War Refugee Board
American Legation
Bern, Switzerland.

UNION OF ORTHODOX RABBIS: REPRESENTATION IN SWITZERLAND (I. STERNBERG): "SCHWEIZ.
HILFSVEREIN FÜR JUED. FLIECHTLINGE IM AUSLAND."

January through June 1944.

Juris-Mappe Nr. 1000 (32 x 24 cm)
Kaiser & Co. A.-G., Bern
There is quoted below, in paraphrase, the text of a license which the Treasury Department has issued to the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada (referred to hereinafter as the Union). The representative of the Union is Mr. Isaac Sternbuch, St. Gall, Switzerland, and you are requested to transmit to him urgently the substance of the message quoted below:

"(A) Authorization is hereby granted to your representative in Switzerland, together with such agents as he may appoint, notwithstanding General Rule No. 11, by any means which may be deemed by him expedient or necessary, to communicate with persons in enemy territory or in territory occupied by the enemy for the purpose of arranging the evacuation of persons in such territory whose lives may be in imminent danger, to such areas of safety or relative safety as such representative may select, and, until such time as such evacuation is possible, to arrange for the safeguarding and sustenance of such persons, and to pursue any other action which may be appropriate for said purposes, including the payment of funds to persons in enemy territory or in territory occupied by the enemy who may have provided either services or goods in connection with the foregoing. For the purpose of acquiring the necessary local currency for the purposes of financing the operations referred to above, the following three methods are authorized, provided that method number 3 should not be used if it is feasible to obtain the local currency by either of the other two methods mentioned:

1. By purchasing in Switzerland the currency or exchange of the country in which the operations are to take place, provided your representative is reasonably that the sellers of such currency have held it since before the date as of which such country was frozen by this Government, or that, if the currency was acquired subsequently thereto, the acquisition took place under circumstances from which the enemy did not benefit, your representative when possible to
to consult with the American Legation Bern. Sellers of such local currency or exchange may be reimbursed in Swiss francs at the prevailing unofficial rate of exchange in Switzerland.

(2) By purchasing in enemy or enemy-occupied territory the local currency or exchange of the country in which the operations are to take place, provided reimbursement is to be made only after the war. In order to insure reimbursement to the sellers of such exchange or local currency after the war, blocked accounts in a bank in Switzerland or the United States may be established on your books in the United States, provided that without specific approval of the Treasury in each case there shall be no assignment of any interest in such blocked account or payment from it.

(3) By purchasing in enemy or enemy-occupied territory the necessary local funds, goods, services, or exchange, reimbursement to be made in foreign exchange or free currency notes, provided that such reasonable steps as are possible are taken by your representative to prevent such notes or exchange from being acquired by persons from whom the enemy may receive them.

(4) The total sums paid out from any blocked account which is established in pursuance of this license, plus the claims established against it, shall not, during the six months beginning January 1, 1944, exceed 430,000 Swiss francs or the dollar equivalent thereof.

(5) Your representative should report fully to the American Legation Bern on the financial transactions which are completed under this license, and should insure to whatever extent possible that the persons from whom the exchange or local currency is purchased are acceptable to the Legation. Your representative should be satisfied, so far as possible, that any payments made to such persons will not be of benefit to the enemy.

(D) Periodic reports on the operations carried out pursuant to this license should be filed by your representative with the American Legation.

Please advise Mr. Sternbuch that, unless the Union advises him to the contrary, his authority in connection with the above license is to be exercised in collaboration with Mr. Rosenbaum and Mr. David Rubenfeld. Please advise him further that this license has been issued as a result of reports that considerable numbers of Jews are now hiding in the forests bordering several European countries, particularly
particularly Poland and Hungary, where living conditions are most extreme and they suffer greatly from hunger and disease. Furthermore we are advised that active attempts can be made to rescue these people if the necessary funds are provided, their evacuation to Hungary from Poland being specifically contemplated.

Approval of these operations has been given by the Department and the Treasury, and the legation is requested to take such reasonable steps as may be required to facilitate their being carried out. The Legation's attention is invited to paragraph A, clause 3 above, in which specific authorization is granted for direct transfers of free foreign exchange into enemy or enemy-occupied territory if it should prove impracticable to adopt either of the two other methods of financing the program.

Please report promptly to the Department on the progress made with the program, and on any difficulties that may be encountered, especially as regards the financial operations.

HULL

In triplicate

re
Bern, January 26, 1944.

feasible to obtain the local currency by either of the other two methods mentioned.

(3) By purchasing in Switzerland the currency or assets of the country in which transactions are to take place, provided such currency or assets can be sold at the date as of which such currency was frozen by this government, or that, if any currency was acquired subsequently, it was acquired in good faith for value in a foreign country.

Mr. Isaac Sternbach,
Villa Golondrinas,
Montreux.

Dear Sir:

The Legation has received from the Department of State, Washington, D.C., a cablegram directing it to communicate to you, as the representative in Switzerland of the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada (hereinafter referred to as the Union), the text of the following license which has been issued to the Union by the Treasury Department:

(A) Authorization is hereby granted to your representative in Switzerland, together with such agents as he may appoint, notwithstanding General Ruling No. 11, if any means which may be deemed by him expedient or necessary, to communicate with persons in enemy territory or in territory occupied by the enemy for the purpose of arranging the evacuation of persons in such territory, whose lives may be in imminent danger, to such areas of safety or relative safety as such representative may select, and, until such time as such evacuation is possible, to arrange for the safeguarding and sustenance of such persons, and to pursue any other action which may be appropriate for said purposes, including the payment of funds to persons in enemy territory or in territory occupied by the enemy who may have provided either services or goods in connection with the foregoing. For the purpose of acquiring the necessary local currency for the purposes of financing the operations referred to above, the following three methods are authorized, provided that method number 3 should not be used if it is feasible

 feasibly
feasible to obtain the local currency by either of the other two methods mentioned:

"(1) By purchasing in Switzerland the currency or exchange of the country in which the operations are to take place, provided your representative is reasonably sure that the sellers of such currency have held it since before the date as of which such country was frozen by this Government, or that, if the currency was acquired subsequently thereto, the acquisition took place under circumstances from which the enemy did not benefit, your representative may consult with the American Legation, Bern. Sellers of such local currency or exchange may be reimbursed in Swiss francs at the prevailing unofficial rate of exchange in Switzerland.

"(2) By purchasing in enemy or enemy-occupied territory the local currency or exchange of the country in which the operations are to take place, provided reimbursement is to be made only after the war. In order to insure reimbursement to the seller of such exchange or local currency after the war, blocked accounts in a bank in Switzerland or the United States may be established on your books in the United States, provided that without specific approval of the Treasury in each case there shall be no assignment of any interest in such blocked account or payment from it.

"(3) By purchasing in enemy or enemy-occupied territory the necessary local funds, goods, services, or exchange, reimbursement to be made in foreign exchange or free currency notes, provided that such reasonable steps as are possible are taken by your representative to prevent such notes or exchange from being acquired by persons from whom the enemy may receive them.

"(B) The total sums paid out from any blocked account which is established in pursuance of this license, plus the claims established against it, shall not, during the six months beginning January 1, 1944, exceed $50,000 Swiss francs or the dollar equivalent thereof.

"
"(c) Your representative should report fully to the American Legation Bern on the financial transactions which are completed under this license, and should insure to whatever extent possible that the persons from whom the exchange or local currency is purchased are acceptable to the Legation. Your representative should be satisfied, so far as possible, that any payments made to such persons will not be of benefit to the enemy.

"(d) Periodic reports on the operations carried out pursuant to this license should be filed by your representative with the American Legation."

The Legation is further requested to inform you that unless you are advised to the contrary by the Union your authority in connection with the above license is to be exercised in collaboration with Mr. Rosenbaum and Mr. David Rubenfeld.

Very truly yours,

Daniel J. Reagman
Commercial Attaché.

Mr. N. Rosenbaum
Mr. David Rubenfeld

Very truly yours,

Daniel J. Reagman
Commercial Attaché.
To: Department

Date: January 29, 7 p.m., 1944.

No: 8415

Charged to:

Paraphrase

The message quoted in your E29, January 52, was contained in a letter dated January 29 which was delivered personally to Sternbuch on January 29. In accordance with the third from the last paragraph of the telegram from the Department under reference, Sternbuch was orally advised. He stated that he would consult with Joseph Rosenbaum and Leo (not David) Rubenfeld with regard to the action to be taken pursuant to the license and he promised to report to the Legation concerning the plans at an early date. Sternbuch inquired respecting the intentions of the Union with regard to the transfer of the funds referred to under (b) of the telegram from the Department.

HARRISON

$23,80

DUR: RCO:nf

In triplicate
Union of Orthodox Rabbis
February 1944.
Letter to Sternbuch 2/4/44

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

From: Department
Date: February 2, 9 a.m., 1944.
No: 341
Code:

Received: [Redacted]

"426,632 Swiss Francs, the equivalent of $160,000, have been transmitted to you by cable by us. The amount aforementioned is transmitted under Treasury license No. 602472-R and it is to be used by you in accordance with the license that was transmitted to you through the American Legation at Bern, Switzerland. The money comes from the Vaad Hatzala Emergency Committee; it was raised by Orthodox Jewry of all classes for the purpose of rescuing Jews as set forth in letters of Rabbis of Satmar and Nitra. Please consult the American Legation and, in so far as practicable, you should follow its advice. Periodic reports regarding your operations should be furnished to the Legation to be transmitted to us. Communicate with us only through the Legation at Bern. Please confirm that the money has been received.

We should know how much Swiss Jewry has raised for the purpose in order to prosecute our holy campaign to rescue Jews. Together with the names of Dr. Rubenfeld and Rosebaum, your name was submitted to the Department of State for heading a committee, but we now recommend the addition to that committee of the following persons: Mendel Wilner, Dr. F. Rom, Zalmon Pines, Alfred Barlowitz and Dr. Marcus Kohn. You are requested to comment regarding latter additions. Signed: Union of Orthodox Rabbis of United States, the Vaad Hatzala Emergency Committee, Rabbi Abraham Eismanowitz, E. L. Silver, Jacob Levinson, Israel Rosenberg, Aro Kolter."

Substance of foregoing message, which refers generally to our 229, January 28, is for Isaac Sternbuch, of St. Gallen.

With reference to Department's no. 229, the second sentence of paragraph A(2) should read as follows:

"By the establishment on your books in the United States..."
States of a blocked account, reimbursement subsequent to the war to the sellers of such local currency or exchange may be insured, or such blocked account may be in a bank in the United States or Switzerland etc.

The last sentence of the Legation's 615, January 29 should be answered by the message quoted above.

HULL

jh:nf
In triplicate
Subject: Union of Orthodox Rabbis - relief measures.

I telephoned Mr. Sternbuch at his Montreux address. He is in bed with the gripe but hopes to call at the Legation on Monday or Tuesday to receive the message transmitted in the Department's 341 of February 2, 1944 and to inform me of the steps taken pursuant to the license transmitted to him in the Legation's letter of January 26.

R.G.

Feb. 11. Tried to reach Sternbuch in St. Gall and Montreux. He is still sick at his home in St. Gall and his house has no telephone. I left a message for him to get in touch with me as soon as possible. R.G.

Feb. 12. Tried to reach Sternbuch. Not in St. Gall. No answer from the number in Zurich where he was supposed to be. Hamm left message for him to call me. R.G.

Feb. 15. Called Sternbuch's business. They stated he might show up in the afternoon. Called later and arranged with his secretary for S. to pick up letters from Zurich Consulate General.
Dorn, February 4, 1944

Dear Mr. Sternbuch,

Mr. Isaac Sternbuch,
Villa Colondalles,
Montreux.

