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ILLEGAL ENTRY OF JEWS INTO ITALY
MAY 1946

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

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HEADQUARTERS ALLIED COMMISSION
APO 194
DISPLACED PERSONS AND REPATRIATION SUB COMMISSION

DPR/11-2/SA.

Tel. 489081 Ext 239

19 May 1946.

SUBJECT:- Illegal Entry of Jews into Italy from Austria
and Germany.

TO :-- Executive Commissioner,
H.C. Allied Commission.
A.C. of S.,
G-5,
A.F.R.C..
A.C. of S.,
G-2,
A.F.R.C..
Public Safety Sub Commission,
Allied Commission Headquarters.

1. Attached is Copy No. 4 of a memorandum on the
above subject compiled from data collected by this Sub
Commission.

2. The facts pertaining to the BERLA Pass have been
reported to C.I.C. BOLAND and to C.C. 381 P.S.C. The latter
was going to investigate the matter more fully and report to
his immediate superiors.

For the Director.

C. Hartman 3797
C. HARTMAN,
Major.
Immigration and Advisory.

~~SECRET~~

COPY NO. 4

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Illegal Entry of Jews into ITALY from
AUSTRIA and GERMANY.

1. Colonel THIENHAUD, in charge of the DP Section of the French Military Government in the French Zone of AUSTRIA, said that there were only about 350 non-Austrian Jews in the French Zone a few months ago. Since then there had been a steady trickle from the U.S. Zone through the French Zone. Such would-be immigrants to PALESTINE were provided with food by the A.J.D.C. at INNSBRUCK. The French authorities protested about these unauthorized moves to the A.J.D.C. representative, Mr. MENDLSOHN, who promised that such malpractices would cease. However, the promise has not been kept, and Colonel THIENHAUD conservatively estimated that 2,000 Jews had passed through the French Zone of AUSTRIA to ITALY since the 1st January, 1946. The French authorities closed a Jewish camp run by the A.J.D.C. in the INNSBRUCK area on account of this breach of promise.

2. Colonel THIENHAUD said that MENDLSOHN had informed him that the Russian authorities were facilitating the Jewish exodus from Eastern Europe.

3. MENDLSOHN further alleged to Colonel THIENHAUD that H.M. Government's official policy was only to allow Jewish immigration into PALESTINE on the official White Paper quota system, but that, in point of fact, was aiding and abetting "clandestine" Jewish entry into PALESTINE. To illustrate the truth of his allegation, MENDLSOHN pointed out to THIENHAUD that the Allied authorities authorized and even supported a chain of hostels and camps stretching from Italy's Northern frontiers to the "Heel".

COMMENT: Professor LAZAR's recent successful intervention on behalf of the "LAZAR Jaws" and the world-wide publicity given to the case would lend even more truth to allegations such as those put forward by MENDLSOHN.

4. Colonel THIENHAUD thought, but had no definite proof, that IMERA's director in the French Zone, a certain Canadian by the name of ASHLEY, was connected with the illegal movement of Jews. He also stated that IMERA were preparing a series of camps in the U.S. Zone of AUSTRIA to house part of the anticipated "100,000" whose immigration into PALESTINE was recommended by the Anglo-American commission. ASHLEY, according to THIENHAUD, was to be the over-all Director of these camps.

COMMENTS: (a) Another source, thought to be reliable, mentioned that Mr. Jan Van HERTEN, IMERA Camps Director for the MENDLSOHN-OSERAGAU area, was also connected with the clandestine Jewish movements into ITALY. VAN HERTEN, a Dutchman, and, from his physical appearance possibly a Jew, was paying very frequent visits to THIENHAUD. Colonel THIENHAUD was not certain.

There had been a steady trickle from the U.S. Zone through the French Zone. Such would-be immigrants to PALESTINE were provided with food by the A.J.D.B. at IMMERBACH. The French authorities protested about these unauthorized moves to the A.J.D.C. representative, Mr. MENDELSON, who promised that such malpractices would cease. However, the promise has not been kept, and Colonel THIERAUD conservatively estimated that 2,000 Jews had passed through the French Zone of AUSTRIA to ITALY since the 1st January, 1946. The French authorities closed a Jewish camp run by the A.J.D.C. in the IMMERBACH area on account of this breach of promise.

