Requests for Specific Aid: Wiener, Chiel-Henryk
FROM: Secretary of State, Washington
TO: Acrion Location, Bern
DATE: October 13, 1944

To Minister Harrison and McLeod.

1. In reference to Department's 3130 of September 9, 3255 of September 21 and earlier communications regarding admission of Jewish children from Hungary, Hungarian Minister of Education by communication of August 20 agreed in principle to extend to children from Hungary previous Hungarian consent to give asylum to a number of refugee children from France to be determined later, subject to certain economic conditions.

On September 22, Ecuadorian ministry of foreign affairs informed Embassy that "it is believed that Ecuador would be able to receive up to three hundred children provided that Ecuador furnished the funds necessary for the case."

By note of August 31, Ecuadorian foreign minister informed Embassy that since it made "no distinction in the nationality of the children which it would receive in no inconvenience that they should also proceed from Hungary." This applies to a previous Ecuadorian agreement to accept between 1000 and 2000 refugee children.

2. Substance of our 6669 of September 20 is being communicated to Embassy as aforesaid for appropriate action. In the meanwhile, the following Ecuadorian dispatch to Embassy of August 24 has been received.

QUOTE The 'Ministry of Foreign Affairs, having been informed of the persecution which at present is taking place in Hungary against persons of a certain race, among whom are many who possess passports issued in the names of American Republics, has addressed its diplomatic representative in Switzerland to arrange for the Federal Government an representative of the interests of Ecuador in Axis nations and satellites thereof to notify the Government of Hungary that the Government of Ecuador recognizes the validity of documents or passports issued in its name and that accordingly it is expected that the bearers of such papers will be accorded the rights, privileges and immunities which Ecuadorian nationals enjoy. Likewise it has been requested to state that the United States is authorized to negotiate the exchange of such persons.'

DECLASIFIED
State Dep't Letter 111-74

By R. H. Parke
SEP 12, 1972
The Ecuadorian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, in replying to the cablegram of the Embassy of the United States dated August 19, reiterates its intention of not declaring invalid passports granted illegally while they may serve to protect the life and property of their holders but (reiterates) that these persons are not thereby authorized to enter Ecuador. UNQUOTE

Pending further action by Ecuador, please try to make use of above to ensure prompt action by Ecuadorian consulates and embassy government in defense of holders of Ecuadorian documents.

3. In reference to last paragraph of your 6469 of September 11, 13, 14, which mentions as implying a request to represent Ecuador in Hungary to the extent stated, and have adopted procedure analogous to that described in your 6219 of September 20. Department's 24/0 of July 21 1st six applies to this case.

4. By note of August 14, Haitian Foreign Ministry informed Embassy that the following note has been sent on August 11 to Haitian legation Bern:

QUOTE Referring to cablegram of the 31st of July please ask Federal Government to communicate the following declaration to the German Government: 'Having learned that the following persons, namely, Abraham Berger, Eugenia Berger, Leon Fassner and Ilda Fassner, holders of passports delivered in the name of Haiti, have been removed by the German authorities from the civilian internment camp at Vittel to an unknown destination, the Haitian Government protests energetically against the treatment inflicted upon the above-mentioned persons, STOP The Haitian Government urgently asks for information concerning their address and their health and expects their immediate transfer to a civilian internment camp where they would be easily available for exchange and where, in awaiting this exchange, they will be placed under the supervision of the Protecting Power and the International Red Cross. STOP. The Haitian Government also declares that it will not permit that Germany places in doubt the validity of any documents delivered in its name and that it expects that the German Government will accord the holders of these documents the same treatment which the German Government expects to obtain for its nationals in the Eastern Hemisphere. STOP. Finally, the Haitian Government reserves the right to take action against any ill-treatment which might be inflicted upon the above-mentioned persons and upon all persons who may be in the same position. UNQUOTE

5. With
5. With reference to your 5231 of August 16, the following note from Cuban Ministry of State was received by Embassy on September 19:

"NOTE Although the data on Gelrrneter are not sufficient to enable a quick search, since it is a humanitarian matter the Government of Cuba desires to avail itself of the good offices of the Government of the United States of America to the end that all possible protection be given to Gelrrneter through the means which the North American Government uses in similar cases. The Ministry will continue the investigation started in the Department of Citizenship and Immigration in order to verify the exactness of the information and the Embassy will be duly informed. UNNOTH.

Please take appropriate action.

6. With reference to your 6524 of September 30, please express to Swiss authorities this Government's appreciation of their action in conveying to Hungarian officials the message referred to therein.

