

Cooperation with Other Governments: Latin America: Venezuela

000341

FFC-76
(11-42)

CROSS REFERENCE ON COOPERATION WITH OTHER GOVERNMENTS
LATIN AMERICAN (VENEZUELA)

FOR:

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

1. FOR RELATIVE MATERIAL RERECOGNITION OF LATIN AMERICAN PASSPORTS

SEE: 1. PROGRAMS WITH RESPECT TO RELIEF AND RESCUE OF REFUGEES: OTHER
MEANS OF EFFECTING RESCUES
(RECOGNITION OF LATIN AMERICAN PASSPORTS)

000342

DEPARTMENT
OF
STATE

INCOMING
TELEGRAM

DIVISION OF
COMMUNICATIONS
AND RECORDS

SFG-205
Distribution of true
reading only by special
arrangement. [REDACTED]

Lisbon

Dated October 4, 1944

Rec'd 4:20 p.m.

Secretary of State

Washington

3062, October 4, 1 p.m.

Venezuelan Minister confirms understanding that all
Venezuelan visas (REURTEL 248 WRB 86, September 2) must
be individually confirmed by Venezuelan Government in
Caracas. In view of this understanding which would cause
interminable delay question wisdom of any approach
Portuguese Government.

RB

NORWEB

CONTROL COPY

[REDACTED]
For security reasons the
text of this message must
be closely guarded.

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 14 1972

000343

*5-10-44
Ref Bd*

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: American Embassy, Lisbon
TO: Secretary of State, Washington
DATED: September 22, 1944
NUMBER: 2955
X

CONTROL COPY

The Minister from Venezuela at Lisbon has finally confirmed receipt of letter from Caracas which authorized the Legation to visa refugees' passports, children for Venezuela, whether or not they are going to Venezuela, in particular. Every application must be presented to the Foreign Office in Caracas, nevertheless. This is WRB 200.

In this connection the Embassy is conferring further with the Minister to find out if the arrangements which have been made are definite enough to justify approaching the Portuguese Foreign Office as your cable 2480, September 2, suggested. Because of the necessity to refer to Caracas with the consequent delay, the Embassy is doubtful if it is wise to approach the Portuguese without additional guarantees that the Legation in Venezuela could really grant visas within a reasonable time of the arrival in Portugal of the refugees.

NORWSE

DCR:MEB:EYN 10/2/44

UN OCL R SW R 25

RECEIVED
DECLASSIFIED
Date Dept. Letter, 1-11-72

By R. H. Parks Date SEP 14 1972

000344

FBI
Distribution of true
reading only by special
arrangement. (SECRET)

September 9, 1944

5 p.m.

AMEMBASSY,

LISBON

2408

The following for Dexter is HRB 88.

A communication from Embassy, Caracas, August 22, states that the Venezuelan Government has authorized its legation at Lisbon to visa the passports of Jewish refugees, especially children, who are traveling to the American continent, even though they may not be proceeding to Venezuelan territory.

You may find the foregoing helpful in inducing Portuguese authorities grant large numbers of transit visas to Jews in Hungary and other German-controlled territories. Please consult Venezuelan Legation and Portuguese authorities and advise of opportunities in this respect.

WILL
(HRB)

WBS:KID
9/1/44

WB

SB

DOE

Miss Chennery (For the Sec'y), Abrahamson, Akina, Cohn, DeBois, Drury, Friedman, Gorton, Hodel, Laughlin, Lerner, Mason, Marks, McCrummet, Peltz, Sargoy, Staudish, Weinstein, Cable Control Files

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter 1-11-72

By R. H. Parks Date SEP 14 1972

000345

copy

3 War Refugee Bd. Files

Caracas, August 18, 1944

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Files

No. 6374

Subject: Venezuela agrees to admit Jewish refugees from Hungary.

