

EVACUATION OF CHILDREN FROM FRANCE TO PALESTINE

000222

January 22, 1945

MEMORANDUM FOR THE FILES

Reference is made to my earlier memorandum of the same date regarding my telephone conversation with Counselor Lindholm, New York representative of the Swedish Legation.

Mr. Lindholm called again this afternoon to advise me that Mr. Sven Salem, who was in his office at the moment, could enlighten me further with regard to the Swedish shipping situation. Mr. Salem is a representative in Sweden of both the International and Swedish Red Cross.

Mr. Salem advised me that there are three passenger ships tied up in Swedish waters at the moment. One of these is the Drottningholm. The other two might well be available for charter to the Jewish Agency for Palestine, but inasmuch as they are in German blockaded waters, a German safe conduct would have to be obtained before they could set sail.

Outside Swedish waters there is no Swedish passenger ship other than the Gripsholm. In addition, there are also the cargo vessels mentioned earlier in my conversation with Counselor Lindholm.

Mr. Salem stated that there are two excellent Rumanian passenger ships which have been tied up for some time in Turkey by the Turkish Government. He stated that both these vessels are probably well equipped for the purpose which Mr. Joseph has in mind. (If my memory serves me correctly, Ambassador Steinhardt reported many months ago that the Rumanian Government had made an offer to sell the two ships to which Mr. Salem is probably referring to the International Red Cross or any similar relief organization. I recalled further that the vital parts of these ships had been removed by the Turkish Government at the request of the Allied Governments.)

Mr. Salem is waiting in New York for passage on a plane back to Sweden. He stated that he would be very happy to look into the whole question if the War Refugee Board desired him to do so. I pointed out to Mr. Salem that I was merely making an inquiry at the request of Mr. Joseph and that this was not a War Refugee Board project. I advised him that I would probably call Mr. Joseph and ask him to contact Mr. Salem before his departure.

Mr. Salem stated that he was staying at the Plaza Hotel in New York, Room 434, and that he could be contacted at any time through Counselor Lindholm.

*M. J. Marks*

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MJMarks:nlf 1-22-45.

MM

000224

January 22, 1945

MEMORANDUM FOR THE FILES

Reference is made to Mr. Bernard Joseph's letter to Mr. Friedman of December 18 requesting the War Refugee Board to intervene with the Swedish Legation for the charter of a Swedish ship by the Jewish Agency for Palestine to transport Jewish children from Marseilles to Palestine.

On January 16, I called Mr. Lindholm, Commercial Counselor of the Swedish Legation, and was advised that he was in New York City. When I was in New York on January 20, I attempted to contact Mr. Lindholm there, and was told that he was in Washington. This morning Mr. Lindholm called me from New York, as I had left my name with his secretary in New York.

After explaining to Mr. Lindholm that the proposed movement of refugee children from Marseilles to Palestine was a Jewish Agency rather than a War Refugee Board project and that my inquiry was being made at the request of Mr. Bernard Joseph, I inquired whether any Swedish ships would be available for such a project.

Mr. Lindholm explained that so far as passenger ships are concerned, the Drottningholm and the Gripsholm are both engaged in transporting prisoners of war on an international exchange basis. In addition, there are certain Swedish passenger ships now in Swedish waters, but since these waters are blockaded by the Germans, a safe conduct would be necessary from the German as well as the Allied Governments before these ships could sail.

Mr. Lindholm explained that in addition, the Swedish Government has certain cargo vessels which are outside the German blockaded area. However, these ships are operating under charter for the British and American Governments. Furthermore, they would not be suitable for carrying passengers without extensive realterations.

Since all the above vessels, except those in Swedish waters, are being utilized by the Allied Governments in the war effort, it would be necessary to obtain their consent before they could be chartered to the Jewish Agency.

*W. J. Markas* Discussed with  
Mr. Hearst of Jewish  
Agency  
1/21/45

000225

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*MJM*  
MJMarks:nlf 1-22-45.

000226

DEC 26 1944

Dear Mr. Becker:

Enclosed is a letter dated December 18, 1944, from  
Mr. Bernard Joseph of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, to  
Mr. Joseph Friedman.

I should appreciate having your opinion concerning the  
availability of cargo vessels for the transportation of children  
from France to Palestine.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) J. W. Pehle

J. W. Pehle  
Executive Director

Mr. Arthur M. Becker,  
Lt. Commander U.S.N.R.,  
War Shipping Administration,  
Washington, D. C.

Enclosure.

MJMarks:inp

12/26/44

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000227

הסוכנות היהודית לארץ ישראל

## The Jewish Agency for Palestine

New York Office: SUITE 1205, 342 MADISON AVENUE, NEW YORK 17, N. Y.; Murray Hill 2-8803

Washington Office  
1720 SIXTEENTH ST., N.W.  
Michigan 4480

December 18, 1944

Mr. Joseph Friedman,  
Executive Office of the President,  
War Refugee Board,  
Treasury Building,  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Friedman:

In a note of the interview of Dr. Heller, Dr. Schwarz et al with Mr. Pehle on October 24th, I note that Commander Backer of the War Shipping Board told Mr. Pehle that cargo vessels would be of no use for children and that the Mediterranean position was such that they would still have to travel in convoy.