2. Colonel THIERAUD said that MENDELSON had informed him that the Russian authorities were facilitating the Jewish exodus from Eastern Europe.

3. MENDELSON further alleged to Colonel THIERAUD that K.M. Government's official policy was only to allow Jewish immigration into PALESTINE on the official White Paper quota system, but that, in point of fact, was aiding and abetting "clandestine" Jewish entry into PALESTINE. To illustrate the truth of his allegation, MENDELSON pointed out to THIERAUD that the Allied authorities authorized and even supported a chain of hostels and camps stretching from Italy's Northern frontiers to the "heel".

COMMENT: Professor LASKI's recent successful intervention on behalf of the "LA RESSIA Jews" and the world-wide publicity given to the case would lend even more truth to allegations such as those put forward by MENDELSON.

4. Colonel THIERAUD thought, but had no definite proof, that IMMERBACH's director in the French Zone, a certain Canadian by the name of ASHLEY, was connected with the illegal movement of Jews. He also stated that IMMERBACH were preparing a series of camps in the U.S. Zone of AUSTRIA to house part of the anticipated "100,000" whose immigration into PALESTINE was recommended by the Anglo-American commission. ASHLEY, according to THIERAUD, was to be the over-all Director of these Camps.

COMMENT: (a) Another source, thought to be reliable, mentioned that Mr. Jan Van HEMMEN, IMMERBACH Camps Director for the IMMERBACH-GERMANGAU area, was also connected with the clandestine Jewish movements into ITALY. VAN HEMMEN, a Latvian, and, from his physical appearance possibly a Jew, was paying very frequent visits to IMMERBACH. Colonel THIERAUD was not cognizant of these visits but promised to investigate. VAN HEMMEN was very reticent about Jews in his area and, when the topic was broached with him, invariably changed the conversation.

(b) IMMERBACH are contemplating setting up a debussing centre on the IMMERBACH. A certain MELVIN-THIERAUD (name?) was sent to the IMMERBACH to inspect accommodation and report.

5. Colonel THIERAUD reported that the clandestine (commonly "officially clandestine") Jewish drafts were coming from the U.S. Zone of AUSTRIA and were passing into ITALY by the LAMER-MAURER-GERMANGAU route (i.e. via the RESSIA Pass). He believed that similar groups of Jews, ex-camps in the U.S. Zone of AUSTRIA, were also passing through LAMERBACH on their way to ITALY.

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COMMENT: In general, the impression gained was that the French were adopting an impulsive attitude as long as the movement of Jews through the territory administered by them did not impair the already precarious economic situation in the French Zone of AUSTRIA.

6. The MITTENWALD-CHERNAGAU-MURCH area is full of Jewish Camps and "Heksharoth".

One of the latter communal organizations was set up in a chandling chalet - type of hotel at MITTENWALD. The front of the building was tastefully decorated with scenes depicting in ghastly detail, life in German Concentration Camps, the whole topped by a realistic figure of HITLER hanging from a gibbet. Slogans, explaining the martyrdom of the Jews, in letters a foot high, completed the decoration of the building.

Most of the Jewish Camps and "Heksharoth" flew both the Jewish and the Red "hammer and sickle" Flag.

7. The Camps and "Heksharoth" were all dependent on A.J.D.C./YHRA for rations and financial support.

8. C.L.O. BOLIANO was interviewed and was informed that French sources suspected that illegal entry of Jews into ITALY was taking place through the KESLA Pass. The C.L.O. was sceptical as to the truth of this information as the local COME and F.S.S. both had only very recently, on being queried, declared to him that no known unauthorized moves of Jews had been reported in the area. Permission was asked of and obtained from the C.L.O. to visit the KESLA Pass with a promise to report any findings.

9. It was originally thought that 14 such clandestine movements were, in fact, taking place through the KESLA Pass then route 38 through GUMENKA-TERAN-GRANICO-Eastern bank of Lake QUHO to the MILIT area. (Comment: where the existence of important A.J.D.C./YHRA run Jewish Camps and "Heksharoth" have been reported at ABBATE GRANICO, TERAN (see para 12), ANSELMO and numerous other localities) would be a likely path to be taken.