CONTROL COPY

War Refugee Board

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to report that I was today informed by Mr. Albert J. Foinquinos, of the Venezuelan Jewish Association, that following the receipt on August 12, 1944 of a cable from the HIAS-ICA Emigration Association, 396 Fourth Avenue, New York City, stating that the Hungarian Government is prepared to permit the departure of all Jews able to obtain visas for any other country, he and four associates took up with President Medina the possibility of entrance into Venezuela. President Medina was asked to allow entrance visas into Venezuela for (a) children under ten years of age and (b) adults under temporary visas for the war's duration to be quartered in free camps similar to those in the United States, England and Canada.

Mr. Foinquinos informed me that as a result of the discussions which the group of five including himself had with President Medina, the Venezuelan Government yesterday sent cabled instructions to its Legation at Lisbon authorizing it to grant visas to Jewish refugees who apply, regardless of age and without restrictions.

Respectfully yours,

Joseph Flack
Chargé d'Affaires ad interim

JF: jr

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-78
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 14 1972

000345

SECRET

30 War Refugee Board (T-100)

CONTROL COPY

No. 6248

Caracas, Venezuela, July 27, 1944.

Subject: Venezuela gives consideration to steps to provide means for rescue and relief of victims of enemy oppression.

*30 MR 13
30 War Refugee Board (T-100)*

The Honorable,
The Secretary of State,
Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to refer to the Department's secret (restricted) circular sirgram of June 20, 1:30 p.m. and to report the following action taken:

Steps were immediately taken through channels available to the Embassy to give publicity to the President's action and news articles on this subject were published in the principal Caracas papers supported by sympathetic editorial comment in some of the issues.

At the same time the matter was discussed fully with the Venezuelan Foreign Minister and the War Refugee Board's cable quoted in the communication under reference was furnished to the Minister in a note in which the significance of action in the refugee field was emphasized along with the determination of our Government to find a haven of refuge for persecuted peoples who can escape from German dominated areas. Inquiry was also made concerning the possible means by which further aid in the rescue and relief of victims of enemy persecution may be given by the Venezuelan Government.

In reply to this Embassy's inquiry I have now received a communication from the Foreign Minister under date of July 26, 1944 stating that the Foreign Office has examined the contents of the Embassy's communication with care and has requested other Ministries of the Venezuelan Government to acquaint the Foreign Office with their viewpoints on the matter, and that as soon as possible the Minister will inform me of the conclusions reached.

Respectfully yours,

Joseph Flack,
Chargé d'Affaires ad interim

JF:na

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 14 1972

000347

Files
CONTROL COPY

No. 6242

Caracas, July 26, 1944

Subject: Venezuela takes parallel action to aid oppressed peoples in German-occupied territory.

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to refer to the Department's secret airgram circular instruction of June 26, 1 p.m. embodying a telegraphic message sent to our Legation at Bern with regard to inability of access to individuals held in camps situated in territory under German domination, and to enclose a copy of strictly confidential note No. 2003 of July 23 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs stating that the Venezuelan Government has noted with satisfaction the steps taken by the Department of State, of which the Embassy informed the Foreign Minister on June 30, 1944, and had transmitted telegraphic instructions to the Venezuelan Charge d'Affaires at Bern to associate himself with the efforts being undertaken by the diplomatic representative of the United States in the sense indicated.

Respectfully yours,

JOSEPH FLACK

Joseph Flack,
Charge d'Affaires ad interim

Enclosure:

Copy of note
No. 2003.

