

Prominent Hungarian Jewish  
Industrialists in Portugal

000154



picians of the Germans, the Hungarians here are advising  
her to send clear telegram urging them to call at the Ameri-  
can consulate and try to get visas. This Legation has no  
information as to whether the four ladies wish American visas  
but believes that the War Refugee Board would be interested  
in <sup>method of</sup> their escape (probably involving bribery and connivance  
of Hungarian officials). The Lisbon Consulate may say that  
Mr. Gellert urges her to make full statement, to convince  
Baroness Korafeld that she can talk in confidence without dan-  
ger to her husband and relatives in Hungary.

JOHNSON

RECEIVED  
JUL 14 1944

000156

*2-man Refugee Bd.  
m. Peble*

ENCLOSURE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

**CONTROL COPY**

FROM: American Embassy, Lisbon  
TO: Secretary of State, Washington  
DATED: July 1, 1944  
NUMBER: 2054

The first part of this week a group of some 32 Hungarian Jews, among whom were members of the most wealthy and prominent Hungarian Jewish capitalists and industrialists, arrived here. Mr. W. Billits, director of the Manfred Weiss airplane factory, Dr. George Hoff and son, Baron Eugene Weiss and family, Dr. Maurice Korafeld and family, Mr. Zoltan Fonyvesi and wife, Francis Demaufner and family and Dr. Francis Chorin and family are the most outstanding among the group.

These people came from Berlin via Luftansa planes and only after reaching Barcelona were they given passports. Portuguese and Spanish visas (the former issued at Berlin) were affixed to these passports. Previous knowledge that the visas were to be issued is denied by the authorities of Portugal, and inquiry as to whose authority was invoked is being made. The Portuguese authorities are requiring this group to proceed (for enforced residence) to Curia near Coimbra.

All kinds of rumors are current, and a great amount of mystery in connection with the presence of the group here exists. Some of the rumors indicate that this prominent group of Jews has been allowed by the Germans to leave in order to arrange peace terms through intermediary of influential controlling Jewish leaders in Great Britain and the United States while other rumors suggest the United States Government is involved in unfreezing certain monies belonging to the group.

DECLASSIFIED  
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-78  
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 27 1972

That such

000157

That such rumors are intended to create suspicion and  
foster misunderstanding in Moscow in an effort to create schism between  
her Allies and Russia is, of course, a grave peril.

MORWEB

DCB/387

7-12-44

000158

DEPARTMENT  
OF  
STATE

INCOMING  
TELEGRAM

DIVISION OF  
COMMUNICATIONS  
AND RECORDS

Bas-326  
Distribution of true  
reading only by special  
arrangement. (W)

Lisbon  
Dated July 7, 1944  
Rec'd 11:34 a.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
JUL 9 1944  
DIVISION OF  
COMMUNICATIONS & RECORDS

2095, July 7, 11 a.m.

Looking into Vilmos Gabor case will report later.

Referring Department's telegram 1925 July 5, WRB 50.

This is WRB 94. Regarding Stockholm's 12 see Embassy's  
2054, July 1. Will forward information Stockholm if  
and when we have anything useful or reliable. Have some  
fairly effective Hungarian channels available as you will  
not from recent despatches.

For security reasons must  
be closely guarded.

NORWEB

WSB RR

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

000159

No. 677

~~SECRET~~

Lisbon, July 4, 1944

Subject; Arrival in Portugal of Group of Prominent  
Hungarian Jewish Industrialists.

3 MR B  
2 MR Refugee Board  
1 MR (Klas)  
1 MR (Sima Brandt)

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

Sir:

In confirmation of the Embassy's telegram No. 2054, July 1, 1944, 1 p.m., I have the honor to report that on June 26 and 27, 1944, a group of thirty-two Hungarian Jewish capitalists and industrialists arrived in Lisbon, without previous warning, accompanied by their families. A list of the names of the members of this group, together with the number and date of the passports issued to the heads of the families, is attached hereto. This list was prepared at the Embassy's request by Mr. Sima, formerly Press Attache of the Hungarian Legation who, together with the Minister, has broken off all relations with the Sztojay government.

There is also attached a copy of a report prepared by Mr. Sima after talking to Mr. Billitz, one of the members of the group who is an acquaintance of long standing of Mr. Sima.

The information supplied by Mr. Billitz should, in the opinion of the Embassy, not be accepted without careful checking. It has been obvious that the individuals comprising this group were ordered by the Germans to give no information and that they have a wholesome fear of the possibility of reprisal measures being taken against the members of the families which were left behind as hostages.

