Negotiations in Switzerland – including
German Proposals
Folder 2: B:40-64

26 W Ref Bd
Mr Pehle

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: American Legation, Bern

TO: Secretary of State, Washington

DATED: August 5, 1944

NUMBER: 5023

CONTROL COPY

Hodel

[redacted]

McClelland sends the following for the War Refugee Board.

Reference is made herewith to Department's cable of July 30, no. 2614. not in files

I refer you to Legation's messages dated July 26, no. 4802, and of July 29, no. 4874. Neither Saly Mayer nor myself have ever refused to grant serious consideration to any objective and acceptable proposition for effecting the rescue of endangered Jews in Hungary regardless of the quarter from which such a proposition came. Our primary concern has always been not "It can not be done" but "How can this be done." In view of the contradictory and often unreliable nature of many of the proposals of Sternbuch, we have had to handle them with considerable circumspection.

This convoy of 1,200 Jews has been sent to Bergen-Belsen near Hannover in Germany according to recent reliable reports.

HARRISON

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 27 1972

AUG 9 1944

Dear Mr. Leavitt:

The following message has been received through the American Embassy in Lisbon:

"Regarding group of 1200 Rabbis and religious leaders Mayer was told by Sternb usch that payment of 700,000 Swiss francs was asked for. 200,000 were to be paid by Sternbush and JDC to pay rest. This money was to be used for purchase of goods to be shipped to Hungary. Also firms were named to make purchases all of which were on black list. REURTEL to Saly Mayer July 26.

"Mayer referred to WRB representative McClelland who refused to authorize deal unless Washington approved. Mayer then wired Budapest asking if money payment alone were not adequate and has received no reply to date. JDC representative never refused to help but on the contrary tried to find ways of helping consonants with American and Swiss regulations. We had previously given Mayer specific instructions never to undertake any enterprise unless he had given McClelland full information in advance and had his approval. McClelland is in general most sympathetic and cooperative but could not approve this project. Sternbusch in common with many other individuals in our rescue work seems to feel that Mayer must put up all money he demands with no questions asked. JDC can not work in such a way nor is it possible to agree to suggestions which are unsound and improperly considered. It is absolutely impossible for JDC to approve any project whatever without submitting it to proper authorities for their consideration and approval.

"It was never stated nor was any assurance given by any one competent to do so that in the event of the payment mentioned being made these people would be evacuated to Palestine or any other safe place. It was also not made clear whether the 700,000 Swiss francs was in complete payment or only a first installment on a much larger sum as had been previously intimated.

"There is nothing which is legitimate that JDC will not undertake and are not now doing to save this group which you may not know includes the family of our staff member Jose F. Blum.

"Now group of 1200 is in Bergenbersen near Hanover a camp for refugees possibly destined for exchange."

Very truly yours,

(Signed) J. W. Pehle

J. W. Pehle
Executive Director

Mr. M. A. Leavitt, Secretary,
American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee,
270 Madison Avenue,
New York, New York.

FHodel:jth 8/9/44

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

INCOMING TELEGRAM

DIVISION OF COMMUNICATIONS AND RECORDS

CONFI[redacted]

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

LC - 995
Distribution of true reading by special arrangement. ([redacted]T W)

Lisbon
Dated August 5, 1944
Rec'd 6:53, p.m.

CONTROL COPY

Secretary of State,

Washington.

2419, August 5, 1 p.m.

Regarding group of 1200 Rabbis and religious leaders Mayer was told by Sternbusch that payment of 700,000 Swiss francs was asked for. 200,000 were to be paid by Sternbush and JDC to pay rest. This money was to be used for purchase of goods to be shipped to Hungary. Also firms were named to make purchases all of which were on black list. REURTEL to Saly Mayer July 26.

Mayer referred to WRB representative McClelland who refused to authorize deal unless Washington approved. Mayer then wire Budapest asking if money payment alone were not adequate and has received no reply to date. JDC representative never refused to help but on the contrary tried to find ways of helping consonants with American and Swiss regulations. We had previously given Mayer specific instructions

instructions never to undertake any enterprise unless he had given McClelland full information in advance and had his approval. McClelland is in general most sympathetic and cooperative but could not approve this project. Sternbusch in common with many other individuals in our rescue work seems to feel that Mayer must put up all money he demands with no questions asked. JDC can not work in such a way nor is it possible to agree to suggestions which are unsound and improperly considered. It is absolutely impossible for JDC to approve any project whatever without submitting it to proper authorities for their consideration and approval.

It was never stated nor was any assurance given by any one competent to do so that in the event of the payment mentioned being made these people would be evacuated to Palestine or any other safe place. It was also not made clear whether the 700,000 Swiss francs was in complete payment or only a first installment on a much larger sum as had been previously intimated.

There is nothing which is legitimate that JDC

will not

will not undertake and are not now doing to save this group which you may not know includes the family of our staff member Jose F. Blum.

Now group of 1200 is in Bergenbersen near Hanover a camp for refugees possibly destined for exchange.

NORWEB

BB WSB

32.

August 10, 1944

A conference was held today in Mr. Pehle's office for the purpose of discussing certain problems with Michael Tress and a companion representing the Agudas Israel. Messrs. Friedman, Abraham, Akzin, and Miss Hodel were present for the War Refugee Board.

The problems discussed were all in connection with the 1200 rabbinical leaders recently sent from Vienna to Bergen-Belsen in Germany. The Board was asked what steps could be taken to help them. It was suggested that Palestine certificates might be made available to those of the group who do not already possess them. In this connection Mr. Tress agreed that his group would approach Dr. Nahum Goldmann of the Jewish Agency and, with our consent, he would ask Dr. Goldmann to send through our facilities a cable to his representative in Jerusalem on this matter.

It was also suggested that a request might be made to appropriate people in Sweden to discuss with the Swedish authorities the matter of issuing Swedish protective papers to the group. On this point Mr. Tress stated that a cable would be prepared and that he would request us to transmit it through our facilities.

The question was then raised of Sternbusch's inability to handle a transaction which he believed might have saved the people in question from being removed to Bergen-Belsen. Mr. Friedman then explained the background on the so-called Sternbusch proposal and informed Mr. Tress of the messages which we had received from Mr. McClelland which indicated that the proposal involved the purchase of tractors and other war materiel des~~ignated~~ tined for the enemy; that at no stage in the negotiations had it been clearly indicated that this transaction would actually save the 1200 from deportation. Mr. Friedman explained that in view of the foregoing, McClelland had been unable to approve the transaction and that we had supported him in his decision. It was pointed out that there is a marked distinction between the transaction suggested by Sternbusch and the operations envisaged by the various licenses which this Government has issued permitting rescue and relief operations and that our position had been made very clear to Mr. McClelland in a recent cable sent by the Board. Mr. Tress agreed that the position taken by this Government on the Sternbusch proposal was absolutely right and he appreciated our explanation of the matter.

JH

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: American Legation, Bern
TO: Secretary of State, Washington
DATED: August 11, 1944
NUMBER: 5197

[redacted]

McClelland sends the following for the War Refugee Board.

Reference is made herewith to Department's cable of August 2, no. 2656, and Legation's messages of August 3, nos. 4972 and 4974, and of August 5, no. 5043.

There has just reached Switzerland several reports dated the end of July from reliable Jewish sources in Budapest (Kasztner, Komoly and Percz) which shed additional light on the present situation of Jews in Hungary with regard especially to ransom and emigration aspects of the problem. In spite of the preliminary reassuring news of the agreement between the ICRC and the Hungarian Government to allow Jewish emigration to Palestine and elsewhere and relief to Jews remaining in Hungary it now seems that ranking Gestapo agents of so called "Sondereinsatz Kommand" specially sent to Budapest to direct the deportation of Jews have no intention of permitting them to emigrate freely, especially to Palestine, if they can prevent it. After the attack on Hitler and following the rapid worsening of the German military situation, the Gestapo in Budapest shifted their interest from the ideological aspect of Jewish extermination to the purely material benefits in goods, labor and money to be derived therefrom. The essence of their present attitude is contained in declaration of Gestapo Head to Kasztner to the effect that he wished to pump out the necessary labor from Hungary Jewry, and sell the balance of valueless human material against valuable goods.

On the other hand, the Hungarian Government led by Horthy apparently has been frightened not only into stopping deportation (July 9) but also into trying to make up for the unsavory role it has already played in the persecution and deportation of Jews by favoring their emigration and relief to them under the supervision of ICRC. Krausz of the Jewish Agency for Palestine accordingly has been permitted to set up an office in the Swiss Legation where they are actively preparing the emigration to Palestine of 8700 families previously mentioned.

HARRISON

Miss Chauncey (for the Sec'y) Abrahamson, Akzin, Borenstein, Cohn, DuBois, Friedman, Gaston, Hodel, Laughlin, Lesser, Mann, Mannon, Marks, McCormack, Pehle, Sargoy, Standish, Weinstein, Files

HIS
Distribution of this
reading only by special
arrangement. ([redacted] W)

August 12, 19

1 p.m.

[redacted]

CONTROL COPY

[redacted]

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

COMMUNICATIONS AND RECORDS (LIMSON)

1944 AUG 15 AM 10 58

DEPARTMENT OF STATE DIVISION OF

AMEMBASSY,

LISBON.

2237

The cable below is WRB 74.

Please deliver paraphrase of following message to Dr. Joseph Schwartz from Leavitt of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee:

QUOTE Suggest Saly Mayer do everything possible for 1200 Rabbis and other Hungarian Jewish religious leaders and keep us advised. UNQUOTE

STETTINIUS
ACTING
(GLW)

S/CR

WRB:MMV:KG
8/11/44

WE

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 27 1972

000803

CABLE TO LISBON

From War Refugee Board to Norweb.

Please deliver following message to Dr. Joseph Schwartz from Leavitt of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee:

"Suggest Saly Mayer do everything possible for 1200 Rabbis and other Hungarian Jewish religious leaders and keep us advised."

THIS IS WRB CABLE TO LISBON NO. 74.

4:45 p.m.
August 9, 1944

Miss Chauncey (For the Sec'y), Abrahamson, Cohn, DuBois, Friedman, Hodel, Laughlin, Lesser, Mann, Mannon, McCormack, Cable Control Files

FHodel:jth 8/9/44

Message dictated by Miss Mannon, JDC.

2 War Ref Board
Mr Pehle

ORIGINAL TEXT OF TELEGRAM SENT

FROM: Secretary of State, Washington

TO: American Legation, Bern

DATED: August 12, 1944

NUMBER: 2774

CONTROL COPY

[redacted]

FOR MCCLELLAND.

The War Refugee B oard requests that you deliver the following message to Isaac Sternbuch, St. Gallen, Switzerland:

QUOTE Reference to message of July 21 guaranteeing one million francs, it is necessary that Freudiger rescue plan secure McClelland's approval. Upon your sending us notification of such approval and McClelland notifying War Refugee Board likewise we are hopeful after conference that Joint will grant needed sum.

Concerning Neutra Rabbi's request behalf 1800 persons Joint cabling Saly Mayer regarding matter.

Advise developments rescue project for 1200 persons. Please confirm receipt of francs 428,816 forwarded July 28.

VAAD HAHATZALA EMERGENCY COMMITTEE
ABRAHAM KALMANOWITZ UNQUOTE

The following from WRB to McClelland:

In view of your 4802 of July 26 and Department's 2656 of August 2, Board assumes that you will have acquainted Sternbuch with your decision regarding Freudiger proposal and that Sternbuch will notify Vaad Hahatzala accordingly.