THIS IS TRANSMITTED TO Reft No. 213.

HULL

cc: Miss Chauncey (for the Sec'y) Abrahamson, Akhan, Cohn, Drury, DuBois, Friedman, Gaston, Hodel, Lesser, Parks, Rahman, McCormick, Nehle, Files.
PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: American Legation, Bern

TO: Secretary of State, Washington

DATE: September 30, 1944

NUMBER: 6934

Reference is made in the following to the Department's September 21 telegram No. 3255.

The Legation wishes to report in connection with second paragraph of message referred to above that, in accordance with instructions of the Department, it communicated by letter the substance of numbered paragraphs one and two of the Department's August 19 cable No. 2863, numbered paragraph three thereof to Swiss Foreign Office for communication to the authorities of Hungary. The reply which Inter­cross made to Legation's letter is summarized in Legation's September 3 cable No. 5796. According to Swiss note dated September 26 the Swiss Budapest Legation communicated to the Hungarian Government the substance of numbered paragraph 3 of Department's telegram No. 2863, on the 6th of September. On the same date Hungarian Government was also advised by said Legation of substance of paragraph two under numbered section one of August 23 cable No. 2900 from the Department.

The Wilner Case mentioned in last paragraph of Department's cable under reference, which was also the subject of Department's September 2 cable No. 3038, is being taken up with Swiss authorities again by Legation. If cases involving individuals who claim U. S. nationality were made the subject of separate instructions from the Department it would be most helpful to us.

HARRISON

Miss Chauncey (for the Sec'y) Abrahamson, Akzin, Cohn, Drury, DaBois, Friedman, Gaston, Hodel, Laughlin, Lessor, Meeke, Mannon, McCormick, Files, Pohle.
FROM: Secretary of State, Washington
TO: American Legation, Bucharest
DATE: September 21, 1944
NUMBER: 1226

FOR WOOLRUFF:

1. With reference to earlier communications regarding admission of Jewish children from Hungary, Ambassador Molnár reports that by a note of August 14, Cuban government agreed to lodge 5,000 refugee children now in France and Hungary. American Legation advised by LGC that Bulgarian government is ready to accept 500 Jewish refugee children from Hungary.

2. With reference to your 775/6 of September 9, clarification is desired. MINO, Department of 2342 (erroneously given as 3063) of August 15, while LGO was aimed at Swiss government rather than Hungarian actions. Nevertheless, interventionist attitude is regretted and you are requested to convey to Hungarian Embassy feeling that fear of misunderstanding should not be allowed to hamper the way if supervision of deportations can alleviate suffering of deportees. The very presence of Hungarian observers might have alleviative effect beyond mere humanization of treatment during deportations. Note to Department 10/40 of May 20.

3. With reference to your 5200 of September 7, request to express at the inability of Swiss authorities to transmit message contained in Department's 4332 of August 32. In the opinion of the Board, this purpose would be accomplished by the mere awareness of Hungarian government that deportations are being transmitted to Austrian authorities occurring in Hungary, whether or not they would accept the message in a formal sense.

4. With reference to your 4200 of September 4, paragraph two, it is considered here that document in question may be deemed to be covered by Salvadorian declaration reported in paragraph six of your 3272 of June 17. Accordingly, if in you judgment delivery of such documents would assist victims of deportation, you are advised simultaneously sending Board indicating numbers of documents you will send and numbers covered. It is also suggested that these persons be included in list which you will present to Cuban authorities pursuant to Department's 2170 of July 23. Paragraph numbered six, Department's 1507 of September 14, paragraph numbered one.

5. In the

[signature]

[Department]

[Date: SEP 12, 1974]
5. In the main connection, the wisdom of using old arms and eavesdropping in any communication is seriously questioned, being inconsistent with the stand taken by Department and Board and the Inter-American Emergency Advisory Committee for Political Defense.

6. With reference to your 3800 of September 7, please thank Swiss authorities for information reported therein and request them to continue pressing German government on basis of Department's 3160 of September 14, with 1643 and Department's 2040 of July 21.

7. Department's and Board's attention has been called to the case of Chiniquay Military reported to the son of an American citizen, and last known to have been in Saarbrucken.

Pursuant to Department's 1260 of April 23, 1944, please advise Swiss government that Miller's claim to American citizenship based on the citizenship of his father is under investigation by the Department and that until the Swiss Government is specifically advised to the contrary by the Department, Miller must be presumed to be a citizen of the United States in accordance with aforesaid dated Department's 1260. It is necessary to protect Miller and consistent with protection of other claimants to nationality of any American republic, Swiss may of course advise German authorities of the foregoing.