Dear Sir:

Reference is made to the Legation's letter of January 24, 1944, which transmitted to you the text of a license issued by the Treasury Department to the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada. The Legation has now received a telegram from the Department of State stating that the second sentence of paragraph 4(g) of the license transmitted to you should read as follows:

"by the establishment, on your books in the United States, of a blocked account, reimbursement subsequent to the war to the sellers of such local currency or exchange may be insured; or such blocked account may be in a bank in the United States or Switzerland, provided that without specific approval of the Treasury in each case there shall be no assignment of any interest or funds in such blocked account or payment from it."

It would be appreciated if you would acknowledge the receipt of this letter and the fact that you have taken note of the alteration in the text of the license issued to the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada.

Very truly yours,

Daniel J. Reagan,
Commercial Attaché.
Bern, February 4, 1944

Mr. Isaac Sternbach,
Mr. Isaac Sternbach,
Willa Colondelies,
Monteux.

Dear Sir:

Dear Sir:

The following telegraphic message which has been received:

Reference is made to your interview with Mr. Gutsinger on January 27, 1944, concerning the license issued by the Treasury Department to the Union of Orthodoxy Rabbinical of the United States and Canada and the authorization given you to arrange for the evacuation of Jews from enemy territory. I should like to refer to the oral instruction that was made to the Legation's name to be used or reference made to the Legation in connection with the project for the evacuation of Jewish refugees or the acquisition of funds to carry out evacuation without the Legation's specific authorization.

Please quote it, as set forth in letters of Rabbi of Netzer and Spero. Please quote it, as set forth in letters of Rabbi of Netzer and Spero.

Very truly yours,

Daniel J. Reagan,
Commercial Attaché

We should know in order to proceed with our holy

Daniel J. Reagan,
Commercial Attaché

A true copy of the alleged original:

committee
Bern, February 4, 1944

Mr. Isaac Sternbuch,
Villa Colondalles,
Montreux.

Dear Sir:

The Legation has been requested to transmit to you the following telegraphic message which has been received through the Department of State, Washington, D.C.:

"Swiss francs 428,632, the equivalent of $100,000, have been transmitted to you by cable by us. The amount aforementioned is transmitted under Treasury license No. 602472-R and it is to be used by you in accordance with the license that was transmitted to you through the American Legation at Bern, Switzerland. The money comes from the Vaad Haatzala Emergency Committee; it was raised by Orthodox Jewry of all classes for the purpose of rescuing Jews as set forth in letters of Rabbis of Satmar and Mitta. Please consult the American Legation and, in so far as practicable, you should follow its advice. Periodic reports regarding your operations should be furnished to the Legation to be transmitted to us. Communicate with us only through the Legation at Bern. Please confirm that the money has been received."

"We should know how much Swiss Jewry has raised for the purpose in order to prosecute our holy campaign to rescue Jews. Together with the names of Dr. Rubenfeld and Rosenbaum, your name was submitted to the Department of State as heading a committee"
committee of 21, but we now recommend the addition to that committee of the following persons: Mendel Wilner, Dr. F. Ros, Zalmon Pines, Alfred Barlowitz, and Dr. Marcus Kohn. You are requested to comment regarding letter additions. Signed: Union of Orthodox Rabbis of United States, the Yeshiva Hatzala Emergency Committee, Rabbi Abraham Kalmanowitz, E.L. Silver, Jacob Levinson, Israel Rosenberg, Aron Kolter."

It would be appreciated if you would acknowledge the receipt of this letter and telephone to the Legation for an appointment when you have prepared the reply requested to the message quoted above.

Very truly yours,

Daniel J. Reagan,
Commercial Attaché.
To the Legation of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Bern.

Dear Mr. Göttinger,

In the name of Mr. Sternbueh I herewith beg to refer to the telephonic call with you and further to your esteemed letter dated January 26th, which he had the honour of receiving from you personally. Mr. Sternbueh expresses you his deepest recognition for all your efforts in the matter in question and wishes to apologize that owing to his falling ill he has been unable to let you have any communication before.

Mr. Sternbueh has taken the necessary steps and will be pleased to give you a full report about the matter after his recovery which he hopes will be the case within a few days.

In the meantime he begs to remain, dear Sir,

Yours most respectfully.
To the Legation

BY COURIER

Bern, February 16, 1944.

Dear Mr. Woods:

It would be appreciated if you would deliver personally the enclosed three letters dated February 4, to Mr. Isaac Sternbuch, representative in Switzerland of the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada. Mr. Sternbuch, according to arrangements made by telephone between Mr. Getzinger and Mr. Sternbuch's secretary, will call at the Consulate General in the next few days.

Will you please explain to Mr. Sternbuch that the Legation regrets the delay in the delivery of these letters. However, since this material could not be entrusted to the open mail and since Mr. Sternbuch because of illness was unable personally to accept their delivery, the delay was unavoidable.

It would be appreciated if you would inform me by phone as soon as the letters have been delivered to Mr. Sternbuch. If he fails to call by Thursday, February 17, please telephone me.

Mr. Sternbuch may desire to forward a report to the Legation through you. Any messages he may desire to transmit to the Legation through you should be accepted and forwarded to Bern by the next courier.

Enclosures: 3 letters to Mr. Sternbuch.

Sincerely yours,

For the Minister

Daniel J. Reagan

Sam E. Woods, Esquire,
American Consul-General,
Zurich, Switzerland

[Handwritten note:]

Wednesday, Feb. 16. Mr. Woods called at 3:30 P.M. The state delivery had been off. Tr. 3
To the Legation of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, Bern.

Dear Mr. Gützinger,

Will you please excuse the delay of my reply to your esteemed letter of Jan. 26th, which is due to a case of illness.

Firstly I want to confirm that I have taken best note of all the details in your letter and that I will keep your instructions in every respect.

As regards your propositions No. 1-3 regarding the remittance of the money I beg to say that in my opinion only No. 2 of your propositions could be taken in consideration. By that way we do the best in order that the money should remain in Switzerland.

In order to make the first trial in our action to save people, we did pay 100,000 Pengos each to three personalities in Hungary who were prepared to occupy themselves with the work of rescue.

The payment to these persons has been made through a friend of my brother Ing. M. Sternbuch St. Gall at the cheap rate of 13 Pengos for 1 Swiss Frano, altogether Frn. 23,769.90. The friend in Hungary is interested to have his money in Switzerland and this is the reason that he grants this cheap rate. In this way we are saving people without sending off money from Switzerland.

I am also looking for a way to send a big amount to the Grand Rabbi of Neutral (Slovakia) according to the telegraphic instructions of the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States. This wellknown Rabbi is a place of concealment of different people and is certainly able to save them. I hope that a payment could be made in the course of the next days under the same supposition that the counter-value will remain in Switzerland.

I will not fail to let you have, as requested by you, a periodical report as soon as the first saved people will arrive in Hungary. Meanwhile, I beg to express you, dear Mr. Gützinger, my heartiest thanks for all your efforts.

I beg to remain, dear Sir,

Yours very sincerely,
To: Department

Date: February 17, noon, 1944

No: 987

Charged to:

Reference is made to your no. 341 of February 2.

The message contained in the Department's telegram cited above and the correction of paragraph A2 of the license transmitted in the Department's no. 229 of January 22 could not be received by Sternbuch until February 16 because of S's illness. Delivery was effected through the Consulate General at Zürich on February 16. Sternbuch has been requested to transmit reply to the Union of Orthodox Rabbis through this Legation.

HARRISON

DwR: SCG: nf

In triplicate
February 29, 1944.

To: Department
Date: February 19, 9 p.m., 1944.
No: 1054
Code:

Paraphrase

Please refer to Legation's 967 of February 17.

It is reported by Sternbuch that he has purchased 100,000 pengoes for Swiss francs 23,077, the francs remaining in Switzerland. This purchase was in accordance with provision A5 of license transmitted in your 229 of January 22. S. states that the pengoes have been turned over to three persons in Hungary who are prepared to undertake rescue work. Through a similar arrangement he is endeavoring to make available a large amount of funds for rescue work in Slovakia. Since A5 avoids the possibility of transferring foreign exchange in enemy territory, Sternbuch considers it the only feasible method of operation.

HARRISON

DJB:RGG:mf
In triplicate
Dear Mr. Oetsinger,

I herewith take the liberty of calling your attention, dear Sire, to the fact that the citizens of various South-American states, who are interned at Belson-Bergen, respectively at the camp of Zelle near Hannover, are completely cut off from the outer world. Contrary to other camps no news can be received from these people and also the Red Cross is not in a position to pass on the ordinary parcels to them. Some hundred or even some thousand people are said to be deported there, but the names of these are not known.

Today I received a card from a relative of mine from the camp at Tittmoning, dated Febr. 20th. In this letter the man writing me that a family whom I know (being South-American subjects of latter days from camp at Westerbork in Holland) which was liquidated partly in the meantime, have also been brought to the camp of Zelle near Hannover some of these days together with whole families. This means that from now on no more news will be had by these people, too, nor will they ever get the parcels through the Red Cross.

Perhaps it would be possible for you, dear Sire, to clear this urgent question up through your Government or through the Red Cross and to intervene somehow in an energetic way. Mr. Locher of the Red Cross, though, informed me by telephone that he is not able to do anything in this matter and advised me to try to get in contact with you. Therefore I beg to ask you, dear Sire, to do all the necessary in order to attain that these interned are
treated in the same way as the other interned people of other American camps in Germany. I believe that for the moment the Red Cross is most suitable for the intercourse in order to get some information through the help of the Swiss Embassy in Berlin. I suppose that the Chief, Prof. Burkhard would attend to this matter if the same came to his hands and if you instructed your representative with the Red Cross accordingly.

Will you, dear Sire, kindly accept my deepest and sincerest apology for causing you so much trouble, and believe me to be, dear Sire,

Yours most respectfully

[Signature]
To the Legation of the United States of America
Bern.

Dear Mr. Götzinger,

On Feb., 16th I had the honor to receive your esteemed letters through the Consulate General in Zurich. Thanking you again for your kind efforts, I herewith beg to confirm, according to your wish, that I have taken note of the following:

1. to consider the relations with the Legation as strictly confidential. I will act exactly according to your instructions although I could not admit any responsibility for any indiscretion which could be caused through other members of the committee. At any rate, I did everything necessary to exclude that possibility. I also confirm you the details respecting

2. the remittance of the money. It has been taken care that the money remains in Switzerland in any case. However, the way proposed by you could not be used by any means as nobody would be prepared to have his money looked up. Such guarantees are given which can be considered as sufficient for the fact that the money remains in Switzerland. We are not making these remittances through banking houses or unknown persons but only through men whom we know and who merit absolute confidence. The undersigned will take the liberty of discussing this question with you at the beginning of the coming week.

3. I cannot yet report to you much about the rescue-action. All steps in this direction have been commenced; however, owing to the coldness and the snowfall on all frontiers no results have been obtained up to this day. We are in steady connection with Budapest and are expecting further reports every day. On the beginning of the coming week I will take the liberty of sending you a detailed report for the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of USA regarding the different questions they submitted to me. I will perhaps remit to you this report Tuesday next at the latest.

I also would be greatly thankful to you if you would help with regard to another important matter which concerns the Union of orthodox rabbis. Since 10 days I am in connection with the International Committee of the Red Cross, Nessar, Haasl and Loebor (Chief of the American service) regarding the supply of about 500 kgs., of Passover bread (Marzen) to the orthodox American interned persons in the camps of Theresienstadt and Thonien. The said gentlemen were so kind to make a telegraphic inquiry, but have not yet received any reply. It would certainly be useful if you would be so kind as to get into telephonic connection with these men.
To the Legation of the USA in Bern.

Febr. 24th, 1944.

...or perhaps ask an accelerated settlement of this matter in Washington. For the transport of these Maszen several weeks will be needed and it could happen that they will arrive too late or even could not be obtained eventually next week. The interned persons have asked these Maszen every year.

