

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

MEMORANDUM

Re: Jewish Refugees in the Netherlands

Mr. McCormick of the Red Cross recently indicated that the Red Cross has from time to time received cables from individuals in the Netherlands directed to individuals in the United States. Apparently the senders of the cables have been Jewish refugees and their messages have requested that their friends in the United States use all efforts to have their names placed on an exchange list and be given entry permits for Palestine. Some of the documents shown to us by McCormick indicate that the matter has been taken up by persons receiving such messages with the British Embassy in Washington. In one case the British advised the person making the inquiry that there was an arrangement whereby Palestine entry permits were granted to persons in occupied countries. The British stated that this matter was being handled for them by the Swiss.

I spoke with both Mr. Leavitt and Mr. Bergson regarding this matter with a view to getting such information as would enable us to perhaps take up the matter on an over-all basis with the British.

Mr. Bergson was not acquainted with this particular matter and seemed to feel that it was of relatively slight importance. He referred to his present effort to get the British to grant large scale allotments of Palestine permits, indicating that in his opinion this was much more important. He agreed, however, to give me any information he could get regarding this particular problem.

Mr. Leavitt was acquainted with the matter and gave me the following information:

1. About a year ago the British, through the Swiss, made an effort to get word to Jewish refugees in occupied countries that if they escaped to Switzerland they would be given entry permits to Palestine. At that time a small list was made up, principally consisting of certain important people known to be in the Netherlands and other occupied countries. The basis for this action was the indication at that time that the Germans were not deporting from camps Jewish refugees known to have permission to enter Palestine. The Germans were apparently doing this on the theory that they might wish to exchange such persons for Germans interned in Palestine.

2. The private organization principally interested in this matter has been the Jewish agency in Palestine. Various private organizations in the United States, including the J.D.C., have from time to time received requests that certain persons be added to the list and have taken the necessary steps to

have this action carried out. The list, however, still remains very small.

3. The most recent information that Leavitt has seemed to indicate that this procedure is apparently no longer completely effective for preventing deportations, since, according to Leavitt, they have received word of the deportation of certain people known to be on the list and to whom Palestine entry permits are available.

JAN 8 1945

My dear Mr. Ambassador:

I wish to acknowledge and thank you for your letter of December 27, 1944, (No. 8702) expressing the appreciation of the Netherlands Government for the work the War Refugee Board is doing in the interest of Netherlands nationals in Germany.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) J. W. Pehle

J. W. Pehle  
Executive Director

His Excellency,  
The Netherlands Ambassador,  
Netherlands Embassy,  
Washington, 9, D. C.

*John* *RBH*  
RBHutchison: 1/6/45 *JH*

NETHERLANDS EMBASSY  
WASHINGTON 9, D. C.

No. 8702

December 27, 1944.

Dear Mr. Pehle:-

Through the courtesy of the War Refugee Board I have been able to keep my Government informed concerning the various activities on behalf of Jewish Netherlanders undertaken by the United States Government through the War Refugee Board.

I was particularly gratified to be able to inform my Government that thanks to your continuous efforts, it has finally become possible to send food relief parcels to persons in concentration camps of which already 2,800 have been delivered to Netherlands citizens. My Government has requested me to express its sincere appreciation for the valuable work which the War Refugee Board is doing for Netherlands nationals in Germany.

The Netherlands Government has taken cognizance of the expenditures made on behalf of Netherlands citizens by your organization and will be glad to contribute to this work as much as it is able to do.

Yours very truly,  
For the Ambassador

Minister Plenipotentiary

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

December 28, 1944

MEMORANDUM FOR THE FILES

The information contained in the attached informal letter received from H. N. Boon of the Netherlands Embassy has been discussed with the JDC and the Vaad Hahatzala Emergency Committee. Neither organization is involved in a plan such as that set forth in the letter.



F. Hodel

NETHERLANDS EMBASSY  
WASHINGTON 9, D. C.

No. 8700

December 22, 1944.