This is to cable to Berlin: NO. 175

RICE

[Signature]

[Name]

[Date]
FROM: Secretary of State, Washington
TO: AMERICA, Bern
DATE: April 15, 1944
NUMBER: 1249

FROM WAR DEPT. BOARD FOR THE REFUGEES

The War Department is informed that there are small groups of refugees from Poland interned at Vittel, France and Germany. They claim American citizenship.

The War Department is informed that the German government has not made inquiry of the State Department as to the validity of such claims. You are instructed to advise appropriate officials of the State Department of the proper time that such inquiries are to be answered in substance as follows:

All pertinent information available to the Department relating to any claim to United States citizenship, in the interned person within territory under enemy control, the Department will undertake fully to investigate the matter. While any particular claim to United States citizenship is under investigation by the Department and until the State Department is specifically advised to the contrary by the Department, the claimant must be presumed to be a citizen of the United States and must be afforded all the rights, privileges, and immunities to which such citizens are entitled with the exception that financial assistance may not (except in exceptional cases) be rendered until the Department specifically authorizes such assistance.

The following is in reference to the Department's list, April 5, 1944.


DECLASSIFIED
Date Date: 1/1/12
By: M. D. T.
September 12, 1944

MEMORANDUM FOR THE FILES

The purpose of the attached draft of a cable is to safeguard the life of Chil-Jerzy Wilner, born December 27, 1922 in Poland, reported to be the son and brother of American citizens and, in view of the reported naturalization of his father, David Wilner, to possess some prima facie claim to U. S. citizenship. His father's naturalization certificate number 2310880 is said to have been issued by the U. S. District Court in New York. David Wilner has also been issued a U. S. passport No. 3433.

It is not proposed that this claim be investigated by the Department of State, however speedily this could be done, prior to communicating with our Legation at Bern. On the contrary, it is proposed that the cable be sent immediately and the investigation should follow. Should the investigation lead to negative results, it is expected, of course, that in line with our repeated requests to the other American republics, this Government would not communicate such results to Switzerland while the claimant's life is in jeopardy at the hands of the enemy.

The only difference between the procedure here envisaged and the one provided in Department's 1269 to Bern of April 13, 1944, consists in the request that the Swiss government advise the German authorities of Wilner's status as claimant to U. S. citizenship under investigation by the Department, without waiting for an inquiry from the German authorities. This departure is believed justified in view of the fact that German authorities in the camp of Belsen-Bergen have been known in the past to pass on claims of internees to foreign citizenship without making inquiries of the governments concerned; and, upon having denied such claims, to deport such internees to death camps in the East. The U. S. Minister at Bern is invited, however, to exercise his discretion with due regard to the effect which such initiative may have on the fate of other internees at Belsen-Bergen on whose behalf no such initiative has been taken.

[Signature]

000396
MEMORANDUM FOR THE FELIX

September 12, 1944

The purpose of the attached cable is to safeguard the life of Chimenisky Milner, born December 17, 1914, in Poland, reported to be the son and brother of American citizens and, in view of the reported naturalization of his father, David Milner, to assess some use of a claim to U.S. citizenship. His father's naturalization certificate number 3166 is said to have been issued by the U.S. District Court in New York. David Milner has also been issued a U.S. passport No. 3633.

It is not proposed that this claim be investigated by the Department of State, however, speedily this could be done, prior to communicating with our legation at Bern. On the contrary, it is proposed that the cable be sent immediately and the investigation should follow. Should the investigation lead to negative results, it is expected, of course, that in line with our repeated requests to the other American republics, this Government no in not communicate such results to Switzerland while the claimant's life is in jeopardy at the hands of the enemy.

The only difference between the procedure herein envisaged and the one provided in Department's L669 to Bern of April 13, 1944, consists in the request that the Swiss government advise the German authorities of Milner's status as claimant to U.S. citizenship under investigation by the Department, without waiting for an inquiry from the German authorities. This departure is believed justified in view of the fact that German authorities in the camp of Buchen-Bergen have been known in the past to pass on claims of internees to foreign citizenship without making inquiry of the governments concerned, and, upon having denied such claims, to deport such internees to death camps in the East. The U.S. Minister at Bern is invited, however, to exercise his discretion with due regard to the effect which such initiative may have on the fate of other internees at Buchen-Bergen, on whose behalf no such initiative has been taken.

Bakir/sg 9/12/44
September 4, 1944

Dear Mr. Wise:

Regarding our last conversation, I would like to give you the reasons why I ask you to take up once more my brother's case with the War Refugee Board.

