutral countries could communicate more freely, though of course under strict censorship, with relatives or friends in the United States, much more could be done without sacrifice on anyone's part. Let me give you a case in point. I know that for over six months the Palestine Government has given immigration certificates to relatives of mine but up to the present I am not in a position even to cable to people in Switzerland letting them know this fact or the numbers of these certificates, and I am fairly certain that the

TO Mr. Lawrence S. Lesser

PAGE II

DATE July 3, 1944

people in question do not know anything about it. I have serious reason to believe that their lot is very much harder than it would be, if they could be informed of the issuance of the Palestine certificates. My experience in this respect is shared by many others in this country who also succeeded in getting immigration certificates. I beg you to reconsider this question and to let me know whether it would not be possible to make arrangements so that information of this kind, if strictly censored, could not be transmitted to the people in question, via persons in neutral countries.

It is also with great regret that I cannot agree with the last paragraph of your letter. From my own experience with remittances to Switzerland I can say that, although permitted under the regulations of the Treasury Department, they cannot reach the payees because the Swiss National Bank does not buy blocked dollars from people who only arrived in Switzerland a comparatively short time ago. Those people must be in a very difficult position since the Federal Reserve Bank changed the rules at the end of May so that it is no longer possible to remit free francs to them. I myself have two nieces and the husband of one of them in Switzerland who arrived there about a year ago and who are in no position to work and to whom I was permitted to send \$150 a month. Since May of this year they have received nothing and I am really very worried especially as one of the girls is practically blind. I did send them a cable on June 7 to which I have never received a reply so I must take it that the cable was not passed by the Censor notwithstanding my request to the Cable Censor to let me know, if he had any objections to it. For your information I am enclosing a copy of this cable and my letter to the Censor. I really do not know what to do

TO Mr. Lawrence S. Lesser

PAGE III

DATE July 3, 1944

about this matter.

I am sending you this letter by special delivery because I will be in Washington about 4:00 P.M. on July 4 and will be staying at the Carlton Hotel until Wednesday night or Thursday morning. I would be very glad, if you would discuss these matters with me and please let me know whether you can spare a little time for this purpose.

Sincerely yours,



D. Birnbaum 63 Wall Street New York

June 7, 1944

NLT

JOHANNA KONIJN KALKER  
CARE FAMILY BIGARD  
13 GUTENBERGSTRASSE  
BERN SWITZERLAND

NEW YORK AGENCY CREDIT SUISSE REFUNDED TODAY MONEY I  
REMITTED TO YOU MAY ELEVEN STOP AM AWARE THAT REMITTANCE  
IN MAY COULD NOT BE MADE IN FREE FRANCS AS BEFORE SINCE  
END APRIL THIS PROHIBITED BY FEDERAL RESERVE BANK AND ALL  
REMITTANCES MUST BE MADE AT OFFICIAL RATE WHICH MEANS THAT  
SWISS BANKS RECEIVE BLOCKED DOLLARS STOP PLEASE CABLE  
CIRCUMSTANCES YOU COULD NOT OBTAIN PERMIT USE MONEY STOP  
AS I HAVE NO OTHER MEANS MAKING REMITTANCES THAN THROUGH  
BANKERS HERE ON CONDITIONS LAID DOWN BY FEDERAL RESERVE  
BANK PLEASE CABLE WHETHER I SHALL DISCONTINUE REMITTANCES  
STOP HOPE YOU ALL WELL BEST REGARDS

DAVID BIRNBAUM

June 7, 1944

To the Cable Censor

Dear Sir:

Although I believe that the attached cable is clear, I would very much appreciate it, if you would let me know if there is any objection on your part.

The addressee is my niece who with her husband and sister are, to the best of my knowledge, absolutely dependent upon my monthly remittances. As far as I know they are not allowed to work in Switzerland. As a matter of fact, a few months ago I had several cables complaining about the small amount of francs which they received. This was better during the months of March and April because the free francs rate dropped considerably. I am rather worried as they have no means at all.