Dear Miss Hodell:-

Referring to our discussion of yesterday I beg to inform you of the gist of the information which I received from a reliable informant who has not permitted me to use his name:

The "Joint", the World Jewish Congress and the Waad Hatsalah are planning an exchange of 150,000 Jews against \$30,000,000.- to be deposited for the account of the Germans in Switzerland in the form of Swiss Francs. The money would be procured by the above three organizations. As proof that this project is not fantastic, they quote the fact that 1350 Hungarian Jews who would be deported to Poland arrived in St. Gallen, Switzerland on Sunday, December 10, 1944. It is not stated how much was paid for the liberation of these Jews. This plan is developed by representatives in Switzerland of the above groups in the greatest secrecy with money which various wealthy Jews have given.

I trust that you will consider the above information which reached me from a private source as entirely unofficial and that you will not use my name or that of the Embassy if you decide to make investigations.

Sincerely yours,



H.N. Boon

Miss F. Hodell  
Special Assistant to the Director  
War Refugee Board  
Main Treasury Bldg.  
Washington, DC

**CONTROL COPY**

*J. W. B. B.*  
*(Teas)*

No. 127.

near the Netherlands Government

LONDON, March 6, 1944.

Subject: Present position of  
Netherlands 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. 034, 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 the substance of a conversation with Dr. W. Huender, who is head of the Bureau of Post-war Problems in the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and who was one of the Netherlands representatives on the Technical Advisory Committee on Displaced Persons of the Interallied Committee on Post-war Requirements.

Dr. Huender said that the Dutch authorities concerned with problems of refugees and displaced persons were in agreement with the policy of the President's Executive Order and would be glad to support any action which might be initiated by the War Refugee Board. He indicated some concern as to possible duplication of activities in the refugee field by the various national and international organizations, but asked that this be regarded as an "off the record" expression of opinion. He went on to observe that so far as avoidance of duplication of effort was concerned, one of the most useful things would be some arrangement between the various Jewish relief agencies for central coordination of their activities, perhaps through one central world agency. At present, he said, it sometimes happens that four or five different agencies start activities on behalf of one individual refugee, some of which conflict with each other with resulting confusion and delay.

Dr. Huender stated that of the 180,000 Jews originally resident in Holland about 140,000 have been deported to German Poland and that there are now only about 8,000 Jews,

Respectfully

recognized as such, still left in Holland. The remaining 30,000 have just dropped out of sight. Some may have found refuge in France or made their way through to Switzerland, but most of them are probably still living in Holland in concealment with the help of the non-Jewish population.

Quite a number of engineers and other people with special qualifications have escaped to Switzerland where they have been well treated and, in a great many cases, given employment. Wherever Dutch nationals succeed in reaching neutral or allied countries, Dr. Huender states, adequate assistance is provided for them by the Dutch Government: clothing, food, shelter and pocket money. Where possible transfer to places where they can join the armed forces of the Netherlands Government is arranged; and in some cases refugees who are not fit for military service are enabled to go to the Dutch West Indies.

With particular reference to Jewish victims, Dr. Huender said that those Jews in Holland who had been provided with a "Palestine Certificate" are in a relatively better position than other Jews, since the possession of such a certificate may assist the holder to avoid being sent to a concentration camp. He thought therefore that it would be helpful if it were possible to provide more of these certificates. Likewise, it would assist in keeping some Jews out of the concentration camps if more passports to South American countries could be provided.

Dr. Huender raised the question as to whether there might not be some means of providing more air transport from certain neutral countries, particularly Sweden. He thought that if people in Holland, who are in danger, knew that on escape to Sweden or Switzerland they would be able to go on from these countries and join more actively in the war effort, more of them might endeavor to escape.

Discussing the question as to whether any instances were known where refugees have been turned back at the borders of neutral countries, Dr. Huender said that some instances were known to the Dutch authorities, for example, Switzerland, but for the most part he felt that neutral countries, while they have not actively encouraged escape across their borders, have not put any special obstacles in the way.

Respectfully yours,

Rudolf E. Schoenfeld  
Chargé d'Affaires ad interim

Original and hectograph to the Department.