If cargo ships can be made available, but have not been, because it was thought they would be of no use, may I suggest that an attempt be made to get the use of such ships? I am sure that the children could travel on deck for the five or six days' trip in the Mediterranean. It would only mean providing them with some blankets and making the most elementary arrangements to meet hygienic requirements. After all it is much better to let them suffer inconvenience a few days and get them to Palestine than to have them linger on endlessly in their present unhappy surroundings in Europe.

If convoying is still necessary in the Mediterranean I fail to see why this must be an obstacle. Surely such ships can be timed to leave Marseilles or some other Mediterranean port so as to join a passing convoy.

May I ask whether it would be possible for Mr. Pehle and yourself to have the matter considered again in the light of the foregoing?

Many thanks,

Yours very sincerely

  
Bernard Joseph

P.S. I have just heard from the Swedish Legation that they require intervention by the War Refugee Board before they can act in the matter of the Swedish ships which I mentioned to you. You were kind enough to say that you would ask Mr. Pehle to urge such action by them. This, it would now seem, is indispensable if any action is to be taken by them.

000228

המוכנת היהודית לארץ ישראל

The Jewish Agency for Palestine

WASHINGTON OFFICE: 1720 SIXTEENTH STREET, N. W. • MICHIGAN 4480

December 13, 1944

*Noted  
JBT  
File*

Mr. Joseph Friedman  
War Refugee Board  
Treasury Building  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Friedman:

Enclosed is a copy of the letter I have sent to  
the Swedish Legation.

We will be grateful for anything you can do in  
the matter.

Yours sincerely,



Bernard Joseph

*Was in child  
from 22. 6. 1944.*

000229

December 13, 1944

Mr. W. Boström, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary  
Swedish Legation  
1900 Twenty-fourth Street  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir:

I beg to refer to my conversation this morning with Count Bonde concerning the possibility of procuring transportation facilities on Swedish ships for Jewish refugee children going from Europe to Palestine. At the moment, we are anxious to obtain transportation for 3,000 children, 2,000 of whom are in France and 1,000 in Switzerland. We assume it would be necessary to take them from Marseilles, or some other convenient Mediterranean port, to Haifa in Palestine.

In view of the terrible suffering these children have undergone and the desirability of moving them to Palestine as expeditiously as possible, we would be glad of an opportunity to move them even on freighters, if passenger ships are not available.

We should be very grateful if your Legation would ascertain whether there is any possibility of a Swedish ship being made available for the purpose, or of arranging for Swedish ships plying the Mediterranean to call at a North Mediterranean port to take these children from there to Palestine. We would, of course, be prepared to pay the transportation costs involved.

The Government of Palestine has made immigration certificates into Palestine available for these children and there would be no formal difficulties whatever about their entry into the country.

In view of the very friendly and helpful attitude your government has maintained in the matter of assisting Jewish refugees, we are confident you will give this matter your early consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Bernard Joseph

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100230

MEMORANDUM

November 3, 1944.

TO: Mr. Friedman

FROM: Mr. Marks

*My M*

Reference is made to Miss Hodel's memorandum of November 1 concerning Lt. Com. Arthur Becker's conversation with Mr. Fehle regarding the transportation of children from Marseille to Palestine.

Lt. Com. Becker called again today to say that there is a possibility that the Army may soon be releasing a palatial, ocean-going yacht capable of carrying between 200 and 300 children. It is Lt. Com. Becker's guess that this yacht originally cost between one and a half and two million dollars. If the Board is interested, there is a possibility that Commander Becker might succeed in having the yacht assigned permanently to the War Refugee Board at no cost other than insurance and operating expenses. In addition there might be alteration expenses which could be very little or as high as \$100,000, depending upon whether the Army has heavily armed the ship. Lt. Com. Becker feels that if the ship were released to the War Refugee Board, Admiral Land might be persuaded to have the War Shipping Administration operate it in behalf of the Board.

As Commander Becker is not yet certain whether the ship will be available, he is merely interested at present in knowing your reactions to the proposal.

000231

MEMORANDUM FOR THE FILES

November 1, 1944

Lt. Commander Arthur Becker telephoned Mr. Pehle today concerning the problem of sending children from Marseilles to Palestine. He advised Mr. Pehle that there were the two following possibilities of solving the problem of obtaining the necessary shipping:

1. When Germany collapses there will probably be a short period immediately following the collapse when our transports will not be wholly needed for military operations. During this period it might be possible to obtain one of these military transports for the shipment of the children to Palestine. However, Commander Becker feels that it is too early now to make such a request. He suggests that when the fall of Germany is imminent is the time to raise this point.
2. At the present time the Navy is gradually returning to private owners various yachts requisitioned for military purposes. Some of these yachts are very large and can accommodate several hundred passengers. It might be possible to get one of these boats for the transportation involved.

Aside from the two foregoing possibilities, Commander Becker advised that the shipping situation is just as tight as he had expected.

*FH*

F. Hodel

000232

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F. Hodel

FH:hd 11/1/44

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