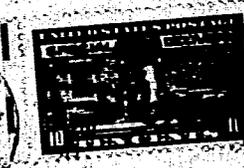
Very truly yours,

D. BIRNBAUM  
63 WALL STREET  
NEW YORK

SPECIAL DELIVERY

SPECIAL DELIVERY - AIR MAIL

NEW YORK  
JUL 3  
12 M  
1944



VIA AIR MAIL

Mr. Lawrence S. Sesser  
Assistance Executive Director  
War Refugee Board  
U.S. Treasury Building  
Washington D.C.

SPECIAL DELIVERY - AIR MAIL

9/2

JUN 27 1944

Dear Mr. Birnbaum:

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter of June 19, 1944.

Refugees in neutral countries can, and often do, convey to the representatives of the Board attached to the American missions in such countries any pertinent information they may have concerning persecuted persons in enemy-occupied areas.

We are advised by appropriate Swiss authorities that it is their understanding that in all instances in which the Swiss National Bank has refused to convert blocked dollars into Swiss francs the remittances were in favor of persons who had ample funds for their support in Switzerland, had sponsors who were able and had been providing for their support, were young and able to work and the Swiss Government desired that they accept employment, or other similar reasons existed. We would appreciate your advising us of the specific details of any case in which the action of the Swiss National Bank appears to have been unreasonable.

We have as yet had no word from Lisbon which has any bearing on your proposed trip.

Very truly yours,

Lawrence S. Lesser

Lawrence S. Lesser  
Assistant Executive Director

Mr. D. Birnbaum  
63 Wall Street  
New York 5, N. Y.

LSLesser:als 6/27/44

*Dated and copy  
7/7 received in  
file*

TREASURY DEPARTMENT

INTER OFFICE COMMUNICATION

DATE June 22, 1944

TO Mr. Lesser

FROM A. U. Fox

*visited/A*

Reference is made to your memorandum of June 20 relating to remittances to refugees in Switzerland.

This matter was raised on June 22 with Messrs. Straessle and Thomann. Mr. Thomann stated that he had recently scrutinized an enormous number of cases of this nature and had found that in all instances in which the Swiss National Bank has refused to convert blocked dollars into Swiss francs the remittances were in favor of persons who had ample funds for their support in Switzerland, had sponsors who were able and had been providing support to such persons, were young and able to work and the Swiss Government desired the benefit of their services, or other similar reasons. Accordingly, Mr. Thomann expressed the view that the Swiss National Bank was not capriciously refusing conversion. He stated that he would be glad to have you advise him of the specific details of any cases in which the action of the Swiss National Bank appeared unreasonable and that, at your request, he would be glad to raise such cases by cable with Switzerland. *01-*

A. U. Fox

cc: Messrs. Schmidt, Blake, Day, J. C. Jones, Richards, Alk, Moscovitz, Glasser, Fisher, N. Davis.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
WAR REFUGEE BOARD

INTER-OFFICE COMMUNICATION

DATE

TO Mr. Fox

June 20, 1944

FROM L. S. Lesser

The following is an excerpt from a letter received from a person much interested in refugee problems:

"I should also like to call your attention to the fact that the rulings of the Federal Reserve Bank are driving many refugees, who are living on their own, especially in Switzerland, again into camps. As you are doubtless aware, recently the Federal Reserve Bank has withdrawn all licenses to send free francs to refugees in Switzerland and insists that money be remitted at the official rate of exchange which seems to mean that the recipients in Switzerland are credited with blocked dollars. However, the National Bank of Switzerland refuses to buy these blocked dollars from refugees who are living in Switzerland unless they have been residing there for several years. This means that, although theoretically one is allowed to remit certain amounts to the refugees in Switzerland, the money cannot be paid out, and, as a matter of fact, it is returned to this country. As a result, the refugees are without means and the Swiss government will probably have no other choice than to put them into camps again. I do not know why the Federal Reserve Bank altered the system of remitting to refugees in Switzerland in the beginning of May and I am not offering any criticism but I am only saying that, as a result of these alterations, those refugees who are dependent upon these remittances are now penniless and stranded again. Here too I am certain that a way out can be found so that these refugees will not get into difficulties again."