JR:PS

CWDG: Netherlands

MEMORANDUM FOR THE FILES

February 24, 1944

Re: Jewish Refugees in Dutch Concentration  
Camps Possessing Palestinian Permits and  
Rumor Concerning Exchange of Dutch Jews  
for German Internees.  
(Information taken from the censorship  
files of the Visa Division in the State  
Department)

The American Emergency Committee for Zionist Affairs of New York City cabled the Jewish Agency in Palestine on October 12, 1943 that a report in the New York Times indicated that the German Government is prepared to release a number of Dutch Jews for immigration into Palestine in exchange for German internees. The Committee requested information concerning this report (Station No. NYC 122,010-B).

A reply dated November 11, 1943 from Gerard Riegner to Leon Kubowitzki Arifh Tartakower (NYC 237069-B) states that of the remaining Dutch Jews in the Westerbach concentration camp, 900 have been exempted from deportation because they are in possession of numbered Palestinian immigration certificates. At the request of the Jewish Agency a list of these prospective immigrants was transmitted by the British Government to the German Government, which is treating the Jews on this list as candidates for eventual immigration.

In reply to the specific question relating to the rumored exchange of Netherland Jews for German internees, Riegner states that at present: " \* \* \* no such negotiations taking place one reason being lack of German subjects for exchange."

*My Marks*

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EJM:im 2/24/44  
11/11/44

*Netherlands*

MEMORANDUM

February 23, 1944

Exchange of Internees (Material  
obtained from file in Visa Division,  
State Department)

I. Dutch-German Exchange

1. Congressman Sol Bloom sent a newspaper clipping to Long on November 24, 1943, which reported that the Hebrew Shelter and Aid Society had received information that the Germans proposed to release a number of Dutch Jews for immigration to Palestine in exchange for a corresponding number of Germans now interned in Palestine. This information was supposed to have been received from relatives in Spain, Switzerland, and Portugal. The report stated that the German offer had been conveyed to the Jewish Agency in Palestine with a request to suggest the names of refugees who would be included in the exchange list.

2. On November 24, Long wrote to Bloom that this Government was asking the British Government about the proposal.

3. A letter of November 26, from W. G. Hayter, of the British Embassy, to Brandt states that the foreign office has heard that there is a Palestinian--German exchange scheme which involves repatriation of Palestinian residents now in occupied Europe and Nazi Germans now in Palestine, by arrangement with the Swiss Government. Hayter stated that he was wiring the foreign office for details.

4. On January 11, 1944, Hayter reported that London had stated that the above newspaper rumour was a distorted version of a scheme to exchange Dutch Jews in Holland for German nationals under Dutch control. This plan proved to be impossible because the Dutch wish to reserve the Germans under their control for other exchange purposes.

5. On January 27, the Dutch Ambassador in Sweden informed the Department that the only exchange presently envisaged by the Netherlands Government is a proposed exchange of 4 Jews in the Netherlands against an equal number of German nationals at present under the control of the Netherlands Government. (Copy of the Dutch Ambassador's note is attached hereto.)

II. Exchange of Polish Rabbis in Shanghai

On October 4, 1943, a conference was held between Rabbi Goldman, Rabbi Kalmanowitz, and Mr. Tress, of Agudath Youth Council, and Mr. Long respecting the evacuation of 464 Polish rabbis in Shanghai by an exchange with the Japs. Mr. Long expressed deep interest in the case but stated that it would be most difficult to justify the inclusion of non-Americans in an exchange passenger list if they displaced American citizens who would thereby be forced to remain in Far Eastern concentration camps. (Copy of memorandum of conversation is attached hereto.)

*P.E. Hartung*

GA-424

*File - "Exchange of Jews"*

The Netherlands Ambassador presents his compliments to the Honorable the Secretary of State and, referring to Mr. Hull's note of January 24, has the honor to inform Mr. Hull that no official information is available concerning the purported exchange of Jews in the Netherlands for German nationals now in Palestine.

According to information received from the "World Jewish Congress", several lists of names of Jews, who were qualifying for allocation certificates for entry into Palestine, have been communicated to the German government, with a view to prevent the deportation of these individuals into Germany.

