

Cooperation with Other Governments: United Nations: Belgian Govt in Exile

000743

FFC-76
(11-42)

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)

700744

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

Belgium

FROM: American Embassy, London
TO: Secretary of State, Washington
DATED: June 30, 1944
NUMBER: 5194
X

In accordance with directions contained in Department's message of June 19, Number 4829, the EWD agent visited Vicomte 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 EWD 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 EWD, in view of your instructions. The Government of Belgium has now instructed du Parc on this issue, according to our understanding.

WLNANT

DCR/GPW
7/3/44

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 13 1972

Miss Chauncey (for the Secy), Abrahamson, Aksin, Bernstein, Cohn, DuBois, Friedman, Gaston, Hodel, Laughlin, Lesser, Luxford, Mann, Mannon, Marks, McCormack, Pehle, Sargoy, Smith, Standish, Stewart, Weinstein, H. D. White, Files

*(War Refugee Bd
(Mr
Belk)*

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: American Embassy, London
TO: Secretary of State, Washington
DATED: May 15, 1944
NUMBER: Belge 5

(copy only)

CONTROL COPY

*Fate
JBT*

Schoenfeld sends the following for the War Refugee 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 10, 1944, no. 3755.
3135

RECEIVED
MAY 22 1944
WASHINGTON, D.C.
MAY 22 1944
MAY 22 1944
MAY 22 1944

BUCKNELL

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 13 1972

000748

*War Ref Board
Mr. Peller
Copy only*

ORIGINAL TEXT OF TELEGRAM SENT

FROM: Secretary of State, Washington
TO: American Embassy, London
DATED: May 10, 1944
NUMBER: 3735
X

CONTROL COPY

FROM WAR REFUGEE BOARD TO SCHOENFELD NEAR BELGIAN GOVERNMENT

Reference our No. 634 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.

HULL

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 13 1972

000747

RECORDED
INDEXED
MAY 10 1944
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR REFUGEE AFFAIRS
MAY 10 1944
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR REFUGEE AFFAIRS

CABLE TO LONDON

From War Refugee Board to Schoenfeld near Belgian Government

Reference our No. 634 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 No. 9417 of January 22.

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.

May 8, 1944
2:10 p.m.

[Handwritten signature] 5/6/44

000748

*was Ref Ed
and Keller
copy only*

ORIGINAL TEXT OF TELEGRAM SENT

FROM: Secretary of State, Washington
TO: American Legation, Lisbon
DATED: May 10, 1944
NUMBER: 1314
x

CONTROL COPY

FROM WAR REFUGEE BOARD TO MINISTER NORME 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.
x

HULL

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MAY 13 1944
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DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 13 1972

000743

RECEIVED
MAY 10 1944
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
GENERAL INVESTIGATIVE
DIVISION
MAY 10 1944
RECEIVED
MAY 10 1944
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
GENERAL INVESTIGATIVE
DIVISION

CABLE TO LISBON

From War Refugee Board to Minister Norweb 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.

May 8, 1944
2:10 p.m.

MEM
1075/6/uh

100750

*War Refugee Bd
and Phil
Copy only*

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: AMLEGATION, Lisbon
TO: Secretary of State, Washington
DATED: April 28, 1944
NUMBER: 1292

CONTROL COPY

RECEIVED
WAR REFUGEE BOARD
WASHINGTON, D.C.

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 concurs. We suggest that information be furnished its representatives in event that it does not participate in program.

NORWEG

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72.
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 13 1972

000751

CONTROL COPY

B. W. R. B. (Free)

No. 109.

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 Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington.

Sir:

Referring to the Department's instruction no. 634, January 28, 8 p.m., regarding the establishment of the War 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 Series, 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 A. Delierneux, 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. Delierneux 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. Delierneux 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 a letter L. Delierneux 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, some leading to Switzerland, others to Portugal via occupied 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 a visa for Great Britain - the British authorities kindly giving their assistance in this matter - or to help them to reach the Belgian Congo."

On the question as to what special obstacles may be interfering with the rescue and relief of these victims, L. Delierneux said that he could only repeat what he had already said as to the dangers in the way of escape arising mainly from the strict control exercised by the Gestapo and the occupying German forces.

As regards measures taken by the Belgian Government for the rescue of victims of Nazi persecution, L. Delierneux stated 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 imminent 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 women 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 unassisted have succeeded. It was particularly difficult, he thought, for Jews to escape unassisted 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. Delierneux referred to the lack of

cooperation

cooperation from local Spanish authorities on the Franco-Spanish frontier and suggested that as far as Belgian refugees are concerned, intervention with the Spanish Government to try to bring about some 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 way that the Spanish borders were less efficiently controlled. There had been cases, M. Delierneux said, where Belgian refugees were turned back at the Spanish borders, and up to a few months ago those who were able to reach Spanish soil were arrested and interned during long months under the worst conditions. At the 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.

M. Delierneux mentioned that at one time there were several hundred Belgians in Spanish concentration camps. Although Belgian information was that most of these had been freed in recent months, he thought that, if such a thing were possible, it was desirable that the Spanish prison camps should be inspected by Swiss Red Cross officials, or, if possible, also by American 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, M. Delierneux 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 collaborate with the War Refugee Board in view of realising its highly human aim."

Several times in the course of the conversation M. Delierneux 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 these 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 Gestapo officials and the real Nazis, 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,

Rudolf E. Schoenfeld
Chargé d'affaires ad interim

Original and hectograph to the Department.

JW:EE