Can you give me any light on this matter?

LL

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
WAR REFUGEE BOARD

INTER-OFFICE COMMUNICATION

*File  
with  
Burnham's  
letter*

DATE

June 20, 1944

TO Mr. Behuncik JUN 21 Recd

FROM L. S. Lesser

The following is an excerpt from a letter received from a person much interested in refugee problems:

"The particular reason why I am writing you in regard to the foregoing is because it has become more and more difficult, if not impossible, to get in touch with refugees who are in neutral countries, like Switzerland and Sweden. No letters can be sent to them from this country although some letters do arrive from the other side. This cannot be helped, but what makes the position very much worse is that telegraph communication is also made almost impossible. It seems that the Censor withholds the majority of the cables from and to the people in these countries. As a result, quite a bit of information which could be obtained, about the people in neutral countries, and, through them, about people in camps in the occupied territories, does not reach its destination."

Can you give me any light on this matter?

*W.A.*

*revised for*

*6/22  
revised letter  
sent to Mr. Behuncik  
Several days*

June 15, 1944

MEMORANDUM FOR THE FILES

Subject: Communications from Danish Refugees in Sweden

Reference is made to my memorandum of June 10, 1944, and to Mr. Behuncik's memorandum of June 12, 1944 concerning a conference held on June 8 with Censorship and State on the above subject. Since these memoranda and consultation with Treasury representatives present at the conference indicated divergent views as to the policy followed by Censorship with respect to communications from Swedish nationals in Sweden, I called Lt. Darnielle of the Office of the Chief Cable Censor on June 14 in order to obtain a clarification of Censorship's policy.

Lt. Darnielle confirmed the fact that all refugee messages from Sweden and from other neutral territories are handled on the same basis and that there is no discrimination against financial messages as such. He also confirmed the fact that messages from Sweden which are sent by Swedish nationals are expedited if there is nothing objectionable in the message. In response to the question as to whether it was not possible that Nazi agents may be included among these residents Lt. Darnielle admitted the possibility but pointed out that the message would only be cleared if it appeared satisfactory and that if the message involved the transmittal of funds they relied upon Treasury screening and the licensing procedure of Treasury. So far as requests for funds from refugees are concerned censorship is willing to release any such requests provided that evidence is established in any one of a number of ways, (e.g., through their files, recognized relief agencies, or the use of approved channels such as Legation and relief agency channels) that the refugee is a bona fide refugee and intends to remain in the country. They are only concerned with preventing the remittance of funds to ostensible refugees who may immediately return to Denmark. Asked why Censorship could not rely upon Treasury screening in this case as well as in the case of Swedish nationals, he replied that for security purposes the double screening was desirable. Furthermore, he stressed the point that the Swedish national has only one channel of communication, namely, the commercial cable whereas the refugee has access to the various other channels indicated above and which have been established at considerable expense.

Another question posed was the evidence they have as to the extent that undesirable persons are included among refugees. We stated that a sufficient number of instances have been uncovered to justify the policy of caution toward such messages. He did not know of any list of undesirable names the refugee group submitted by the Legation, but indicated that a request for such a list might be considered unreasonably burdensome.

It was pointed out to Lt. Darnielle that there was some feeling in Treasury that discrimination against messages from refugees as a class imposes an undue hardship upon that class particularly in view of the possibility that Nazi agents may be included among the Swedish residents whose messages are treated more liberally. In response to this point he reiterated the position outlined above that for security purposes Cable Censorship felt that the messages should be screened or submitted through approved channels, that undue hardship was not imposed upon refugees as a class due to the various channels of communication open to them and that Swedish nationals have only one channel of communication. The indication was that Censorship would not consider the argument as to discrimination against refugees to be sufficiently weighty to result in a revision of their policy. He also stressed the fact that Censorship policy is applied uniformly to all neutrals and that no discrimination is exercised toward communications from refugees in Sweden or from Swedish nationals merely because they originate in Sweden.

