Negotiations in Switzerland - Including
German Proposals
Folder 21 B.40-64
McClelland sends the following for the War Refugee Board.

Reference is made herewith to Department’s cable of July 26, no. 2614.

I refer you to Legation’s message dated July 26, no. 4802, and of July 26, no. 4874. Neither Sally 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.
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 Sternbuach that payment of 700,000 Swiss francs was asked for. 200,000 were to be paid by Sternbuach 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. RERURERL to Saly Mayer July 26.

Mayer referred to WRB representative McGlelland 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 consonant with American and Swiss regulations. We had previously given Mayer specific instructions never to undertake any enterprise unless he had given McGlelland full information in advance and had his approval. McGlelland is in general most sympathetic and cooperative but could not approve this project. Sternbuach 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 Bergenbaren near Hanover a camp for refugees possibly destined for exchange.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) J. W. Pfeile

J. W. Pfeile
Executive Director

Mr. M. A. Leavitt, Secretary,
American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee,
270 Madison Avenue,
New York, New York.
Distribution of true reading by special arrangement. (SECRET)

Secretary of State,
Washington.

2419, August 5, 1 p.m.

Regarding group of 1200 Rabbis and leaders Mayer was told by Sternbush 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 blacklist.

REURTEL to Saly Mayer July 26.

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-2- 

August 5, 1 p.m., from Lisbon

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-3-  #2419, August 5, 1 p.m., from Lisbon

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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
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 Nodel 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 material desirous of 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.
PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

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

McClelland sends the following for the War Refugee Board.

Reference is made herewith to Department's cable of August 2, no. 2666, 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 (Kassner, Komoly and Fodor) 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 what is 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 Kassner to the effect that he wished to pump out the necessary labor from Hungarian 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. Kreuss 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 Chauncy (for the Sec'y) Abrahamson, Akalin, Borenstein, Cohn, Dubois, Friedman, Gaston, Hodel, Laughlin, Lesser, Mann, Mannon, Marks, McCormack, Pehle, Sergey, Standish, Weinstein, Files

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72

By R. H. Parks Date SEP 27 1972
Excerpts from the cable below in WAB 74.

Please deliver paraphrase of following message to

Dr. Joseph Schwartz from Leavitt of the American Jewish
Joint Distribution Committee:

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

STEPHANIUS
ACTING
(625)

S/CR

8/11/46
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 WFB CABLE TO LISBON No.

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.
FOR MCCLELLAND.

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 for 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 ABDUCAZIA, BERN, SWITZERLAND

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

"Reference to message of July 21 guaranteeing one million francs, it is necessary that Freediger 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 1200 persons Joint cabling Ily Mayer regarding matter.

Advise developments rescue project for 1200 persons.
Please confirm receipt of francs 428,816 forwarded July 22."

VAAD MAHALZALI EMERGENCY COMMITTEE
ABRAHAM KALMANOVITZ URGENT

The following from Webb to McClelland:

In view of your 4002 of July 26 and Department's 2550 of August 2, Board assumes that you will have acquainted Sternbach with your decision regarding Freediger proposal and that Sternbach will notify Vaad Nahatzala accordingly.

THIS IS WBD BERN CABLE NO. 116.

12:15 p.m.
August 9, 1944

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

BAKZINTAH 8-9-44
AMLEGATION,

STOCKHOLM, 1644

The following for Olsen is WAR 75.

Please transmit paraphrase of the following message to
Wilhelm Walba, 12 Grefagotten, Stockholm, Sweden.

QUOTE Reported 7000 Lithuanian Jews evacuated from Klaunas
to East Prussian border for slave labor fearful extermination
will follow. We are ready 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 Dorthy
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 Interosser, Swedish Redcross
or Hungarian Redcross to insure such conditions. Also that

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 27 1972
1944, August 17, 1944, to Stockholm

- 2 -

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 Habatzala 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

[Signature]

WRB: NNV: KG  
6/17/44  
NOE  
SE  
EE  
S/CR
CABLE TO MINISTER JOHNSON AND OLSEN, STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN

Please transmit the following message to Wilhelm Wolbe, 11 Olofsgotten, 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 affect their rescue. Please utilize every appropriate method available save maximum possible number.