With repeated thanks for your valuable efforts and best regards, I beg to remain,

dear Mr. Götzinger,

Very sincerely yours

[Signature]

J. STERNBUCH
MONTREUX

TEL. 2000
TELEGR.-ADD. STERNBUCH
Zürich, Febr. 28th, 1944.

To the honorable
Legation of the United States of America,

Dear Mr. Getsinger,

Referring to my last letter I herewith beg to hand you the answer for the Union of orthodox rabbis of the United States with the request to pass this contents of.

At the same time we give you the names of those, to whom money has been sent to save people. This action is among others also controlled by the president of the Jewish Community of Budapest, Mr. Freudiger, with whom we are in telephone-contact.

The undersigned will take the liberty of calling upon you next Tuesday and will not fail to ring you up before. With my very best thanks for all your kindness and with best regards, I am, dear Sir,

Yours most respectfully

Enclosure:

100,000 Pengő... Mr. Silt e r, Budapest, Hungary
100,000 "... " Kehl ebr i Titelbaum, Sotmar, Hungary fr.83.074.90
100,000 "... " C o h n Ungvar "
240,000 SLOV. Sr... Ungar, Nitra, Slovakia fr.12,000...
To the

Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States

Vesadha Hatzala Emergency,

1) We have started an action for saving and so far totally 35,000 sht.
transmitted to the rabbis of Neutra and Setmar and also to some
persons in Budapest, who are giving their advices to one another.
Further remittances are to be made as soon as a list of the first
saved people is to be got. The action is also controlled by
some orthodoxical personalities in Budapest. To save people has
become much more difficult since some weeks and nearly impossible
on account of the snow and cold weather at all frontiers. When
the first results will be known, we shall let you know. We shall
also report about all to the American Embassy. Furthermore we have
informed the following gentlemen, that they have been completed to
our committee; they are: Messrs. Fines, Wiener, Rom, Berlowitz and Cohn.

2) The journey through Turkey to get to Palestine is very difficult
now. There are men with certificates in the Slovakia and Hungary,
who cannot depart for that reason and who have to keep themselves
hidden. Enormous sums must be paid to get in a circumstantial way
a permit to pass through the above named country. Thus there is
a terrible state there. At present only a souls per week are
allowed. For this matter the rabbis Mr. Herzog and Dr. Elyasch are
staying at Istanbul at present. Try to find a way and a chance
to intervene with the Turkish Government, that at least greater
relief is given, or that free passing to all, being owners of
Palestine-certificate, and who do not intend at all to remain,
while passing through, in Turkey.

3) Lately also people from Belgium, France and Holland, being kept
hidden, were deported to the East. Various people might have saved
themselves to Switzerland, if they only had had the necessary
money. Every day we are getting such urgent calls for help of
such people. And besides many people starve in their hiding-places.
Please, try to begin a great action in favour of those people
among the many Belgian as well as French refugees in America.
It would not be clever to wait any longer with the help for saving them, until they might also be deported to the East without the chance of being found afterwards. Or may we also save meanwhile with that money the refugees from those countries.

The possibility of saving the refugees from those countries to Switzerland is granted only to a few categories of elderly men of more than 60, to women with little children or such who may have some certain relatives in Switzerland. Other categories of refugees, as for instance, younger men are in accordance with the order of Switzerland’s Foreign-Police-Department prohibited at the borders of the country by the officers there to enter Switzerland and driven back without any court, quite regardless of the consequences to be driven to death. Such refugees are not even allowed to speak through the telephone with their acquaintances just to enable every kind of intervention. – It is not difficult to imagine what such a treatment means for men, who succeeded after terrible troubles, that might be even deadly, to get to Swiss territory and there to find themselves refused.

Just for that reason and such risks lately only very few refugees have tried from France or Belgium to come over to Switzerland. It would be of great importance to influence the Swiss Government to stop at last such refusals of persecuted Jews, who have to flee from the Nazis, and to take them as political refugees. The Nunciature apostolique at Bern with whom we have excellent relations and who have been so helpful to us in all things for a considerable time, they have according to our request also tried to intervene several months ago with the Swiss Government for the Vatican. Facilities were granted then, but the refusals are still going on in a quiet way and will be increasing when the number of refugees should be increasing again.

Sternbach Rubinfeld Rosenbaum
J. Sternbuch, Esquire,
Schweizergasse 14,
Zurich.

Sir:

I refer to your letter of February 24, 1944, to Mr. Getzinger, in which you request that the Legation take action with regard to certain citizens of various other American republics who are interned at Belson-Bergen, at the camp of Zelle near Hannover.

The Legation regrets to state that although it communicates with the Federal Political Department regarding the affairs of certain of the other American Republics, it does so merely as a channel of communications and serves only to transmit messages between the Swiss Government and the governments of the other American republics whose interests in enemy territory are represented by Switzerland.

In view of this fact, the Legation is unable to take any action with regard to your communication under reference and suggests that, should you desire to pursue further the matter, you communicate with the representatives of the interested governments at Bern or their consular offices in Switzerland.

Yours very truly,
For the Minister:

Dale W. Maher
Second Secretary
Bonn, February 29, 1944.

J. Sternbuch, Esquire,
Schweizergasse 14,
Zurich.

Sir:

I refer to the penultimate paragraph of your letter of February 24, 1944, to Mr. Getzinger, with regard to your desire that the Legation assist in having forwarded to the camps at Fritsmonting, Germany, and Vittel, France, six hundred kilos of passover bread.

As the Legation is not in a position to ask the Red Cross to send special parcels to camps in Germany, it regrets exceedingly that it is unable to take any action with regard to your request.

Very truly yours,
For the Minister:

Dale W. Maher
Second Secretary
Bern, February 29, 1944

Benz to Druich
Via Fouch to Zurich

Mr. Isaac Starnbach,
Villa Colonelles,
Montreux.

Dear Sir:

I refer to your letter of February 4th as regards purchase of Brazilian sugar for 150,000 Swiss Francs. According to the terms of the license granted to you, you are required to notify the American Legation and secure its consent to the transaction before concluding such transactions. In order that I may report the details of this transaction to the proper authorities I would like to receive information as to the seller of this Brazilian sugar as well as his address and information concerning the acquisition of this money.

Very truly yours,

Daniel J. Reagan, Commercial Attaché.

Would you please notify the purchase of the 150,000 marks in L.A.

Very truly yours,

Daniel J. Reagan, Commercial Attaché.
To: Mr. Isaac Sternbuch, 
From: D.J.R.

Via Pouch to Zürich

Mr. Isaac Sternbuch,
Villa Coloniale,
Montreal.

Dear Sirs:

Referring to your letter of February 15 and February 26, you state that 300,000 pengoes were bought through 15 and 15 pengoes were bought through 15. You neglect to state in either letter the name of the seller of this money as well as the address. Under the terms of the license issued to you, you are required to consult with the Legation whenever it is possible before consummating such transactions and it must be reasonably sure that the seller of currency has held it since before the date upon which the American Government froze the currency in question or that if acquired subsequently thereto that the enemy did not benefit from this transaction. In the future would you therefore, in compliance with the terms of the license, make a purchase of the 300,000 Hungarian pengoes.

Would you please inform the Legation of the details of the purchase of the 300,000 Hungarian pengoes.

Very truly yours,

Daniel J. Reagan,
Commercial Attaché.
MEMORANDUM

February 29, 1944

To: Mr. Huddle
From: D.J.R.

I have received a letter from Rabbi Sternbuch representing the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada, to which was attached a copy of the enclosed memorandum whose contents Rabbi Sternbuch requested be forwarded by telegraph through the Department of State to his organization. Inasmuch as the contents of his memorandum are not within the realm of economic warfare, I am forwarding it to you for such action as you may wish to take.

Enclosure as stated.

D.J.R.

Government, that at least greater relief is given, or that free passing to all, being owners of Palestine-certificates and who do not intend at all to remain, while passing through, in Turkey.
Enclosure to Sternbuch's letter of February 28, 1944.
In CA Files 848 Union of Orthodox Rabbis in the U.S.

To the
Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States
Vaad HaHatzala Emergency,

1) We have started an action for saving and so far totally 35,000
   bt. transmitted to the rabbis of Neutra and Sotmar and also to
   some persons in Budapest, who are giving their advices to one
   another. Further remittances are to be made as soon as a list
   of the first saved people is to be got. The action is also
   controlled by some orthodoxical personalities in Budapest.
   To save people has become much more difficult since some weeks
   and nearly impossible on account of the snow and cold weather
   at all frontiers. When the first results will be known, we
   shall let you know. We shall also report about all to the
   American Embassy. Furthermore we have informed the following
   gentlemen, that they have been completed to our committed;
   they are: Messrs. Pines, Wilner, com, Berlowitz and Cohn.

2) The journey through Turkey to get to Palestine is very difficult
   now. There are men with certificates in the Slovakia and
   Hungary, who cannot depart for that reason and who have to keep
   themselves hidden. Enormous sums must be paid to get in a
   curcumstantial way a permit to pass through the above named
   country. Thus there is a terrible state there. At present
   only 8 souls per week are allowed. For this matter the rabbis
   Mr. Herzog and Dr. Eliasch are staying at Istamboul at present.
   Try to find a way and a chance to intervene with the Turkish
   Government, that at least greater relief is given, or that
   free passing to all, being owners of Palestine-certificales and
   who do not intend at all to remain, while passing through, in
   Turkey.

3)
3) Lately also people from Belgium, France and Holland, being kept hidden, were deported to the East. Various people might have saved themselves to Switzerland, if they only had had the necessary money. Every day we are getting such urgent calls for help of such people. And besides many people starve in their hiding places. Please, try to begin a great action in favour of those people among the many Belgian as well as French refugees in America. It would not be clever to wait any longer with the help for saving them, until they might also be deported to the East without the chance of being found afterwards. Or may we also save meanwhile with that money the refugees from those countries.

4) The possibility of saving the refugees from those countries to Switzerland is granted only to a few categories of elderly men of more than 60, to women with little children or such who may have some certain relatives in Switzerland. Other categories of refugees, as for instance, younger men are in accordance with the order of Switzerland's Foreign-Police-Department prohibited at the borders of the country by the officers there to enter Switzerland and driven back without any court, quite regardless of the consequences to be driven to death. Such refugees are not even allowed to speak through the telephone with their acquaintances just to enable every kind of intervention. It is not difficult to imagine what such a treatment means for men, who succeeded after terrible troubles, that might be even deadly, to get to Swiss territory and there find themselves refused.
Just for that reason and such risks lately only very few refugees have tried from France or Belgium to come over to Switzerland. It would be of great importance to influence the Swiss Government to stop at last such refusals of persecuted Jews, who have to flee from the Nazis, and to take them as political refugees. The Nunciature apostolique at Bern with whom we have excellent relations and who have been so helpful to us in all things for a considerable time, they have according to our request also tried to intervene several months ago with the Swiss Government for the Vatican. Facilities were granted then, but the refusals are still going on in a quiet way and will be increasing when the number of refugees should be increasing again.

Sternbuch Rubinfeld Rosenbaum.
Union of Orthodox Rabbis
March 1944
Dear Mr. Woods:

It would be appreciated if you would deliver the two enclosed letters dated February 28, 1944, to Mr. Isaac Sternbich, a representative of the Executive Committee of the Union of Orthodox Jews of the United States and Canada.

Sincerely yours,

Daniel J. Reagan
Minister

Commercial Attaché

Enclosures as stated.

Sam E. Woods, Esquire
American Consular General
Zürich.
TELEGRAM SENT

To: Department  Date: March 4, 6 p.m., 1944.
Code: 1321

Charged to:

Refer to Department's no. 341, February 2.

In Department's discretion please inform Yaasha Hatzala Emergency Committee of the following, which comprises the substance of a report by Sternbuch, Rubinfeld and Rosenbaum.

1. The rescue work has begun but lately difficulties have been greatly increased by snow and cold. 35,000 francs have been transmitted to Rabbis Neutra and Sotmar to date, and also to persons in Budapest where orthodox personalities control action. All are cooperating. You and Legation in Bern will be informed of results.

