Cooperation with Other Governments: United Nations; Belgian Govt in Exile
CROSS REFERENCE ON COOPERATION WITH OTHER GOVERNMENTS
UNITED NATIONS (BELGIAN GOV. IN
EXILE)

FOR:

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

FOR FURTHER MATERIAL RELATIVE TO THIS FILE

SEE: PROGRAMS WITH RESPECT TO RELIEF AND RESCUE OF REFUGEES; EVACUATION TO AND THROUGH SPAIN (AND PORTUGAL)
FROM: American Embassy, London
TO: Secretary of State, Washington
DATE: June 30, 1944
NUMBER: 2194

In accordance with directions contained in Department's message of June 19, Number 4022, the ENSO agent visited Vicente Obert of the Foreign Office of Belgium on June 21 and voiced to him our wish that arrangements be made to dispose of the CHRISTINA's cargo at once.

It was stated by Obert that this matter was under consideration by the departments concerned, including Belgian Foreign Office and War Office, at that time.

The Foreign Office of Belgium advised ENSO orally on June 29 that they desired that part of their supplies which could still be forwarded to Geneva for ultimate allocation to Belgian war prisoners to be shipped as originally planned, but that, although they felt they were unable to give the materials, they were willing to sell the balance to the International Red Cross. The question of what definite monetary settlement the Belgians had in mind was not followed up by ENSO, in view of your instructions. The Government of Belgium has now instructed du Parc on this issue, according to our understanding.

WILMANN

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 11-72
By H H Parks Dec 1972

Miss Chaumay (for the Easty), Abrahamson, Akin, Bernstein, Cohn, Dubin, Friedman, Gaston, Hodel, Laughlin, Lesser, Luxford, Mann, Mannon, Marks, Motz, Mohn, Behle, Sargoy, Smith, Stansfield, Stewart, Weinstein, H. D. White, Files
Schoenfeld sends the following for the Your Refuge Board:

Substance of this message has been repeated to Lisbon.

It is stated by the Foreign Office that already all Belgian missions have been instructed to cooperate fully with the Board, but it will communicate again with the legation at Lisbon in the sense of your message dated June 10, 1944, no. 37552.

Buckhall
FROM: Secretary of State, Washington
TO: American Embassy, London
DATED: May 10, 1944
NUMBER: 3775

FROM WAR REFUGEE BOARD TO SOVEREIGN NEAR BELGIAN GOVERNMENT

Reference our No. 534 of January 28 and your No. 109 of March 4
concerning cooperation between Belgian Government and War Refugee Board
for fulfillment of objectives set forth in Executive Order 9417 of January 22.

Following cable has been received from Minister Norweb in Lisbon:

In getting adults and children from occupied territory,
representatives of Belgian Convention, Lisbon, are prepared to
cooperate with War Refugee Board. However, instructions from
the Belgian Government in London are desired by the Belgian
Legation here. It is suggested that the Belgian Government be
approached as regarding its attitude if the War Refugee Board
agrees and the Department concurs. We suggest that information
be furnished its representatives in event that it does not
participate in program.

Please request Belgian Government to instruct its Legation in Lisbon
to cooperate fully with Minister Norweb and Dr. Robert Dexter, War Refugee
Board representative in Lisbon, as suggested in the above quoted cable.
Please report result of your approach to Belgian Government.

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 13 1972
CABLE TO LONDON
From War Refugee Board to Schoenfeld near Belgian Government


Following cable has been received from Minister Norweb in Lisbon:

"Quote. In getting adults and children from occupied territory, representatives of Belgian Convention, Lisbon, are prepared to cooperate with War Refugee Board. However, instructions from the Belgian Government in London are desired by the Belgian Legation here. It is suggested that the Belgian Government be approached as regarding its attitude if the War Refugee Board agrees and the Department concurs. We suggest that information be furnished its representatives in event that it does not participate in program. Unquote.

Please request Belgian Government to instruct its Legation in Lisbon to cooperate fully with Minister Norweb and Dr. Robert Dexter, War Refugee Board representative in Lisbon, as suggested in the above quoted cable. Please report result of your approach to Belgian Government."

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May 6, 1944
2:10 p.m.
FROM: Secretary of State, Washington
TO: American Legation, Lisbon
DATED: May 10, 1944
NUMBER: 1314

FROM WAR REFUGEE BOARD TO MINISTER NORRIS AND DEXTER

Reference your 1292 of April 28, concerning cooperation between
Belgian Convention, Lisbon, and War Refugee Board.

We have cabled Schoenfeld, London, asking him to request Belgian
Government to instruct its Legation in Lisbon to cooperate fully.

THIS IS WAR REFUGEE BOARD NO. 17.

HULL

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-31-72
By R. H. Parks Date, SEP 13 1972

000749
CABLE TO LONDON

From War Refugee Board to Minister Norweb and Dexter

Reference your 1939 of April 19, concerning cooperation between Belgian Convention, Lisbon, and War Refugee Board.

We have cabled Schoenfeld, London, asking him to request Belgian Government to instruct its Legation in Lisbon to cooperate fully.

This is War Refugee Board No. 27.

***************
May 8, 1944
2110 p.m.
PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: AMLEGATION, Lisbon
TO: Secretary of State, Washington
DATED: April 26, 1944
NUMBER: 1298

CONTROL COPY

The following message for WRB is WRB Cable No. 9.

In getting adults and children from occupied territory, representatives of Belgian Convention, Lisbon, are prepared to cooperate with War Refugee Board. However, instructions from the Belgian Government in London are desired by the Belgian Legation here. It is suggested that the Belgian Government be approached as regarding its attitude if the War Refugee Board agrees and the Department consents. We suggest that information be furnished its representatives in event that it does not participate in program.