Group of 1200 including Rabbinic religious leaders evacuated from Hungary through Slovakia now reported in concentration camp at Pelsen Bergen near Hanover. Danger imminent deportation to death camps. Doing everything to affect 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 Intercessors, Swedish Redcross or Hungarian Redcross to insure such conditions. Also that upon return to Hungary, 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. Vehement Emergency Committee. UNQUOTE

THE FOLLOWING FROM WEB FOR OLSEN.

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

THIS IS WEB CABLE TO STOCKHOLM NO. 76

1:40 p.m.
August 16, 1944

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

BA
Bak宁静 8/15/44
August 11, 1944

War Refugee Board
Treasury Building
Washington, D. C.

Attn: Dr. 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

Rabbi Abraham Kalmanowitz

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

To utilize the possibilities for rescue of European Jewry where the Vaad Hahatzala program is especially needed.
Reported group of 1200 including religious personalities leaders other party groups evacuated from Hungary through Slovakia and now in concentration camp Belsen Bergen near Hanover. Danger imminent deportation to extermination death camps. Being everything intervening to offset these, with governments effect rescue. Vital you immediately take following first steps, intervene Swedish Government and瑞典的 King direct immediate appeal to Admiral Horthy repatriate those 1200 secondly contact Swedish Government to grant Swedish citizenship or passports documentation to save this group, enlist cooperation Olsen War Refuge Bureau and Rabbi Ehrenpreis. 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 method available save maximum possible number.

August 11, 1944

MESSAGE TO WILHELM WOLSE
11 OLSEPOSSTEN
STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN
Through AMERICAN LEGATION STOCKHOLM

VAAD HAHATZALA
(EMERGENCY COMMITTEE)
132 NASSAU STREET
NEW YORK 7, N. Y.
PHONE RECTOR 2-4298

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

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

“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.
FROM: Secretary of State, Washington
TO: American Legation, Bern
DATED: August 17, 1944
NUMBER: 2934

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 max-
imum possible number. Contact Intercross urge them send
representative intervene for group.

Concerning 1200 endeavoring secure Palestine certificates
for them. Urges you do likewise. Necessary also you request
Intercross and Swiss government to address appeal to Admiral
Hoelsky to demand repatriation of this group. It hoped that
their transportation to Hungary would be accomplished in con-
ditions insuring survival and that on their trip they would be
accompanied by representative of Intercross or Hungarian Red-
cross to insure such conditions. Also, that upon return to
Hungary they would be treated under terms of relaxed regime
pandling emigration. Have called Holbe Stockholm to make simi-
lar request of Swedish government. Vaad Hahatsala Emergency
Committee. UNQUOTE

The following from WRH for McClelland:

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

THIS IS WRH CABLE TO BERN NO. 128

HULL

Miss Chauncey (for the Secy), Abrahamson, Akris, Borenstein, Coh, DuBois,
Drury, Friedman, Gaston, Hodel, Laskin, Lesser, Mann, Mannon, Marks, McCormick,
Fehl, Sargoy, Standish; Weinstein, Cable Control Files.
TO: Secretary of State, Washington
DATED: August 23, 1944
NUMBER: 5197

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 Kolozvar 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

DEC 24/44
FROM: Secretary of State, Washington
TO: American Legation, Bern
DATED: September 2, 1944
NUMBER: 3040

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. 2526 of August 2 (WAR 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.

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 27 1972
Mr. Dingle Foot of the LSO.

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 HULL NO. 109.

HULL
CABLE TO MINISTER HARRISON AND MOCELLAND, BRUN, FROM THE DEPARTMENT, THE WAR REFUGEE BOARD AND THE FOREIGN ECONOMIC ADMINISTRATION.