It appears that the policy of Censorship toward the two classes of messages may be summarized as follows: A message from a Swedish national will be released if the message is unobjectionable and nothing unfavorable is known about the sender. A message from a refugee will not be released unless favorable information is on file, is available in this country or an approved channel of communication has been used. Censorship believes the discrimination is justified for the reasons above outlined.

Allan J. Fisher

cc: Mr. Glasser, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Richards, Mr. Behuncik, Mr. O'Flaherty

AJF:er 6/15/44

## MEMORANDUM FOR THE FILES

June 12, 1944.

Re: Meeting concerning Censorship's policy of condemning Incoming Requests for Funds sent from Sweden by Persons escaping from Enemy Territory.

On June 8, 1944, a meeting was held at the Sloane Building conference room on the above matter. Present were Messrs. G. W. Baker, Lloyd D. Yates, and P. R. Atterberry of the State Department, Messrs. K. B. Morrish and C. G. Quinlan of the Office of Censorship, Lts. H. H. Darneille, and A. E. Shackell of the Office of the Chief Cable Censor, Mr. A. J. Fisher of Monetary Research, and Messrs. Bach, O'Flaherty, Rueffer, and Behuncik of F.P.C.

The purpose of the meeting was to obtain a clarification of Censorship's "policy to stop such communications unless they have been sponsored by the State Department or recognized refugee organizations" as stated in a letter received from the Office of Censorship under date of May 5, 1944. This letter was in response to a memorandum of April 3, 1944 outlining for Censorship our views and policy with respect to requests for remittances sent by, and remittances to, Danish refugees in Sweden and asking for Censorship's future policy with respect to this type of message. After receipt of this letter an attempt was made to learn from Censorship whether or not this policy applied to all types of communications but no definite word was obtainable. Hence the decision to have representatives of interested agencies meet to discuss the problem.

Representatives of the Office of the Chief Cable Censor advised us that their policy was based on security reasons and applied to all communications, whether financial or personal, which originated in all neutral countries and that the policy was, therefore, not limited in its application to financial communications in which the Treasury has an interest. They pointed out that where the security aspect was not involved, because of information available to Censorship, or where the text of the message was innocuous etc., they permitted incoming messages to pass and in this regard also treated personal and financial messages according to common standard. When any such message was sent by or to recognized refugee organizations or was being transmitted via State Department channels, they passed it; relying in such cases upon the organization sponsoring the message. Thus Censorship's decision to allow such communications to come in when sponsored by the State Department or recognized refugee organizations was in fact a concession and an exception to their general policy. The Office of the Chief Postal Censor is, of course, affected by the general policy and follows the same principles, though in practice it may permit more messages to pass since detailed information is usually available in the written communication as distinguished from the cryptic cable message.

The State Department representatives were in agreement with this procedure and stated they had no objection to use being made of the Department's facilities for communications of this type.

Since no different treatment was being accorded to financial messages than to other types, and Censorship was in fact making some concessions with respect to certain refugee messages, Treasury representatives agreed that no further action need be taken by us in this regard.

E. J. Behuncik

cc: Messrs. Bach, O'Flaherty, Fisher, Richards, Fox, Alk, Gilbert, Bennett, and Miss Hodel.

EJBehuncik:mb

6/12/44

D. BIRNBAUM  
63 WALL STREET  
NEW YORK 5, N.Y.

June 19, 1944

Mr. Lawrence S. Lesser  
War Refugee Board  
U. S. Treasury Bldg.  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Lesser:

I am writing you today about a different matter from that which we have discussed up to the present. There was published in yesterday's Herald Tribune (June 18) certain correspondence between the Secretary of State, Mr. Cordell Hull, and Dr. Alberto Guani, President of the Emergency Advisory Committee for Political Defense at Montevideo.