There is a great deal of mystery surrounding the arrival of this group in Portugal and their presence has given rise to rumors of all sorts in which an attempt is made in some way to implicate the United States. One such rumor alleges that arrangements have been made through an American intermediary to unblock certain funds in the United States belonging to members of this group. A second alleges that the Germans allowed these prominent and influential Jewish industrialists to come to Lisbon for the purpose of attempting to arrange peace terms through their important Jewish connections and friends in the United States and Great Britain. A third attempts to link up this group with the Brand proposals, which originated in Turkey, involving an exchange of motor trucks and food materials for the

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

release /

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release by the Germans of Jews in occupied countries. In this connection see Embassy's despatch No. 680, July 4, 1944.

It probably can be taken as axiomatic that the release of these individuals by the Germans has been engineered with some ulterior motive and that this goes beyond a simple question of ransom, which was undoubtedly involved. The danger appears to lie in the fact that the Germans may in some way use the presence of this group in Portugal to drive a wedge between the Russians and their Allies either by letting it leak out that the British and ourselves are involved in attempting to arrange separate peace negotiations or in some way intimating that the release of this group is evidence that the Brand plan has been accepted by us.

Both the British Embassy and this Embassy are following the matter closely and we shall not fail to report any further developments or information which may come to light.

Respectfully yours,

For the Ambassador:

  
Edward S. Crocker  
Counselor of Embassy

✓ Enclosures:

- No. 1 - List of names
- No. 2 - Report

ESC:rm

000161

RECENT HUNGARIAN ARRIVALS IN LISBON

BARON EUGENE WEISS - Hungarian - engineer - passport delivered in Budapest, dated June 4, 1937, No. 9600 - accompanied by six children - date of arrival June 25, 1944.

Family: Georges - age 18  
 Alice - age 20  
 Annie - age 15  
 Gabriel - age 21  
 Martha - age 19  
 Marie - age 17  
 Edith - wife - age 45  
 Annie Geitler WEISS - relative - age 45

DR. FRANCOIS CHORIN - Hungarian - passport delivered at Budapest, dated November 25, 1941 - No. K17037 - arrived from Berlin via Lufthansa German plane June 25, 1944 - accompanied by three children.

Family: Francois - age 16  
 Elisabeth - age 22  
 Daysi - age 19  
 Daisy Weiss CHORIN - wife - age 49

DR. MAURICE KORNFELD - Hungarian - senator - passport delivered at Budapest dated September 30, 1943 - No. 79044 - date of arrival in Lisbon June 27, 1944 - accompanied by three children.

Family: Marie - age 30  
 Hanna - age 28  
 Thomas - age 20  
 Marianna Weiss KORNFELD - wife - age 56

FRANCOIS DE MAUTHNER - Hungarian - engineer - passport delivered in Budapest, dated January 20, 1944, No. 144316 - accompanied by his daughter - date of arrival June 25, 1944.

Family: Anna - age 31  
 Francois - age 34  
 Gabrielle - age 21  
 Elsa - wife - age 68

DR. MAURICE HOFF - Hungarian - attorney (legal adviser of Weiss) - accompanied by his wife - passport delivered in Budapest, dated December 18, 1937 - No. 120356 - date of arrival in Lisbon June 26, 1944.

ZOLTAN FENYVESI - Hungarian - engineer - accompanied by his wife - passport delivered at Budapest, dated April 2, 1939 - No. 178982 - date of arrival in Lisbon June 26, 1944.

All above-mentioned individuals arrived in Lisbon from Berlin, via German Lufthansa planes. All "entry-visas" in Portugal were delivered by the Portuguese Legation, Berlin, with permission to remain 30 days in Portugal. All passports contain transit-visas through Spain.

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Lisbon, June 30, 1944

The party was accompanied to Lisbon by Mr. W. Billitz, director of the Manfred Weiss Aeroplanes Factory, who, by arrangement with the Germans, returned to Hungary, presumably to save others.

After the experiences they must have gone through these people are very much intimidated and reluctant to speak, particularly of the arrangements which enabled them to escape. As far as could be gathered the price of their escape was an agreement between the Chorin-Weiss-Mauthner group and a German industrial concern by which the industrial plants of these three families, which forms a considerable part of Hungarian industry, were taken over by the concern for use, but the property rights have been reserved for the owners. Whether any other payments have been made, is not known. It appears that they are provided with cash for about a year. The Portuguese authorities seem to have doubts about the genuineness of their visas and are making investigations.