Please refer to your No. 4874 of July 29 concerning Sternbach scheme. As clearly indicated in Department's No. _______ of _______ (WR 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 Sternbach 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 MEE:

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 organisations authorising such organisations 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 enemy 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 organisations.
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 co-operation 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.

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. 109.

This is Web 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, Laggin, Lesser, Mann, Mannon, McCormack, Cable Control Files

[Signature]

[Signature]
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.
Please refer to your No. 4874 of July 29 concerning Sternbuch scheme. As clearly indicated in Department's No. 106 of (WM No. 106) and for the reasons indicated therein we consider 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 MWD.

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, consistent with the successful prosecution of the war, for the speedy rescue and relief of the oppressed minorities of Europe.

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. 566.

* * *

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

JHFriedman oss 8/1/44
Miss Chauncey (for the Sec'y) Abrahamsen, Cohn, DuBois, Friedman, Hodel, Laughlin, Lesser, Mann, Manning, McCormack, Cable Control Files
In reply refer to BA-813-SHJr.

AUG 19 1944

Mr. Marshall M. Vance
State Department
1712 G Street, N.W., Room 806
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

BUREAU OF AREAS
2--Mr. Vance

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
Miss Florence O'Dell
Treasury Department Building, Room 190
Washington, D.C.
CABLE TO HARRISON, BERN, FOR MC CLELLAND FROM WAR REFUGE BOARD.

Reference penultimate paragraph your no. 4258 of July 5, your no. 4367 of July 29, and Department's nos. 2417 of July 16 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 HARRISON NO. 163

5:00 p.m.
September 7, 1944

Miss Chumney (for Sec'y) Abrahamson, Cohn, Dubois, Friedman, Hodel, Laughlin, Lesser, Mannon, McCormack, Cable Control Files

Cleared

Phl 9/7/44 401 143
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:

"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.

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
9/12/44

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72
By R. H. Parks Date, SEP 27 1972
CABLE TO MINISTER HAHNACZ AND McCLILLAND, BERN, SWITZERLAND

Please deliver the following message from Wlad Hahatzel to Stambach, St. Gallen:

NOTE: Please detail your rescue activities in Hungary and Slovakia to McColliand.

Please also communicate to McColliand 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 WBB. [Redacted]

The following is for McColliand from WBB:

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

THIS IS WBB CABLE TO BERN NO. 186

9:20 a.m.
September 9, 1944

Miss Chauncey (for the Sec'y) Abrahamson, Cohn, DuBois, Friedman, Hodel, Laughlin, Lesser, Ma1mon, McCormack, Cable Control Files

Bakshin;Lesser:ar 9/7/44
FROM: Secretary of State, Washington
TO: American Legation, Bern
DATED: September 14, 1944
NUMBER: 3186

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, WBB'S 185. WITH RESPECT TO THE SLOVAKIAN SITUATION UNION OF ORTHODOX RABBIS REPORTS FURTHER URGENT PLEASE 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.
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. 160.

HULL
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 Sternbush in an effort promptly to secure the names and addresses of persons indicated in Department's WIB'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 Sternbush the nature and the 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 Sternbush 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 herein-above contained should be construed as indicating that you may not in your discretion arrange to have Sternbush 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 Rabbinical leaders now reported at Borguen-Dalin could have been saved while abroad then 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 WIB CABLE TO BERN NO. 169

10:20 a.m.
September 13, 1944

Miss Chauncey (for the Sec'y) Abrahamsen, Cohn, DeBois, Friedman, Hodel, Laughlin, Lesser, Mannen, McCormack, Cable Control Files

PhILSLJNPIdg 9/12/44
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<td>Letter from Vaad Hahatzala requesting License to Transmit $357,000 to Sternbach</td>
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<td>Feb. 27, 1945</td>
<td>Conference Memorandum at which were present: Mr. Gaston, Mr. O'Connell, Mr. White, Mr. Feible, Mr. Dubois, Mr. Aarons, Mr. Coe, Miss Hodel and Mrs. Klotz</td>
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<td>Feb. 29, 1945</td>
<td>Memorandum re. Special Negotiations with the Gestapo and SS to save the Jews in Europe</td>
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PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: AMBASSADOR, Bern
TO: Secretary of State, Washington
DATED: September 15, 1944
NUMBER: 6083

This message is from McElroy for Ackermann, WEP.

