

copy

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

In reply refer to  
SD 740.00116 European War 1939/1090

September 21, 1943

The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, Inc.,  
270 Madison Avenue,  
New York 16, New York.

Sirs:

The Department has received a telegram dated September 11, 1943,  
from the American Legation at Bern, Switzerland, containing a confidential  
message for you from Mr. Donald Lowrie, a paraphrase of which is enclosed.

Very truly yours,

For the Secretary of State:

(signed) Gilson G. Blake  
Acting Assistant Chief  
Special Division

Enclosure:  
Paraphrase.

OSE has informed me that a systematic campaign for exterminating all Jews in France has reached a new climax, employing all persecution methods already known in Belgium, Holland, and Germany. New terror in Drancy, which includes physical violence to all interned women, children, and men, has been introduced by Director, Brunner, and Adjoint, Bruckner. All kinds of patients are crowded into one infected barrack of the so-called hospital, which is a mockery, and operations must be performed under impossible conditions. Only miscarriages, no normal births, have occurred. There exists real famine since the sending of food packages was discontinued. Brunner's police compel persons at liberty to surrender themselves for internment under threat of torture to members of families already in Drancy.

One letter, which serves to locate other family members, may be written by each prisoner here and deportation follows with the next convoy, once the whole family is rounded up. It has been ordered by Brunner that each person deceased, escaped, or deported must be replaced immediately by another seized at random among yellow star wearers still at liberty and in this way constant population in Drancy of approximately 3500, including numerous children, is maintained. In order to prove Drancy a comfortable, beautiful place, Brunner is decorating camp elaborately and making photographs. For eventual deportation, all children of the Paris area are being registered; 700 are in hiding; 400 have been deported; and through Eugene's efforts 200 have been sent to Jomil. However, there remain under German surveillance 600 and these should also be transferred to Jomil in order to save them. Necessary measures have been taken by Eugene, who daily awaits his own arrest, for continuation of his work.

In the grieves office, 29 Rue Bienfaisance, Paris, wholesale arrests occurred, Brunner in person arresting whole families and 45 employees in addition. There have been collected from asylums and taken to Drancy all Jewish insane and transfer of Rebour to Drancy has also taken place. Following the removal to Drancy of all those usually in Baume la Rolande, they were deported and in the provinces the same situation exists. The entire Jewish population of a given village is seized and all jewelry and money collected by mobile columns of German police. There are in the provinces 3000 children hidden, 1000 in Jewish families, 1200 in homes, and 400 in forced residence making total in charge of OSE 6300. Specially threatened are children remaining with parents and those in forced residence. All prefectures in France were ordered on August 23 to arrest all Jewish men, foreign between 18 and 50, and French between 20 and 30 and send them to the central top wrists organization at Marseille in convoys. As a result, Jews are being arrested everywhere, including volunteers in the French Army, escaped war prisoners, and political refugees.

I have been informed by Raoul that four children, wife, and wife's parents were arrested at Marseille, together with other employees. Also Professor Olmer is held as hostage and we await expulsion of all Jews at Marseille, as well as new measures against the union. All OSE personnel not individually sought by the police remain at their posts, despite their frightful situation. Provided they had necessary

*necessary*

funds, thanks to preparations made (?) save 600 children in danger at Paris and the 1000 in Jewish families. For want of the 2000 francs to pay fare to the provinces, children perish, financial situation being catastrophic, and because 600 francs monthly pension is not guaranteed for coming months, even the 3700 in hiding (3000 in provinces and 700 at Paris) are menaced. Hence, the Gestapo is of less danger than the lack of relatively small funds. Up to the present, protection from arrest has been secured by our friends from the Italians in the prefectures under their occupation, but Italians insist that this is only a reprieve and that to avoid reprisals by Germans later, other measures are necessary.

Although it has been promised by the Italians that when leaving France they will take with them as civil prisoners the 4000 foreign Jews now in forced residence in Haute Savoie, we are not certain that this can be accomplished and we feel that the devotion and courage of our friends under greatest danger merit special assistance. It is no right of ours to expect them to risk their lives and then by lack of funds have their endeavors defeated. We have been informed by Levy, Weill, Jarblum, and Gurvic that during the last two weeks fundamental changes have occurred in the situation of UGIF, whose important officials arrested, and the situation of Jews as well. In order to save our faithful collaborators, immediate measures are indispensable and special fund of 30,000 francs paid via Saly is needed by us. Your informing Katzki would be appreciated.

September 29, 1943

Mr. Gilson G. Blake,  
Acting Assistant Chief, Special Division,  
Department of State,  
Washington, 25, D. C.

Re: SD 740.00116 European War 1939/1090

My dear Mr. Blake:

With further reference to the telegram which the Department of State received, dated September 11, 1943, from the American Legation at Bern, Switzerland, containing a confidential message for the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee from Mr. Donald Lowrie, a paraphrase of which you were good enough to enclose, -- we should indeed be grateful if the Department would forward our reply to Mr. Donald Lowrie, through the channels of the American Legation at Bern, as follows:

"RECEIVED YOUR MESSAGE DESCRIBING TRAGIC SITUATION JEWS IN FRANCE stop PLEASE CONSULT SALY MAYER REGARDING OUR AUTHORIZATION TO HIM ARRANGE FOR LOCAL BORROWING OF FRENCH FRANCS OR PURCHASE SUCH FRANCS IN SWITZERLAND FROM SOURCES APPROVED BY AMERICAN LEGATION BERN stop WE CAN ONLY HOPE THAT SUCH ARRANGEMENTS WILL BE MADE TO MEET IN SOME DEGREE THE DESPERATE NEEDS."

Would you be good enough to advise us, at your earliest convenience, concerning the disposition of our request.

With appreciation of your courtesy, believe me,

Sincerely yours,

J. C. Hyman  
Executive Vice-Chairman