THIS IS WRB BERN CABLE NO. 116.

STETTINIUS
(Acting)

CABLE TO LEGATION, BERN, SWITZERLAND

The War Refugee Board requests that you deliver the following message to Isaac Sternbuch, St. Gallen, Switzerland:

QUOTE Reference to message of July 21 guaranteeing one million francs, it is necessary that Freudiger rescue plan secure McClelland's approval. Upon your sending us notification of such approval and McClelland notifying War Refugee Board likewise we are hopeful after conference that Joint will grant needed sum.

Concerning Neutra Rabbi's request behalf 1800 persons Joint cabling Saly Mayer regarding matter.

Advise developments rescue project for 1200 persons. Please confirm receipt of francs 428,816 forwarded July 28.

VAAD HAHATZALA EMERGENCY COMMITTEE
ABRAHAM KALMANOWITZ UNQUOTE

The following from WRB to McClelland:

In view of your 4802 of July 26 and Department's 2656 of August 2, Board assumes that you will have acquainted Sternbuch with your decision regarding Freudiger proposal and that Sternbuch will notify Vaad Hahatzala accordingly.

THIS IS WRB BERN CABLE NO. 116.

12:15 p.m.
August 9, 1944

Miss Chauncey (For the Sec'y), Abrahamson, ~~Akzinx~~, Cohn, DuBois, Friedman, Hodel, Laughlin, Lesser, Mann, Mannon, McCormack, Cable Control Files

Ba. 7
BAkzin:tmh 8-8-44

36.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

OUTGOING TELEGRAM

Distribution [illegible] only by special arrangement. [illegible] W)

DIVISION OF COMMUNICATIONS AND RECORDS

August [illegible] 7 p. m.

CONTROL COPY

AMLEGATION,

STOCKHOLM.

1644

The following for Olsen is WRB 75.

Please transmit paraphrase of the following message to Wilhelm Wolbe, 1% Olefagotten, Stockholm, Sweden.

QUOTE Reported 7000 Lithuanian Jews evacuated from Kaunas to East Prussian border for slave labor fearful extermination will follow. We ready meet every obligation effect their rescue. Please utilize every appropriate method available save maximum possible number.

Group of 1200 including Rabbis religious leaders evacuated from Hungary through Slovakia now reported in concentration camp at Belsen Bergen near Hanover. Danger imminent deportation to death camps. Doing everything to effect their rescue. Vital you immediately (1) request Swedish government to grant Swedish passports or visas to save this group or (2) intervene Swedish Government and King direct immediate appeal to Admiral Horthy to demand repatriation of these 1200. If repatriation is granted, request that their transportation to Hungary be accomplished in conditions insuring survival and that on their trip they be accompanied by representative of Intercross, Swedish Redcross or Hungarian Redcross to insure such conditions. Also that upon

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 27 1972

special

1644, August 17, 1944, to Stockholm

upon return to Hungary, they be treated under terms of relaxed regime pending emigration. Enlist cooperation of Olsen and Rabbi Ehrenpreis. The lives of this group dependent on your action. Vaad Hahatzala Emergency Committee. UNQUOTE

THE FOLLOWING FROM WRB FOR OLSEN.

If you deem it advisable, you may actively support the above requests to Swedish authorities.

HULL

WRB:MMV:KG
8/17/44

NOE SE EE S/CR

CABLE TO MINISTER JOHNSON AND OLSEN, STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN

Please transmit the following message to Wilhelm Wolbe, 11 Olefagotten, Stockholm, Sweden.

QUOTE Reported 7000 Lithuanian Jews evacuated from Kaunas to East Prussian border for slave labor fearful extermination will follow. We ready meet every obligation effect their rescue. Please utilize every appropriate method available save maximum possible number.

Group of 1200 including Rabbis religious leaders evacuated from Hungary through Slovakia now reported in concentration camp at Belsen Bergen near Hanover. Danger imminent deportation to death camps. Doing everything to effect their rescue. Vital you immediately (1) request Swedish government to grant Swedish passports or visas to save this group or (2) intervene Swedish Government and King direct immediate appeal to Admiral Horthy to demand repatriation of these 1200. If repatriation is granted, request that their transportation to Hungary be accomplished in conditions insuring survival and that on their trip they be accompanied by representative of Intercross, Swedish Redcross or Hungarian Redcross to insure such conditions. Also that upon return to Hungary, they be treated under terms of relaxed regime pending emigration. Enlist cooperation of Olsen and Rabbi Ehrenpreis. The lives of this group dependent on your action. Vaad Hahatzala Emergency Committee. UNQUOTE

THE FOLLOWING FROM WRB FOR OLSEN.

If you deem it advisable, you may actively support the above requests to Swedish authorities.

THIS IS WRB CABLE TO STOCKHOLM NO. 75

1:40 p.m.
August 16, 1944

Miss Chauncey (for the Sec'y) Abrahamson, Cohn, DuBois, Friedman, Hodel, Laughlin, Lesser, Mann, Mannon, McCormack, Cable Control Files

Ba.
BAkzin:ml 8/15/44

ועד ההצלה
VAAD HAHATZALA
(EMERGENCY COMMITTEE)
132 NASSAU STREET
(ROOM 819)
NEW YORK 7, N. Y.
PHONE REctor 2-4235

August 11, 1944

War Refugee Board
Treasury Building
Washington, D. C.

Att: Dr. B. Axzin

Dear Dr. Axzin,

We are enclosing two cables which we respectfully ask you to expedite through the War Refugee Board. Their import is evident and we must urge their earliest dispatch.

With greatest appreciation,

Very respectfully yours,

VAAD HAHATZALA EMERGENCY COMMITTEE

A. Kalmanowitz

AK:r

Rabbi Abraham Kalmanowitz

תודה רבה להשם מאד יקרת ראתה ותשרת
ומה מעניות

To rescue, save and preserve from war destruction the Torah values (Yeshivoth, Rabbis, Scholars and Communal Leaders)

To utilize the possibilities for rescue of European Jewry where the Vaad Hahatzala program is especially needed.

ועד ההצלה
VAAD HAHATZALA
(EMERGENCY COMMITTEE)
132 NASSAU STREET
(ROOM 819)
NEW YORK 7, N. Y.
PHONE REctor 2-4235

August 11, 1944

MESSAGE TO WILHELM WOLFE
11 OLEFSCOTTEN
STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN
Through AMERICAN LEGATION STOCKHOLM

Reported group of 1200 including Rabbis ~~great~~ religious ~~personalities~~ leaders ~~other party groups~~ evacuated from Hungary through Slovakia and now in concentration camp Belsen Bergen near Hanover. ~~stop~~ Danger imminent deportation to ~~extermination~~ death camps. ~~stop~~ Doing everything ~~intervening~~ with ~~governments effect~~ to effect their rescue. ~~stop~~ Vital you immediately take following first steps intervene Swedish Government and ~~Swedish~~ King direct immediate appeal to Admiral Horthy to demand repatriate ~~d~~ these 1200 secondly ~~contact~~ approach Swedish Government to grant Swedish ~~citizenships~~ or passports or visas ~~documentations~~ to save this group. Enlist cooperation of Olsen ~~War Refugee Board~~ and Rabbi Ehrenpreis ~~ise~~. The lives of this group dependent on your action. Further reported 7000 Lithuanian Jews evacuated from Kaunas to East Prussian border for slave labor fearful extermination will follow. We ready meet every obligation effect their rescue utilize every appropriate method available save maximum possible number.

VAAD HAHATZALA EMERGENCY COMMITTEE

To rescue, save and preserve from war destruction the Torah values (Yeshivoth, Rabbis, Scholars and Communal Leaders)

To utilize the possibilities for rescue of European Jewry where the Vaad Hahatzala program is especially needed.

37.

Miss Morrissey said that Mr. Levy decided that JDC should get in touch with the VAAD. Mr. Levy talked with Rabbi Gold yesterday afternoon and told him the 1200 Rabbis were going through Slovakia on their way to Hannover. Miss Morrissey suggests that, perhaps, the following cable should be sent, but will discuss it with you when she talks with you (when you call her):

TO SCHWARTZ FOR SALY MAYER

"Suggest you do everything possible for 1200 Rabbis and other Hungarian Jewish religious leaders and keep us advised."

*****

Mr. Matthey of the National Red Cross Committee called and said Rabbi Kotler of the VAAD called him from New York yesterday and insisted that the Red Cross should do something for the 1200 Rabbis. Kotler wants to come down to see Matthey today, but Matthey's attitude is that, while he will do anything the WRB wants him to do, his understanding is that if WRB is taking care of the matter, REd Cross should keep out of it. He seems in imminent danger of being surrounded by four Rabbis from New York about four this afternoon. He had his representative in New York talk with Kotler and advise him that if he had seen the WRB then there was no use coming to see the Red Cross. Is afraid Kotler was not convinced. He would like you to call him (Matthey) as soon as possible and advise him if his position is correct.

J. Hannon

ORIGINAL TEXT OF TELEGRAM SENT

FROM: Secretary of State, Washington
TO: American Legation, Bern
DATED: August 17, 1944
NUMBER: 2834

[redacted]

Please transmit the following message to Isaac Sternbuch, St. Gallen, Switzerland:

QUOTE: Reported 7000 Lithuanian Jews evacuated from Kaunas to East Prussian border for slave labor fearful extermination will follow. We ready meet every obligation effect their rescue utilize every appropriate method available save maximum possible number. Contact Intercross urge them send representative intervene for group.

Concerning 1200 endeavoring secure Palestine certificates for them. Urge you do likewise. Necessary also you request Intercross and Swiss government to address appeal to Admiral Horthy to demand repatriation of this group. It is hoped that their transportation to Hungary would be accomplished in conditions insuring survival and that on their trip they would be accompanied by representative of Intercross or Hungarian Redcross to insure such conditions. Also, that upon return to Hungary, they would be treated under terms of relaxed regime pending emigration. Have cabled Wolbe Stockholm to make similar request of Swedish government. Vaad Hahatzala Emergency Committee. UNQUOTE

The following from WRB for McClelland:

Please actively support the above requests to Swiss authorities and Intercross. Developments should be reported.

THIS IS WRB CABLE TO BERN NO. 128

HULL

Miss Chauncey(for the Sec'y), Abrahamson, Akzin, Borenstein, Cohn, DuBois, Drury, Friedman, Gaston, Hodel, Laughlin, Lesser, Mann, Mannon, Marks, McCormacl Pehle, Sargoy, Standish, Weinstein, Cable Control Files

39.

0 0 0 8 1 8

I was by Bd-Pdle

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: American Legation, Bern

TO: Secretary of State, Washington

DATED: August 23, 1944

NUMBER: 5517

CONTROL COPY

MCCLELLAND SENDS THE FOLLOWING FOR WRB.

We refer herewith to Legation's telegram of August 11, 1944, No. 5197.

On August 21 there arrived in Switzerland 320 of 500 Hungarian Jews transferred to camp of Bergenbelsen who were to be unconditionally released by the Gestapo. On August 22 or 23, 200 more are due to arrive. These people appear to be principally from Budapest and Kolosvar and are mixed group of both sexes ranging from two to eighty-two in age. Among the 320 who have reached Switzerland are certain rabbis and other members of the original convoy of 1200 (see Department's cable of August 17, 1944, No. 2834) which actually turned out to be composed of 1690 persons.

HARRISON

DCR:JDB:FB 8/24/44

40.