Given below is a message which has been transmitted to Rome:

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 WAB 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.

9-15-44

MARRISON

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-72

By R. H. Parkin, Date SEP 27 1972

Miss Chauncey (For the Sec'y) Abrahamson, Akers, Cohn, DaBois, Drury, Friedman, Gaston, Hoel, Laughlin, Lessor, Mannon, Marks, McCormack, Peile, Sargent, Standish, Weinstein, Cable Control Files.
McClelland sends the following for the war refugee board.

In line with the department's September 12 cable, No. 3678, have consulted with Starnbach and he maintains that the names and addresses of his principal confidential agents in Slovakia are known to the union orthodox in the United States already but that he will give us a list in a few days' time. As his contacts as regards Hungary were Julius Bark and Philip Friedler who both fled some weeks ago to Bucharest.

According to Starnbach, he is out of contact with Rabbi of Neutra at the present time. Moreover, Starnbach 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 Hovw trabajo crowns per person, with about 100 refugees arriving per day), and from Poland (10,000 Hovw trabajo crowns per person), securing false papers (per person 3,000 Hovw lavoro crowns).
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: 55,000 to Czech resistance for Slovakia by Rieger and me; 50,000 through Vachkaz to Bratislava by me from USF funds; 500,000 to Bratislava by Salymayer; 305,000 mainly to Neutra by Sternbach.

A wire is being sent to Bratislava by Sternbach in an attempt to secure late news from Rabbi or 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 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 on 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 pengos to IGf. 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. 6023.
SECRET

6443, September 28, 9 a.m.

FOR WSS FROM MCCOILELAND

Sternbach has given me following names of his contact men for rescue work in Hungary and Slovakia: Department's 5152 September 12 and Legation's 5252 September 21. In Budapest: Charles Roth, Sch. B. Fity and Dr. Reiner; in Bratislava: Rabbi Samuel David Ungar, Berthold Donnbaum and M.B. Weissman.

HARRISON

For security reasons the text of this message must be closely guarded.
We are advised that a resolution is of the view that

beactions of Jews in enemy-occupied countries can be spread to

the world via radio and other media. The director of C.B.S.

stated that it appears to them to be in the public interest that they

agree to send all films necessary. I have informed his plans

with the Central Organization and your Office.

Acting

By R. H. Parks Date SEP 24 1972
We are advised that Sternbach is of the view that thousands of Jews
in many occupied countries can be saved if large sums of money are made
available. The head institution has asked that a sum be sent to Sternbach
indicating that there is a need to send all funds necessary. Please discuss
the plans with Sternbach at once and send us your views.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

[Date]

Miss Chauvrey (for the Sec'y) Abrahamsen, Ackermann, Cohn, DaBois,
Friedman, Huges, Johnson, Jaffe, Trimmer.

Filed 11/27/44.
Text of message received by Vass Havatzele Emergency Committee from Issac Sternbach, Switzerland - dictated in translation by Michael Tress III/25/44, 3 p.m.

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

Vass Havatzele desires to send following reply at once to Sternbach:

"We completely agree to send all funds necessary for your rescue work."
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, 1946

MEMORIAL FOR THE FELLIES

Rabbi Press telephoned at 4:40 p.m. today. He explained that he was at the home of Rabbi Kahanowitz 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. Sternbach to the effect that thousands of Jews could be saved if large sums were sent at once. The Vaad Nahalzel Emergency Committee wishes to send a message to Sternbach through government channels reading as follows:

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

Mr. Press requested that the VAAD Nahalzel send immediate dispatch of this message today.