I should like to make some observations in connection with this correspondence. First of all, I do believe that the number of people in occupied territories who have foreign passports or other documents which guarantee them free entry into foreign countries (the last group especially includes those who are in possession of immigration certificates for Palestine) is certainly far in excess of the 2,000 mentioned in the article. I have reason to believe that those who are in possession of a passport for Paraguay alone number more than 2,000 and there are quite a few with passports for other South and Central American countries. To the best of my knowledge, all people possessing foreign passports or immigration certificates for Palestine have been kept up to now in special camps. Of course, I have no way of knowing how they are treated.

B/ The particular reason why I am writing you in regard to the

to Mr. Lawrence S. Lesser

PAGE II

DATE June 19, 1944

foregoing is because it has become more and more difficult, if not impossible, to get in touch with refugees who are in neutral countries, like Switzerland and Sweden. No letters can be sent to them from this country although some letters do arrive from the other side. This cannot be helped, but what makes the position very much worse is that telegraph communication is also made almost impossible. It seems that the Censor withholds the majority of the cables from and to the people in these countries. As a result, quite a bit of information which could be obtained, about the people in neutral countries, and, through them, about people in camps in the occupied territories, does not reach its destination. <sup>B</sup> do not say this as a criticism of the Censor, who probably cannot be too careful; but could not a way be found so that contact at least with refugees in neutral countries could be established by cable through the War Refugee Board? I think that there are several ways of doing this which would eliminate any risk of information falling into enemy hands, and, if you so desire, I shall be glad to discuss these possibilities with you.

<sup>A</sup> I should also like to call your attention to the fact that the rulings of the Federal Reserve Bank are driving many refugees, who are living on their own, especially in Switzerland, again into camps. As you are doubtless aware, recently the Federal Reserve Bank has withdrawn all licenses to send free francs to refugees in Switzerland and insists that money be remitted at the official rate of exchange which seems to mean that the recipients in Switzerland are credited with blocked dollars. However, the National Bank of Switzerland refuses to buy these blocked dollars from refugees who are living in Switzerland unless they have been residing there for several years. This means

to Mr. Lawrence S. Lesser

PAGE III

DATE June 19, 1944

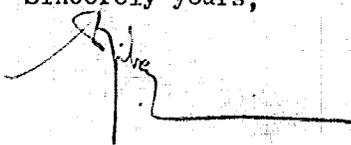
that, although theoretically one is allowed to remit certain amounts to the refugees in Switzerland, the money cannot be paid out, and, as a matter of fact, it is returned to this country. As a result, the refugees are without means and the Swiss government will probably have no other choice than to put them into camps again. I do not know why the Federal Reserve Bank altered the system of remitting to refugees in Switzerland in the beginning of May and I am not offering any criticism but I am only saying that, as a result of these alterations, those refugees who are dependent upon these remittances are now penniless and stranded again. Here too I am certain that a way out can be found so that these refugees will not get into difficulties again. / A

I do hope that the two points raised in this letter will receive your attention and that you will let me know whether you wish to discuss them at any time or place indicated by you.

As I have not heard from you since our discussion of May 30 in your office, I conclude that you have not yet heard from the gentleman who was sent to Lisbon by the War Refugee Board.

Hoping to hear from you and with best regards, I remain

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'S. J. ...', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

May 6, 1944

Mr. Lesser:

Mr. Adams, Dutch Embassy, called today re Birnbaum.

Mr. Adams stated that Mr. Birnbaum had called at the Embassy about the same matter which you asked him (Mr. Adams) about. He also said that Mr. Birnbaum's proposal was quite fantastic. First, Mr. Birnbaum's proposal to go to Portugal and write letters to persons in Holland to contact him in Lisbon is quite unreal in that the Germans would never permit persons to leave occupied areas because in all probability those persons would continue to the United States or elsewhere. Second, Birnbaum plans to have money put in banks in neutral countries. The Germans would never permit that - they would keep it in their own hands.

However, if you want the proposal carried out, please write to the Netherlands Desk, State Department, asking that a letter be written to the Dutch Embassy presenting the case. The Embassy will then cable London for the visa on the passport.

Mr. Adams is leaving town today or Monday and will be gone until next Saturday, May 13. Mr. Davidson, who was with Mr. Adams when he visited you a few days ago, knows about Mr. Birnbaum's proposal and you can contact him if you like.