In the concentration camp near Vienna where Chorin, Weiss and Kornfeld were kept for a time, the following Hungarians remained:

Count Anton Sigray  
Count George Apponyi  
Count Anton Szapary  
Count Ivan Csekonic  
Mr. Charles Rassay, leader of the Liberal Party  
Mr. Charles Payer, leader of the Socialist Party  
Mr. Julius Malasits, Socialist M.P.  
Mr. Mano Buchinger, Socialist M.P.  
Mr. Desider Laky, former Minister of Food  
Mr. Julius Somogyvary  
Mr. Nicholas Halmi  
Mr. Gustav Gratz  
Mr. Eugene Vida  
Mr. Lipot Aschner  
Mr. Leopold Goldberger  
Mr. Frederick Fellner  
Mr. Rudolph Andorka, former Minister at Madrid  
Mr. Joseph Sombor and  
25 members of the Political Police

Mr. Lipot Baranyay, former President of the National Bank, and Mr. Charles Barcza have been allowed to go home. (The rumor that Baranyay died is not true.) Mr. Szentmiklosy and Mr. Szegedy-Maszak are kept in prison in Budapest. The brothers Keresztes-Fischer are imprisoned in Germany. Baron George Ullman, Mr. Joseph Balogh, Mr. Zoltan Tildy, Mrs. Tibor Eckhardt are hiding somewhere in the country.

As regards the effect of bombardment, the following could be gathered: The Manfred Weiss Aeroplane Works, the Aeroplane Factory at Győr, the Chemical Factory at Pet and the Petrol Refinery at Almasfuzito have been destroyed. The refineries at Soroksari-ut in Budapest have also heavily suffered. On the other hand, railways, marshalling yards and other railway installations have been little damaged. Industrial production has been largely disorganized. After raids on industrial plants which usually destroy a number of workers' houses, the workers simply disperse to save their families and belongings, and return to work sometimes only after weeks.

REG-DE-  
UNCLASSIFIED

000153

HIAS-JCA EMIGRATION ASSOCIATION  
(HICEM)

LISBOA, July 13, 1944. 194

49, RUA RODRIGO DA FONSECA, 2.º

TELEPHONES 5 2041-5 1978

CABLE ADDRESS: HICEM - LISBOA

TO: Messrs. James H. Mann, and John W. Pehle,  
War Refugee Board.

FROM: S. Bertrand Jacobson.

SUBJECT: Group of Hungarian Refugees Recently Arrived in Lisbon.

Sunday evening June 25, 1944, there arrived at the Lisbon airport, by a Lufthansa plane from Stuttgart via Madrid, a first contingent of a prominent Hungarian family group,-- Manfred Weiss & Company, the leading industrialist family in Hungary. By Tuesday evening June 27, two additional Lufthansa planes landed in Lisbon with other members of the family and the families of trusted employees. In all 38 people arrived. They all went to the Avenida Palace Hotel, in the center of Lisbon, and this unexpected, unannounced arrival of so prominent a family created a most unusual commotion.

I first learned about it Monday morning June 27, when there suddenly appeared in our office, Baroness Edith Weiss and her young niece Miss Anne Mauthner. It should be stated that most of the members of this group had been very close friends of mine in Budapest in 1940, 1941, and 1942, when I represented the Joint Distribution Committee in Hungary and the Balkan area.

It should also be stated that the Manfred Weiss family occupied a leading position not only in the industrial, banking, and social life of Hungary, but were the principal supporters of all relief work, both Jewish and non-Jewish, in that country. They were active participants in all matters connected with refugee relief and the improvement of social conditions. Baroness Edith Weiss was the active representative of the family in all such undertakings.

The following persons were those who arrived here:

- 1 Baroness Edith Weiss.
- 5 Baron Eugene Weiss, his wife, and 3 children.
- 5 Baron Moric Kornfeld, his wife, and 3 children
- 4 Mrs. Elsa Mauthner (Nee Weiss) and 3 children.
- 5 Baroness Elizabeth Weiss and 4 children
- 5 Mr. Ferenc Chorin, wife (Nee Weiss) and 3 children.
- 2 Dr. George Hoff (of their legal staff) and his  
/ mother and father.
- 4 Mr. & Mrs. Fenyvesi, their young daughter, and Mrs.  
/ Fenyvesi's mother.
- 1 Dr. Vilmos Billitz, general manager of one of the family's  
large plants. He is a brother of young  
Mrs. Fenyvesi.