I asked Mr. Press if he had any details concerning the Sternbach 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 Sternbach in his regular rescue activities; he did not believe that the money involved a ransom deal.

I told Mr. Press that in Mr. Feinberg's absence, I would raise the question with Mr. Friedmann and that I would call him back at 8:00 p.m. if the message could not be sent out today.

It is possible that the Sternbach message may refer to the Soly Meyer negotiations.
SECRETARY OF STATE,  
WASHINGTON  

4025, December 8, 1944  

FOR CIR FROM SCHELLHARDT  

I have timed this letter (first return)  
in least one week later than 4025, October 30) with  
Sternbuch.  (Department 4014, November 20; 5174.  
206).  It revolves around a trip which a certain  
few weeks before Chancellor, May took to Berlin  
during November in behalf of Mrs. Sternbuch in an  
attempt to locate and mitigate near 500 Jews previously  
detained from Vittel, a great many of whom were relatives  
of the Sternbuch family.  In spite of having been in  
oppositional touch with Hitler (as Sternbuch informed me),  
May was unsuccessful in his efforts to locate these  
people who are reported to be in Auschwitz.  On his  
return May intrigued to the Sternbuchs that the  
sum 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.  

DECLASSIFIED  
State Dept. Letter 4-11-78  
By R. H. Parks Dept.  SEP 27 1972
The situation is not entirely clear, In view of this, it is advisable to consider the question of the validity of the law, and the validity of the question of the validity of the law, and the validity of the question of the validity of the law.

IMPOLE
The cable below for Maclelland is WHD 394.

Please deliver the following message to Joseph

Schwartz from H. A. Leavitt, American Jewish Joint Dis-

tribution Committee:

QUOTE Please cable your views validity Sternbuch

proposal rescue large numbers monthly. We apply-

ing license remit to Alyn Meyer $78,000 balance

returned by Simonds, International Red Cross

Delegate Turkey, for relief purposes Jewish de-

portees internees through Intercedour. UNQUOTE

STATILIUS

(GHH)
2:30 p.m.
December 21, 1944

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

Flight 12/21/44
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
WAR REFUGEE BOARD

INTER-OFFICE COMMUNICATION

DATE

FROM

I, L, and L, the Director of the War Refugee Board, have learned that there is an object in the Vaddi Institute to secure the admission of the Vaddi Institute into the Administrative Board.

I stated to Mr. S. that I could not comment on the suggestion made by my relief organization, and that I could not comment on the matter, as the War Refugee Board, in my opinion, could not be expected to give any opinions, and did not think it necessary to state my views on the subject. I expressed that, personally, I believe that the Vaddi Institute has done very useful work in connection with the relief of individuals, but that I have nothing to say in the campaign of the Vaddi Institute. I stated that he certainly would not want me to make any comments regarding any campaign conducted by Congress, if a representative of the Vaddi Institute had asked me for such comments.

I replied that I would not be of any help to him in this respect, and that I was not prepared to do so.

On Tuesday, January 9, Mr. Grossman, of the World Jewish Congress, telephoned me from New York. He stated that there are rumors going around in New York that the Vaddi Institute is conducting a campaign for the purpose of recruiting 500,000 Jews at a cost 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.
At the same time, and without necessarily having reliance on their
version of the Wood Enlargement theory, it may be useful to inquire what
in fact the Wood Enlargement theory is having to offer contributions to the current
situation. Girard. It appears that the Wood Enlargement theory is offering
the possibility of certain improbable 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 reliance.

L. Girard.
...
Dr. Goldman and Dr. Silbereschin then questioned me concerning the alleged scene of which Silbereschin had received from Switzerland a request for 100 million Swiss francs to be sent to Switzerland to cover part of the negotiations and penal, for the release of Jews from enemy territory. I asked whether the project mentioned had been discussed with Blaskowitz and Dr. Silbereschin said that it had not been. I was offered to send a cable to Blaskowitz asking him to discuss the matter with Fischer and to report to the proper authorities. Both Dr. Goldman and Dr. Silbereschin appeared satisfied with the suggestion and asked at the same time that a message be sent to Fischer from Dr. Silbereschin instructing Fischer to discuss the matter with Blaskowitz. Accordingly, the attached cable was drafted and sent to the State Department for dispatch.
Following for approval from War Refuge Board.