2 War Ref Bd-Peha

ORIGINAL TEXT OF TELEGRAM SENT

FROM: Secretary of State, Washington

TO: American Legation, Bern

DATED: September 2, 1944

NUMBER: 3040

CONTROL COPY

[redacted]

FROM THE DEPARTMENT, THE WAR REFUGEE BOARD AND THE FOREIGN ECONOMIC ADMINISTRATION TO MINISTER HARRISON AND MCCLELLAND, BERN.

Please refer to your No. 4874 of July 29 concerning Sternbuch scheme. As clearly indicated in Department's No. 2656 of August 2 (WRB No. 106) and for the reasons indicated therein we concur in your view that it is not (repeat not) feasible to undertake the transaction in question at this time.

However, in view of the comments contained in paragraph four of your cable it is feared that you may be under a misapprehension as to the policy of the Government of the United States concerning the licensing of financial operations in and communications with enemy territory for refugee rescue and relief purposes. It is to be emphasized that the decision not to undertake the Sternbuch proposal does not (repeat not) in any way change or derogate from the licensing policy which has been in effect since prior to the establishment of the War Refugee Board in January of this year. For your information and guidance the following is a statement of this Government's policy regarding licenses for rescue and relief purposes which was communicated several months ago to the British Government and which has been explained in person and detail to Mr.

Mr. Dingle Foot of the MEW.

QUOTE The United States Government, with the approval of the Department of State, the Treasury Department, and the War Refugee Board, has issued a number of licenses to private organizations authorizing such organizations to finance operations in and communicate with enemy territory in an effort to save the lives of oppressed peoples. The British Government has already been advised of the basic provisions of these licenses. As the British Government knows, such licenses permit the acquisition of the necessary local funds, goods or services from persons in enemy or enemy occupied territory against payment in free exchange or free currency notes only if it is not feasible to obtain the local funds by the other methods which are prescribed.

The United States Government has concluded, in issuing these licenses, that any danger involved in permitting the enemy to acquire relatively insubstantial quantities of foreign exchange is far outweighed by the saving of lives. Experience has shown that the use of money is in many cases the only means by which refugees can be assisted to escape or otherwise save their lives, and it is felt that every effort should be made to see that adequate funds are available for this purpose.

The United States Government is convinced of the need for operations of this character, in addition to those to be

undertaken

undertaken by the Intergovernmental Committee in extension of credit operations hitherto conducted by private organizations.

The United States Government, motivated by humanitarian considerations, intends to continue to follow the policy which it has been pursuing now for several months in connection with the issuance of licenses to private organizations. It is most anxious that its efforts in this regard should not be unilateral, and that the two governments will be able to follow a common line so that there may be full cooperation in this matter as well as in the case of operations through the Intergovernmental Committee.

Accordingly, the United States Government hopes that the British Government will decide to adopt a similar policy in connection with authorizing and encouraging the sending of funds by private organizations to neutral countries for the relief and rescue of victims of enemy oppression. In this way, the two governments will be able most effectively to carry out the policy heretofore agreed upon to take all possible measures, consistent with the successful prosecution of the war, for the speedy rescue and relief of the oppressed minorities of Europe. UNQUOTE.

It is important that in continuing and intensifying our humanitarian efforts to rescue the victims of enemy oppression, you be guided by the policy indicated. In this connection, your attention

attention is further directed to the Department's cable of March 15, 1944, No. 856.

We know adequate care is being taken not to make available free exchange or free currency except where it is not feasible to use the other prescribed methods of procuring local funds and, from reports we have received, we are not disturbed about the amount of free exchange and free currency being obtained. Furthermore, these activities are not regarded by us as conflicting with the various negotiations now being conducted by this government with Swiss banks and Swiss Government to deny to the enemy Swiss francs to the greatest possible extent and especially to prevent a last minute flight of capital into Switzerland, trying to avoid United Nations' economic and military control.

THIS IS THE CABLE TO BERN NO. 109.

HULL

CABLE TO MINISTER HARRISON AND MCCLELLAND, BERN, FROM THE DEPARTMENT, THE WAR REFUGEE BOARD AND THE FOREIGN ECONOMIC ADMINISTRATION.

Please refer to your No. 4874 of July 29 concerning Sternbuch scheme. As clearly indicated in Department's No. _____ of _____ (WRB No. 106) and for the reasons indicated therein we concur in your view that it is not (repeat not) feasible to undertake the transaction in question at this time.

However, in view of the comments contained in paragraph four of your cable it is feared that you may be under a misapprehension as to the policy of the Government of the United States concerning the licensing of financial operations in and communications with enemy territory for refugee rescue and relief purposes. It is to be emphasized that the decision not to undertake the Sternbuch proposal does not (repeat not) in any way change or derogate from the licensing policy which has been in effect since prior to the establishment of the War Refugee Board in January of this year. For your information and guidance the following is a statement of this Government's policy regarding licenses for rescue and relief purposes which was communicated several months ago to the British Government and which has been explained in person and detail to Mr. Dingle Foot of the MEW.

QUOTE The United States Government, with the approval of the Department of State, the Treasury Department, and the War Refugee Board, has issued a number of licenses to private organizations authorising such organizations to finance operations in and communicate with enemy territory in an effort to save the lives of oppressed peoples. The British Government has already been advised of the basic provisions of these licenses. As the British Government knows, such licenses permit the acquisition of the necessary local funds, goods or services from persons in enemy or enemy occupied territory against payment in free exchange or free currency notes only if it is not feasible to obtain the local funds by the other methods which are prescribed.

The United States Government has concluded, in issuing these licenses, that any danger involved in permitting the enemy to acquire relatively insubstantial quantities of foreign exchange is far outweighed by the saving of lives. Experience has shown that the use of money is in many cases the only means by which refugees can be assisted to escape or otherwise save their lives, and it is felt that every effort should be made to see that adequate funds are available for this purpose.

The United States Government is convinced of the need for operations of this character, in addition to those to be undertaken by the Intergovernmental Committee in extension of credit operations hitherto conducted by private organizations.

The United States Government, motivated by humanitarian considerations, intends to continue to follow the policy which it has been pursuing now for several months in connection with the issuance of licenses to private organizations. It is most anxious that its efforts in this regard should not be unilateral, and that the two governments will be able to follow a common line so that there may be full cooperation in this matter as well as in the case of operations through the Intergovernmental Committee.

Accordingly, the United States Government hopes that the British Government will decide to adopt a similar policy in connection with authorizing and encouraging the sending of funds by private organizations to neutral countries for the relief and rescue of victims of enemy oppression. In this way, the two governments will be able most effectively to carry out the policy heretofore agreed upon to take all possible measures, consistent with the successful prosecution of the war, for the speedy rescue and relief of the oppressed minorities of Europe. UNQUOTE.

It is important that in continuing and intensifying our humanitarian efforts to rescue the victims of enemy oppression, you be guided by the policy indicated. In this connection, your attention is further directed to the Department's cable of March 15, 1944, No. 856.

THIS IS WRB CABLE TO BERN NO. 109

* * * *

In view of the fact that the cable which is being answered is also addressed to Foreign Economic Administration I assume that you will arrange for clearance with that organization.

2:30 p.m.
August 2, 1944

Miss Chauncey (for the Sec'y) Abrahamson, Cohn, DuBois, Friedman, Hodel, Laughlin, Lesser, Mann, Mannon, McCormack, Cable Control Files
JBFriedman:css 8/1/44

L.S.L.
B7

8/25/44

TO: Mr. Warren

FROM: Mr. Pehle

Reference is made to the letter of August 19 from Mr. Sidney Homer of FEA to Mr. Vance of the State Department, concerning the proposed reply to Bern's No. 4874 of July 29, and suggesting the addition of a paragraph to the draft prepared by the War Refugee Board.

We are not prepared to approve this paragraph as drafted by FEA and suggest that it be revised to read as follows:

"We know that adequate care is being taken not to make free exchange or free currency available except where the other prescribed methods of obtaining local funds are not feasible, and from the reports with which we have been furnished we are not disturbed about the amounts of free exchange and free currency being used. Nor do we regard these activities as in conflict with the various negotiations which this Government now has under way with the Swiss Government and Swiss banks to deny free Swiss francs to the enemy to the fullest extent possible, and expressly to prevent a last minute flight of capital into Switzerland, seeking to avoid United Nations Military and economic control."

It will be appreciated if you will clear the foregoing with FEA.

8/29

FH:jth 8/25/44 FH Cleared with Mr. Madison & Mr. Pehle

CABLE TO MINISTER HARRISON AND MCCLELLAND, BERN, FROM THE DEPARTMENT, THE WAR REFUGEE BOARD AND THE FOREIGN ECONOMIC ADMINISTRATION.

Please refer to your No. 4874 of July 29 concerning Sternbuch scheme. As clearly indicated in Department's No._____ of _____ (WRB No. 106) and for the reasons indicated therein we concur in your view that it is not (repeat not) feasible to undertake the transaction in question at this time.

However, in view of the comments contained in paragraph four of your cable it is feared that you may be under a misapprehension as to the policy of the Government of the United States concerning the licensing of financial operations in and communications with enemy territory for refugee rescue and relief purposes. It is to be emphasized that the decision not to undertake the Sternbuch proposal does not (repeat not) in any way change or derogate from the licensing policy which has been in effect since prior to the establishment of the War Refugee Board in January of this year. For your information and guidance the following is a statement of this Government's policy regarding licenses for rescue and relief purposes which was communicated several months ago to the British Government and which has been explained in person and detail to Mr. Dingle Foot of the MEW.

QUOTE The United States Government, with the approval of the Department of State, the Treasury Department, and the War Refugee Board, has issued a number of licenses to private organizations authorizing such organizations to finance operations in and communicate with enemy territory in an effort to save the lives of oppressed peoples. The British Government has already been advised of the basic provisions of these licenses. As the British Government knows, such licenses permit the acquisition of the necessary local funds, goods or services from persons in enemy or enemy occupied territory against payment in free exchange or free currency notes only if it is not feasible to obtain the local funds by the other methods which are prescribed.

The United States Government has concluded, in issuing these licenses, that any danger involved in permitting the enemy to acquire relatively insubstantial quantities of foreign exchange is far outweighed by the saving of lives. Experience has shown that the use of money is in many cases the only means by which refugees can be assisted to escape or otherwise save their lives, and it is felt that every effort should be made to see that adequate funds are available for this purpose.

The United States Government is convinced of the need for operations of this character, in addition to those to be undertaken by the Inter-governmental Committee in extension of credit operations hitherto conducted by private organizations.

The United States Government, motivated by humanitarian considerations, intends to continue to follow the policy which it has been pursuing now for several months in connection with the issuance of licenses to private organizations. It is most anxious that its efforts in this regard should not be unilateral, and that the two governments will be able to follow a common line so that there may be full cooperation in this matter as well as in the case of operations through the Intergovernmental Committee.

Accordingly, the United States Government hopes that the British Government will decide to adopt a similar policy in connection with authorizing and encouraging the sending of funds by private organizations to neutral countries for the relief and rescue of victims of enemy oppression. In this way, the two governments will be able most effectively to carry out the policy heretofore agreed upon to take all possible measures, consistant with the successful prosecution of the war, for the speedy rescue and relief of the oppressed minorities of Europe. UNQUOTE.

It is important that in continuing and intensifying our humanitarian efforts to rescue the victims of enemy oppression, you be guided by the policy indicated. In this connection, your attention is further directed to the Department's cable of March 15, 1944, No. 856.