ALS

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
WAR REFUGEE BOARD

INTER-OFFICE COMMUNICATION

*JLE*

DATE

April 28, 1944

TO Mr. Pehle

FROM L. S. Lesser

David Birnbaum called to see me yesterday as a result of the correspondence between you.

His plan is to go to Portugal and contact from there certain persons in Holland in an effort to get them to visit him in Lisbon. He believes that notwithstanding the fact that these people may be free to travel they will be helpful in aiding victims of Nazi persecution in the Netherlands to escape. Mr. Birnbaum stated that two of his sons had been apprehended by the Nazis in Holland, that one had been murdered and the other released without even the necessity of wearing the usual yellow arm band. He said that he believes that the release of the latter son was procured by the people he hopes to contact. Incidentally, Mr. Birnbaum has a third son who, as you may recall, was injected into the Jeidels-Birnbaum unlicensed transactions affair, who is now a lieutenant in the United States Army.

The principal people whom Birnbaum would contact are: F. H. Fentener van Vlissingen, Utrecht; O. Rebholz and E. den Tex, Amsterdam; and W. van der Vorm, Rotterdam.

Mr. Birnbaum stated that he was sure that he could receive a diplomatic passport from the Dutch Embassy.

*Jag*  
*JST* Unless you disagree, it is my intention to check Mr. Birnbaum and the persons above named with the Dutch Embassy. Even if we cannot agree to Mr. Birnbaum's trip, it is possible that these names may be of some use to Dexter.

*Mr.*

Carbon  
copy

Find out whether people in Holland  
can travel to Portugal and if so under  
what conditions for what purposes and  
with what if any implications.

J. H. Fentener van Vlissingen      Utrecht

O. Rebholz      Amsterdam

W. van der Vorm      Rotterdam

G. den Tex      Amsterdam

**TREASURY DEPARTMENT**

**INTER OFFICE COMMUNICATION**

**DATE**

**TO** : Mr. Lesser

April 19, 1944

**FROM** : T. H. Ball

**Re** : David Birnbaum  
63 Wall Street  
New York, N. Y.

David Birnbaum, a national of the Netherlands, was formerly connected with the Dutch rayon syndicate AKU (Allegemeene Kunstzyde Unie), and also had other textile interests. He first came to the United States in 1937, again in 1939, and entered on an immigration visa from London in July 1940.

He appeared in the Lazard Freres case in connection with an unlicensed payment of \$100,000 to a third party for his account, and thereby gained free access to these funds when they should have been blocked as Dutch. Briefly, the facts are as follows: Birnbaum and Otto Jeidels, who was then a Lazard Freres partner, had previously known each other in Europe, and Birnbaum had funds on deposit with that firm in one of the Jeidels accounts since 1939. As of May 10, 1940 the amount was \$100,000. On July 12, 1940, two days after he arrived in this country, Birnbaum withdrew this remaining balance in a check payable to Hubert G. Hohe, New York, who deposited the funds in his own name and then disbursed the entire amount for Birnbaum's account between July 1940 and September 1941. Hohe, a United States citizen and American representative for a number of European firms, had no other interest in the transaction.

When questioned in December 1941, Birnbaum claimed that the funds belonged to his son Fritz, a resident of the United States since 1939, whom he considered too young and inexperienced (28) to handle such a large sum and for that reason the money was entrusted to Hohe. However, it appears from the facts that he purposely used Hohe as a means to prevent blocking. A statement submitted by Birnbaum set forth that substantially all of the funds had been used for personal, business and family expenditures, and no action was taken.

According to his TFR-300 report, Birnbaum has substantial means. He reported gross assets of \$956,221 as of June 14, 1941, and total indebtedness of \$379,000. No mention was made of

the \$100,000 as of either reporting date. Other assets, in Europe, include life insurance endowments with a maturity value of nearly \$1,000,000 (£ 100,000 in a British company and the remainder with Dutch companies). 1/

Of possible interest as to the man's personality is a description by Otto Jeidels. Writing to a mutual friend in London, Jeidels speaks of David "Peartree" (Birnbaum anglicized) as "a genius, a great adventurer ... compressed into a truly unhappy neurasthenic Jew, with vices and weaknesses quantitatively balanced by true friendship, generosity and idealism."