Table referred to above reads as follows:

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Please discuss his plans with Fisher at once and send us your views.
Do not utilize that in any event prospect or present of large numbers widely by Sternbach or anyone that began my discussion in Switzerland. During my discussions with Sternbach neither of us ever mentioned such proposal nor did it submit anything in this connection to Maclelland to my knowledge. Without first clearing with Maclelland suggest strongly that no concrete steps be taken on any proposal or anything with Sternbach.

J.H.

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. letter; 1-11-72
By R. H. Parko Date: SEP 27, 1972
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

OUTGOING TELEGRAM

DIVISION OF CENTRAL SERVICES TELEGRAPH SECTION

January 14, 1945

11 p.m.

DECLASSIFIED

CONTROL COPY

The cable below is Cables succeeding to the following message to Theodore Fischer, World Jewish Congress relief Committee, 2 Rue du Rhone, Geneva, from Dr. Abraham Silberschein of World Jewish Congress, New York:

"NOTE: Cable from Klee received. Please discuss project with McClelland. UNJOCY2"

Following for McClelland from War Refugee Board:

Cable referred to above reads as follows: "NOTE: For Silberschein negotiations are Geog Engelmann 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 funds previously secured. Try utmost procure half million D-mark whilst corresponding sum procured here by individuals. UNQUOTE"

"Please discuss his plans with Fischer at once and send up your views."
CABLE TO HUDSON, BURLINGTON, FROM MCGILLAND FROM WAR REFUGEES BOARD

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

QUOTE: CABLE FROM KEHR HACHEM, PLEASE DISCUSS PROJECT WITH MCGILLAND UNQUOTE.

Following for McGilland from War Refugees Board:

Cable referred to above reads as follows: QUOTE FOR SILBERSCHEIN

NEGOTIATIONS HE ONCE QUESTIONED WITHOUT RESULT THEREFORE DEPUT ILLEGITIMATE
STOP, AUTHOR OF HEAR ARRIVED HERE FROM SWITZERLAND TRANSPORT DURING SHORT VISIT HERE GAVE FISCHER HOPE ANOTHER PROMISING MAY HAPPEN MATTEN BY NECESSARY MEANS PREVIOUSLY ASSURED STOP TRY UTMOST PROCEDES HALF-MILLION SWISSFRANC WOOL

CORRESPONDING SUM PROCUR AND HIGH BY INDIVIDUALS UNQUOTE.

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

THIS IS WHB DRUM CABLE NO. 362.

3:30 p.m., January 12, 1945

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

FH/DR 1/13/45 Cleared with FBLA.
LIST forwarded to reorg without result therefor. DR. OT ILLUMINATED STOP Author of HERB arrived bergmen transport during recent visit here gav fischer hope another bergmen may same matter if efforts are means previously secured stop tyr utmost procure halpinotion 9th changed whilst corresponding him procured here by individuals stop.
Mr. Warren feels very strongly that a cable should be sent to McClelland informing him of the plan which Mr. Schenkendorf outlined to Warren and advising him of their statement that $250,000 is now on deposit in Sternbuch's name for payment of the first group of 12,000. 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.
OUTGOING TELEGRAM

ALLOCATION

The following is based on information from Department of State and War Refugee Board:

Information has been received that a Balkan-financed organization, said to be German-sponsored, has been moved to a military camp in Morocco. The organization is said to be paying $8,000,000 per year out of the sum of 10,000 a month and an agreement has been signed to pay $280,000 a month to the French for the Convoit. At present $280,000 is now on deposit in a bank in the name of Storch and is to be used for payment for the first shipment of 18,000 Jews expected shortly in Switzerland.