2. It is very difficult at present to reach Palestine through Turkey. The cost of permits for transit through Turkey are enormous and conditions there are terrible. Only eight persons are admitted for transit each week. Consequently men in Slovakia and Hungary with certificates cannot leave and must remain in hiding. In connection with this matter, Rabbis Herzog and Dr. Eliaš are staying in Istanbul. Endeavor to intervene with Government of Turkey to secure greater relief or free transit to all holders of Palestine certificates who do not intend to remain in Turkey.

3. Deportations of persons in hiding occurred lately; if funds had been at hand these persons might have reached Switzerland. We get appeals from such persons every day; many of them are starving in these places of hiding. Please institute a big movement in their favor among Belgian and French refugees in America. Delay threatens them with deportation East beyond the possibility of rescue. May we use for refugees in these countries the funds that have been made available to us?

4. Following is strictly confidential. The possibility of refugees from Holland, Belgium and France to enter Switzerland

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter J-11-52
By R.H. Baker Date SEP 28 1972
Switzerland is limited only to those who have relatives in Switzerland, women with minor children, and elderly men over sixty. In accordance with an order of the Swiss Foreign Police Department, other categories, such as younger men, are prohibited entry at the border and regardless of consequences to be driven to death they are rejected without hearing. Such refugees are not even allowed to telephone to acquaintances to initiate intervention. It is not difficult to imagine what such treatment means for men who, after facing even death to attain Swiss territory, find themselves refused there.

Very few refugees from France or Belgium have recently tried to enter Switzerland for these reasons. It would be of great importance to influence the Government of Switzerland to admit as political refugees persecuted Jews fleeing from the Nazis. At our request several months ago the Nunciature Apostolique at Bern, with whom we have excellent relations and who has long been of help to us, intervened for the Vatican with the Swiss Government. At that time facilities were granted but refusals continue in a quiet way and if the number of refugees rises again they will increase. Signed ROSENBAUM, ROBINFIELD, and STEWART.

This paragraph for Department only. Please read Legation's telegrams nos. 1303 and 1304 of March 4, which contain official statement of the policy of the Swiss Government regarding the admission of refugees, in connection with the statements made in the confidential paragraph numbered 4 above.

HARRISON

$129.00

JKH:mf:inf
One paraphrase

COPY MADE FOR PA

FEB 28, 1944
March 7, 1944,

Mr. Sternbuch, Bern, March 7, 1944.

March 7, 1944.

Mr. Sternbuch, Bern, March 7, 1944.

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March 7, 1944.
Memorandum for the Piles

March 7, 1944.

Mr. Sternbuch was handed the Legation's letter of letter of February 28 had been despatched in accordance with his request. He expressed his appreciation.

Mr. Sternbuch referred to difficulties encountered by Jewish refugees in obtaining entry into Switzerland. He stated he considered this question of urgent importance and hoped that diplomatic intervention by the Nuncio and this Legation could be arranged. He stated that he was preparing a memorandum concerning a proposal which he will submit shortly.

I questioned Mr. Sternbuch concerning the financial transactions which have been arranged for the purchase of pengoes and Slovakian coupons. He stated that in the case of the pengoes a check for Swiss francs signed by him and two other members of the Committee has been given to his brother, N. Sternbuch, of St. Gall. He declared that the latter will hold this check until after the war when he will make payment to the persons in Hungary who supplied the pengoes. He stated that his brother was inclined to name the persons in Hungary who supplied the pengoes but was assured him that they are eminent members of the Jewish community in Budapest. Mr. Sternbuch stated that he has received telephonic confirmation from Budapest (in code in Hebrew was used) that the pengoes were delivered to the agents designated by him, namely, Silber, Titelbaum, and Cohn.

Mr. Sternbuch stated that the Slovakian transaction mentioned in his letter of February 28 is being arranged in a similar manner although in this case a written confirmation of the receipt of the pengoes will be required before the check for 12,000 francs is given to his brother.

I pointed out to Mr. Sternbuch that under the conditions of the license he should consult with the Legation before engaging in financial transactions and that full report should be made to the Legation of the financial transactions which are completed under the license. Neither of these conditions had been observed and I urged upon him the necessity, in future, of following the terms of the Treasury license in his operations. He agreed to make at an early date a full written report concerning the pengoe and sterling transactions and stated that in the future he would consult with us before making further purchases of currency.
I also pointed out to him that the manner of the purchases of dollars and pengoes does not fall strictly within the authorization of A2 of the Treasury license in that the blocked accounts have not been established but that the Swiss francs have been paid to his brother. He stated that persons would not be willing to supply funds were the counter-payment to be made in the form of a blocked account.

R.C.G.
TELEGRAM RECEIVED

From: Department
Date: March 9, 1944, 5 p.m.
No: 784
Code:
Received: March 10, 8 a.m.

Paraphrase

The message which follows is to be signed by Isaac Sternbuch, whose reply the Legation should forward to the Department immediately.

License W-2149 has been issued by the Treasury to Vaadka Hatzala Emergency Committee, of New York (which will be referred to as "Vaad" hereinafter) covering the transaction which follows herewith:

Vaad desires to communicate with Rabbi Chaim Szulewicz, whose address is 21/2 Baikal Road, Shanghai, China, but he is eager that the authorities do not regard such communication as having its origin in the United States. In accordance therewith, the following message should be delivered to Isaac Sternbuch, of St. Gallen, Switzerland, with Vaad's request that it be transmitted to Rabbi Szulewicz at once as having originated from him. Although, of course, the Legation should deliver a paraphrase of the message in question, special care should be taken in this connection that Rabbi Szulewicz will be able to understand the full implication of the message received by him. Rabbi Szulewicz will understand the reference to "fifty" to mean dollars fifty thousand. Following is the message:

"Support fifty additional Rabbis available from Kalmanowitz. You should arrange therefore distribution to be among all scholars of rabbinical colleges, together with post graduate students, Rabbi and their families. Please make suitable arrangements and reply."

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter 11173

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DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter 11173
To the honorable
Embassy of the United States
of America

Dear Mr. Getzinger,

Referring to our meeting I herewith beg to confirm that the firm,
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more to submit this letter or mine to your respectable Mr. Harrison,
in you please. If my work, with which I was entrusted through

washington, for the rescue of pursued persons from the territory of
To the honorable
Embassy of the United States of America.

Zürich, the 13th of March, 1944.

To Mr. Getzinger,

Referring to our meeting I herewith beg to confirm that the first remittance to those people, mentioned in my last letter, has been made by my brother Ing. N. Sternbuch of St. Gall. Such remittances are a most delicate matter, as those friends helping us abroad, wish on no account that their names should be mentioned, since such transactions might cause severe penalties by the enemy as long as people did not succeed in saving themselves.

Nevertheless there is an absolute certainty as regards keeping the amount in Switzerland, for they are no professional dealers, but private persons who are interested to keep their fortune in this country. You may, dear Mr. Getzinger, rest assured that I shall never perform any transaction without being quite sure of such a guarantee.

Unfortunately, however, it is not always possible to let you know of this beforehand, for instance in a case when I get informed at night-time that certain people are near the Hungarian borders with a view of being saved; then, as you will surely understand, I am unable to delay my assent, not even for a moment. In future, however, I intend to let you know before whenever this will be possible, practically possible. May I ask you, dear Sir, to be good enough to pass the attached letter on to the Union of Orthodox Rabbies of U.S.A.

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the enemy, it is to be successful, it does not suffice to place money only at my disposal for that purpose, as you will understand, dear Mr. Getzinger. If this task, being not quite easy, should be at any use at all, your kind and valuable assistance is of no less importance and I assure you that I will treat the whole matter absolutely confidentially in every way. Of what use could it be in the end, if those people, being brought to a safe place, were driven back in a most cruel manner to the German hell.

At the present moment the intervention with the Swiss authorities is of considerable importance and to my opinion it is also in the interest of America as well and also to the allied. As you know well, all male refugees of less than 65 years are sent back at the borders, and this after having succeeded in getting to Switzerland after many dangerous hardships and even often viewing death itself. Only old people, being over 65 years, are permitted to remain, but not younger ones between 15 - 65 years of age. These are deported by the Hitlerregime in France as well as Holland and Belgium to Germany in order to work there very much against our own interest. Just in the latter days such actions have been developing in a tremendous measure and most alarming reports and despaired calls for help have reached us now. These poor people are being caught in the streets just like dogs and then deported somewhere.

Would it be right of me, dear Sir, to keep quiet after all this? Is not everyone of us in the face of God and his own conscience compelled to help wherever and whenever this is possible? Were I not convinced as a Swiss citizen of the correctness of an absolute neutrality of Switzerland, I should have to think that such refusals of such refugees of less than 65 years is caused by a command of the enemy of from fear of him. Though it may be a regrettable error or misunderstanding of certain Swiss authorities, though not intended by our country, the fact is, no doubt, of help to the enemy. But are we allowed to be silent and to agree to such deportations of men, being in the prime of their life and thus being forced to work against us over there?

Furthermore a direct instruction of the honorable Government of Washington has to be stated, namely the one to support the rescue
of the refugees of occupied countries as far as this can be done.
This direction, I am confident, cannot be meant for American citizens
who are in any case sure of the help of all American consulates at
any time, but is certainly intended for all men, no matter what
subjects they may be or which their religion may be. In short, to
all men who are friends with a good will in favor of the allied,
and who are starving in the occupied territory and besides have to
lead a most miserable life at present. To these men all help ought
to be given, that is my idea.

My request of to-day is, therefore, to get the intervention of
the Swiss Federal Government for suspending the rejection of the
refugees being under 65 years of age, who are fleeing from the Nazis
and as well to attain that these people are accepted without any
regard of their race or religion as purely political refugees.

If I am informed rightly, the committee with President Roosevelt
as the chairman have dealings exclusively with the rescue of men,
suffering from the terror of the Gestapo.

I further beg to call your attention, dear Sir, to the fact that
also the Nuncio Apostolique, the highly respected Mr. Bernardini,
is doing good work for the deliverance of the prosecuted people with all
his might. His aid, indeed, has helped to save thousands of persons
and mankind will never forget him for this and that all the less
when time will arrive to bring all these happenings to light in the
future.

Mr. Bernardini will intervene in this matter some of these days
moreover.

We cannot presume that the honorable American Embassy should
wished to stand back in supporting these humanitarian demands. Perhaps
your worthy minister, Mr. Harrison, would be good enough to get
in contact with the Nuncio Apostolique in order to converse with
him about this subject and to co-ordinate a démarche.

The fear that an influx of too many refugees might follow, or
that these people might remain in this country when the war will be
over, is entirely unfounded. At any rate Switzerland need not be
afraid of a Jewish influx, since a great many of them have been
either captured or killed by the Germans during their flight. Thus
hardly 10,000 men will be lucky enough to reach Swiss soil in the
course of 1944 and perhaps not even this number, if that awful
catching or people in masses in the streets in the occupied
territories will last for some more time. Furthermore no Dutch-
man and no Belgian will wish to remain in this country after the
war, which would mean to them to give up their freedom in their
native-country - precious to all of them as Switzerland is to
all Swiss - for a life in a Swiss working-camp. All refugees
really long for the day to come when they may return to their
former homes the same way as they have come here. No sooner will
Hitler and his regime vanish than all refugees will, you may rest
assured, avail themselves of the first opportunity to go home-
wards from our country in masses, with the expectation of taking
up their previous professions and to lead again the life of free
men and not one of inferior beings. Switzerland may risk some
inconveniences, caused maybe by the refugees, even if their number
should increase somewhat. All these drawbacks are a trifle in com-
parison with the sacrifices of a war, which by God's Providence
our country has been spared so far and - let us hope - will be spared
in the future.