Dr. Billitz, I am told, had an urgent message to communicate to me from the Jewish leaders in Hungary, begging for immediate help to save them from deportation and terrorism; but he was unable to communicate with me, as he was practically

REGRADED  
UNCLASSIFIED

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spirited out of Portugal in a German plane some time on Tuesday June 27 or the next day. Wednesday evening, on the way back to Budapest, during a stopover in Madrid, he telephoned to Edith Weiss reminding her ~~to~~ not to fail to convey to me the urgent appeal of the Jewish committee in Budapest. I have reason to believe that Dr. Billitz was rushed back to Budapest without the knowledge of the Portuguese police.

Wednesday morning June 28, the male members of the group were all summoned to the headquarters of the Portuguese International Police to explain the circumstances under which they received their Portuguese visas. It must be stated here that every Portuguese visa must be telegraphically authorized by the International Police in a numbered telegram to the Portuguese Consular or diplomatic officer authorized to issue the visa. Such numbers appeared in the Portuguese visas of all the members of the group, but the Police could find no trace of such telegrams having been sent from Lisbon. A check was made in every telegraph office in Portugal, and in Spain, without disclosing any trace of the origin of the telegrams authorizing the visas.

To the police and to me, the group stated that when they arrived on German territory sometime after May 19, when most of them left Hungary, their Hungarian passports were taken up by the Germans, and were returned to the members of the group only half an hour before they left the airport at Stuttgart en route to Lisbon via Madrid. The passports thus returned to them bore the Portuguese visas. It seems obvious then that somewhere on German territory the Portuguese visas were affixed to the passports. But by whom? Where? For what consideration? Under what pressure? These questions are now being investigated by the Portuguese police, who, I am reliably informed, have recalled one of their officials from Berlin to make explanation.

On equally reliable authority here, I have it that the Portuguese police is not questioning the good faith of the Weiss group who came here with these apparently questionable visas.

It is important to point out that there are detained on German territory (not in Hungary), as hostages and as the price of silence, Baron Alphonse, -the husband of Elizabeth Weiss--and a son and daughter ~~xxxxxx~~ in law of Baron Moric Kornfeld.

The following Saturday, ~~June~~ July 1, the entire group complying with an order issued by the Portuguese Police, left Lisbon to restricted residence in the little summer resort village of Curia, in northern Portugal.

During the six days between their arrival in Lisbon and their departure for Curia, I saw them frequently and had many talks with them. In fear of any possible reprisal against the members of their family detained in Germany, they decline to talk about the circumstances of their departure, or to make any statements about their journey, conditions in Hungary and similar data.

The arrival in Portugal, with the obvious help of the Nazis, of so large a group of Hungarian Jews, has raised a number of questions. To ascertain the answers to these questions I decided, after talking the matter over with Mr. Crocker, Counselor of our Embassy, to go up to Curia for the weekend.

Why did the Germans permit them to leave--assuming even that a heavy ransom was paid in the form of confiscated property, money, or valuables? There are many thousands of cases where the property of Jews was robbed, legally or otherwise, by the Nazis who yet refused the victims ~~to~~ permission to leave for safety.

A suspicion was even expressed in certain circles here that this group, or some of its members might be the bearers of a secret peace offer.

What were they doing in German territory from the time they left Budapest May 19, until their arrival in Lisbon June 25th?

To clarify these questions and get some idea of what is going on in Hungary, I went to Curia Thursday July 6 for the weekend. My mission to secure the desired information was frankly unsuccessful. A family conference was held and the spokesman, Mr. Ferenc Chorin, told me that while some of them were for telling me all, the consensus was that because of the grave danger that might result for Baron Alphonse Weiss (the titular head of the family) and the Kornfeld children--still detained as hostages in Germany--they preferred not to make any reports. Mr. Chorin did however give me a personal message to Mr. Crocker, to whom I conveyed it upon my return here Monday July 10.

(I should add that Mr. Chorin is the leading industrialist in Hungary, president of the Hungarian National Manufacturers Association, member of the executive committee of the Hungarian Commercial Bank of Pest, and a member of the Hungarian Senate. Baron Moric Kornfeld is also a Hungarian senator.)

Nevertheless, in spite of their unwillingness to give me anything orally or in writing, I arrived at certain conclusions which I submit to you--in confidence--

1. There is no doubt in my mind that the Weiss family paid a heavy ransom, perhaps cash, perhaps property, perhaps stock in their various enterprises. I have no doubt that the Nazis "accepted" this ransom in some legal form.

2. I am equally certain that they were able to buy their permit to leave German territory for Portugal--with the active help of the Germans--through powerful connections with German industrialists. It must be remembered that the firm of Manfred Weiss & Company had extensive business connections in many countries for many years,

4.

and that they were able to mobilize the influence of connections in Germany, who with an eye to the future, arranged for their departure from German territory.