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JF:er

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 14 1972

841.48 Flack 7-26-44

000348

Enclosure, Despatch No. 6242, Emb. Caracas, July 26, 1944

C O P Y -er

ESTADOS UNIDOS DE VENEZUELA
MINISTERIO DE RELACIONES EXTERIORES
Direccion de Politica Internacional
Seccion de Relaciones Interamericanas

No. 2003

Estrictamente Confidencial

El Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores saluda atentamente al Honorable Senor Encargado de Negocios *ad interim* de los Estados Unidos de America en la oportunidad de avisar el recibo de la interesante comunicacion numero 1783, de fecha 30 de junio ultimo, referente a un mensaje por el cual el Departamento de Estado comunica instrucciones a la Legacion de los Estados Unidos de America en Berna, con el fin de que ruegue al Departamento Político Federal suizo, que inicie gestiones para investigar las reclamaciones de nacionales de las Republicas Americanas internados por el Gobierno aleman en campamentos donde los funcionarios de Suiza y los de la Cruz Roja Internacional no han tenido libre acceso hasta ahora.

El Gobierno de Venezuela ve con agrado las gestiones que realiza el Departamento de Estado, y de acuerdo con los particulares contenidos en la citada nota, ha transmitido órdenes cablegráficas al Encargado de Negocios de Venezuela en Berna para que se asocie a las diligencias que en el sentido indicado practica el Representante Diplomático de los Estados Unidos de America.

C. Parra-Pérez reitera al Honorable Senor Joseph Flack las seguridades de su consideración distinguida.

Caracas, 23 de julio de 1944.

MEM/onp

C O P Y -er

000344

File File
O.K.

AIRGRAM CONTROL COPY

FROM
Caracas
Dated May 20, 1944
Rec'd May 25 3pm

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
MAY 26 1944
DIVISION OF
COMMUNICATIONS & RECORDS

Secretary of State,
Washington.

A-453, May 20, 4:40 p.m., [redacted] BY COURIER

Department's secret circular airgram May 11, 7:30 p.m.

In conversation at Foreign Office this morning acting Foreign Minister reiterated Venezuela's desire to be as helpful as possible in matter of assisting in protection of refugees in territory under German domination and referred to information previously furnished by Foreign Office and communicated to Department in my secret despatch No. 5881 of May 9, 1944. I then informed the Ministry of the urgency of representations in Madrid by his Government supporting representations made by our own Embassy there on the various aspects of the problem as previously explained to the Venezuelan Foreign Office. The acting Foreign Minister expressed his most sympathetic interest and promised to give this matter urgent attention. I shall continue to report developments.

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 14 1972
CORRECTED

FPC:JF:er

000350

No. 5881

EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

[REDACTED] - By Courier

Caracas, May 9, 1944

Subject: Venezuelan Government requests respect for its
passports in Germany or territory occupied by
its troops.

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington, D. C.

Sir:

With reference to the Department's secret airgram No. A-245 of May 2, 3:25 p.m., and to my secret airgram No. A-381, May 2, 3:13 p.m., I have the honor to enclose a copy and translation of a strictly confidential memorandum of May 8, 1944, which has just been received from the Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs, confirming the information previously submitted by me regarding the favorable attitude of the Venezuelan Government in protecting the bearers of its passports in certain European areas. The enclosed copy of the memorandum cited reveals that the matter has been taken up through the Swiss Government which has been requested to make a telegraphic reply of the result, and adds certain information given by the Foreign Office to the Inter-Governmental Committee for Refugees and to the Belgian Legation here. Further developments will be reported promptly to the Department.

Respectfully yours,

/s/ Frank P. Corrigan

Enclosures:

Frank P. Corrigan

1. Copy of strictly confidential memorandum of May 8, 1944, from the Acting Foreign Minister.
2. Translation of enclosure No. 1.

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JFier

cc: Miss Chauncey (For the Sec'y), Mr. Abrahamson, Mr. Akzin,
Mr. Bernstein, Mrs. Cohn, Mr. DuBois, Mr. Friedman, Mr. Gaston,
Miss Hodel, Miss Laughlin, Mr. Lesser, Mr. Luxford, Mr. Mann,
Mrs. Mannon, Mr. Marks, Mr. McCormack, Mr. Murphy, Mr. Paul,
Mr. Pehle, Mr. Pollak, Mr. Rains, Mr. Sargoy, Mr. Smith, Mr.
Standish, Mr. Stewart, Mr. Weinstein, Mr. H.D. White, Files

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72

By R. H. Parks Date SEP 14 1972

000351

Enclosure 2, Despatch No. 5881, Embassy, Caracas,
May 8, 1944.