THIS IS WRB CABLE TO BERN NO. 109

* * * * *

In view of the fact that the cable which is being answered is also addressed to Foreign Economic Administration I assume that you will arrange for clearance with that organization.

2:30 p.m.
August 2, 1944

JBFriedman:oss 8/1/44
Miss Chauncey (for the Sec'y) Abrahamson, Cohn, DuBois, Friedman, Hddel, Laughlin, Lesser, Mann, Mannon, McCormack, Cable Control Files

Miss O'Dell

BUREAU OF AREAS

In reply refer to
BA-813-SHJr.

AUG 19 1944

[redacted]

Mr. Marshall M. Vance
State Department
1712 G Street, N.W., Room 606
Washington, D.C.

Subject: Proposed Reply to Bern's No. 4874 of July 29.

Dear Mr. Vance:

We have considered the draft reply which you submitted to us for clearance on behalf of the War Refugee Board and have discussed the matter with Mr. McCormick and Miss O'Dell.

We believe Cable 4874 of July 29 requires an answer, (even though the Sternbuch proposal may now be academic) because the Mission raises the important problem of consistency with U.S. and U.K. programs to limit enemy holdings of Swiss francs.

We approve the draft answer submitted by the War Refugee Board provided this question can be clarified by the insertion at the end of the cable of a paragraph similar to the following:

> It is assumed that great care is being taken not to make free exchange or free currency available except where the other prescribed methods of obtaining local funds are not feasible. Hence the amounts of free exchange or free currency used will be moderate. Thus, this program need not conflict with the various negotiations which this Government now has under way with the Swiss government and with Swiss banks to deny free Swiss francs to the enemy and especially to prevent a last minute flight of enemy capital into Switzerland seeking to avoid United Nations' military and economic controls.

The purpose of the above paragraph is obviously to convey to the Mission the information that the refugee program and the financial blockade program are not necessarily mutually antagonistic. Since

the Mission itself has raised this question and, since the Mission is now receiving many instructions from Washington outlining new programs of denying Swiss francs to the enemy, it is important that the Mission should not believe that conflicting instructions are coming from Washington.

Sincerely yours,

Sidney Homer, Jr., Chief
Enforcement Section
Blockade Division

FOREIGN ECONOMIC ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

RIVATE USE TO AVOID
OF POSTAGE, $300

Miss Florence O'Dell
Treasury Department Building, Room 190
Washington, D. C.

REGISTERED No. 782579

000832

41.

CABLE TO HARRISON, BERN, FOR MC CLELLAND FROM WAR REFUGEE BOARD.

Reference penultimate paragraph your no. 4258 of July 5, your no. 4867 of July 29, and Department's nos. 2417 of July 26 and 2579 of July 28.

In view of recent developments and the urgency of the Hungarian situation and since delays may be disastrous, JDC agrees that balance of one million dollar fund may be used by Saly Mayer in any way that can be helpful in saving the lives of Jews in Hungary. Please advise Mayer accordingly.

THIS IS WRB CABLE TO BERN NO. 163

5:00 p.m.
September 7, 1944

Miss Chauncey (for the Sec'y) Abrahamson, Cohn, DuBois, Friedman, Hodel, Laughlin, Lesser, Mannon, McCormack, Cable Control Files

FH:lab 9/7/44 Cleared with Hearst & Pable JCH -

42.

000835

2 war Ref Bd
Pehle

ORIGINAL TEXT OF TELEGRAM SENT

FROM: Secretary of State, Washington

TO: American Legation, Bern

DATED: September 12, 1944

NUMBER: 3152

CONTROL COPY

For McClelland.

Please deliver the following message from Vaad Hahatzala to Sternbuch, St. Gallen:

QUOTE Please detail your rescue activities in Hungary and Slovakia to McClelland.

Please also communicate to McClelland names and addresses of trusted leaders of rescue work in Hungary and Slovakia. It is hoped that this will enable these persons to obtain financial assistance for rescue activities through WRB. UNQUOTE

The following is for McClelland from WRB:

Upon receipt of names and addresses please cable them at once to WRB.

THIS IS WRB CABLE TO BERN NO. 165.

HULL

CABLE TO MINISTER HARRISON AND MCCLELLAND, BERN, SWITZERLAND

Please deliver the following message from Vaad Hahatzala to Sternbuch, St. Gallen:

QUOTE Please detail your rescue activities in Hungary and Slovakia to McClelland.

Please also communicate to McClelland names and addresses of trusted leaders of rescue work in Hungary and Slovakia. It is hoped that this will enable these persons to obtain financial assistance for rescue activities through WRB. UNQUOTE

The following is for McClelland from WRB:

Upon receipt of names and addresses please cable them at once to WRB.

THIS IS WRB CABLE TO BERN NO. 165

9:20 a.m.
September 9, 1944

Miss Chauncey (for the Sec'y) Abrahamson, Cohn, DuBois, Friedman, Hodel, Laughlin, Lesser, Mannon, McCormack, Cable Control Files

BA. L.S.L.

BAkzin:LSLesser:ar 9/7/44

43.

2 war Ref Bd
Pehle

ORIGINAL TEXT OF TELEGRAM SENT

FROM: Secretary of State, Washington

TO: American Legation, Bern

DATED: September 14, 1944

NUMBER: 3186
X

CONTROL COPY

[redacted]

FROM WAR REFUGEE BOARD FOR MCCLELLAND.

Board is receiving numerous urgent requests to take vigorous action on behalf of Jews in Slovakia whose position is reported to have seriously deteriorated without prior warning in recent days. Similar disastrous conditions reported in fact or imminent in Hungary. With respect to Hungarian situation please consult Sternbuch in an effort promptly to secure the names and addresses of persons indicated in Department's 3152 dated September 12, WRB's 165. With respect to the Slovakian situation Union of Orthodox Rabbis reports further urgent pleas for money from the Rabbi of Neutra. Please endeavor to ascertain from Sternbuch the nature and such details as possible of the Rabbi of Neutra's project and, if, in your opinion and that of Saly Mayer such project is feasible and is reasonably calculated to save the lives of Jews is Slovakia, please extend to Sternbuch all possible assistance. To this end, you may in your discretion expend such portion of such funds as may be available to you and to request Saly Mayer to place at your disposal for such purpose such additional funds as you may require within the limits

limits of what may be available to him. If funds in excess of those presently available to you and Saly Mayer in Switzerland are needed for such operation, please advise the Board at once. Nothing hereinabove contained should be construed as indicating that you may not in your discretion arrange to have Sternbuch discuss the Rabbi of Neutra's project with you and Saly Mayer jointly. JDC is in agreement. If, regarding any project you and Saly Mayer are not in agreement with respect to the expenditure of JDC funds, please advise the Board fully at once.

Interested persons here assert that lives of group of Hungarian Rabbis and leaders now reported at Bergen-Belsen could have been saved while aboard train if funds had been sent to appropriate persons in Hungary. Would appreciate any comments you may wish to make and such information as there may be available to you with respect to the present condition of said group.

THIS IS WRB CABLE TO BERN NO. 169.

HULL

CABLE TO HARRISON, BERN, FOR McCLELLAND FROM WAR REFUGEE BOARD

Board is receiving numerous urgent requests to take vigorous action on behalf of Jews in Slovakia whose position is reported to have seriously deteriorated without prior warning in recent days. Similar disastrous condition reported in fact or imminent in Hungary. With respect to Hungarian situation please consult Sternbuch in an effort promptly to secure the names and addresses of persons indicated in Department's ___ ___ WRB's 165. With respect to the Slovakian situation Union of Orthodox Rabbis reports further urgent pleas for money from the Rabbi of Neutra. Please endeavor to ascertain from Sternbuch the nature and such details as possible of the Rabbi of Neutra's project and, if, in your opinion and that of Saly Mayer such project is feasible and is reasonably calculated to save the lives of Jews in Slovakia, please extend to Sternbuch all possible assistance. To this end, you may in your discretion expend such portion of such funds as may be available to you and to request Saly Mayer to place at your disposal for such purpose such additional funds as you may require within the limits of what may be available to him. If funds in excess of those presently available to you and Saly Mayer in Switzerland are needed for such operation, please advise the Board at once. Nothing hereinabove contained should be construed as indicating that you may not in your discretion arrange to have Sternbuch discuss the Rabbi of Neutra's project with you and Saly Mayer jointly. JDC is in agreement. If, regarding any project you and Saly Mayer are not in agreement with respect to the expenditure of JDC funds, please advise the Board fully at once.

Interested persons here assert that lives of group of Hungarian Rabbis and leaders now reported at Bergen-Belsen could have been saved while aboard train if funds had been sent to appropriate persons in Hungary. Would appreciate any comments you may wish to make and such information as there may be available to you with respect to the present condition of said group.

THIS IS WRB CABLE TO BERN NO. 169

10:20 a.m.
September 13, 1944

Miss Chauncey (for the Sec'y) Abrahamson, Cohn, DuBois, Friedman, Hodel, Laughlin, Lesser, Mannon, McCormack, Cable Control Files

FH:LSL:JWP:dg 9/12/44

NEGOTIATIONS IN SWITZERLAND - INCLUDING GERMAN PROPOSALS
(continued)

Cable #6083 from Bern	Sept. 15, 1944	44.
Cable #6252 from Bern	Sept. 21, 1944	45.
Cable #6443 from Bern	Sept. 28, 1944	46.
Cable #6951 (copy) from Bern	Oct. 20, 1944	47.
Cable #4014 to Bern with Attached memo from Miss Hodel to Files	Nov. 28, 1944	48.
Cable #8045 from Bern	Dec. 9, 1944	49.
Cable #4345 to Bern	Dec. 26, 1944	50.
Memorandum to Miss Hodel from Mr. Akzin	Jan. 9, 1945	51.
Memorandum for the Files from Miss Hodel	Jan. 11, 1945	52.
Cable #414 from London	Jan. 12, 1945	53.
Cable #228 (WRB 362) to Bern	Jan. 15, 1945	54.
Memorandum for the Files from Miss Hodel	Jan. 24, 1945	55.
Cable #424 (WRB 381) to Bern	Jan. 25, 1945	56.
Cable #605 from Bern	Jan. 28, 1945	57.
Cable # A-27 from Moscow	Jan. 29, 1945	58.
Memorandum to Miss Hodel from Mr. Akzin & Mr. McCormack re Evaluation of Musy's Efforts, by the Office of Strategic Services	Feb. 3, 1945	59.
Letter from Vaad Hahatzala to WRB, enc. Copy of Cable from Sternbuch re: Release of 1200 Jewish Persons from Theresienstadt & German Agreement for Release of Further Transports	Feb. 7, 1945	60.
Newspaper Clippings		61.
Cable #881 from Bern	Feb. 8, 1945	62.
Copy of Jewish Telegraphic Agency Bulletin for 2/9/45		63.
Cable #1411 from London	Feb. 9, 1945	64.
Memorandum to Mr. Luxford from Miss Hodel 2/10/45 enc. copy of #913 from Bern	Feb. 9, 1945	65.
Cable #295 to Moscow	Feb. 10, 1945	66.
Memorandum from Miss Hodel	Feb. 10, 1945	67.
Cable #1456 from London	Feb. 10, 1945	68.
Letter from Vaad Hahatzala requesting License to Transmit $937,000 to Sternbuch	Feb. 12, 1945	69.
Cable #686 (WRB 400) to Bern	Feb. 13, 1945	70.
Cable #703 (WRB 403) to Bern	Feb. 14, 1945	71.
Cable #990 from Bern	Feb. 14, 1945	72.
Memorandum for the Secretary's Files from Miss Hodel	Feb. 16, 1945	73.
Cable #1069 from Bern	Feb. 17, 1945	74.
Telegram to Sec. Morgenthau from Union of Orthodox Rabbis	Feb. 18, 1945	75.
Memorandum to Sec. Morgenthau from Vaad Hahatzala and two Cables from Bern	Feb. 19, 1945	76.
Memorandum to Sec. Morgenthau from Miss Hodel	Feb. 20, 1945	77.
Memorandum for the Files from Miss Hodel	Feb. 21, 1945	78.
Message from Rabbi Kalmanowitz for Miss Hodel	Feb. 21, 1945	79.
Cable #1175 from Bern	Feb. 22, 1945	80.
License W-2117 Memo to Mr. Aarons from Gen. O'Dwyer	Feb. 22, 1945	81.
Memorandum for the Files from Miss Hodel	Feb. 22, 1945	
Also Memorandum from Miss Hodel	Feb. 27, 1945	82.
Conference Memorandum at which were present: Mr. Gaston, Mr. O'Connell, Mr. White, Mr. Pehle, Mr. DuBois, Mr. Aarons, Mr. Coe, Miss Hodel and Mrs. Klotz	Feb. 27, 1945	83.
Memorandum re Special Negotiations with the Gestapo and SS to Save the Jews in Europe	Feb. 28, 1945	84.