3. With regard to the suspicion that the group, or any individuals in it, may be the secret bearers of a peace offer from Germany or Hungary, I must candidly say that such a suspicion seems baseless. It can hardly be believed that the Germans would confide such an offer to a large group, or even to three or 4 Jews. In any case, if they are the bearers of such an offer, I have heard nothing of it; nor has anyone else, as far as I can ascertain.

4. When they left Hungary on May 19, (up to that time most of them were in hiding with friends or under arrest in Budapest) they traveled by bus or train to Austria. They were detained in camps, under constant guard. They are significantly silent about this.

5. The Manfred Weiss family doubtless have funds in neutral countries, and also in countries at war. I am sure they have funds in Switzerland and in England. I know they have frozen funds in the United States. I heard the suspicion expressed today that they may have assigned some of these accounts to the Germans; I completely disbelieve this.

In conclusion I want to suggest that you investigate this family's financial connections in the United States. A gentleman named Mr. Victor Bator, 30 East 72 Street, New York, will, I am sure, be able to give you such information as you may seek. I should also like to ask that none of the material in this memorandum should be made public.

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DEPARTMENT  
OF  
STATE

OUTGOING  
TELEGRAM

DIVISION OF  
COMMUNICATIONS  
AND RECORDS

BAS  
Distribution of true  
message only by special  
arrangement. ( ) W)

TO BE SENT IN SECRET "W"

JUL 2 1944  
7 11  
**CONTROL COPY**

AMEMBASSY,

LISBON.

2033A  
FOR NORWEG FOR DEXTER.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
JUL 2 2 1944  
DIVISION OF  
COMMUNICATIONS & RECORDS

With reference to ultimate sentence your 2095 July 7  
kindly communicate specific information concerning Hungarian  
channels available to you and identify recent despatches  
mentioning them.

HULL  
(GLW)

HULL

S/CR  
WRB:GLW:KG  
7/13/44

WE

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

000168

DUPLICATE COPY

DEPARTMENT OF STATE      **OUTGOING TELEGRAM**      July 21, 1944      10 p.m.      DIVISION OF COMMUNICATIONS AND RECORDS

BE  
Distribution of this telegram for reading only by special distribution. (SECRET W)

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
JUL 25 1944  
DIVISION OF COMMUNICATIONS & RECORDS

CONFIDENTIAL COPY

AMEMBASSY,

LISBON.  
2057

The following WRB cable 52 is for Dexter.

Reference Stockholm's 12 of June 30 to you and WRB's 50, Department's 1926 of July 5, please deliver the following message from the War Refugee Board to Ferenc Cserkin and Baron Moritz Kernfeld, Avenida Palace Hotel, Lisbon: QUOTE In the name of all our mutual friends I urge you earnestly to cooperate with Doctor Dexter of the War Refugee Board disclosing to him all information concerning your departure and any other information that may be of assistance in saving the lives of others. Please advise Doctor Dexter who in Budapest can be approached with some hope of success and the basis upon which such approach should be made. Best greetings to all of you. Signed Ernest Wittmann. UNQUOTE.

HULL  
(GHW)

WRB:MMV:KB  
7/10/44

WE

BE

S/CR

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

000169

DEPARTMENT  
OF  
STATE

INCOMING  
TELEGRAM

DIVISION OF  
COMMUNICATIONS  
AND RECORDS

RA-550  
Distribution of true  
reading only by special  
arrangement. (SECRET W)

Lisbon

Dated July 21, 1944

Rec'd 6:35 a.m.

**CONTROL COPY**  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
DIVISION OF  
COMMUNICATIONS  
AND RECORDS  
JUL 22 1944

Secretary of State

Washington

2262, July 21, 7 p.m.

Reference your 2033, July 20. This WRB 109.

Channels open are dissident Hungarian officials

here. Despatches mentioning them are 690, 704 and

736.

NORWEB

RR:WSB

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

000170

DEPARTMENT  
OF  
STATE

INCOMING  
TELEGRAM

DIVISION OF  
COMMUNICATIONS  
AND RECORDS

**CONTROL COPY**

LC 102  
Distribution of  
true reading by  
special arrangement  
~~SECRET~~ W)

Lisbon

Dated July 24, 1944

Rec'd 10:48 a.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

JUL 24 1944

DIVISION OF  
COMMUNICATIONS & RECORDS

2273, July 24, 1 p.m.

x  
I believe and Dexter concurs any approach along  
the lines suggested Department's 2057 WRB 52 July 21  
might endanger lives of hostages and is in other ways  
unwise. This is especially true in view of recent  
developments in Hungary which may solve the problem  
without risks delivery your message involves. WRB  
110. Embassy is therefore not (repeat not) delivering  
Whitman's message nor is Dexter conferring with  
individuals mentioned in 2057. They are not in Lisbon  
but in small town of Curia 100 miles north.