Will you kindly excuse me, dear Mr. Getzinger, for my troubling
you with my letter of to-day. But I think it is my duty to explain
all this in a frank way to the American Embassy, being the re-
presentatives of the leading and most respected democracy of the
world, and to ask them at the same time to examine it.

I have the honor to be, dear Sir,

Your obedient Servant

[Signature]
To the

Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States of America

The first twenty-two persons were saved and got to Hungary, there under the brother from Rabbi of Wysnitz. This work for the rescue is well organised. We are expecting a great success after the weather will get better.

The following gentlemen: Mr. Donati, Mr. Valobra and Mr. Lopez as the representatives of the Italian Colony in this place request the Italians of America to place at their disposal some greater amounts as there is the possibility to save the Jews of the Northern part of Italy. This action is managed and controlled by us.

In the meantime the situation in France has become in a terrible manner worse. People are caught in the streets and sent to camps for deportation. There is a frightful panic there.

Sternbuch, Rubinfeld
Rosenbaum, Fines.
By pouch to Zurich

Bern, March 16, 1944.

March 14, 1944

Mr. Isaac Sternbach, representative
of Orthodox Rabbis
Villa Colonelles
Montreux.

I called at the Legation’s request, and said a paraphrase of the message quoted in the
Dear Sir:

Reference is made to your letter of February 28, 1944, with which you enclosed a report for the
Union of Orthodox Rabbis which you requested be forwarded by the Legation. As you were informed
by the Legation’s letter of March 7, your message was transmitted to the United States.

The Legation has now received a reply to your observations concerning the necessity for relief
of refugees in Belgium, France, and Holland. The Legation has been requested to inform you that the
Union of Orthodox Rabbis authorizes you to use the funds already remitted for the purpose of carrying on
relief and evacuation operations in any territory whatever occupied by the enemy, including France,
Holland, and Belgium. The Legation further requested to inform you that the license issued by the
Treasury Department to the Union permits operations in accordance with its terms throughout enemy
territory and territory occupied by the enemy, and individual countries are not specified.

I explained to you that it was impossible to consult with you fully concerning transactions of
this nature, but I report fully concerning transactions completed.

I have been in touch with Dr. Reisner while in Chicago with Mr. Sternbach's representative

Very truly yours,

Daniel J. Reagan
Commercial Attaché

[Signature]

A true copy of the signed original.
Memorandum for the File

March 14, 1944

Subject: Interview with Mr. Sternbuch, representative of the Union of Orthodox Rabbis.

Mr. Sternbuch, who called at the Legation's request, was delivered a paraphrase of the message quoted in the Department's 784, March 9, with the request that a telegram containing this message be dispatched by him to Szmulowitz, Shanghai, as emanating from him. He understood the necessity of avoiding any indication that the message originated from the United States and he stated he would report to us as soon as he has received a reply from Shanghai. He stated that Szmulowitz is the leader of a group of Jewish refugees established in Shanghai and that the Kalmanowitz referred to is a Lithuanian Rabbi now in Shanghai. He stated that some years ago he had formed the Hilfsverein für Judische Flüchtlinge in Ausland, Montreux, to assist this group of refugees which numbers about 450. Some months ago he dispatched to them 20,000 francs collected in Switzerland for their relief but according to recent information these people were starving. He stated that he understood that the Joint Distribution Committee has in the past also interested itself in their relief.

In reply to his inquiry, S was informed that his letter of March 13 would be forwarded to the Chancery for its attention. He was also informed that the Legation would forward by telegraph a summary of the message attached to this letter which reports to the Union of Orthodox Rabbis the results so far achieved by S's rescue program.

I emphasized the importance that S when possible consult the Legation in advance before engaging in financial transactions under the Treasury license and that he report fully concerning transactions completed. I stated that the rescue action taken under the terms of the license has a matter concerning which we need not be consulted in advance.

K.C.U.

R.G./imp
To: Department

Date: March 14, midnight, 1944.

No: Charged to:

Code: 

Paraphrase

Reference is made to your telegram no. 784 of March 9.

On March 14 a paraphrase of the message contained in the telegram under reference was delivered personally to Sternbuch, who will transmit the message as emanating from him to Szmulewicz.

HARRISON

DJR: RCO: mf

In triplicate
TELEGRAM RECEIVED

From: Department
Date: March 14, 11 p.m., 1944
Code: 843
Received: March 15, 3 p.m.

PARAPHRASE

The message which follows has been approved by the Department, the Treasury and the War Refugee Board.

The contents of paragraph (3) of your telegram No. 1321, of March 4, 1944, have been considered by us with the Union of Orthodox Rabbis. The Department desires you to advise Sternbuch without delay that he is authorized by the Union to use the funds already remitted for the purpose of carrying on relief and evacuation operations in any territory whatsoever occupied by the enemy, including France, Holland and Belgium. You should advise Sternbuch that the license issued by the Treasury Department to the Union permits operations in accordance with its terms throughout enemy territory or territory occupied by the enemy, and individual countries are not specified. It is understood, however, that only Hungary and Poland were mentioned in the instructions previously given to Sternbuch. It was not intended that this instruction should operate to preclude operations elsewhere.

HULL

/nrm
in triplicate

Received CA, DJR for action. Rl

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Index 1-11-72

For release 1-11-72

Richter

SFP 1-11-72

shining with him to say all new possibilities for the rescue.
TELEGRAM SENT

To: Department
Date: March 15, 6 p.m., 1944.
No: 1697
Code: -

Charged to: Paraphrase

Refer to our no. 1321 March 4.

"1. The first 22 persons saved have reached Hungary. They are in latter country with brother of Rabbi of Wysnitz. The rescue work is well organized and when there is an improvement in the weather great success is expected here.

"2. As representatives of the Italian colony, Valobra, Lopez and Donati request the Italians in the United States to place greater amounts at their disposal as the possibility of saving Jews of northern Italy exists. We are managing and controlling this action.

"3. The situation in France is worsening. People are seized in the streets and sent to camps for deportation. A frightful panic exists there. Signed by STERNBUCH, ROSENBAUM, PINES and RUBINFIELD."

The above is a paraphrased message from Sternbuch for transmission, in the discretion of the Department, to the Union of Orthodox Rabbis.

HARRISON

$54.75

DJR:ROG:af
In triplicate
With reference to the Legation's telegram 1054 of February 19 and No. 1321 of March 4, the amount of pengoes mentioned in the first reference should read 300,000 and not 100,000. Sternbich states that compensation was given to his brother, R. Sternbich of S., Gall, in the form of a check for Swiss francs 23,077. N. Sternbich arranged the purchase of pengoes from persons in Hungary, and, according to Sternbich, will hold the Swiss francs until after the war. Sternbich states that his brother declines, in the interests of secrecy, to reveal the sources of pengoes in Hungary. S. states that he received confirmation by telephone from Budapest that the pengoes were turned over to the agents designated. S. says that through his brother he has arranged for a similar purchase of 240,000 Slovakian crowns for 19,000 Swiss francs but this transaction has not been completed yet. S. states that in the case of the crowns he is demanding written confirmation of the receipt thereof by the agent before he gives a check for the Swiss francs equivalent to his brother. The Legation was not consulted before these transactions were undertaken.

Legation would appreciate instructions from the Department in view of future transactions of this character which S. envisages and which technically do not appear to fall within the authorization from the Treasury transmitted in Department's 229, January 23.

HARRISON
TELEGRAM RECEIVED

Extract from telegram no. 851 March 15 from Department
in 648 American Committee for Christian Refugees Inc.
Received: March 15, 6:30 a.m.

PARAPHRASE

In reply to your telegram No. 1054, of February 19, you have
concerning the license of the United States Citizen from the
Department of War and the licenses mentioned above together with
all others identified as such by the Department and the Department
specifically permitting operations looking only towards
effecting the relief of persecuted persons in territory
occupied by the enemy.

The Department desires you to bring the
information to your representatives or other organizations to which similar
licences have been issued, informing them that all three
methods may be used in the acquisition of the local currency
required. The third method, while it may make foreign exchange
available in territory of the enemy, should be utilized if it
proves to be the most effective one for the speedy execution
of the operations of relief and evacuation authorized by the
license.

With a view to avoiding delay, you are requested to note
liberal interpretations of the provisions of all the licenses
issued, keeping in mind always that time is important and
the operations authorized by these licenses should be initiated
without delay. The Department of State, the War Refugee Board
and the Treasury Department consider the saving of lives of
paramount importance in the present situation.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

in triplicate
In reply to your telegram No. 1054, of February 19, 1944, regarding the license of the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada, the following message is from the War Refugee Board.

The Treasury Department and the Department of State would like to make clear, with reference to Sternbuch's comment with regard to clause A(2) specified in the license, that all three (repeat all three) methods detailed in this and similar licenses can be used for carrying out the operations described in the licenses. The Department desires you to bring the foregoing to the knowledge of Sternbuch immediately; also to the representatives of other organizations to which similar licenses have been issued, informing them that all three methods may be used in the acquisition of the local currency required. The third method, while it may make foreign exchange available in territory or the enemy, should be utilized if it proves to be the most effective one for the speedy execution of the purposes of relief and evacuation authorized by the license.

With a view to avoiding delay, you are requested to make liberal interpretations of the provisions or all the licenses issued, keeping in mind always that time is important and that the operations authorized by these licenses should be initiated without delay. The Department of State, the War Refugee Board and the Treasury Department consider the saving of lives of paramount importance in the present situation.

Hull

Received in triplicate

DECLASSIFIED
State Ltr. 1511-73
By R. H. nurse dated SEP 26 1972
Bern, March 16, 1944.

FIRST PRIORITY

To: [Redacted] - via Courier.

Date: March 16, 1944

No. 1872

Charged to:

Dear Mr. Woods:

It would be appreciated if you would deliver the enclosed letter of today's date to Mr. Sternbuch, representative of the Union of Orthodox Jews of the United States and Canada, and inform the Legation by telephone when this has been done.

Mr. Sternbuch has given his Zurich address as Schweizergasse 14.

Sincerely yours,

[Signature]

Daniel J. Reagan,
Commercial Attaché,

Enclosure as stated.

Sam E. Woods, Esquire,
American Consul General,

Zurich.

[Note: The letter is parapraphed in triplicate.

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1972
By M. H. Pinto Date]
With reference to the Department's No. 656 of March 16, it is thoroughly understood by Sternbuch and the representatives of other organizations which have received similar licenses, that they are at liberty, under the terms of the licenses, to employ any or all of the methods stated in section A of the licenses. In attaining the aim in view, the saving of lives, their choice of methods is governed by their discretion as to the methods' relative efficiency. Sternbuch's observation concerning clause 2A, which he made in a letter to the Legation, dated February 18, and which was transmitted in the Legation's No. 1064 of February 18, was prompted by his lively appreciation of the fact that the transfer to enemy territory of foreign exchange risks encouraging renewal of the venereal traffic by the enemy (which is stated by the British and American authorities to be against the interests of the refugees themselves; see circular telegram of the Department dated November 21, 1940).

HARRISON

D/JR/RCG:mk
Paraphrased in triplicate.
Let to Sternbuch 3/23/44

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

From: Department
Date: March 22, 3 p.m., 1944
No: 960
Code: PARAPHRASE
Received: March 23, 9 a.m.

War Refugees Board requests transmission of following message to Isaac Sternbuch, Teufenerstrasse 9, St. Gallen, from Rabbi Aron Kotler and Rabbi Abraham Belznerovitz, Vadska Hatzala Emergency Committee:

Interventions you requested in your communication via the American Legation are being taken. Necessary funds are being raised to do everything possible to expand the rescue work in Belgium, Holland, Lithuania, France, and wherever else possible. Please advise whether you and Jacob Ostrick in Istanbul can carry on rescue work for Jews in Romania and for those who entered Hungary.

HULL

In triplicate

re
First Priority

Bern, March 23, 1944.

St. Gallen.