For your information, were reports from Bonn regarding to the above reports on the Storch 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.

GADW (acting)

URB: MIV: KG
1/25/45
GARRETT TO HUBBELL AND MOLEKLAND, DORN, FROM DEPARTMENT AND WAR REFUGEE BOARD

Information has reached us recently that Sternbush has developed a plan for the release of 300,000 Jews from Germany and German-occupied territory in return for payments totalling $3,000,000. 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 Veid Mahateesa is now on deposit in a Swiss bank in the name of Sternbush 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 Sternbush 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 MRS. HUBBELL NO. 331.

10:30 a.m.
January 26, 1945.

Miss Chapeau (for the Sec'y) Ackerman, Aksin, Cohen, Drury, Dulais, Ganten, Hadel, Marks, McDermack, Pahle, Piles.

[Handwritten note: Classified]
[Handwritten note: Filed 2/21/45]
CONTROL COPY

At the instigation of a Swiss (H) approximately January 10 undertook a second journey to Germany in behalf of rescuing surviving Jews who were in the possession of the Nazis. I was advised by S that a personal invitation from Himmler (H) extended in writing by German authorities at Dornbirn which S claims to have seen was in the possession of H. January 17 on H's temporary return to Switzerland to report to S he (H) 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. H 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.
I strongly maintain, according to S, that he, K, 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 Germany to release Jews still surviving. The reputation of K is that of being a Naziophile 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 K. I am repeatedly assured that K is not interested in offering Nazi money or in getting it for himself. However, S made the admission that he advanced N 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 he collected N 10,000 francs from Mr. Matsotian because he was successful in freeing Matsotian's grandson from a German concentration camp and bringing him back in October to Switzerland. Matsotian 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 H'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
There is enthusiasm on the part of S. because he believes that for the first time direct personal contact has been established with him concerning the question of the Jevi, and skepticism in its efficacy which he will believe only when arrival of trains in Switzerland actually begins.

On the twenty-first of January ostensibly for additional consultation with him, I returned to Germany.

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

HUBBLE

DC/LSHS
1-20-48
SECRETARY OF STATE  
Washington, D.C.

January 23, 1941

INCOMING  
TELEGRAM

DIVISION OF  
CENTRAL SERVICES  
TELEGRAPH SECTION

CONTROL COPY

Important telegram, January 23, 1941, with reference to a request for assistance from London.

After giving careful consideration to the request made by the war office, I am obliged to say that I do not feel that it would be in the interest 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 small 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 thereby 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
In the Soviet government apparently does not believe, as a matter of principle, in dictating with泱泱, and has generally taken a position with regard to the very truth that the interests of the Soviet state and of the Allied nations to prevent over-rule the interests of those groups who are unfortunate enough to fall into the hands of the enemy. The idea of ransom any of these cases by the payment of sums which can help the demands to prolong their war effort will not only fail to appeal to the nations 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 any 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

GPI/8f
To utilize the possibilities for rescue of European Jewry where the Vaad Hahatzala program is especially needed.
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 Consul Geeral Dany charged with this mission by us. Germany agreed to release further transports.

Miekie Sternbuch
SPECIAL DELIVERY

WAR REFUGEES BOARD
TREASURY BUILDING
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Att. Miss Florence Model
RABBIS CELEBRATE
FREEDOM OF REFUGEES

Sunday evening 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 Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada, 122 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 Union, 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 Kalfer, former deen of the Ktetsa Yeshiva in Lithuania; Rabbi Abraham Halimovitz, dean of the Mirrer Yeshiva in Poland; Rabbi Israel Rosenberg of the president of the Union of Orthodox Rabbis, and other Hebrew scholars. Laymen members of the committee present included Irving Braun, Abrahom Rapin and Henry W. Goldman.

It was disclosed at the meeting that the committee had received a communication from the Apostolic Delegate to Washington informing them that Pope Pius XII had made a financial contribution for the relief of distressed Jews in Hungary.
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 obtained 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.
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 last 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 Desk, vice Council of Vaad Hahatzala.
The following text is from a cable for MB.