HORVEB

WSB RR

DECLASSIFIED  
State Dept. Letter, 1-11-73  
By R. H. Parks Date SEP 27 1972

000171

**CONTROL COPY**

PARAGRAPH OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

*2-man Refugee Bd.  
Mr. Poble*

FROM: AMLEGATION, Bern  
TO: Secretary of State, Washington  
DATED: July 24, 1944  
NUMBER: 4729  
X

*File*

This message is from McClelland for WRP and concerns Department's 2377, July 11.

Although Swiss entry visas were secured over two years ago and on June 2, 1944 were renewed Gideon Richter and his wife have not yet arrived in Switzerland. The report is that their boy is in Ankara now.

It may be that the German plane angle is a confusion resulting from the arrival in Zurich on the twenty-fifth of June from Stuttgart in a Swiss airplane of ten members of the families of Chorin and Weiss; Dr. Margaretha, wife and two children, Otto Henrich; Borbelye, wife and three children. False Swiss visas were possessed by these people who, as part of a ransom plan involving 54 members of these families, had been sent there by the Gestapo. At approximately the same date about 33 of these were deported to Lisbon in two German planes. It is reported from a reliable source that a portion of the price was a 25 year lease to the German Goering Werke of the Weiss industries especially metallurgical, and that in addition several million Swiss francs were paid although there is no confirmation of this last. In Vienna there remained as hostages Hans Muetner, Baron Alfons Weiss, George S. Kornfeld, wife and children.

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

000172

From a reliable source it is stated that the Jewish Director of Chowgenauva, ID, one Wilhelm Bielitz, organized the departure of these persons and is now trying to come here himself. Should he arrive in Switzerland I shall make an attempt to see him. In the meantime I suggest that Bielitz be contacted by the neutral attache which Department's 2270 mentioned.

The case of Chorin and Weiss is the most outstanding example of the current ransoming in Hungary of rich Jewish persons. It is reputed that the prices are over 100,000 Swiss francs per individual. Recently in Switzerland one or two intermediaries have turned up to negotiate such cases. The only individual which Department's 1040, June 6 and 2142, June 23 mentioned who after investigation of all those named turned out to have any useful channels through Kurt Gries<sup>v</sup> contacted one of these intermediaries on the thirteenth of July who departed for Vienna that evening to be in Budapest approximately the twenty-third of July. Around August 6 he should return to Switzerland with practical data.

It appears that according to indications which ICRC received on the eighteenth of July from the Hungarian Legation in Bern and earlier from a special ICRC delegate who around July 6 took President Huber's letter to Horthy, the Hungarian Cabinet met the thirteenth of July and agreed seemingly in spite of storm of protests and public indignation in Allied and neutral nations (not to mention Allied military successes and effect of bombardments Budapest) to consider permitting: the Jews remaining in Hungary to be given relief from ICRC; and supervision of emigration of children and adults to Palestine and of children up to ten years of age other places. According to the same source

000173

after the Minister of Sweden's interview with Hortly on the fifth of July all deportations have ceased from Hungary.

HARRISON

DCR:EMS

7-29-44

000174

# Horthy Sends Out Wealth With Planeloads of Millionaires

By NICHOLAS HALASZ



Behind the arrival of three German Lufthansa planeloads of Hungarian millionaires in Lisbon the last week in June, stands Regent Horthy of Hungary. He is worried about his economic security in postwar days.

Following the corrupt pattern of graft and personal profit developed by the German Nazi hierarchy, the Hungarian satellite head of state has enabled 21 persons, technically enemies of the Hungarian state, to make a nonstop journey from an elite concentration camp direct to the safety of a neutral capital. They carried for him over \$1,000,000 worth of valuables to be preserved in the Western Hemisphere for the benefit of the fleeing losers of World War II.

Upon arrival at Lisbon's International Airport, the family of the late Baron Manfred Weiss, Hungary's armament king whose wealth is estimated at 2,000,000,000 pengos (about \$500,000,000), was met by a personal attorney for Horthy. The local legal light whisked them away to an unknown destination.

## 30-Day Visas

Inquiries at the Hungarian Legation were referred to the Portuguese immigration authorities who admitted the arrival of a number of Hungarians from Stuttgart during the week. The Hungarian passports bore 30-day transit visas, and their destination was booked as "over-seas."