The only exchange of Netherlands Jews against German nationals, which is envisaged at present by the Netherlands Government, is a proposed exchange of four Jews in the Netherlands, who were in the possession of Palestine immigration certificates, issued before May 10, 1940, against an equal number of German nationals, at present interned and

Wetter: Jan  
epre conge...  
to inform H. H. H.  
letter to H. H. H.  
refers to the Honorable  
the Netherlands

-2-

interned and under the control of the Netherlands Govern-  
ment.

Should further information concerning the pos-  
sibility of exchange for Netherlands Jews become avail-  
able, the Netherlands Ambassador will immediately in-  
form the Secretary of State thereof.

Washington, D.C.

January 27, 1944.

HNB/tvw  
Copied: VD:RU:BT 2/3/44

Official File Copy

February 10, 1944

MEMORANDUM FOR THE FILES

Congressman Celler called me this afternoon and stated that he had just been talking to Paul McCormick of the American Red Cross who had advised him that they had received word that the Nazis in the Netherlands were permitting refugees in the Netherlands to go to Palestine under certain circumstances. He was quite vague on the matter except that his informant at the Red Cross had stated that he thought the information was authentic. Congressman Celler stated that he had attempted to confirm it with Mr. Berle, who stated that they had received the report but were highly skeptical of its authenticity; that the State Department, however, was checking on it.

I inquired of Congressman Celler as to whom I might discuss the matter with at the Red Cross. He stated that the man was Paul McCormick, Extension 136, Red Cross. I spoke to McCormick and he stated that he would like another twenty-four hours to check with the International Red Cross offices as well the Red Cross files. He felt that in that time he could furnish us with a more detailed story. Accordingly, it was arranged that he would call me tomorrow afternoon to furnish me with whatever data was available.

He then stated that he was anxious to meet Mr. Pehle, that he was handling refugee work for the American Red Cross and thought it would be a good idea for the two of them to get together. I advised him that I was certain that could be arranged and I would discuss it with him tomorrow at the time he furnishes me with the information.

*GP*

cc: Messrs. Pehle, Friedman, Stewart, DuBois, Bernstein and Miss Hodel.

CWDG: Netherlands

**AMERICAN RED CROSS  
INSULAR AND FOREIGN OPERATIONS**

DATE February 15 1944

REFERRED TO J. W. Pehle,  
Acting Executive Director,  
War Refugee Board

REMARKS Attached please find a copy of a request to transmit a cable via the International Red Cross Committee to a person detained at Westerbork in the Netherlands. You will note that the sender is an employee of the Netherlands Government in New York. The text of the requested cable and the Chapter's note, seem to indicate that an exchange actually takes place in making exits to Palestine.

*Paul J. McCormack*  
Paul J. McCormack

AMERICAN RED CROSS  
WASHINGTON, D. C.  
INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS COMMITTEE  
GENEVA, SWITZERLAND



AMERICAN RED CROSS  
Washington, D. C.

Form 1816  
Rev. Sept. 1942

International Red Cross Committee  
Geneva, Switzerland

CABLE

CABLE

CIVILIAN MESSAGE FORM

Sender

Name GROEN, MAURICE T.  
Street 186 RIDER AVENUE  
City MALVERNE State NEW YORK  
Citizen of NETHERLANDS  
Relationship to person sought SON  
Chapter Nassau County Date 2/8/44

Message

(News of personal or family character; not more than 25 words)

"Did you receive Palestine immigration certificates arranged November. You both included preferential veterans list for pending exchange."

Chapter Note: Addressee, Tobie Groen, is father of sender who (sender) is employed by the Netherlands government in Radio City, New York. Sender has arranged for parents to be exchanged with internees in Palestine and is anxious they be notified they have been accepted for exchange.

Sender assumes responsibility for cable charges and for charges of reply cable.

Addressee

Name GROEN, TOBIE  
Address CAMP WESTERBORK  
HOOGHALEN, DRENTE  
Country Holland

Identifying Data

Birthplace and date of birth } Paris, France  
5/17/81  
Citizen of Netherlands

Reply on the reverse side

Réponse au verso

Antwort umseitig