UNITED STATES OF VENEZUELA
MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
Direction of International Policy
Section of Inter-American Affairs

Translation

No. 1258

Strictly Confidential

Memorandum

The Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs has the honor to refer to the oral representation on April 15 last by His Excellency the Ambassador of the United States of America, concerning the bearers of Venezuelan passports resident in territory occupied by the Axis in Europe. Reference is also made to the strictly confidential memorandum addressed subsequently to the Chancellery.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs has requested the Federal Political Department at Bern to express to the German Government the firm hope that the passports of Venezuelan citizens will be respected, and any others issued by officials of the Venezuelan Government, whatever the religious beliefs of the bearers might be, when they reside in Germany or in territory occupied by its troops. It was likewise communicated to it that the greatest importance is attributed to this statement and that it would be appreciated if the result of the representations would be communicated by cable.

Recently the Inter-Governmental Committee for Refugees presented to the Government of Venezuela a petition in favor of the Poles and other Europeans exposed to persecution of the Nazi authorities. The Committee was informed in reply that the competent Venezuelan authorities would not issue, during the war, measures designed to annul Venezuelan passports obtained exceptionally by persons in these circumstances.

Analogous assurances were given by the Chancellery to the Belgian Legation in Caracas, in reply to an appeal for protection of Belgian citizens who might find themselves in the same situation.

Caracas, May 8, 1944.

000352

A-345

3:25 pm

██████████
██████████
May 2, 1944

AMEMBASSY,

CARACAS (VENEZUELA).

FOR THE PERSONAL AND ██████████ INFORMATION OF THE
AMBASSADOR.

The results reported in your A-323 of April 15 are very gratifying to the Department and the War Refugee Board. The appreciation of this Government of the attitude of the Venezuelan authorities should be conveyed to them. At the same time kindly find out if an affirmative approach has yet been made through the protecting power. Please urge immediate action if this has not (repeat not) occurred.

Hull
(glw)

HULL

WRB:MMV:KG
5/1/44

ARA

Miss Chauncey (for the Sec'y) Abrahamson, Akzin, Bernstein, Cohn, BuBois, Friedman, Gaston, Hodel, Laughlin, Lesser, Luxford, Mann, Mannon, Marks, McCormack, Pehle, Pollak, Raine, Sargoy, Smith, Standish, Weinstein, H. D. White, Files

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks, Date SEP 14 1972

000353

KEM

AIRGRAM

Caracas

BY COURIER

Dated May 2, 1944

Rec'd 8 a m , 5th

Secretary of State,

Washington

A-381, May 2, 3:15 p.m.

Department's secret circular airgram April 22,
7:30 p.m. for the Ambassador concerning internees in
German occupied territory holding South American pass
ports

In supplementation of the action reported in my
secret airgram No. A-323, April 15, 3:10 p.m., I have
again spoken personally with the Foreign Minister in the
sense of the circular airgram of April 22 above cited,
who informed me that his Government is taking active
measures along the lines indicated and that as soon as he
had further details in this connection he would inform me.

He added that the Venezuelan Government had no precise
information regarding the number of Venezuelan passports
which might have been issued in Europe and reiterated
his previous statement that these passports would not
be invalidated by the Venezuelan Government.

DECLASSIFIED
CORRIGAN State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72

By R. H. Parks Date SEP 14 1972

FPC:JF:fkf

cc: Miss Chauncey (For the Sec'y), Abrahamson, Akzin, Bernstein,
Cohn, DuBois, Friedman, Gaston, Hodel, Laughlin, Lesser,
Luxford, Mann, Mannon, Marks, McCormack, Pehle, Rains, Bargoy, Smit
Standish, Stewart, Weinstein, White, Files.