Dear Mr. Woods:

Dear Sir: It would be appreciated if you would deliver the enclosed letter of today’s date addressed to Mr. Sternbuch, representative of the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada. Will you be good enough to telephon the Legation when the message has been delivered.

Sincerely yours,

For the Ministry are being taken. Necessary funds are being raised to do everything possible to expand the rescue work.

Daniel J. Reagan, Lithuania, France, and was Commercial Attaché. Please advise whether you and Jacob Drizel in Enclosure as stated can rescue work for Jews in Hungary and for those who entered Hungary.

Sam E. Woods, Esquire
American Consul General,
Zürich.

Very truly yours,

Daniel J. Reagan,
Commercial Attaché.

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Order, 1-11-73
By R. H. Parks Dated SEP 26 1972

A true copy of the original.
Bern, March 23, 1944.

GROSS-EXCHANGE SHEET

NOTE

Mr. Isaac Sternbuch,
Teufenerstrasse 3,
St. Gallen.

Dear Sir:

The Legation has been requested to deliver to you the following telegraphic message from Rabbi
Aron Kotler and Rabbi Abraham Kalmanowitz, Vaadha 1944:

Hatza'a Emergency Committee:

"Interventions you requested in your communication via the American Legation are being taken. Necessary funds are being raised to do everything possible to expand the rescue work in Belgium, Holland, Lithuania, France, and wherever else possible. Please advise whether you and Jacob Griffith in Istanbul can carry on rescue work for Jews in Hungary and for those who entered Hungary."

It would be appreciated if you would acknowledge the receipt of this letter.

Very truly yours,

Daniel J. Reagan,
Commercial Attaché.

DJR/805/imp
CROSS-REFERENCE SHEET
DOCUMENT FILE
NOTE

SEE LEGATION'S FILE FOR TELEGRAM NO. 983 FROM THE DEPARTMENT

FROM . . . . . . . . . . . . [Name] DATED MARCH 24, 1944

TO

RECORDING:
From: Department  
Date: March 25, midnight, 1944  
No: 1012  
Received: March 26, 8 p.m.

PARAPHRASE

Department's 229 of January 22.

Legation is requested, in connection with Treasury license W-2117 which was transmitted in the above telegram for the Union of Orthodox Rabbis, to advise Sternbach that Section (B) has been amended to authorize, in place of 430,000 francs as now provided, the remission during six months beginning January 1, 1944 of 860,000 Swiss francs or the dollar equivalent thereof. It is the purpose of this amendment to permit the transmission by the Union of Orthodox Rabbis to Sternbach, in addition to amounts previously licensed, of the Swiss franc equivalent of $100,000. Amendment has been approved by Treasury, War Refugee Board, and Department.

HULL

In triplicate
March 27, 1944

MEMORANDUM

To: Mr. Hume

From: D. J. R.

I understand from the Code Room that telegram 1304 dealt with the War Refugee Board question taken up with the Foreign Office by the Chancery. In view of this and under instructions from the Minister to refer to the Chancery questions on Jewish relief requiring communication with the Political Department, I am enclosing Department's 983, March 24, which calls for such action but which came to this office without having crossed your desk.

We have retained one copy of this telegram for our chronological file.

D. J. R.
Bern, March 28, 1944.

Mr. Isaac Sternbuch

Dear Mr. Woods:

I enclose hereewith a letter addressed to Mr. Sternbuch of the Union of Orthodox Rabbis. It would be appreciated if the Consulate would pass this letter on to Mr. Sternbuch.

I have, in the meantime, advised the Ministry of the Home Office to forward the enclosed licence and a copy of the advice to the Union of Orthodox Rabbis. In section (b) of the strategy, the Consulate has been instructed to provide further details regarding the licence.

Enclosure as stated.

Sam R. Woods, Esquire
American Consul General
Gurich

Daniel J. Reagan,
Commercial Attaché.

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter 1-11-12
By R. F. Price Date SEP 26 1972

In coning with him to say all new possibilities for the rescue.
Mr. Isaac Sternbuch, 
Scheizerpasse 14, 
Zurich.

Sir: Sternbuch stated that he has no definite news concerning developments in Hungary although he has received scanty, conflicting reports that certain groups have been able to escape to Switzerland.

I have just received a cable from the Department of State amending Treasury license L-2117 issued to the Union of Orthodox Rabbis. In section (g) of the license, a copy of which is in your possession, I am advised that instead of 430,000 francs as now provided during the six months beginning January 1, 1944, 860,000 francs or the dollar equivalent thereof, is authorized.

This amendment has been approved by the Department of State, the Department of the Treasury, and by the War Refugee Board.

Very truly yours,

Daniel J. Reagan,
Commercial Attaché.

BJR/CH/Imp
Mr. and Mrs. Sternbuch called this morning and delivered the enclosed draft telegram with the request that it be dispatched urgently to the Union of Orthodox Rabbis.

Sternbuch stated that he has no definite news concerning developments in Hungary although he has received telegraphic communications indicating that certain persons in whom he is interested have up to the present been able to hide successfully. He will keep us informed.

R.C.G.
We receive an urgent and desperate appeal from the 238 Jews interned in the American camp in Vittel, France, amongst whom the most distinguished Rabbis and personalities who could be saved one year ago in handing them passports of various Southamerican States. After steps undertaken some months ago Paraguay and other states have acknowledged passports, some states have not yet acknowledged.

Nevertheless all 238 Jews of whom 132 Paraguayans have been isolated on March 20th from internment camp Vittel and separated for deportation under the argument that they possess accommodation passports and are therefore no real objects for exchange.

The acknowledgment of these passports can therefore only then be a means of safety when these people of whom we have here a detailed list are also considered as exchange objects.

Schabsa Frenkel Wilson Street 113 Brooklyn has written to his parents in Vittel some months ago that most of these interned in Vittel appear on the exchange list of the War department at Washington. This is however useless as long as Germany is not informed by the protecting powers officially that the exchange of these people is being prepared.

Besides the 238 in Vittel another few thousand such distinguished interned in Tittmoning and different other camps would come into consideration but of whom we have so far in part received no cry for help nor possess any news.

There are a few hundred Germans in Texas and their wives at Cuba who are expecting the exchange. This would be a means for stopping at once the deportation of our interned. Help at the last moment, it may be too late at any hour!

Vaadloy Kahala
Bernheiden, Rubinfeld
Rosenbaum Lines
Should the exchange really become effective the persons will not be a burden to the United States. They all possess veteran certificates and could emigrate from Lisbon to Palestine direct.
CASE FILE

TELEGRAM SENT

To: Department

Date: March 31, 10 p.m., 1944

No: 1994

Charged to:

PARAPHRASE

URGENT U.S.

Isaak Sternbuch has approached the Legation respecting the situation of Jews who have reportedly been interned in Vittel. (Refer also to my No. 1068 of March 30.) 238 persons are involved, comprising adults and children, by most of whom documentation has been obtained of ten Latin American Governments—Peru, Paraguay, Costa Rica, Honduras and others.

It is represented by Sternbuch that some kind of remedial action is being attempted by interested persons with the governments whose officials abroad have issued the false documents which are possessed by these persons. Also, it has been repeatedly stated that the State Department has interested itself and that the governments concerned are being urged by it to find some means of alleviation by either complete recognition of nationality or in some other way assuming responsibility for victimized persons. (Advice respecting the authenticity of this report is requested.)

There has now been received clandestinely information to the effect that the German authorities are about to or may have already removed these persons elsewhere largely because of some alleged action by the Spanish Embassy at Berlin as the protecting power of Paraguayans. The Swiss Division of Foreign Interests has told us informally that the Spanish Government had been requested by the Germans to inquire into the bona fides of all suspected aliens—only Paraguayans—and that claims and responsibility were denied by other governments. There is no complete picture of the affair available to me.

The following four names of persons she claim United States nationality are contained in the list of internes concerned: Helka Nager, Hirsch, Lieba and Matilde Nachtel.

DECLASSIFIED

State Dept. Letter 1-41-33

By H. H. Pehle Date SEP 26 1972
There is no record in the Legation of the submission of applications to the Department for documentation as American citizens of Helene, Lieba and Nettie Nachtal. In a list received from the Swiss authorities and transmitted to the Department (please refer to the Legation's despatch No. 6037 of September 3) Halka Hager was reported as an American citizen. The decisions of the Department respecting the citizenship claims of these persons have not yet been received.

The interested Jewish circles in Switzerland and Sternbuch are fearful of the fate awaiting the above-described group and it is felt by them that it may be possible to arrange with the German authorities an exchange of members of such a group for Germans who now may be in North and South America. Such exchange arrangements, if it is realized, would require time for negotiations and in the meantime Sternbuch, pending the submission of such a proposal to the German authorities, hopes that the German authorities might be prevailed upon to delay any summary action affecting the group. The possibility was therefore suggested to the Legation by Sternbuch that the Department might be willing to telegraph the American Embassy at Madrid requesting it to communicate with the Spanish Foreign Office with a view to communicating appropriately with the Spanish Ambassador at Berlin in the premises. It was suggested by Sternbuch that in such an arrangement the Spanish ambassador at Berlin might be requested to ask the German authorities to withhold any action while the possibility of arrangements for an exchange against Germans could be explored.

Accordingly, I am submitting Sternbuch's proposal to the Department. Urgency is stressed by him. Representations may also, I have reason to believe, have been made to the International Committee in London and possibly also in Washington.

Respecting the Hager and Nachtal cases, I am asking the Swiss authorities to request the Germans to take no action until their status is definitely determined.

In my despatch No. 6287 of December 27 sent to the Department in microfilm No. 285 the developments reported in the foregoing were contended.

JSH/JH:J
Paraphrase to AI: Mr. Tait
3 paraphrases to CA

HARRISON
From: Department
Date: March 31, midnight, 1944
No.: 1088

Received: April 1, 2 p.m.

PARAPHRASE

You are requested to contact Sternbuch and to report the present status of the matter referred to in Department's 784 of March 9 which discussed Treasury license 2148.

HULL

In triplicate re
To: Department  
Date: March 30, midnight, 1944  
No: 1958  
Charged to:  

PARAPHRASE

Reference Department's 1012 dated March 25th.

Following summary of message to Union of Orthodox Rabbis from Sternbuoh:

"230 Jews interned in American camp in Vittel have sent urgent appeal. Group, which includes distinguished rabbis, saved by receiving various South American passports year ago. Paraguay and some states recognized these passports, but other states have not recognized them. These people were isolated for deportation on March 20th on the grounds that they are not eligible for exchange as they possess merely accommodation passports.

"A letter from Schabae Frenkel, 113 Wilson Street, Brooklyn, to his parents in Vittel stated that most of this group is included in the exchange list of the United States War Department. The only chance of saving them is for the protecting powers to inform the Germans officially that preparations are being made for the exchange of these people. They will be no burden to the United States if the exchange is effected since all could go from Lisbon to Palestine and have veteran certificates.

"In addition to the Vittel group there are another few thousand distinguished persons interned at Tiltmann and other camps whose rescue should be considered. Posses little news and no appeal received.

"As a means of preventing deportation there are a few hundred Germans in Texas and their wives in Cuba. Rubenfeld, Rosenbaum, Pines, Sternbuoh, Yaadha Hatzala."

HARRISON
Union of Orthodox Robbers
April 1944

living with him to see all new possibilities for the rescue.
To the
Honorable Embassy of the United
States of America,
B E R N .

Dear Mr. Getzinger,

Owing to my request, which I submitted to you when speaking with you over the 'phone a short time ago, you were good enough to grant me your assistance for a permit to export Easter-bread to the interned people abroad.

The Red Cross received this permit on the following day and thus it was possible to forward the parcels in time. I am convinced that this permit was given in consequence of your intervention, by which the interned people got the Easter-bread in due time. Let me, dear Mr. Getzinger, express once more my very deepest thanks for your kind help in this matter.