Reference Department's 551, January 23; Date 277; Department's circular cable January 1, 1945; Department's 1168, April 6, 1944 and Legation's 60, January 20, 1945.

Legation's 605 previously reported the entire matter of the Zivy negotiations which have come into considerably sharper focus since the third of February when Sternbuch told me that Zivy had come back on the first of February from Germany and had reported that his endeavors to induce Himler to release Jews had been successful and that, on or around February 8, a first convoy of some 1300 individuals would arrive at the Swiss frontier. On February 6 this convoy was to depart from the Dresden area. Then Sternbuch requested that I raise the question of Swiss permission for their entry into Switzerland. I did this personally with the Chief of Federal Police, Dr. Rothmund, on the third of February, reiterating 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

DECLASSIFIED
State Dept. Letter, 1/11/72
By R. H. Furke Date SEP 27 1972
the Police Section of the Ministry and brought up the question of the Government's assurance concerning the evacuation of the territory of Jewish refugees from Hungary to Little Switzerland held 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 could extend its guarantee to include such groups from Germany. The matter was given in Department's Circular Jan 14, 1944, and reported on basis of President's statement of March 24, 1944 in Department's Brief, April 6, 1944. I array myself 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 could 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 Husz, Sternbuch and Boll on the 6th of February, and they informed me as follows:

Himmler has been induced by Husz 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 Husz, according to the latter. Husz describes Schellenberg as a really good man and as his own particular friend.
I did not press Lusy 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 Lusy 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, i.e. it had not been satisfactory and it is
not clear whether they were being interned, but it is quite clear that 50 per cent of
the refugees are children. I have never been able to put in writing an opinion of
such a nature. what has been written is that a child of a heroic rescuer can
thus be rehabilitated from a political and not a political way.
I must advise the doctor to be careful in his advice to the patient to avoid
the first convoy made at the time of the frontier.
Information that a convoy of 1500 individuals was Constant
arrived at Basel in a convoy of these by the German Frontier at 2 p.m.
on February 3, 11 a.m. They arrived February 7, about noon, in
Switzerland. The convoy is made up of 1500 individuals, including
some 50 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 the convoy from Bialystok, 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
1. Lusy, continue his efforts in these negotiations with Hitler, and in particular, it seems to have received support from Schellenberg throughout. It is of interest to advise the Board that the Chief of the Nazi Army Intelligence, Lessner, informed the Office on February 6, 1941, independently of Lusy, that Schellenberg had recently indicated to him through an intermediary that he, Schellenberg, was interested in using something regarding releases of Jewish refugees.

2. Lusy’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 Lusy also has been in touch with the French Embassy in Bern and in addition to effecting the release of the Jewish group of 1910, 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.

Lusy was also successful in liberating a group of nine Swiss nationals, whom the Germans imprisoned on espionage charges, from German prisons. For over a year the Swiss Government has been attempting...
I am especially impressed by the thoroughness and efficiency of the personnel at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is clear that they have arrived in Berlin with a mission.

Of course, since you will be unable to return until after the convention, I would like to request your advice concerning the evacuation of this group. I understand that a conference is being held in Berlin relating to questions of 1923 Hanover Jews.

I am grateful for your cooperation.

HUBBLE

(*) apparent emission.

UN/MOVED
2-9-45

800908
One of the most fantastic feats of rescue of Jewish internes from German concentration camps has been accomplished by a group of twenty orthodox Swiss Jews who sent Jean H. Mury, 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 560 more are expected to arrive here tomorrow. The release of these internes 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 56 children under the age of 17 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.
SECRETARY OF STATE,

WASHINGTON,

Mr. Smith

FOLLOWING EMBASSY REPORT:

"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 500 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..."
will 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 Inter-Governmental Committee to secure the necessary funds.

"Since groups from places other than Terezienstadt 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".

WIN:NT

RB