1110354

AIRGRAM

BY [REDACTED] COURIER

FROM
Caracas
Dated April 15, 1944
Rec'd Apr 22 4p

Secretary of State,
Washington.

A-323, April 15, 3:10 p.m.

Having memorized the contents of Department's airgram of April 11, I took advantage of the first opportunity to discuss these matters orally with the Venezuelan Foreign Minister. I found him to be quite conversant with the situation and in entire sympathy with our aims. Dr. Parra-Peres informed me that he had already been approached on this subject by representatives of the Refugee Committee in London and the Belgium Government. He expressed approval of our desire to initiate negotiations for exchange on the basis indicated and promised full Venezuelan cooperation.

He said that he had received no inquiries through either Spanish or Swiss channels as to the validity of Venezuelan passports held by internees in occupied countries. He assured me that his Government would not "invalidate" any such passports even though under the strict letter of Venezuelan law governing issuance of passports their revalidation should become necessary by lapse of time. He also promised me that his government would affirmatively approach the German Government through the protecting power with a demand that the rights of individuals holding Venezuelan passports or claiming citizenship on the basis of consular documents be respected.

CORRIGAN

FPC:gw

Miss Chauncey (for the Sec'y) Abrahamson, Akzin, Bernstein, Cohn, DuBois, Friedman, Gaston, Hodel, Laughlin, Lesser, Luxford, Mann, Mannon, Marks, McCormack, Paul, Pehle, Pollak, Rajen, Sargoy, Smith, Standish, Stewart, Weinstein, H. D. White., Files

State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72

By R. H. Parks Date SEP 14 1972

100355

CONTROL COPY

5-100 Refugee Bd.
(Mr. Pehle)
Venezuela

No. 5643 Caracas, March 10, 1944
Subject: Venezuelan Government supports establishment
of War Refugee Board.

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to refer to the Embassy's airgram No. 135, February 11, 1:05 p.m., reporting that the Acting Foreign Minister had informed the Embassy that the policy expressed in the President's Executive Order of January 22, 1944, communicated to the Embassy in the Department's circular airgram of January 26, 7:00 p.m., and communicated to the Foreign Minister in a note dated February 2, 1944, along with an oral explanation of the policy, was receiving the careful consideration of the Venezuelan Government. A copy of the Embassy's note No. 1600 of February 2, 1944, is enclosed.

At the time of the receipt of the Department's circular airgram of February 29, 7:30 p.m., sent at the request of the President's War Refugee Board, the Embassy again approached an appropriate official in the Foreign Office and at the time of making further explanation of our Government's desire for the cooperation of the Venezuelan Government left a memorandum (No. 1651, March 6, 1944), a copy of which is enclosed, and urged the declaration of a policy similar to that made by the President as well as action comparable to the instructions contained in the Department's circular airgram of January 26, 1944.

I am now in receipt of note No. 671 of March 14, 1944, from the Foreign Minister, a copy and translation of which are enclosed, expressing the support of the Government of Venezuela of the idea which inspired the establishment of the Board, recounting the cooperation of Venezuela along

similar

similar lines at present and stating further that the appropriate official organizations are studying the possibility of giving concrete form to the cooperation which Venezuela could render to the task confided to the War Refugee Board.

I shall continue to follow this matter and transmit promptly to the Department further information on the extent of Venezuelan cooperation which I obtain from the Foreign Minister.

Respectfully yours,

Frank P. Corrigan

Enclosures:

- 1) Copy of note No. 1600, February 2, 1944, to Foreign Minister.
- 2) Copy of memorandum No. 1651, March 6, 1944.
- 3) Copy of Foreign Minister's note No. 671, March 14, 1944.
- 4) Translation of enclosure No. 3.

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JF:er

To the Department in original and hectograph.