It was possible to establish the identity of the following persons in the party:

Barons Eugene and Alphonse Weiss, sons of the late Baron Manfred and present heads of the family. Alphonse, about 50, was accompanied by his wife, Eugene, more actively concerned in the management of his late father's widespread interests, is a year or two younger and was accompanied by his wife and two teen-age children.

Baroness Daisy Weiss, an unmarried sister of about 45.

Knight Oscar Wahl, about 65, oldest son-in-law of the late munition king, accompanied by his wife.

## Another Son-in-Law

Baron Moric Kornfeld, another son-in-law and in his own right chairman of the board of the Hungarian General Credit Bank, a powerful finance entity which was an arm of the Rothschild interests in the middle of Danube Valley. He was accompanied by his wife and two children.

Ferenc Chorin, about 60, chairman of the Salgotarjan Coal Mines Co. (biggest in central Europe), executive vice president of the Budapest Hungarian Bank of Commerce, and president of the Hungarian Assn. of Manufacturers. The bank is the financial center and parent organization of the greater part of the Middle Danube's heavy industries. The majority of its shares are held by the Weiss family.

All male members of the family had been arrested by the Gestapo in Budapest on March 19, 1944, a few days after the formalization of Hungary's occupation by the Germans, and transported to Vienna.

The partnership between the Weiss interests and the Horthy family began about the time of Hitler's coup d'etat in Germany. Although the Goering plan for the centralization of wealth and industrial installations in the hands of select Nazi chieftains had not yet been put into operation, astute big businessmen were already insuring themselves.

## Son Gets Job

Because of the nature of the munitions business, the Weiss family had always been very friendly to the regime in power. Chorin was a close personal friend and chief financier of the political campaigns of longtime reactionary Premier Stephen Bethlen. When neo-fascist and Hitler-admirer Julius Goemboes became premier in 1933, the moment had arrived to establish unbreakable bonds with the highest possible authority that should survive all changes of regime.

Since the armament plant, the Csepel Works, was a personal holding of the family (not a corporation) one of the regent's sons, Nicholas Horthy, Jr., who, in the late twenties had worked in the Ford plant in Detroit was invited into a position in the directorate.

He was soon given a partnership in the enterprise that employed 40,000 workers on an island in the Danube River. This was to protect the holdings, already a member of the International Steel Cartel, the International Pipe Cartel and the International Munitions Cartel. In the latter, most cordial relationships existed between Csepel in Hungary, Armstrong-Vickers in England and Mitsubishi in Japan.

## Middleman

Middleman in the deal was one of the son-in-laws, the Aryan Christian von Geitler. He is now one of the hostages who remained in Hungary as assurance that the emigres fulfill their part of the deal.

Financial possessions of the Weiss family in the Western Hemisphere reach into New York City as well as South America. In New York the former general manager of Csepel is administrator of the property which is in excess of \$10,000,000. The money is invested chiefly in dwelling real estate on the fashionable East Side of New York.

The Weiss-Horthy pattern is carried forward in New York too. Csepel is the Hangya Cooperative. Hungarian State and Horthy-owned agricultural and livestock products marketing organization is Victor Bator, a former director of the Budapest Bank of Commerce.

## Power Insurance

Bator, a high official of Tibor von Eckhardt's "For Independent Hungary" movement, supplied the funds for that political insurance agent of the Horthy regime. It was Eckhardt's task to play exile, and profess love for the democracies, thus insuring the regent's continued power regardless of who wins the war.

In 1938, the partnership with the Horthy family began to show results. The Hungarian regime, following the German pattern in many of its economic as well as political measures, set up a holding company for heavy industry, patterned on Germany's Herman Goering Werke.

This holding company, known as the Nicholas Horthy Jr. State Iron, Steel and Machine Works, swallowed Csepel at one bite. The holding company, though carrying in its title the designate "state," is owned 50 per cent by the German Herman Goering Werke and 50 per cent by the Horthy family.

## Jewish Control

The fact remains, however, that despite the most stringent of Jewish laws in Hungary, the actual management of the Weiss interests remained the same without change until March, 1944. (The Weisses are Jews under the racial theory. Many of them, however, are children of converts to Christianity.)

On this date, the Gestapo, acting with its usual speed a few hours after the formal occupation of Budapest, arrested Chorin who had sought asylum in the chapel of a politically powerful friend's estate.

He was transported to the Hotel Metropole of Vienna.

Within a few days, Chorin's brothers-in-law were also brought to the Gestapo headquarters.