STERNBUCH DEALS

000843

44.

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: AMLEGATION, Bern

TO: Secretary of State, Washington

DATED: September 15, 1944

NUMBER: 6083

[redacted]

This message is from McLelland for Ackermann, WRB.

Given below is a message which has been transmitted to Rome: (71, September 15, 8 a.m.)

From reports which have been received during the last few days from trustworthy sources in Bratislava, the situation of the remaining 18,000 to 20,000 Jews in Slovakia is becoming more and more precarious.

In a telegram received here the twelfth of September the statement is made that again on the eleventh of September Slovak officials began to deport Jews. Although we are awaiting additional data from a courier who is arriving the last of this week, as yet this news is unconfirmed. Indications which are reliable and confidential have come to me which show that responsibility for this renewed persecution of the Jews rests on the Slovak "Quisling" Government. The recent public statement of the Minister of the Interior of the Tiso Government to the effect that the Jews and Czechs were responsible for the extensive resistance movement, which a short time ago broke out in Slovakia, bears out the indications above. In both Czech circles here and Jewish circles in Bratislava, it is strongly felt that the influence of the Vatican could help alleviate this situation if energetically and quickly used. Will you please have a discussion with Mr. Taylor as to the possibility and advisability of such Vatican intervention. From reliable sources I am advised that the Slovak Minister and "homme de finance" of Tiso, Carol Sidor, still is at the Vatican from which he hopes to secure protection after the war is over. It might be that this situation could be used to advantage. Information as to whether Mr. Taylor feels that a step in this direction might be effective and feasible would be appreciated.

The message above was repeated to WRB in Washington with the further request that serious consideration be given to the possibility of giving the Slovak Government a formal warning that they will be held responsible for last minute excesses against the Jewish people.

9-16-44
DCR:EMS

HARRISON

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 27 1972

Miss Chauncey (For the Sec'y) Abrahamson, Akzin, Cohn, DuBois, Drury, Friedman, Gaston, Hofei, Laughlin, Lesser, Mannon, Marks, McCormack, Pehle, Sargoy, Standish, Weinstein, Cable Control Files.

45.

2 was to be file

DEPARTMENT OF TELEGRAM ARCHIVES

FROM: American Legation, Bern

TO: Secretary of State, Washington

DATED: September 21, 1944

NUMBER: 5252

CONTROL COPY

[redacted]

McClelland sends the following for the War Refugee Board.

In line with the Department's September 12 cable, No. 3450, have consulted with Sternbuch and he maintains that the names and addresses of his principal confidential agents in Slovakia are known to the union orthodox Rabbis in the United States already but that he will give me a list in a few days time. His main contacts as regards Hungary were Julius Link and Philip Freudiger who both fled some weeks ago to Bucharest.

According to Sternbuch he is out of contact with Rabbi of Neutra at the present time. Moreover, Sternbuch has no news concerning any special rescue plan evolved by Rabbi of Neutra recently.

The last report received from Neutra in early September states that the Rabbi needs funds primarily to finance: rescue and flight from Hungary (6,000 Slovakian crowns per person with about 100 refugees arriving per day), and from Poland (10,000 Slovakian crowns per person), securing false papers (per person 3,000 Slovakian crowns)

and

and hiding refugees (per month 4,000 Slovakian crowns) general maintenance for all such newly arrived refugees as well as Jews "normally" in Slovakia and special relief to orthodox Jews in and out by camps (20 to 25 Slovakian crowns can be bought with one Swiss Franc). According to check of my records during second half of July, August, and first half of September, the following sums in Swiss francs have been sent to Slovakia for Jewish relief and rescue operations: 95,000 to Czech resistance for Slovakia by Riegner and me; 50,000 through Mechalaz to Bratislava by me from LRB funds; 500,000 to Bratislava by Salymayer; 305,000 mainly to Neutra by Sternbuch.

A wire is being sent to Bratislava by Sternbuch in an attempt to secure late news from Rabbi of Neutra and concerning situation in Slovakia with respect to Jews in general. Careful consideration will be given by Salymayer and me to any financial request he may place before us and if proposals are at all feasible, will assist to the extent of our funds.

In connection with the assertion that the lives of Jewish leaders and Hungarian Rabbis in Bergen-Belsen at present (about 1,370 are there) could have been saved while en route, we understand from trustworthy persons who arrived here in Switzerland with 320 that certain individuals on that train paid as high as three million pengoes to IGT. We have heard of no concrete plan to rescue this group other than

tractor

tractor proposition (see Legation's July 26 cable No. 4802). Since this group forms part of the some 160 to 170 thousand Hungarian Jews outside of Hungary for whom the Gestapo still hopes to collect ransom in goods, they are being well treated in Bergen-Belsen, according to all reports.

Reference is made in the above message to the Department's September 14 cable No. 3186 and the Legation's September 15 cable No. 6083.

HARRISON

DCR:EGH:LBH:LFR 9/23/44

46

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

INCOMING TELEGRAM

DIVISION OF COMMUNICATIONS AND RECORDS

BJR - 266
This telegram must be paraphrased before being communicated to anyone other than a Government Agency. [redacted] O)

Bern

Dated September 28, 1944

Rec'd 9:23 a.m.

CONTROL COPY

Secretary of State,

Washington.

6443, September 28, 9 a.m.

FOR WRB FROM MCCLELLAND

Sternbach has given me following names of his contact men for rescue work in Hungary and Slovakia; Department's 3152 September 12 and Legation's 6252 September 21. In Budapest: Charles Roth, Sch. B. Frey and Dr. Reiner; in Bratislava: Rabbi Samuel David Ungar, Berthold Donnebaum and M.B. Weissman.

HARRISON

CSB

[redacted]

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

[illegible]

[illegible] Secretary of State, Washington

[illegible] Stockholm [illegible]

[illegible] October 26, 1944

[illegible]

CONTROL COPY

[redacted]

[illegible]

We are advised that [illegible] view that [illegible] Jews in enemy-occupied countries [illegible] [illegible] available. The [illegible] has asked that [illegible] be sent to [illegible] that they [illegible] all funds necessary. Please [illegible] with [illegible] to your views.

[illegible]

[illegible]
(Acting)

CABLE [illegible], [illegible], FROM MCDONALD FROM [illegible]

We are advised that Sternbuch is of the view that thousands of Jews in enemy-occupied countries can be saved if large sums of money are made available. The Vaad Hahatzala has asked that a cable be sent to Sternbuch indicating that they are to send all funds necessary. Please discuss this plans with Sternbuch at once and send us your views.

[illegible] . [illegible].

14;1. [illegible]
November 27, [illegible]

Cleared with Friedman, [illegible]

Miss Chauncey (for the Sec'y) Abrahamson, Ackermann, Cohn, DuBois, Friedman, Hoehl, Jesser, Mannon, McCormack, Files.

Filehd 11/27/44

Text of message received by Vaad Hahatzala Emergency Committee from Isaac Sternbuch, Switzerland - dictated in translation by Michael Tress 10/25/44, 3 p.m.

"It is possible to rescue thousands of Jews in occupied and enemy-occupied countries to neutral countries but large sums of money will be necessary for this work. Can you obligate yourselves?"

Vaad Hahatzala desires to send following reply at once to Sternbuch:

"We completely agree to send all funds necessary for your rescue work."

NOVEMBER 21, 1944

THOUSANDS OF JEWS CAN BE RESCUED FROM ENEMY OR ENEMY OCCUPIED TERRITORY TO NEUTRAL COUNTRIES. LARGE SUMS OF MONEY IS NECESSARY FOR THIS WORK. CABLE WHETHER YOU WILL OBLIGATE YOURSELF.

November 25, 1944

MEMORANDUM FOR THE FILES

Michael Treas telephoned at 2:40 p.m. today. He explained that he was at the home of Rabbi Kalmanowitz and would not have telephoned us on the Sabbath if it were not a matter of great importance. He stated that they had just received a message from Mr. Sternbuch to the effect that thousands of Jews could be saved if large sums were sent at once. The Vaad Hahatzala Emergency Committee wishes to send a message to Sternbuch through government channels reading as follows:

"We completely agree to send all funds necessary for your rescue work".

Mr. Treas requested that the War Refugee Board expedite the dispatch of this message today.

I asked Mr. Treas if he had any details concerning the Sternbuch message and he advised that the message was in very general terms; that he did not know what the money was needed for but that he assumed it would be used by Sternbuch in his regular rescue activities; he did not believe that the money involved a ransom deal.

I told Mr. Treas that in Mr. Pehle's absence, I would raise the question with Mr. Friedman and that I would call him back at Evergreen 3-5700 if the message could not be sent out today.

It is possible that the Sternbuch message may refer to the Saly Mayer negotiations.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

INCOMING TELEGRAM

DIVISION OF COMMUNICATIONS AND RECORDS

[illegible] true [illegible] only by special [illegible] [redacted] 7)

Dated December 9, 1944

Rec'd 10:15 a.m.

Secretary of State,

Washington

8045, December 9, 10 a.m.

CONTROL COPY

FOR WRB FROM MCCLELLAND

I have discussed this matter (first referred to in last paragraph Legation's 6051, October 20) with Sternbuch. (Department's 4014, November 28; [illegible] 208). It revolves around a trip which a certain former Swiss Federal Councillor, Musy took to Berlin during November on behalf of Mrs. Sternbuch in an attempt to locate and liberate some 300 Jews previously deported from Vittel, a great many of whom were relatives of the Sternbuch family. In spite of having been in personal touch with Himmler (so Sternbuch informed me), Musy was unsuccessful in his efforts to locate these people who are reputed to be in Auschwitz. On his return Musy intimated to the Sternbuchs that if a fund of from ten to twenty million Swiss francs were placed at his disposal he would be able to "arrange" (inference being by buying them out) the exit from Germany

For security reasons the text of this message must be closely guarded

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 27 1972

[illegible]

[illegible] of Jews. In view of Fuhrer's extremely [illegible] attitude here in Berlin (he is generally [illegible] critical [illegible]) and [illegible] and unreliability of [illegible] "[illegible]" [illegible] [illegible] [illegible].

HUNDE

J[illegible]

50

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

OUTGOING TELEGRAM

DIVISION OF COMMUNICATIONS AND RECORDS

December 26, 1944

8 p.m.