NORWEB

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 11-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP. 13 1972
CONTROL CORD

No. 104.

near the Belgian Government

London, March 4, 1944.

Subject: Present position of Belgian victims of Nazi persecution and suggestions for action to facilitate rescue.

The Honourable
The Secretary of State,
Washington.

Sir:

Referring to the Department's instruction no. 626, January 28, 6 p.m., regarding the establishment of the new refugee board and the general policy in the President's Executive Order of January 22 as to action for the rescue and relief of the Jews of Europe and other victims of enemy persecution, and referring also to our telegram no. 30, Polish section, of March 1 summarizing results of conversations with officials of the Governments to which this Embassy is accredited, I have the honor to report below information gained in conversation and subsequent correspondence with Monsieur M. Delormeux, who is Chief of Cabinet in the Belgian Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare and who was one of the Belgian representatives on the Technical Advisory Committee on Displaced Persons of the Interallied Committee on Post-War Requirements.

M. Delormeux stated that although it was in general very difficult for refugees to escape from Belgium, nevertheless every few weeks a small number of people do manage to get through to England, France, and Spain. He mentioned that recently it has been found necessary to exercise great caution as to these refugees because it has been found that the Germans were trying to use this method of sending out some secret agents. The great majority of Jews who were formerly resident in Belgium, M. Delormeux thought, had been deported; and though he was able to give no definite figures, he believed that the situation of the Jews was not very different from that in the Netherlands where (as will be seen from a corresponding despatch in the Netherlands series) the number of Jews recorded as residing in the country at the present time is only about five per cent of the former Jewish population, while perhaps another fifteen or twenty per cent, not recorded as having been deported, have "disappeared" and are believed for the most part to have been afforded refuge by non-Jewish friends or protectors, so that in one way or another their racial identity is concealed from the Germans.

In
In a letter, Delboeuf makes the following further reference to the present situation of Belgian victims of Nazi persecution:

"The possibilities of escape to a place of safety of victims of the Nazi persecution are very limited.

Belgium is surrounded by countries occupied by the enemy. The escape routes are few; they are very long and dangerous, even leading to Switzerland, others to Portugal via coupled France and Spain.

Those who are able to reach Switzerland are given a warm and kind welcome. Unfortunately, they are in fact in a cul-de-sac. They cannot leave the country without falling again in the hands of the Germans.

Those who reach Portugal are received with hospitality; from there it is possible either to secure them visas for Great Britain - the British authorities kindly listen to their cries once in this matter - or to help them to reach the Belgian coast."

On the question as to what special measures may be interfering with the rescue and relief of these victims, L. Delboeuf also that he could only repeat what he had already said as to the dangers in the way of escape arising mainly from the strict neutral ceremonies by the countries and the occupying German forces.

As regards measures taken by the Belgian government for the rescue of victims of Nazi persecution, L. Delboeuf notes that the Belgian authorities were doing all in their power to help those trying to escape, and in this connection he mentioned that a certain number of people, mainly young people able to fight and certain others considered to be in terrible danger, had been assisted to escape through an underground channel. It was, however, in his opinion not possible for this means to be used by taken or children or others unable to stand severe physical hardship, as they were likely to be subjected to extreme exposure. He estimated that less than one per cent of people from Belgium who had tried to escape unaided have succeeded. It was particularly difficult, he thought, for Jews to escape unaided because of the greater risk of their racial origin being detected.

As to possible opportunities for special action by the United States Government to facilitate the rescue of Nazi victims, L. Delboeuf referred to the lack of cooperation..."
cooperation from local Spanish authorities on the Franco-
German front and concluded that as far as Belgian
refugees are concerned, intervention with the Spanish
Government to try to bring about more change in this
situation would be of value. Later he observed that from
the Belgian point of view perhaps the most effective single
action that could be taken would be to secure in some
case that the Spanish borders were less efficiently con-
trolled. There had been cases, he Bellemennix said, where
Belgian refugees were turned back at the Spanish borders,
and up to a few months ago where they were able to reach
Spain, still were arrested and interned during two
months under the worst conditions. At this present time,
however, the situation was improving and the Spanish
authorities were not now so apt to put people into
internment camps, although they still do not encourage,
or cooperate actively in the entry of refugees into
Spain.

... Bellemennix mentioned that at one time there were
several hundred Belgians in Spanish concentration camps.
Although Belgian information indicated that most of these had
been freed in recent months, he sought that, if such a
thing were possible, it was desirable that the Spanish
prison camps should be inspected by Swiss and Red Cross
officials, or, if possible, also by American and Red Cross
officials, to make sure that no Belgian or other refugees
were still under detention.

As regards cooperation in helping to implement the
policies expressed in the President's Executive Order,
Bellemennix said that his Government favored any action
that gave promise of more effective or speedy relief.
"The Belgian Government," he subsequently wrote, "will
always be glad to cooperate with the Red Cross board
in view of realizing its highly humanitarian aim."

Several times in the course of the conversation
Bellemennix emphasized the horrible conditions that
prevail in the prison camps and the concentration camps
under German control, but he said that he could think
of no action which would be likely to affect the position
in those camps beyond what was already being done through
existing Red Cross channels. While it was possible that
some good might come of propaganda threats designed to
intimidate German officials, he was inclined to doubt that
these were of much use since the German officials and
the real basis, who were responsible for the worst of these
atrocities, had in any case no hope of mercy for themselves
in case of defeat.

Respectfully yours,

Rodolf E. Schoenfeld
Chargé d'Affaires ad interim

Original and photostat to the Department.