The information contained herein is taken mainly from the Lazard Freres files, and while there may be other miscellaneous material no further search was made at this time.

*RAM*

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1/ Report NY 3-84B. TFR-500's not checked.

Mr. Lasser

April 19, 1944

T. H. Ball

Re : David Birnbaum  
63 Wall Street  
New York, N. Y.

David Birnbaum, a national of the Netherlands, was formerly connected with the Dutch rayon syndicate AKU (Allegemeene Kunstsyde Unie), and also had other textile interests. He first came to the United States in 1937, again in 1939, and entered on an immigration visa from London in July 1940.

He appeared in the Lazard Freres case in connection with an unlicensed payment of \$100,000 to a third party for his account, and thereby gained free access to these funds when they should have been blocked as Dutch. Briefly, the facts are as follows: Birnbaum and Otto Jaidels, who was then a Lazard Freres partner, had previously known each other in Europe, and Birnbaum had funds on deposit with that firm in one of the Jaidels accounts since 1939. As of May 10, 1940 the amount was \$100,000. On July 12, 1940, two days after he arrived in this country, Birnbaum withdrew this remaining balance in a check payable to Hubert G. Hohe, New York, who deposited the funds in his own name and then disbursed the entire amount for Birnbaum's account between July 1940 and September 1941. Hohe, a United States citizen and American representative for a number of European firms, had no other interest in the transaction.

When questioned in December 1941, Birnbaum claimed that the funds belonged to his son Fritz, a resident of the United States since 1939, whom he considered too young and inexperienced (28) to handle such a large sum and for that reason the money was entrusted to Hohe. However, it appears from the facts that he purposely used Hohe as a means to prevent blocking. A statement submitted by Birnbaum set forth that substantially all of the funds had been used for personal, business and family expenditures, and no action was taken.

According to his TFR-300 report, Birnbaum has substantial means. He reported gross assets of \$956,221 as of June 14, 1941, and total indebtedness of \$379,000. No mention was made of

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the \$100,000 as of either reporting date. Other assets, in Europe, include life insurance endowments with a maturity value of nearly \$1,000,000 (£ 100,000 in a British company and the remainder with Dutch companies). 1/

Of possible interest as to the man's personality is a description by Otto Jeidels. Writing to a mutual friend in London, Jeidels speaks of David "Peartree" (Birnbaum anglicized) as "a genius, a great adventurer ... compressed into a truly unhappy neurasthenic Jew, with vices and weaknesses quantitatively balanced by true friendship, generosity and idealism."

The information contained herein is taken mainly from the Lazard Freres files, and while there may be other miscellaneous material no further search was made at this time.

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1/ Report NY 3-84b. TFR-500's not checked.

HK Drenans:brf 4/19/44  
NAD.

D. BIRNBAUM  
63 WALL STREET  
NEW YORK 5, N.Y.

April 5, 1944

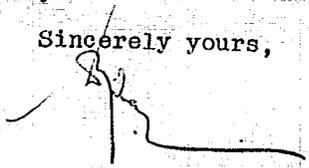
Mr. J. W. Pehle, Executive Director  
War Refugee Board  
Executive Office of the President  
Washington 25, D. C.

In re: 417

Dear Mr. Pehle:

Thank you for your letter of April 3  
and I am accordingly enclosing the explanatory  
memorandum which I promised, and, on the strength  
of it, I would very much appreciate an opportunity  
of seeing you shortly.

Sincerely yours,



April 5, 1944

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. JOHN W. PEHLE

In offering my assistance to the War Refugee Board, I have in mind especially to go to Lisbon, Portugal, or, if at all possible, to Berne, Switzerland.