Enclosure No. 1
Despatch No. 5043
Embassy, Caracas
March 16, 1944

C O P Y

No. 1600

Caracas, February 2, 1944

Excellency:

I have the honor, pursuant to instructions from the Department of State, to invite Your Excellency's kind attention to the following matter.

On January 22, 1944, the President of the United States of America issued an Executive Order in which he declared:

"It is the policy of this Government to take all measures within its power to rescue the victims of enemy oppression who are in imminent danger of death and otherwise to afford such victims all possible relief and assistance consistent with the successful prosecution of the war."

The Executive Order establishes special governmental machinery in the United States for executing this policy. It creates a War Refugee Board consisting of the Secretaries of State, Treasury and War. The Board is charged with direct responsibility to the President in seeing that the announced policy is carried out.

The President indicated that while he would look directly to the Board for the execution of this policy, the Board would cooperate with the Inter-Governmental Committee, UNRRA, and other interested international organizations. The President stated that he expected the cooperation of all members of the United Nations and other Governments in carrying out this difficult task. He stated that the existing facilities of the State, Treasury and War Departments would be employed to the fullest extent possible. He stressed that it was urgent that action be taken to forestall the plot of the Nazis to exterminate Jews and other persecuted minorities in Europe.

In bringing the foregoing explanation of the policy referred to above to Your Excellency's attention, I would be very appreciative if I might be informed as soon as may be possible for the information of my Government, the extent to which the Government of Venezuela is prepared to cooperate therein.

Please accept, etc.

Joseph Flack
Chargé d'affaires ad Interim

His Excellency, Señor H. Gil-Fortoul, Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs, Caracas.

Enclosure No. 2
Despatch No. 5643
Embassy, Caracas
March 16, 1944

C O P Y

No. 1651

M E M O R A N D U M

The Department of State has recently invited the Embassy's renewed attention to the Executive Order issued on January 22, 1944, by the President of the United States concerning a policy of measures to rescue the victims of enemy oppression.

In this connection the Embassy has been requested to make clear that the establishment of the War Refugee Board represents the United States Government's determination effectively to carry out as promptly as possible the policy to take all possible measures for the speedy rescue and relief of the refugees of Europe.

Although the United States Government intends on its part to take all possible action with the great urgency, it feels that this effort will not be unilateral and it is the policy of the United States Government to encourage and participate in effective cooperative efforts with the other Governments.

As set forth in the Embassy's note No. 1600 of February 2, 1944, the United States Government is desirous of the cooperation of the Venezuelan Government in this matter and it is its hope that the consideration which is being given to this matter by the appropriate Venezuelan authorities as indicated in the Ministry's note No. 379 of February 9, 1944, may contemplate also the possibility of implementing the cooperation which Venezuela may be prepared to give through (1) the issuance of a declaration of policy similar to that made by the President of the United States, and (2) the issuance by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of instructions to its representatives in other countries comparable to the instructions issued to officials of the United States abroad, as set forth in the Embassy's note No. 1600 above cited.

Caracas, March 6, 1944.

Enclosure No. 3
Despatch No. 5043
Embassy, Caracas
March 10, 1944

C O P Y

ESTADOS UNIDOS DE VENEZUELA
MINISTERIO DE RELACIONES EXTERIORES
Dirección de Política Internacional
Sección de Relaciones Interamericanas

No. 671

Caracas, 14 de marzo de 1944.

Señor Embajador:

Tengo a honra referirme a la atenta nota de Vuestra Excelencia número 1600, de fecha 2 de febrero último, relativa a la creación en los Estados Unidos de América de una Junta de Refugiados de Guerra, y al memorándum número 1651, de 6 de marzo actual, sobre el mismo asunto.

En relación con dichos particulares llevo a conocimiento de Vuestra Excelencia que la idea que inspiró el establecimiento de la mencionada Junta merece la mayor simpatía al Gobierno de Venezuela, el cual siempre ha prestado su apoyo moral a iniciativas de esta índole.