Distribution of true reading only, by special arrangement. ([redacted]-W)

CONTROL COPY

AMLEGATION

BERN

4346

The cable below for McClelland is WRB 334.

Please deliver the following message to Joseph Schwartz from M.A. Leavitt, American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee:

"QUOTE Please cable your views validity Sternbuch proposal rescue large numbers monthly. We applying license remit to Saly Mayer $76,000 balance returned by Simonds, International Red Cross Delegate Turkey, for relief purposes Jewish deportees internees through Intercross. UNQUOTE

STETTINIUS
(GHW)

WRB:MMV:BM
12/26/44

LE NE SWP

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 27 1972

[illegible] the following message to Joseph Schwartz from

[illegible] Schwartz, American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee:

[illegible] MONTHLY [illegible] 278,000 [illegible] RETURNED BY SIMANDS [illegible]

[illegible] 334.

2:30 p.m.
December 21, 1944

Miss Chauncey (for the Sec'y) Abrahamson, Ackermann, Cohn, DuBois, Hodel, Mannon, McCormack, Files

copy sent JDC 12/21/44 RS

FHmhd 12/21/44

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
WAR REFUGEE BOARD

INTER-OFFICE COMMUNICATION

DATE

TO

FROM

[illegible]

I [illegible] to commit myself [illegible] stated that I could not comment on [illegible] any campaign by any relief organization, and that if a comment [illegible] desired, the American Jewish Congress [illegible] any [illegible] which they wish to have our opinion. Rabbi Miller [illegible] that he could not ask for any expression of opinion of the War Refugee Board, but wanted my personal views on the subject. I answered that, personally, I believe that the Vaad Hahatzala has done very useful work in connection with the rescue of individuals, but that I have nothing to say regarding the alleged specific campaign of the Vaad Hahatzala. I added that he certainly would not want me to make any comments regarding any campaign conducted by Congress if a representative of the Vaad Hahatzala had asked me for such comments.

Rabbi Miller said that he, too, is convinced of the good work of the Vaad Hahatzala but finds himself at a loss as to the specific advice he should give to potential contributors.

I repeated that I could not be of any help to him in this respect, and he rang off with every evidence of being disappointed.

On Tuesday, January 9, Mr. Grossman, of the World Jewish Congress, phoned me from New York. He stated that there are rumors going around in New York that the Vaad Hahatzala is conducting a campaign for the purpose of rescuing 300,000 Jews at so much per head, with the consent of the Government. He asked me whether these rumors are true or not.

I answered that I have no comment to offer with regard to any unsubstantiated rumors and inquired whether anything has been published

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] Board [illegible] organization [illegible] contributions [illegible] contributions [illegible] organizations [illegible] citizens are interested in a practice which, unfortunately, is [illegible] contributions. This is why I am [illegible] citizens any obstacle or [illegible] that [illegible] their own ends.

At the same time, and without necessarily lending reliance on their version of the Vaud Humanitaire's slogans, it may be useful to inquire what it is that the Vaud Humanitaire is saying to induce contributions to its current campaign. Should it appear that the Vaud Humanitaire goes too far in claiming the feasibility of certain impossible operations or in claiming U. S. Government support for operations to which no such support is being given, it may be useful to administer a healthy rebuke.

R. Nassi,

October 11, [illegible]

[illegible] Dr. Goldmann is [illegible] Fellows. [illegible] occupied territories [illegible] certain Germans. [illegible] specific project [illegible] Switzerland and is required, [illegible] conditions; that Schelland [illegible] Sternbuch has under way [illegible] Schelland [illegible] Sternbuch [illegible] Schelland would continue to cooperate in such [illegible] Sternbuch [illegible] concrete proposals [illegible].

[illegible] Goldmann's visit unwittingly [illegible] follow up [illegible] Eller and Kurt Rossman [illegible].

Dr. Silberschein of Switzerland who was also present at [illegible] stated that he was familiar with the program which Sternbuch is attempting to work out in Switzerland and that he has discussed the matter with Schelland. Dr. Silberschein is convinced that no workable program has been developed by Sternbuch as yet; that Musy is very inactive in spite of his assertions to Sternbuch that he is in a position to obtain concessions from certain German officials; that Musy is working with a woman in Switzerland who is reputed to be cooperating closely with the Nazis.

E. Hodel

[illegible] 1, 1[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] Dr. Goldmann [illegible] Dr. Silberschein [illegible] well known to [illegible] rescue projects in Switzerland. Dr. Silberschein stated that [illegible] need for funds [illegible] for rescue work. [illegible] questioned as to the specific need for such funds, he stated that the rescue work from enemy territory [illegible] necessitated [illegible] deposit in Swiss banks as security during negotiations for the rescue of individuals from enemy territory. He [illegible] that a group from Bergen Belsen who recently arrived in Switzerland were not only saved as the result of the deposit of 750,000 to the account in a Swiss bank in the name of Kurt Grimpi, [illegible] the Swiss airline Sector [illegible] considerable amount of business with the Germans. Dr. Silberschein [illegible] Kurt Grimpi [illegible] been the key man in the rescue to Switzerland of the 1700 from Bergen Belsen. Silberschein stated that Grimpi is well known to McClelland and to Sally Mayer. Upon further questioning, he advised that the 750,000 did not come from American sources.

Dr. Goldmann and Dr. Silberschein then questioned me concerning the attached message which Silberschein had received from Switzerland requesting that half-million Swiss francs be sent to Switzerland to cover certain negotiations now pending for the rescue of Jews from enemy territory. I asked whether the project mentioned had been discussed with McClelland and Dr. Silberschein said that he did not believe it had been. I then offered to send a cable to McClelland asking him to discuss the matter with Fischer and to report to the Board. Both Dr. Goldmann and Dr. Silberschein appeared satisfied with the suggestion and asked at the same time that a message be sent to Fischer from Dr. Silberschein instructing Fischer to discuss the matter with McClelland. Accordingly, the attached cable was drafted and sent to the State Department for dispatch.

F. Nodel

Please deliver the following message to Theodore Lacher, World Jewish Congress, 15 E 84th, New York, from Graham Liberaccoain of World Jewish Congress, New York:

[illegible]

Following for McClelland from War Refugee Board:

Cable referred to above reads as follows: [illegible] ONLY [illegible] LIST [illegible] KOLNI SEN PROCURED [illegible] INDIVIDUAL [illegible].

Please discuss his plans with Lacher at once and send us your views.

FHshd 1/12/45

January [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

Very truly yours,

By J.W. [illegible]

J. [illegible] Pehle,
Executive Director

Mr. [illegible] Leavitt, [illegible],
American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee,
[illegible] Avenue,
New York 16, New York.

✓

RD

RDrury 1/15/[illegible]

TELEGRAM

[redacted]

CONTROL COPY

Secret 1/15/45
RS

[redacted]

[redacted]

STERNZ:

Do not believe there is any valid proposal for rescue of large numbers monthly by Sternbuch or anyone else basis my discussions in Switzerland. During my discussions with Sternbuch mention was not made any such proposal nor did he submit anything in this connection to McClelland to my knowledge. Without first clearing with McClelland suggest strongly that no concrete steps be taken on any proposal originating with Sternbuch.

WINANT

JLS

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

OUTGOING TELEGRAM

DIVISION OF CENTRAL SERVICES TELEGRAPH SECTION

January [illegible] 1945

11 p.m.

AMELIORATION

CONTROL COPY

BLRE
220
The cable below is WRB SEE.

Please deliver paraphrase of the following message to Theodore Fischer, World Jewish Congress Relief Committee, 1 Rue du Rhone, Geneva, from Dr. Abraham Silberschein of World Jewish Congress, New York:

QUOTE Cable from Klee received. Please discuss project with McClelland. UNQUOTE

Following for McClelland from War Refugee Board:

Cable referred to above reads as follows: QUOTE For Silberschein negotiations re Georg Guggenheim without result therefore depot liberated. Author of here arrived Bergen-Belsen transport during short visit here gave Fischer hope another promising way same matter if necessary means previously secured. Try utmost procure halfmillion Swissfrancs whilst corresponding sum procured here by individuals. UNQUOTE

Please discuss his plans with Fischer at once and send us your views.

GREW

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 27 1972

WRB:MMV:KG
1/15/45

WE

SEP

00077

CABLE TO HUDDLE, BERN, FOR MCCLELLAND FROM WAR REFUGEE BOARD

Please deliver the following message to Theodore Fischer, World Jewish Congress Relief Committee, 1 Rue du Rhone, Geneva, from Dr. Abraham Silberschein of World Jewish Congress, New York:

QUOTE CABLE FROM KLEE RECEIVED. PLEASE DISCUSS PROJECT WITH MCCLELLAND UNQUOTE

Following for McClelland from War Refugee Board:

Cable referred to above reads as follows: QUOTE FOR SILBERSCHEIN NEGOTIATIONS RE GEORG GUGGENHEIM WITHOUT RESULT THEREFORE DEPOT LIBERATED STOP AUTHOR OF HERE ARRIVED BERGENBELSEN TRANSPORT DURING SHORT VISIT HERE GAVE FISCHER HOPE ANOTHER PROMISING WAY SAME MATTER IF NECESSARY MEANS PREVIOUSLY SECURED STOP TRY UTMOST PROCURE HALFMILLION SWISSFRANCS WHILST CORRESPONDING SUM PROCURED HERE BY INDIVIDUALS UNQUOTE.

Please discuss his plans with Fischer at once and send us your views.

THIS IS WRB BERN CABLE NO. 362.

3:30 p.m.
January 12, 1945

Miss Chauncey (for the Sec'y) Ackermann, Akzin, Cohn, Drury, DuBois, Gaston, Hodel, Marks, McCormack, Pehle, Files

FH:hd 1/11/45 Cleared with Pehle

R.O.A.

OL167 SZ6317 GENEVE 70 20 58 RECD. 1'5 JAN 4
NLT WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS
1834 BROADWAY NEW YORK

F. SILBERSCHEIN NEGOTIATIONS RE GEORG GUGGENHEIM WITHOUT RESULT THEREFORE DEPOT LIBERATED STOP AUTHOR OF HERE ARRIVED BERGENBELSEN TRANSPORT DURING SHORT VISIT HERE GAVE FISCHER HOPE ANOTHER PROMISING WAY SAME MATTER IF NECESSARY MEANS PREVIOUSLY SECURED STOP TRY UTMOST PROCURE HALFMILLION SWISSFRANCS WHILST CORRESPONDING SUM PROCURED HERE BY INDIVIDUALS STOP RECEIVED NEW LIST POLISH PEOPLE BERGENBELSEN 300 NAMES WIRE IF TELEGRAM WANTED

HANS LEE

[illegible] Israel, Mr. Schenkowleski [illegible] developed in [illegible] 50,000 Jews from Germany and [illegible] occupied territory into Switzerland at a total cost of [illegible] involve the delivery of 15,000 Jews a month in return for a payment of [illegible] 250,000 a month. Mr. Schenkowleski explained that [illegible] developed by Sternbush who now holds in escrow in Switzerland [illegible] 500,000 which was remitted by the Vaad Hatzala [illegible] instalments of 150,000 in December ~~and 150,000~~ in [illegible]. Mr. Schenkowleski explained that the Vaad Israel and the Vaad Hatzala were aware of the fact that their people in Switzerland may be [illegible] dealing with the enemy but in that their negotiations involve direct dealings with the Nazis. He explained to Mr. Warren that the groups in this country feel that they have absolved themselves by mentioning [illegible] to the assistant Secretary of State Dunn (at the time Rabbi Rosenheim and Mr. Schenkowleski called on him about ten days ago).