I further beg to hand you enclosed a Message for Washington, and believe me to be, dear Sir,

Yours Faithfully

1 Enclosure.
Shanghai answer for about 500 Renethore monthly Budget
20,000 Swiss Francs. We just request a precise reply to
your inquiry. We treat actually their evacuation.
There are good prospects for success for a large party.

Delivered personally
by Stankevich Pylu 6, 6pm.

Living with him to say all new possibilities for the reason.
Refer to your 1088, March 31 and 764, March 9.

According to Sternbuch, the reply from Shanghai reads as follows: "For about 500 Benethora monthly budget Swiss francs 20,000." Sternbuch believes Szmalewicz did not understand reference to "fifty" to mean $50,000 and asks if he should be more specific.

Sternbuch states that he is working, with good prospects, on a plan for evacuation of these people.

HARRISON

$20.60

DVR: ROG:inf

In triplicate
Dear Mr. Getsinger,

To the Legation of the United States of America, Bern.

I would be so kind as to send on the following report. I thank you very much for all your efforts and I beg to express you my sincerest wishes for the Easter-holidays.

I beg to remain,

Yours faithfully,

[Signature]

Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States of America, New York.

We have further details follow.

Wad Ha'ela, Rabbinical Zionist, Rabinfeld, Aschheim, Avenel.

[Handwritten note: From Sternbuch, April 5th, 1944]

[Handwritten note: From Gottschalk, April 5th, 1944]

[Handwritten note: From General Council, April 5th, 1944]

[Handwritten note: From Rabbi of Basel, April 5th, 1944]

[Handwritten note: From Rabbi of Bâle, April 5th, 1944]
TELEGRAM SENT

To: Department
Code: DCL59

Date: April 6, 1944, 5 p.m.
No: 1111

US URGENT

PARAPHRASE

Following is for the Union of Orthodox Rabbis Yedda Hatzalah from Sternbuch.

In my last report with regard to the interned Jews at Vittel, the substance of which the Bern Legation sent you through the Department of State, the energetic action of the Spanish Ambassador in Berlin is urgently necessary. The Spanish Ambassador ignores or watches insufficiently the interests of Paraguayan citizens. (For the Department refer to Bern's 195 of March 5.) The ruling against Jews, according to the Red Cross in Geneva, has been particularly drastic for about three weeks so that firmness by the Spanish Ambassador is urgently necessary. You are requested to act urgently and at once in Paraguay for intervention in Madrid with the Spanish Government.

HARRISON

In quadruplicate
3 copies to CA
TELEGRAM RECEIVED

From: Department

Date: April 6, 7 p.m., 1944

No.: 1174

Received: April 7, 3 p.m.

PARAPHRASE

It is requested that Sternbuch be advised by the Legation to get in touch with Joseph Well and Mathieu Mueller, who are believed to be in Zurich, and invite them to serve as members of his committee for administering the rescue operations which are envisaged in the license that was contained in the Department's telegram No. 222 of January 29. Mueller and Well should further be advised that, provided they associate themselves with Sternbuch in his rescue and relief operations, important sums for use under the license, especially in France, Holland and Belgium, will be provided by Baron Edouard de Rothschild, who is President of the Association of French Jews in America.

Upon completion of the arrangements which are indicated above, a telegram should be dispatched by Sternbuch through the Legation confirming the arrangements and the appointment of Mueller and Well. A report on Sternbuch's activities to date should also be given in the telegram, which should be signed by either Well or Mueller in addition to Sternbuch. You should advise Sternbuch that the signature of either Mueller or Well is required only in order to give Rothschild further assurances.

HULL

In quadruplicate
To C.A. in triplicate

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 4-16-44
By R. H. Fuchs Date SEP 26 1972

4) We are in permanent contact by wire with Griffl and are examining with him to-day all new possibilities for the rescue.
To the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States of America.

1) We have sent a courier to Hungary in order to get new information about the situation there. Considering the frightful misfortune we request you to examine at the hand of the American Government if it is possible to suggest a formal exchange of the Jews in Hungary for German private population in Africa or some other places being occupied by the Allies. Perhaps the German Government might be interested in a return home of these people.

2) Help us to procure an unlimited number of Vatikin certificates. We could make lists of many thousands of families in Hungary and could wire to Jerusalem. Up to the present time they were useful in the occupied countries, for being interned against exchange.

3) Another possibility for the rescue-work would be passports of South-American states for say 10,000 families at first, which ought to be given to us through the consulates of those states in Switzerland confidentially. Never could any mis-use be made with such papers; they would have to serve only that people would be interned as foreigners. All the receivers knew very well, of course, that such passports are valid exclusively during the war-time just to save their lives.

You may also guarantee that these passports will be given only to well-known rabbis and very reliable and trustworthy persons only.

4) We are in permanent contact by wire with Sziffl and are examining with him to say all new possibilities for the rescue.
It would be of the utmost importance to influence Turkey to
drop the rigorous restrictions for the transit of those who
are in the possession of certificates.
3) We have extended our actions for the rescue of people to all
the occupied territories.
The connection with Lithuania has been interrupted completely
since the time of occupation. A courier is in the meantime on
the way there with instructions and the possibility to give
help to 150 Rabbits and prominent persons.

Wand HaZala: Sternbuch Rubinfeld Rosenbaum
Pines
Reference is made to the Legation's no. 1994 of March 31.

There follows herewith the summary of a message to the Union of Orthodox Rabbis from Sternbuch.

"1. I have despatched a courier to Hungary to report on the situation. I suggest that you examine with the American Government the possibility of arranging an exchange of Jews in Hungary against German civilians from Africa or other territory occupied by the Allies.

2. Please help us procure an unlimited number of Vatican certificates. I could wire to Jerusalem lists of thousands of families in Hungary. The certificates, up to the present time, useful in occupied countries for obtaining internment against exchange.

3. South American passports for 10,000 families as a start would be another possibility for rescue. The passports should be handed to us confidentially through the consulates in Switzerland of those countries. Since the recipients are aware that the passports are valid only for wartime as a means of saving lives, the passports could not be misused. The passports would be given to well-known rabbis and other reliable persons only.

4. With regard to rescue possibilities, I am in constant telegraphic contact with Grissel.

5. I have extended rescue activities to all territories that are occupied. Since October contact with Lithuania has been interrupted but there is now en route a courier with instructions to help prominent persons and 150 rabbis.

Signed: Sternbuch, Rosenbaum, Pines, Rubinfeld."

HARRISON
TELEGRAM SENT

To: Department  Date: April 7, 10 p. m., 1944.
Code:  
No:  2194  Charged to:  

Paraphrase

Reference is made to the words "Veteran Certificates" appearing in the second paragraph of the Legation's no. 1658 of March 30 and "Vatican Certificates," appearing in the third paragraph of the Legation's no. 2183 of April 7. These words mean certificates of approval issued by the Government of Palestine for permanent immigration of individual Jews to Palestine.

HARRISON

[Handwritten note]
In triplicate
Copies to CA and FA

[Handwritten note]
on Sternach by rallying influential Jews in America.
Mr. Isaac Sternbuch,  
Mr. Isaac Sternbuch,  
Schweizerstrasse 14,  
Zurich.

Dear Sir:

The Legation has been requested by the Department of	
Reference to the letter of	
September 11, 1944, concerning a proposal that Joseph Well	
and Mathieu Mueller be associated in your relief	
activities. Your committee for administering the

arrangements envisaged by the license which was	
issued with regard to the request that either Mueller or Wall	
will assist you with the telegram to be dispatched through the Legation concerning the arrangements	
made with those men, the Legation is requested to	
inform you that the signature of either Well or	
Mueller is required only in order to give Baron de	
Rothschild further assurances.

Belgium, will be provided by Baron Edouard de Rothschild, who is President of the Union of Jewish Communities in America. The Legation is requested to inform you that, upon completion of the arrangements indicated above, you should dispatch a telegram confirming the appointment of Mueller and Well. This telegram should also include a report of your activities to date and should be signed by either Well or Mueller in addition to you.

Very truly yours,

Daniel J. Reagan,  
Commercial Attaché.

[Signature]

DJB/RC/Imp

It would be appreciated if you would acknowledge receipt of this letter.

Very truly yours,

Daniel J. Reagan,  
Commercial Attaché.

DJB/RC/Imp
Mr. Isaac Sternbuch,  
Schweizergasse 14,  
Zurich.

Dear Sir:

The Legation has been requested by the Department of State to suggest to you that you get in touch with Joseph Weil and Mathieu Mueller, who are believed to be in Zurich, and invite them to serve as members of your committee for administering the rescue operations envisaged by the license which was transmitted to you in the Legation's letter of January 26, 1944.

Messrs. Mueller and Weil should be advised that, provided they associate themselves with you in your rescue and relief operations, important sums for use under the license, especially in France, Holland, and Belgium, will be provided by Baron Edouard de Rothschild, who is President of the Association of French Jews in America. The Legation is requested to inform you that, upon completion of the arrangements indicated above, you should dispatch through the Legation a telegram confirming the arrangements and the appointment of Mueller and Weil. This telegram should also include a report of your activities to date and should be signed by either Weil or Mueller in addition to you.

It would be appreciated if you would acknowledge receipt of this letter.

Very truly yours,

Daniel J. Reagan,  
Commercial Attaché.

DWH/202/imp
Reference is made to the Legation’s telegram no. 1076 of March 15.

The Treasury Department has given consideration to the above telegram and it has been decided that the terms of license W-2117 cover the transaction which that telegram described.

The Department and the Treasury again emphasize that all the three specified methods are available in licenses of this type for financing the envisaged operations.

Hull

The purchase of machinery for Hungary

In triplicate

COPIES

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter 1-11-73
By R.H. Park, Date SEP 26 1977
April 18, 1944.

Sternbach called by appointment and I delivered to him the Legation’s letter of April 11 concerning the proposed inclusion of Weil and Mueller in his committee.

Sternbach stated that he is acquainted with Weil and that last week he had invited him to join the committee because of his intimate knowledge of French relief problems. He explained that Weil is a French Jewish doctor who had headed the "OSA", a children’s relief organization. He is uncertain whether Weil can join the committee since he is already overburdened with work.

Sternbach said that Mathieu Mueller is a swindler, a French Jewish lawyer who has tried to capitalize on the refugee problem to make money by selling false papers at exorbitant prices, etc. He was a member of Sternbach’s committee for a short time but he had been ousted a few weeks ago. Recently a shipment of “Matzen” for refugees in Hungary was planned; Mueller proposed to send it to Hungary on a compensation basis; the committee approved and Mueller tried to exploit the business to make a private profit. As a result, Hungary was occupied before the Jews could get their Matzen. Sternbach stated that Mueller's closest associate is Mantello, a Rumanian who is "chancellor of the San Salvador Consulate". Mantello does a big business in false papers and, believing that there is good money to be made out of refugee relief, has been trying to manoeuvre himself into Sternbach's committee. Sternbach has refused to consider his proposal and Mantello and Mueller have threatened to bring pressure on Sternbach by rallying influential Jews in America.
To: Department

DATE: April 13, 11 a.m., 1944.

Code: 

Charged to:

Reference is made to our 1174 of April 6. Sternbuch is preparing a reply to the information contained therein.

It is requested by S. that the following message be delivered to the Union of Orthodox Rabbis: "The sum of twenty-five thousand Swiss francs have been placed by us at Griffel's disposal. Further details in the matter will follow." Sternbuch explains that Griffel, who is the Istanbul agent of the Union, requested him to deposit the sum of fifteen thousand francs at the American Express Company in Basle and 10,000 francs with his brother, Nahum Sternbuch.

Instructions concerning the employment of the funds will be sent later to Nahum Sternbuch.

HARRISON

$20.30

DJR: RG2: sb:nf

In triplicate

DECLASSIFIED

State Dept. London, 1-11-72

By H. H. Paiko Dept. SEP 24 1972
Zürich, April 13th, 1944.