I am a Dutchman by birth and lived in Holland constantly for the first forty years of my life and after that period, when I lived in England, I visited Holland practically every week. I was engaged in very important business in The Netherlands up to the time of the invasion and I am convinced that even today quite a few Gentiles, prominent in the economic life of that country, would not only be glad to contact me but would really make every possible effort to reach me, if I were in Europe.

Although one of my sons has been killed by the Germans in a concentration camp and another son is still living in The Netherlands, I am opposed to paying foreign exchange to the Germans for the release of Jews or non-Jews whose lives are in danger. My conscience would not permit me to pay them foreign exchange with which they could buy weapons in Switzerland and/or Sweden which would perhaps enable them to kill two members of the Allied forces for each refugee freed.

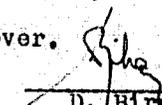
Once in Lisbon, my line of approach would be to try to contact some people (Gentiles) in The Netherlands and request them to do their utmost to come to Lisbon. I certainly would not disclose the reason for my request, but when I did get one or more of them in Lisbon, I would put the matter up to them bluntly, saying that, if they could persuade the authorities to release a certain number of Jews, provision would be made for payment after the war. I would not object to depositing the required amount somewhere in a neutral country in any form satis-

factory to those who can deliver, provided every precaution is taken to prevent the moneys or values from being of any use while hostilities continue. Moreover, it should be made clear that those, who really do deliver the Jews or others whose lives are in jeopardy, will be fully credited for their behavior, not necessarily only in a monetary sense, but in the way expressed by Mr. Eden last week in the House of Commons when he said that the Allies will know how to reward humane conduct as well as punish those who commit criminal acts.

It is my firm conviction that approaches of this kind can only be made by citizens of the countries in question or others who have lived there for a long time, and, in all cases, only through personal contacts with people still residing in the particular country and who have not been politically exposed, that is to say, neither Quislings nor officially known members of any underground movement. For these reasons I believe that I can only be of any use to free people from The Netherlands, whereas for other countries, citizens of those countries should be taken.

Of course, I cannot guarantee that I will succeed but I do believe that the idea is worth trying. The expenses involved would not be great and I am willing and prepared to pay them myself.

I have heard from many quarters that bribery is widespread nowadays, especially among the less important German officials, and I am not without hope that something could be done, as there must be quite a few Germans who know that the war is lost for Germany and who would like to have something to live on when the war is over.

---

D. Birnbaum  
63 Wall Street  
New York City

APR 3 1944

In reply please  
refer to: 417

Dear Mr. Birnbahn:

This is to acknowledge receipt of your letter of March 28, 1944, and thank you for your interest in the work of the War Refugee Board.

Your offer to be of assistance to the Board is greatly appreciated and I shall be pleased to receive your suggested explanatory memorandum.

Very truly yours,

J. W. Pehle

J. W. Pehle  
Executive Director

Mr. D. Birnbahn  
83 Wall Street,  
New York 5, New York.

EAT

HTowler 4-3-44

417

TELEPHONE WHITEHALL 4-6852

D. BIRNBAUM  
63 WALL STREET  
NEW YORK 5, N.Y.

CABLE ADDRESS: DOOR 27 MEA - NEW YORK

**W. R. B.**  
**Filing Authority**  
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 Initial \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date \_\_\_\_\_

March 28, 1944

Mr. John W. Pehle, Executive Director  
War Refugee Board  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Pehle:

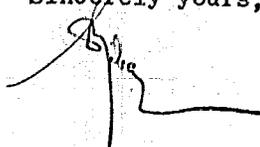
I doubt whether you still remember me, but I met you twice in 1940 and 1941 at the Treasury Department at meetings held in regard to a license for the American Bemberg Corporation, which meetings I attended at the request of the A.K.U. in Holland.

I am addressing this letter to you merely to ask whether there would be a possibility of seeing you in your present capacity as Executive Director of the War Refugee Board. I wish to say at this point that I am not seeking assistance from you but would like to offer you my assistance, if the same can be used; and I do believe that a conversation might be useful.

If you so desire, I am quite willing to send you a memorandum explaining in what way I might be able to help in your work.

Hoping to hear from you, I remain

Sincerely yours,



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