En la actualidad el Gobierno coopera en el mismo sentido en las altas labores humanitarias emprendidas por la U.N.R.R.A. y en las actividades que realiza, con idénticos fines, el Comité Intergubernamental de Refugiados que funciona en Londres.

Los organismos oficiales competentes estudian la posibilidad de dar forma concreta a la cooperación que podría prestar Venezuela en la noble y generosa tarea confiada por el Gobierno de los Estados Unidos de América a la Junta de Refugiados de Guerra.

Aprovecho la oportunidad etc.

C. PERRA-PEREZ

Al Excelentísimo Señor Frank P. Corrigan, Embajador, etc. Caracas.

100360

Enclosure No. 4
Despatch No. 5643
Embassy, Caracas
March 16, 1944

TRANSLATION

UNITED STATES OF VENEZUELA
MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
Direction of International Policy
Section of Inter-American Relations

No. 671

Caracas, March 14, 1944

Mr. Ambassador:

I have the honor to refer to Your Excellency's esteemed note No. 1600 of February 2 last, concerning the establishment in the United States of America of a War Refugee Board, and to the memorandum No. 1651 of March 6, concerning the same matter.

In connection with the said matters I inform Your Excellency that the idea which inspired the establishment of the Board mentioned merits the greatest sympathy of the Government of Venezuela, which has always given its moral support to initiatives of this kind.

At the present time my Government is cooperating in the same sense in the lofty humanitarian labors undertaken by the UNRRA and in the activities which, with identical objectives, the Inter-Governmental Committee for Refugees which functions in London is performing.

The appropriate official organizations are studying the possibility of giving concrete form to the cooperation which Venezuela could render in the noble and generous task confided by the Government of the United States of America to the War Refugee Board.

I take this opportunity to reiterate to Your Excellency the assurances of my highest consideration.

s// G. PARRA-BARRAZ

To His Excellency
Frank P. Corrigan
Ambassador, etc. of the United States of America
Caracas.

CONFIDENTIAL COPY

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AIRGRAM

Caracas

Dated February 11, 1944

Rec'd 5 p.m., 14th

Secretary of State,
Washington.

A-135, Feb. 11, 1:05 p.m.

Embassy's confidential despatch No. 5464, February 4, 1944 concerning rescue and relief of Jews and other victims of persecution in Europe, in reply to Department's circular airgram January 26, 1944.

Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs has just informed me that contents of my note of February 2, 1944, left at the Foreign Office that day, in which inquiry was made as to the extent to which the Government of Venezuela is prepared to cooperate in the policy expressed in the President's Executive Order of January 22, is receiving the careful consideration of the competent authorities of the Federal Executive.

FLACK

JF/fkf

000362

CONTROL COPY

3 for War Refugee Board (Lea)

Caracas, February 4, 1944

No. 5464

Subject: ^x Rescue and Relief of Jews and Other Victims of Enemy Persecution.

[REDACTED]

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of the Department's circular airgram of January 26, 1944 concerning the President's instructions to take action for the immediate rescue and relief of Jews of Europe and other victims of enemy persecution, and requesting (1) that an immediate report be submitted concerning the actual situation as it exists today in Venezuela and (2) that the Venezuelan Government be approached with a view to ascertaining the extent to which it is prepared to cooperate in carrying out the policy expressed in the President's Executive Order of January 22, 1944.

With respect to (1) above, there is quoted here with a confidential statement hastily prepared by the Secretary of the Israelite Association of Venezuela, well-known to and who enjoys the confidence of a member of the Embassy staff:

"Up to 1936 Jews who applied for visas at Venezuelan Consulates abroad obtained them without difficulty, under the same conditions applicable to citizens of any country or any religion, provided always that the usual deposit (sufficient to pay for registration if this should become necessary) would be made upon entry.