Mr. Warren stated that the plan, as set forth by Mr. Schenkowleski, appears to be the same story which the Chicago Daily News reporter mentioned to him on January 22. It is the first time that Mr. Warren had heard of the plan in the precise terms mentioned by Mr. Schenkowleski. Mr. Warren feels that the American groups have relieved their minds by talking to Mr. Dunn and Mr. Warren, knowing that they had not been frank with the War Refugee Board. In this connection, I advised Mr. Warren that they had never discussed this specific proposition with the Board. Mr. Warren expressed concern over the fact that the total figure on the Sternbush plan is $5,000,000 (the same figure mentioned in the Saly Mayer negotiations), and over the fact that Sternbush is probably working on this deal without the knowledge of Mr. McClelland who cabled the Board some time ago that he had been unable to approve of any programs presented to him thus far by Sternbush.

Mr. Schenkowleski also indicated to Mr. Warren that the 1700 from Bergen Belsen who arrived in Switzerland in August and December were brought there only after the JDC had put up a large sum of money for their rescue. Mr. Warren feels that this is a dangerous implication.

Mr. Warren feels very strongly that a cable should be sent to McClelland informing him of the plan which Mr. Schenkowleski outlined to Warren and advising him of their statement that $250,000 is now on deposit in Sternbush's name for payment of the first group of 15,000. Mr. Warren feels that McClelland should check on this and if the fund of $250,000 exists for the purpose mentioned, McClelland should watch the account very carefully.

F. Hodel

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

OUTGOING TELEGRAM

DIVISION OF CENTRAL SERVICES TELEGRAPH SECTION

Distribution [illegible] pending only [illegible]

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

1945 JAN 27 AM 10 35

CONTROL COPY

ALLOCATION

BERN

425

The following [illegible] received from Department and War Refugee Board [illegible]

Information [illegible] developed a plan for [illegible] from [illegible] and German-occupied [illegible] $6,000,000. The [illegible] 10,000 a month and [illegible] $250,000 a month. [illegible] that amount $250,000 remained from the [illegible] by Vichy Spain is now on deposit in [illegible] bank in the name of Sterrbach and is to be used for payment for the first shipment of 16,000 Jews expected shortly in Switzerland.

For your information, [illegible] reports from Bern similar to the above reports on the Sterrbach plan and as yet unpublished have been presented to us for confirmation.

Please advise Department and Board of any information you have or can obtain on the foregoing.

GREW
(Acting)

URB:MMV:KG
1/25/45

WE

SWP

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 27 1972

CABLE TO RUDDLE AND MCCLELLAND, BERN, FROM DEPARTMENT AND WAR REFUGEE BOARD

Information has reached us recently that Sternbuch has developed a plan for the release of 300,000 Jews from Germany and German-occupied territory in return for payments totalling $5,000,000. The Jews are to be released at the rate of 15,000 a month and payments are to be made at the rate of $250,000 a month. It is further reported that sum of $250,000 remitted from the United States by Vaad Hahatsala is now on deposit in a Swiss bank in the name of Sternbuch and is to be used for payment for the first shipment of 15,000 Jews expected shortly in Switzerland.

For your information, news reports from Bern similar to the above reports on the Sternbuch plan and as yet unpublished have been presented to us for confirmation.

Please advise Department and Board of any information you have or can obtain on the foregoing.

THIS IS WRB BERN CABLE NO. 381.

10:30 a.m.
January 25, 1945.

Miss Chauncey (for the Sec'y) Ackermann, Akzin, Cohn, Drury, DuBois, Gaston, Hedel, Marks, McCormack, Pehle, Files.

Cleared with Mr. Pehle
FHshd 1/25/45

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] Secret [illegible]

[illegible] January [illegible]

[illegible] 305

CONTROL COPY

See Department's [illegible], January 25, [illegible] and Leitch's [illegible], December [illegible]

From McClellan for [illegible]

For the purpose of clarifying what I deem a grave and [illegible] incorrectness of data reported to the Board concerning Sternbuch's (S) plan, the subject as recently reported to me is as given in the following paragraphs:

At the instigation of S Musy (M) approximately January 10 undertook a second journey to Germany in behalf of rescuing surviving Jews who were in the possession of the Nazis. I am advised by S that a personal invitation from Himmler (H) extended in writing by German Legation at Bern which S claims to have seen was in the possession of M. January 17 on M's temporary return to Switzerland to report to S. He (M) claimed that on the evening of January 15 in the neighborhood of Western Front he had dinner with H in company with several high SS generals, including Schellenberg. M had secured blanket permission from H as a preliminary concession for the release to Switzerland of all Vittel de ortees "whose location could be ascertained." Stated as proof

[illegible] by January [illegible] not occurred as yet.

M strongly maintains, according to S, that he, M, will by political arguments along the line that release of Jews so near the end of the war will be in the interest of Germany and may secure more favorable treatment for the country from the Allies, persuade Germans to release Jews still surviving. The reputation of M is that of being a Naziphile on anti-Communist grounds and interested in obtaining compromise peace for Germany before it is too late and the Bolsheviks overrun the country. The rehabilitation of his personal political reputation in Switzerland is also of interest to M. I am repeatedly assured that M is not interested in offering Nazis money or in getting it for himself. However, S made the admission that he advanced M 50,000 Swiss francs for travel expenses which included purchase of automobile in Germany apparently.

From reliable source I understand that on his first journey M collected 10,000 francs from Mr. Matossian because he was successful in freeing Matossian's grandson from a German concentration camp and bringing him back in October to Switzerland. Matossian was informed this ten thousand was also for the purchase of an automobile.

S replied when I informed him this appeared somewhat excessive that it was M's intention to pay him back whatever amount was not spent for the expenses of his journey.

I know nothing of the whole payment and delivery scheme which your 424 reported and denial that any such financial arrangement had been arranged was vigorously made by S. It is my inclination to believe

[illegible] received [illegible] that such a straight, large scale person [illegible] entirely unacceptable, he would [illegible] to become involved [illegible] financial scheme.

There is enthusiasm and skepticism on the part of S-- enthusiasm because he believes that for the first time direct, personal contact has been established with Himmler concerning the question of the Jews, and skepticism in HS efficacity which he will believe only when arrival of trains in Switzerland actually begin.

On the twenty-first of January ostensibly for additional [illegible] with Himmler, A returned to Germany.

My personal judgment is still reserved in regard to the entire affair.

HUDDLE

DC/L:EKS

1-29-45

58

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

INCOMING TELEGRAM

DIVISION OF CENTRAL SERVICES TELEGRAPH SECTION

[redacted]

Moscow

Dated: January [illegible], [illegible],

Rec'd: February [illegible], [illegible]

Secretary of State,

Washington, D. C.

CONTROL COPY

A-77, January 29, 1 p.m.

Department's telegram [illegible], January [illegible], [illegible] p.m. with reference to [illegible] for [illegible] from German banks.

Ambassador Harriman was not able before his departure from Moscow to give attention to this matter.

After giving careful consideration to the request made by the War Refugee Board, I am obliged to say that I do not feel that it would be in the interests of our Government to transmit this information to the Soviet Government. In view of the extreme suspicion with which the Soviet Government views all financial transactions with Germany conducted through Swiss channels and in view of the marked lack of enthusiasm with which communications on this subject have been received in the past, I feel that to impart this information to the Soviet Foreign Office would have the effect of undermining confidence here in the integrity of our economic warfare effort and would thus be definitely detrimental to our interests.

The Soviet Government is well aware of the sufferings being inflicted on victims of Nazi persecution of every race and nationality. Their own citizens have been done to death by the Germans in numbers which, they believe, run into the millions. Hundreds of thousands of their citizens are apparently still believed to be held in detention in Germany. Soviet circles feel that the Soviet Union through its war effort is doing the best that can be done to bring to an end this reign of terror and thus to relieve the sufferings of all these unfortunate people.

Russians

[illegible], [illegible], [illegible], from [illegible],

Russians and [illegible] alike.

The Soviet Government apparently does not believe, as a matter of principle, in dickering with bandits, and has generally taken the position with regard to its own people that the interests of the Soviet State and of the Allied powers in general override the interests of those groups who are unfortunate enough to fall into the hands of the enemy. The idea of ransoming any of these people by the payment of sums which can help the Germans to prolong their war effort will not only fail to appeal to the Russians but will be interpreted by them as a form of betrayal of general United Nations interests on our part. In particular, they will fail to understand why these efforts should be directed to the relief of one category of victims of Nazi terror and not others. I am afraid that an explanation to the effect that the transfer of these funds to Switzerland was only a half measure and that we have not yet decided whether or not to release them, will not do anything to improve the impression which this communication would make.

I would therefore strongly recommend that this matter not be communicated to the Soviet Government.

KENNAN

GFK/aj

ועד החצלה
VAAD HAHATZALA
(EMERGENCY COMMITTEE)
132 NASSAU STREET
(ROOM 910)
NEW YORK 7, N. Y.
PHONE REctor 2-4230

February 7, 1945.

War Refugee Board
Treasury Building
Washington, D.C.

Att. Miss Florence Odel

Dear Miss Odel:-

We enclose a copy of the cable received today and of which we advised you by phone.

We are sure you will be as happy to have it as we were and that you will call it to the attention of the Executive Director, and also to the attention of Mr. Pehle.

With our deepest appreciation

Very respectfull, yours,

VAAD HAHATZALA EMERGENCY COMMITTEE
Rabbi A. Kalmanowitz
Rabbi A. KALMANOWITZ

To utilize the possibilities for rescue of European Jewry where the Vaad Hahatzala program is especially needed.

Mackay Radio

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RADIOGRAM

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Time Filed	(Standard Time)

Send the following message "VIA MACKAY RADIO," subject to the rules, regulations and rates of Mackay Radio and Telegraph Company set forth in its tariffs and on file with regulatory authorities.

[illegible] 473 XL Montreux 39 7 1309

[illegible]

V [illegible] H[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] COMITTEE
132 Nassau Street New York

7th February 11.45 morning Just arrived First transport of 1200 Jewish persons from Theresienstadt stop this convoy was released by Germany owing intervention of Conseiller Federal Musy charged with this mission by us. Germany agreed to release further transports.

Hijefs Sternbuch

DCC-8 NY

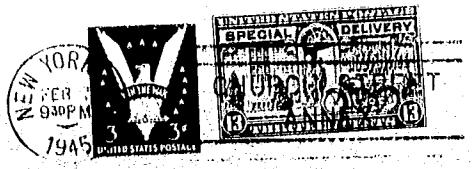
60 EAST 42ND ST., MU. 2-1183
256 FIFTH AVENUE, LE. 2-7278

67 BROAD ST., WHITEHALL 4-6780
30 ROCKEFELLER PLAZA CI. 6-1515

40 WORTH ST., BA. 7-8181
79 WALL ST., HA. 2-6620

MARK YOUR MESSAGES "VIA MACKAY RADIO"

V. H. E. C.
132 NASSAU STREET
Suite 819-820
NEW YORK 7, N. Y.



SPECIAL DELIVERY

WAR REFUGEE BOARD
TREASURY BUILDING
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Att. Miss Florence Model

The New York Times.
FEB 9 1945

RABBIS CELEBRATE FREEING OF REFUGEES

Somberly clad rabbis, refugees from Nazi oppression in eastern Europe, embraced each other and wept with joy yesterday at an executive meeting of the New York division of the Vaad Hahatzala Emergency Committee held in the offices of the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada, 132 Nassau Street.