## Return Demanded

But the German negotiators got nowhere fast. Instead, a personal emissary of Hungary's regent demanded the return of the prisoners to Hungarian jurisdiction. Early in April they were transported to the Hungarian elite concentration camp at Kistarosa near Budapest, where in the formerly luxurious management building of a textile concern a showplace was furnished for the "former rulers of Hungary."

Each day at Kistarosa Chorin received visits from von Geitler as well as others. Often von Geitler was accompanied by the chief of counsel for the Horthy holding company.

Finally, on June 16, two Gestapo officials took the male members of the Weiss family from Kistarosa, boarded a train at Budapest's West Station and proceeded to Stuttgart. In this city they were joined by the women, and until they stepped from the Lufthansa planes at Lisbon Airport nothing was heard of their movements.

*J. F. See*

**CONTROL COPY**

*g. m. [unclear]  
P. h. l.*

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: American Embassy, Lisbon  
TO: Secretary of State, Washington  
DATE: July 29, 1944  
NUMBER: 2351

*file*

The message given below concerns the German sponsored arrival here of Weiss and refers to our July 1 cable No. 2054. Grey has been informed in confidence by the Assistant Chief of the Portuguese International Police that the Portuguese visas provided the Weiss party are false, and that a telegram purporting to have come from the Portuguese Consulate General in Berlin sent to the police here is false also. Indications from the same source are that Portuguese Foreign Office is now formulating protest concerning the matter which will be presented to the German Legation shortly.

NORWEB

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

000176

DEPARTMENT  
OF  
STATE

OUTGOING  
TELEGRAM

DIVISION OF  
COMMUNICATIONS  
AND RECORDS

Distribution of this  
reading only by special  
arrangement. (S- )

August 3, 1944

1944 AUG 5 AM 10 27

For security reasons  
text of this telegram must  
be closely guarded

AMLEGATION,

STOCKHOLM  
1851,

COMMUNICATIONS  
AND RECORDS  
(LIAISON)

The following War Refugee Board cable 66 is for Olsen.

1. Refer Department's 1248 of June 23, WRB's 30,  
penultimate paragraph. Alfred Halasz, Budapest, said to be  
secretary general of printers' union, suggested by Ignatz  
Schultz whose name should be used.

2. Express Board's appreciation to Wallenberg for  
achievements mentioned in your 2779 of July 25, to WRB number  
694. Would appreciate estimate of cost of operating suggested  
experimental camp as well as your views as to the extent to  
which it might be financed without supplying free foreign  
exchange to the enemy. Need of protection would appear to be  
proper basis of selection.

3. Refer your 2396 of June 30 incorporating your 12 to  
Lisbon of same date. Members of same family have arrived in  
Switzerland and Amlegation Bern states:

QUOTE From a reliable source it is stated that the  
Jewish director of Akongasanya I U, one Wilhelm Bieltz,  
organized the departure of these persons and is now try-  
ing to come here himself. UNQUOTE

Wallenberg may find it advantageous to contact him.

WRB:MMV:KG  
8/3/44

NOE

STEFFENS  
(acting)  
(TL) SE S/CR

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

DEPARTMENT  
OF  
STATE

INCOMING  
TELEGRAM  
**CONTROL COPY**

DIVISION OF  
COMMUNICATIONS  
AND RECORDS

FMH-212  
Distribution of true [redacted]  
reading only by special  
arrangement. [redacted] (W)

Stockholm security reasons the  
text of this message must  
be kept secret.  
Dated August 6, 1945

Rec'd 6:13 p.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

2975, August 6, 7 p.m.

Traveler who left Budapest July 5 gave following  
information to dissident Hungarian Legation here  
(reference paragraph three of WRB telegram 66 received  
as Department's 1551 August 3, 8 p.m.):

Our 14, August 6, 7 p.m. to Lisbon repeats this.

Germans are said to have given Weiss family  
(46 persons) permission to leave Hungary for neutral  
destination and take with them all valuables except  
jewelry. In return Hermann Goring Werke was given  
all factories of Manfred Weiss Company in Hungary.  
Thus all csepel came into German hands. In addition  
Weiss family paid Germans one and one half million  
Swiss francs. Transaction took place behind backs  
of Hungarian authorities who therefore resented it.  
Hungarian Jews are also embittered by Weiss case.  
End of travelers information.

Above

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

000178

-2- #2975, August 6, 7 p.m. from Stockholm

Above report which is telegraphed as of interest to WRB in connection with Legation's 2396, June 30, 9 p.m. (sent to Lisbon as 12, June 30, 9 p.m.) is included in Legation's despatch 3782 of July 27.

JOHNSON

BB WSB

000179