As I learned lately from the Palestinians who arrived with an exchange transport from Bergen-Belsen to Palestine, internees are constantly deported in groups from Bergen-Belsen to be killed, unless one obtains protection as an American Internee by the Swiss Protective Power and as a result is transferred to an established American Camp.

My brother is still alive at that camp and is the only U.S.A. Internee among the South American Internees there. His life hangs by a thread. Besides that any day he might be deported, he suffers from the horrible conditions at that camp that makes his existence impossible.

As I told you, Mr. Wise, already my brother had to be executed as a Jew by the Germans and due to the statement I sent to him, signed by the German authorities at my Camp Lichtenau that I possess the Original Citizenship Document of my father and I stated that he is the son of an American citizen, he was not executed but considered by the German Authorities as an American (U.S.A.) Internee and sent to Bergen-Belsen.

Since he is recognized already by the German authorities as a U.S.A. Internee due to the mere true fact that he is the son of an American市民, his life depends now only upon word from the State Department to the Swiss Legation Power. A letter to the Swiss Legation, Protective Power giving him protection as an U.S.A. Internee can save his life. The German Authorities after being notified by the Protective Power that my brother is given protection as a U.S.A. Internee would recognize him as such one and thus my brother could be saved.

Concerning the letter you told me about that the Swiss Legation was notified to give protection if inquiry is made by the German Authorities, I would like to explain that this does not concern cases like my brother's case but those internees kept at established camps.

The German authorities send inquiries to the Swiss Protective Power concerning only U.S.A. internees kept at established Internment Camps and naturally life of those depend only upon word from the Protective Power. My brother's case is different because Bergen-Belsen is not an established camp but a concentration camp. Concerning U.S.A. Internees kept in such camps no inquiry is made by the German authorities but the German Authorities should be notified by the Swiss Legation Protective Power in Berlin that my brother, Carl-Henryk Silver, is a U.S.A. Internee and protection is given him as such one. The German authorities would treat him then accordingly and thus he could be saved.
I, myself was interned as a U.S.A. internee for two years and was kept in different German camps and therefore learned how such cases are handled by the Germans.

I, myself know cases that some internees were transferred from concentration camps to an established camp after the German authorities were notified by the Swiss Legation Power that Protection is given to those internees.

I would like to underline that the Swiss Protective Power should not put my brother in a doubtful position so as to convince the German authorities about my brother's protection as a U.S.A. internee. This is very important.

I have faith that you, Mr. Wise, will help me to save the life of the only remaining member of my family. I express my deepest gratitude for everything you do for me.

Very sincerely yours,

Halina Steinlauf
April 3, 1944

May I request the good offices of the War Refugee Board on behalf of the man of whom I spoke to you the other day. These are the facts:

Chil-Henryk Wilner, born December 17, 1902, is now interned at Bergen-Belsen bei Hanower, bei Celle, Germany for further investigation.

Father, David Wilner, was a United States citizen, Citizenship Certificate No. 2310860, Passport No. 3433.

His sister, Halina Stejnleaf, United States citizen, was repatriated in March on the Gripsholm from the internment camp in Vittel.

His sister sent the following statement from the Concentration Camp on behalf of her brother in order to prevent his being sent to Poland and almost certain death:

"It is hereby stated that Halina Wilner Stejnleaf, the U.S.A. internnee, was in her possession the original document of the U.S.A. citizenship of her father, David Wilner. The above mentioned citizenship certificate was issued in the United States District Court, Eastern District of New York under No. 2310860.

This statement is made in order to send it to Chil vel Henryk Wilner, who is the brother of the above mentioned, interned American citizen.

Stabszahmleister (signature indistinguishable)
Internment Camp Liebenan April 28, 1943

Seal - Reservelazarett, Ravensburg
Internment Camp Liebenan
It is now requested:

1. That the Swiss Legation, Protective Power, Berlin, Pariser Platz 2, be notified that Chil-Henryk Wilner be considered an American citizen until investigation be completed.

2. That the Swiss Legation be requested to transfer Chil-Henryk Wilner from Camp Bergenbelsen (one of the most notorious of the concentration camps) to a regular internment camp where Americans are held.

3. That the United States State Department be requested to put the name of Chil-Henryk Wilner on the exchange transport list to the United States of America.

I am convinced, from talking to the sister of Mr. Wilner, that his survival depends upon the action outlined above, and I should be profoundly grateful for any action you can take at the earliest possible moment in his behalf.

Very cordially yours,

[Signature]

[Note: The signature is illegible.]