The meeting was called as the result of the receipt of news from Berne that a convoy of 1,200 Jewish refugees from the Theresienstadt concentration camp in Austria had arrived in Switzerland. Release of the prisoners was effected by a committee of seventeen representatives of the Vaad Hohatzala, who have been carrying on relief negotiations in the Swiss capital.

Theresienstadt is the second concentration camp from which the committee has obtained the release of captive Jews. More than 1,700 Jewish prisoners ranging in age from 2 to 82 years were freed during August and December, 1944, from the camp at Bergen-Belsen in Germany.

Yesterday's conference was attended by such rabbinical leaders as Rabbi Aaron Kotler, former dean of the Kletzka Yeshiva in Lithuania; Rabbi Abraham Kalmanowitz, dean of the Mirrer Yeshiva in Poland; Rabbi Israel Rosenberg of the presidium of the Union of Orthodox Rabbis, and other Hebrew scholars. Laymen members of the committee present included Irving Bunim, Stephen Klein and Harry W. Golding.

It was disclosed at the meeting that the committee had received a communication from the Apostolic Delegate in Washington informing them that Pope Pius XII had made a financial contribution for the relief of distressed Jews in Hungary.

The [redacted] Sun

FEB 9 1945

REFUGEES RELEASED

Twelve hundred Jewish refugees have been released from the Theresienstadt concentration camp in Austria and have arrived in Switzerland, as a result of negotiations carried on in Berne by a Vaad Hahatzala committee.

The news was greeted with rejoicing yesterday at an executive meeting of the New York division of the Vaad Hahatzala Emergency Committee, attended by a group of rabbis who are themselves refugees from Nazi oppression in eastern Europe. The committee previously had obtaine release of 1,700 Jewish prisoners from the camp at Bergen-Belsen in Germany.

The meeting was held at the headquarters of the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada, 132 Nassau street.

NEW YORK DAILY PM - FEBRUARY 8, 1945

1200 Jews Safe In Switzerland

The Vaad Hahatzala Emergency Committee of New York has announced a cable from its Swiss committee as follows:

"On Feb. 7 the first transport of 1200 Jewish persons from the internment camp at Theresienstadt arrived in Switzerland. The release of this group was made possible by intervention of the European Executive Council of Vaad Hahatzala."

2 War Refug. Bd.
Public

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] February [illegible]

NO. : 881

CONTROL COPY

[redacted]

[illegible]

The following [illegible] is [illegible] recollected for WRB.

Reference Department's [illegible], January 13; [illegible]'s 377; Department's circular cable June 1[illegible], 1944; Department's 1168, April 6, 1944 and Legation's 60[illegible], January 20, 1945.

Legation's 605 previously reported the entire matter of the Musy negotiations which have come into considerably sharper focus since the third of February when Sternbuch told me that Musy had come back on the first of February from Germany and had reported that his endeavors to induce Himmler to release Jews had been successful and that, on or around February 8, a first convoy of some 1200 individuals would arrive at the Swiss frontier. On February 6 this convoy was to depart from the Dresden area. When Sternbuch requested that I bring up the question of Swiss permission for their entrance into Switzerland, I did this personally with the Chief of Federal Police, Dr. Rothmund, on the third of February, reaffirming the interest of our Government in such rescue work and recommending that the Swiss make preliminary preparations for the reception and housing of this group if it should actually reach the Swiss border.

The Police

The Police Chief stated [illegible] the necessary measures and brought up the question of [illegible] our Government's assurances concerning the evacuation from enemy territory of Jewish refugees from Hungary to Allied regions could hold good for a group from Germany such as this. To this I replied that while I had no specific instructions to this effect, I thought our Government would extend its guarantees to include such groups from Germany. (See assurances given in Department's circular June 14, 1944, and reported on basis of President's statement of March 24, 1944 in Department's 1168, April 6, 1944). Since Musy himself later stated to me that this was to be the first of a series of like convoys, this is a particularly important point on which I should welcome the Board's advice as soon as possible. If the military situation in Germany permits, others would follow at intervals of approximately a week.

In later talks with the Federal Police of February 7, this question of evacuation by us was raised again.

I talked at length with Musy, Sternbuch and Dott on the 6th of February, and they informed me as follows:

Himmler has been induced by Musy to release all Jews as yet surviving in German controlled regions, particularly those not suited for labor, within practical limits. SS General Schellenberg, who is one of the top SS triumvirate immediately under Himmler, strongly seconded Musy, according to the latter. Musy describes Schellenberg as a really good man and as his own particular friend.

With regard

[illegible] interested in the [illegible] 1944 [illegible], [illegible] by first convoy of 1200.

In addition, Musy [illegible] Hitler and the SS in general [illegible] to drop [illegible] to obtain compensation in goods in return for [illegible] they now realized the impracticability of this.

A token compensation payment of five million Swiss francs which was to be deposited to an account in Musy's name with a Swiss bank, after delivery of first convoy, was the only string attached. The only bank which Musy declared would be acceptable to him was the Swiss National Bank. He also assured me that this money would stay in Switzerland and he intimated that in all probability the Nazis would release it to the ICRC as an additional gentlemanly "gesture" some time in the future. The five million is expected to be supplied by Sternbuch.

I did not press Musy for an explanation of the purpose behind this token deposit at the request of Sternbuch, since he was eager not to make an issue of the money question at this critical point because he feared that Musy might be insulted and thus the successful outcome of the entire affair would be endangered.

In private, Sternbuch admitted to me that he was not clear as to the reason for this deposit. Although there are a number of possible

possible ex[illegible] satisfactory and it is [illegible] most inclem[illegible] [illegible], above and beyond [illegible], is not in harmony with [illegible] is evident in [illegible] role of an heroic rescuer and thus rehabilitating himself in [illegible] and in a political way.

My advice to Steinhardt was to [illegible] tactfully as he could on this [illegible] is no until [illegible] at least found out whether the first convoy [illegible] Swiss frontier.

Information that a convoy of 1300 individuals was at Konstanz [illegible] by the German [illegible] on February 6, at 6 p.m. They arrived February 7, about noon, in Switzerland. This convoy is made up of 1310 individuals, including some 58 children under twelve, but it is composed mostly of adults about equally divided between men and women.

At present this convoy is in St. Gall under Swiss Army control and seems to be in fairly satisfactory physical condition in contrast to exchanges from Bergen-Belsen, according to preliminary reports.

It is stated in an unconfirmed report that they come from Theresienstadt and as the convoy was to leave from Dresden which is only a short distance from Theresienstadt, this is geographically possible. As yet there are no exact details available regarding composition of the group with respect to nationality,

documentation

documentation [illegible].

With regard to the [illegible] of Musy's negotiations with SS, and in particular Musy's reference to having received support from Schellenberg through [illegible], I believe it of interest to advise the Board that the Chief of the Swiss Army Intelligence, Masson, informed me on February 6, [illegible] independently of Musy, that Schellenberg had recently indicated to Masson through an intermediary that he, Schellenberg, was interested in doing something regarding release of Jewish refugees.

Sternbuch and I cannot get away from the impression that Musy's negotiations with Hitler have not been confined to the Jewish problem which after all cannot be of major importance to Hitler, in view of Germany's present military situation. It is possible that the release of the Jews may be the forerunner of proposals of much greater importance to the Germans.

You will find it interesting to note that Musy also has been in touch with the French Embassy in Bern and in addition to effecting the release of the Jewish group of 1210, has also effected the release of some 540 French men and women, presumably political prisoners. On the night of February 7 this French group arrived at the Swiss border and they will be rerouted through to France by the Swiss.

Musy was also successful in liberating a group of nine Swiss nationals, which the Germans imprisoned on espionage charges, from German prisons. For over a year the Swiss Government has been

attempting

after [illegible] through conventional diplomatic channels of [illegible] Sylo[illegible] of this group, four have arrived in Switzerland [illegible].

Of course, [illegible] will keep you posted with respect to any additional information [illegible] developments in this entire Busy question, and in the meantime, would be grateful for your advice concerning evacuation of this convoy of 1200 individuals, and later groups which may arrive, to Allied territory.

As yet Embassy has received nothing from [illegible] in Paris relating to evacuation of 1622 Hungarian Jews.

HUDDLE

(*) apparent omission.

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JEWISH TELEGRAPHIC AGENCY BULLETIN FOR FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 1945.

GESTAPO AGREES TO RELEASE JEWS FROM CAMPS; 1,200 REACH SWITZERLAND; MORE DUE TODAY

GENEVA, Feb. 8, (JTA) -- One of the most fantastic feats of rescue of Jewish internees from German concentration camps has been accomplished by a group of twenty orthodox Swiss Jews who sent Jean M. Musy, a former member of the Swiss Federal Council, to Gestapo chief Heinrich Himmler in order to negotiate with him concerning the fate of Jews remaining in Germany.

As a result of the negotiations, a group of 1,200 Jews released from the concentration camp in Theresienstadt arrived in Switzerland last night from Germany, and 540 more are expected to arrive here tomorrow. The release of these internees is considered a very important achievement.

Addressing a press conference today, Swiss Minister of Justice, Edward von Steiger, said that it is hoped that henceforth regular transports of Jews from Germany will arrive in Switzerland. All the arrivals, he declared, will be placed in refugee camps in Switzerland and will be obliged to leave the country at the earliest possible date.

About one-half of the 1,200 Jews from Theresienstadt are natives of Holland who were deported by the Germans from Amsterdam and other Dutch cities. There are also 58 children under the age of 12 in the group. The remainder are Jews from Germany and Czechoslovakia. The 540 Jews who are expected to reach Switzerland tomorrow are deportees from France. The refugees from Theresienstadt were given food to last for the three-day trip from the camp to the Swiss frontier.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

INCOMING TELEGRAM

DIVISION OF CENTRAL SERVICES TELEGRAPH SECTION

[illegible]

[illegible]

FCL
LIAISON OFFICE

FILE

Legation

Dated February [illegible], 1944

Rec'd [illegible]

Secretary of State,

Washington.

1411, Ninth

FOLLOWING FOR WRB FROM EMERSON [illegible]

"We have seen press reports that about 1,200 Jews have just arrived in Switzerland from Theresienstadt and that the party includes between 500 and 600 Jews of Dutch nationality. It is further reported that another party of 556 persons from Theresienstadt is expected immediately and that others may follow. We have cabled to the Swiss authorities asking for confirmation and also for information relating to exact numbers distribution by nationality number holding valid Palestine certificates and also plans if any in regard to the party. We will let you know any relevant information we receive and shall be glad if you will keep us similarly informed. We think it very desirable that there should be consultation and coordination regarding these groups between the War Refugee Board and ourselves for instance it may

well be

well be found that some of the Dutch Nationals even if they have protective documents for other countries will wish to return to Holland and it, therefore seems essential that there should be a full inquiry into the antecedents and wishes of members of the groups before definite plans are made for their future. We also think it important that we should take the same line in our approaches to the Swiss Government especially in view of the assurances which have been several times given to the Swiss Government that they will be relieved of the cost of maintenance if they so desire and if the Swiss Government accepts this offer it would presumably be for the Intergovernmental Committee to secure the necessary funds.

"Since groups from places other than Theresienstadt have already entered and may enter Switzerland we have no doubt that you will agree that the same procedure of consultation and coordination should be followed in all such cases".

WINANT

RB