The situation changed in 1937. Then the Minister of Interior Relations, Alfonso Rojas, instructed all Venezuelan Consuls by circular that thereafter all applications for visas executed by Jews should be referred to the Ministry for decision. This act in itself constituted a restriction. The measure made it difficult for Jews to obtain visas, and the number of Jews who have entered the country since that time has been exceedingly small, those allowed to enter being limited to relatives of Jews already living here or friends of persons of influence who were prepared to sponsor applications and to furnish bond.

When the war broke out the BICEM organization, a subsidiary of the American Jewish Joint

Distribution.
DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 14 1972

000363

Distribution Committee, exerted every effort to obtain from the Venezuelan Government permission for groups of Jewish refugees to enter the country, but various visits made by Dr. Lazaro Selver (who has his head office at Bogota) and by Dr. Sobel (of New York) to Venezuelan authorities were fruitless.

The most that could be obtained thereafter were transit visas, provided always that the refugees had and visas from Colombia, Ecuador or Peru. This concession enabled groups of from 35 to 100 refugees to proceed here aboard the Spanish steamers C. BO LI HOMOS and C. BO DE BUIR. ESPERANZA. However, some of these refugees after arrival here were unable to continue on to their destinations because of errors in the visas or because not less had been passed by the countries named while the refugees were en route.

These transit passengers perforce had to remain in Venezuela, and in view thereof the Venezuelan Government issued instructions to its Consuls to refuse even transit visas to persons of the Jewish race. Subsequent efforts of the Jewish Colony at Caracas to obtain authorization for the issuance of transit visas in special cases were fruitless in almost every instance, although authorization was obtained in a limited number of cases.

The German steamer CAIBEL departed from Hamburg for Trinidad with 81 refugees aboard. The authorities at Port-of-Spain refused to permit the passengers to land, and the vessel then proceeded to La Guaira, arriving at the latter port in January, 1939. Members of the Jewish Colony at Caracas immediately interested themselves in the matter and were successful in obtaining permission for the 81 to land.

In March, 1939 another German steamer, the KOLNIGSTIE, left Hamburg for Georgetown, British Guiana, with 165 refugees aboard. The authorities at Georgetown refused to permit the refugees to land, the vessel then came on to La Guaira, and again, after various days of negotiations on the part of the Venezuelan authorities and members of the Jewish Colony here, permission was obtained for the refugees to enter Venezuela.

Since 1939 there have been no other cases of the nature of those just mentioned.

It is now extremely difficult for refugees to obtain visas to enter Venezuela. Upon applying for a visa the applicant is asked as to his

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race, religion and nationality, and if the person is Jewish, or of Jewish origin even though professing another religion, a visa is refused.

It must be added in all fairness, however, that despite Venezuela's refusal to adopt a policy permitting Jews or other European refugees to enter freely, once they were admitted in the past, they found a tolerant and generous atmosphere."

The foregoing picture is shown to the Embassy to be accurate, and further elaboration is deemed unnecessary.

With reference to (2), i.e., the instruction to approach the Venezuelan Government to ascertain the extent to which it is prepared to cooperate, the Department is informed that an appropriate note was delivered to the Foreign Office. The official to whom it was delivered was urged orally to obtain and communicate to the Embassy the Government's decision at the earliest possible date. Unfortunately, some delay will be experienced since President Medina personally decides all matters of important nature and he will not be back from his trip to the United States until February 5, 1944, and probably will not take over the Presidency from the Acting President, Foreign Minister Parra-Pérez, until Monday, the seventh. However, Dr. Parra-Pérez will be informed at once, to the end that he may give the matter consideration and in turn take it up with the President at the earliest opportunity.

The high Foreign Office official referred to confidentially expressed his personal opinion that, while Venezuela naturally would want to help and might take some refugees, it probably would take them only after examination of individual cases and would not take any large number en bloc.

The Department's airmail has been reported to consular offices in Venezuela, as instructed.

Respectfully yours,

Joseph Flack
Chargé d'affaires ad interim

TJM/skf

(To Department in original and hectograph)

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