To the Honorable Legation of the United States of America,

_Bern__

Dear Mr. Getzinger,

To-day I beg to request you to be good enough to pass the following messages on. At the same time I wish to thank you repeatedly for all the trouble I am causing you and am, dear Sir, with my best regards,

Yours faithfully,

[Signature]

2 enclosures.

_April 15th_ — Telegrams from the Red Cross and other messages were not filed. He agreed to hold them until he can call on 19th to discuss.

F.J.
From Shanghai the following wire received:

Boeenhei support advisable 5000 Swiss notes weekly working not yet authorized. Matter of time atop Board of Ezra and Tel El aocbor Schnalleinin.

Sternbuch

Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States of America.

Telegram and April 15 stop regarding 5000 Camerfans weekly wonder not yet approved married Mother and Teli of this Zoombeth.

be a willhelm

In accordance (C. Sternbuch) please transfer

Mr. Malarick R. R. R.

(Scientific and Industrial)
To the

Aruoa Israel World Organisation

Formerly the following consulates have issued such papers:
Paraguay, Ecuador, Costa Rica, Uruguay, Peru, Honduras, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Haiti, Chile, Bolivia.

Presently these papers can be had only from the consulate of Salvador. In order to save people in Hungary it is firstly necessary that consulates in Switzerland should be authorised to issue to us confidentially passports or citizenship documents to be distributed gratis to refugees. This would not only be of great assistance to refugees, it would also reduce the risk of forged passports. It is recommended that the consulates in Switzerland should be informed of this necessity and asked to issue the necessary passports or citizenship documents.

Sternbach says all above did not give false passports in Switzerland — some did it in other countries but not here. Paraguay, Peru, Honduras, Nicaragua and Haiti issued false passports in Switzerland according to his knowledge — Chile many knew too but did not conceal.

Telegram sent April 1: (in clarifying file with immediate orders)
Reference is made to the Legation's no. 2117 of April 5.

"Rosenheims support advisable five thousand Swiss francs per week. Wondering not answered as yet. With regard to 50 rabbis it is a matter of time. Kletzker and Tels "schoor were married by Olef Podlaszek. SEMULEWICZ."

It is Sternbach's request that the Union of Orthodox Rabbis and Rosenheim be informed of the above-quoted telegram which he states was received from Shanghai.

HARRISON

$18.55

DJR: B20: sf
In triplicate
Reference is made to your 1153 April 5.

The following message is from Sternbuch for Agudas Israel World Organization with reference to the above telegram:

"The consulates listed hereunder issued such papers formerly: Bolivia, Chili, Costa Rica, Haiti, Honduras, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela. These documents are now available only from the consulate of San Salvador. In order to save people in Hungary, it is of primary importance that consulates in Switzerland be authorized to issue passports or citizenship documents to us confidentially. These documents would be distributed to refugees free of charge. This measure would put an end to the traffic in false passports. Responsibility that the passports would be employed for temporary protection only and that they would be returned to the states who issued them when the emergency is past would be assumed by the Committee. Signed Sternbuch."

Following is for the Department: S. states that according to his knowledge, only the consulates of Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, San Salvador, Peru and Paraguay have issued false passports in Switzerland, although such passports have been issued in other parts of Europe by consulates of the other countries named above.

HARRISON

$42.60

DJR:ROG:imp:mf
in triplicate
Telegram Received

Date: April 20, 1 p.m., 1944
No: 1584
Received: April 21, 9 a.m.

Paraphrase

The Department desires you to deliver to Sternbuch the following paraphrased message from the Vaad Hehatzala emergency committee by Rabbi Abraham Kalmanowitz:

"An amount of Swiss francs 85,800 has been transmitted from us by the Polish Ministry of Finance to the Polish Embassy in Bern to be delivered to you for transmission to Rabbi Szmulewicz at Shanghai. You should arrange for immediate transfer and advise us when the transaction has been completed.

With a view to facilitating the transmission of these funds the Department requests you to take such steps as may be reasonably possible.

N.U.M.

in triplicate

copy + add.
Dear Mr. Woods:

It would be appreciated if you would deliver the enclosed letter of today's date to Mr. Sternbuch of the Union of Orthodox Rabbis and inform the Legation by telephone when this has been done.

Sincerely yours,

The Legation for you the following message from the Jewish National Committee:

Daniel J. Reagan,
Commercial Attaché

"As already Commercial Attaché, C.O. has been transmitted from us to the Polish Ministry of Finance to the Polish Embassy in Bern to be transferred to the Union of Orthodox Rabbis. You should arrange for immediate transfer and advise us when the transfer has been completed."

Sam F. Woods, Esquire
American Consul-General
Zurich.

Daniel J. Reagan
Commercial Attaché

April 22

[Signature]

[Signature]

RECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter 4-15-72
By D. H. Fasch Date: SEP 8 1972

A copy of the original
Mr. Isaac Sternbuch,
Schweizergasse 14,
Zürich.

Dear Sir:

The Legation has been requested to deliver to you the following message from the Vaadha Hatzala Emergency Committee:

"An amount of Swiss francs 85,800 has been transmitted from us by the Polish Ministry of Finance to the Polish Embassy in Bern to be delivered to you for transmission to Rabbi Szmulowicz at Shanghai. You should arrange for immediate transfer and advise us when the transaction has been completed."

Very truly yours,

Daniel J. Reagan,
Commercial Attaché.

DJR/RCG/imp
Zurich, April 25th 1944

From: Department  Date: April 25, 4 p.m., 1944
Code: Brown  No: 1459
Received: April 26, 9 a.m.

For the Minister from the War Refugee Board.
WRB No. 4.

Please deliver a paraphrase of the following message from the War Refugee Board to Isaac Sternbuch, Postfach 167, St. Gallen, Switzerland:

"Greatly pleased with your April 7th message. Suggest necessity that such couriers be supplied with larger sums and that such funds be given to outstanding personalities leaders of communities and former heads of Yeshivoth to save themselves in whatever possible manner. Ready supply you additional funds on request. Vaadhatzalah emergency committee Rabbis Rosenberg Kotler Kalmanowitz."

HULL

/nrm

in duplicate to files

Two copy in CA files

R.C.G. /imp
Mr. Huddle:

Reference in Dept's 1428 originated in CA. Should copy of reply go to CA?

DJL

Leaving trip this afternoon to New York. MTIC at 10:30. L.

2:16
Zurich, April 25th 1944

To the honorable
Legation of the United States of America
Berne

Dear Mr. Götzinger,

He: Matthew Müller & Dr. Neil

With regard to your esteemed letter of
the 11th April I shall be very much obliged to you, dear
Sir, if you will be good enough to pass this following
line to the Department of State:

"Mr. Müller has been two months belonging to our
Committee, which he has missed for his private
matters. We were happy when he left the same short
time ago much in accordance with our intention.
As regards Dr. Joseph Fell we asked this respectable
man already middle of March to direct our work of
help for France, he is very busy with the work
for children, in spite of that he is showing great
interest in co-operating. Unfortunately the former
appointment could not take place, because he fell
ill about that time. We are in contact with him
and hope to meet him shortly and do all to get his
co-operation. We hope to be able to give you news
about this soonest."

Wass Hassia Sternbach

I beg to thank you for your kindness in
advance. I remain, dear Mr. Götzinger, with the best regards.

Yours very faithfully

[Signature]
Zurich, April 25th 1944

We have just received following cable: 

"Arrangement for a Rabbis temporarily very difficult. Rosenheime support urgent. Advance two months have Emedicine."

Received also amount 86800 Swiss Francs, which dispatched by telegraph Rabbi Samulewicz.

Wand Haralia Sternbuch
Subject: Union of Orthodox Rabbis

April 26, 1944

Sternbuch called by appointment and presented a letter concerning the proposed inclusion of Weil and Mueller in the refugee committee (please see Department’s letter of April 6). I pointed out to him that the Legation’s letter of April 11 stated that he should draft a telegram for dispatch through the Legation concerning this matter and that the Legation could not accept the responsibility of summarizing the statements he made in his letter. Sternbuch agreed to draft the necessary telegram.

Sternbuch stated that he is having difficulty with his own organization here in Switzerland. It seems that Mannes and Rubenfeld, two members of his committee, mastered a majority of the committee in favor of spending 50,000 francs for a Jewish relief home in Switzerland, the funds to be taken from the money remitted by the Union of Orthodox Rabbis for relief and evacuation activities in occupied territory. Sternbuch stated that he has refused to comply with this proposal on the basis that neither he nor the committee has the authority to use the funds for any purpose except for relief and evacuation activities outside Switzerland. He stated that he will not depart from this point of view and that if an open break occurs in the committee he will inform the Legation and put the matter up to the Union of Orthodox Rabbis for decision.

Sternbuch presented the letter dated April 25 (attached) concerning the evacuation of refugees from France to Switzerland. He stated that he understands fully that under his license he is authorized to spend funds for the evacuation of refugees into Switzerland. He has ascertained that the Swiss Fremdenpolizei will not turn back refugees at the frontiers. Nonetheless he fears that if he organizes and finances from Switzerland the evacuation of refugees from France into Switzerland, the Fremdenpolizei will intervene and possibly confiscate the funds remitted by the Union of Orthodox Rabbis. He stated that the financing and organizing of evacuation of refugees from foreign territory into Switzerland is against Swiss law. He desired my advice. I informed him that he as a Swiss citizen must interpret his own obligations to Swiss law and it was not the position of the Legation to instruct him to disobey what he considered to be Swiss regulations. This was a matter for him alone to decide.

Sternbuch requested that we ascertain from the Swiss authorities whether the Fremdenpolizei have any objection to the refugee committee arranging for the evacuation of Jews from France into Switzerland. He asked that this matter be brought to Mr. Rabbi’s attention and stated that he would take no action until this question was clarified.
Bern, April 27, 1944.

Mr. Isaac Sternbach,
Schweizergasse 14,
Münch.

- via Courier.

Dear Sir:

...mission has been requested to deliver to you the following message from the War Council:

It would be appreciated if you would transmit to Mr. Sternbach the enclosed letter of today's date and confirm to the Legation when delivery has been effected.

supplied with larger sums and that such funds to be devoted to underwriting personalities who can influence former heads of Yishuv.

Sincerely yours,

For the Ministry of External Affairs,

J. Klein Rudolf,
Counselor of Legation.

It would be appreciated if you would acknowledge Enclosure as stated - present letter.

Very truly yours,

Sam E. Woods, Esquire,
American Consul General, Münch.
Zürich.
Note: To be forwarded to Mr. Sternbuch through Mr. Urich.

Bern, April 27, 1944

Mr. Isaac Sternbuch,
Schweizergasse 14,
Zürich.

Dear Sir:
The Legation has been requested to deliver to you the following message from the War Refugee Board:

"Greatly pleased with your April 7th message. Suggest necessity that such couriers be supplied with larger sums and that such funds be given to outstanding personalities, leaders of communities and former heads of Yad Vashem to save themselves in whatever possible manner. Are ready to supply you with additional funds on request. Habbis Rosenberg, Kalmanowitz and Kowler of the Yad Vashem Emergency Committee." 

It would be appreciated if you would acknowledge the receipt of the present letter.

Very truly yours,

J. Klahr Huddle,
Counselor of Legation.
Bern, April 29, 1944

Mr. Isaac Sternbuch,
St. Gall.

Sir:

With reference to certain matters which you discussed with Mr. Getinger of the Legation on April 26th, and to your letter of April 25th, you are informed that the conditions of entry into Switzerland of refugees from Axis or Axis-occupied territory is a matter falling only within the competence of the Swiss Government.

The Legation does not doubt that the appropriate Swiss authorities will be pleased to advise with you on the subject and to inform you fully with reference thereto.

Very truly yours,
For the Minister:

J. Klahr Hudick
Counselor of Legation.