This theory proved incorrect as subsequent inquiries in the GRANICO area revealed that route No. 38 passed through the STIVIO Pass at over 2,000 meters and was still impassable even at this time of the year.

NOTE: The existence of an A.J.D.C. hostel at MURANO was not known till after a visit to the KESLA COME Post.

10. About 3 miles from the KESLA Pass a COME Frontier Guard was given a lift. A few questions put to him discreetly revealed that what he termed "Rumanian, Polish and Hungarian prisoners" were continually passing the KESLA frontier post.

11. Permission was asked and granted to peruse the COME Frontier Control books and the following interesting facts were elucidated:-

(a) The following Jewish camps had passed into ITALY

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was tastefully decorated with scenes depicting in ghoulish detail, life in German Concentration Camps, the whole topped by a realistic figure of HITLER hanging from a gibbet. Slogans, explaining the martyrdom of the Jews, in letters a foot high, completed the decoration of the building.

Most of the Jewish Camps and "Haksharoth" flew both the Jewish and the Red Hammer and Sickle" Flag.

7. The Camps and "Haksharoth" were all dependant on A.J.D.C./UNRWA for rations and financial support.

8. G.L.C. ZOUZANOV was interviewed and was informed that French sources suspected that illegal entry of Jews into ITALY was taking place through the KESIA Pass. The G.L.C. was sceptical as to the truth of this information as the local ODER and F.S.S. both had only very recently, on being queried, declared to him that no known unauthorized moves of Jews had been reported in the area. Permission was asked of and obtained from the G.L.C. to visit the KESIA Pass with a promise to report any findings.

9. It was originally thought that 14 such clandestine movements were, in fact, taking place through the KESIA Pass then route 33 through GROMENKA-TRIPKO-SHIMLITZ-Eastern bank of Lake ODER to the HILAN area, (Comment: where the existence of important A.J.D.C./UNRWA run Jewish Camps and "Haksharoth" have been reported at ARNOLD CHAMBER, SPANET? (see para 12), ANSELMO and numerous other localities) would be a likely path to be taken.

This theory proved incorrect as subsequent inquiries in the SLOVAKIA area revealed that route No. 33 passed through the SLOVAKIO Pass at over 2,000 meters and was still impassable even at this time of the year.

NOTE: The existence of an A.J.D.C. hostel at HILANO was not known till after a visit to the KESIA ODER Post.

10. About 3 miles from the KESIA Pass a ODER Frontier Guard was given a lift. A few questions put to him discreetly revealed that what he termed "Romanian, Polish and Hungarian prisoners" were continually passing the KESIA frontier post.

11. Permission was asked and granted to peruse the ODER Frontier Control books and the following interesting facts were elucidated :-

(a) The following Jewish convoys had passed into ITALY from AUSTRIA through the KESIA Pass during APRIL, 1946 :

2/4 190
3/4 104
4/4 129
5/4 200
6/4 0
7/4 300
15/4 220
18/4 360
29/4 100

TOTAL 1,413

...../COMMENT:

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COMMENT: 6 April was the "Sabath" and the absence of "clandestine" movements from 18 April onwards could, perhaps, be accounted for by the fact that Passover devotional exercises impeded them from travelling.

(b) Each draft usually travelled at night in what the OMER described as requisitioned lorries. Nominal rolls made out on "ALLIED ARMY CROSS EXCHANGE" - ALLIED TRAVEL PERMIT - LATVIAN PASSPORT - pro-forma, and again, according to the OMER, bore the stamp of both UMER and a Military Government authority (U.S. Zone of AUSTRIA or GERMANY). One "Allied Travel Permit" in particular, pertaining to the group that passed through on 3/4, bore the serial No. 67840 and was issued by the "Military Government - S. TYROL - SALENBERG".

(c) Lorries had each a spare driver and each convoy was accompanied by "Convoy Leaders". Lorries, Drivers and "Convoy Leaders" usually returned to AUSTRIA one, two at the maximum, three days after entering ITALY.

The following drivers and "convoy leaders" accompanied the draft that passed through AUSTRIA on 3 April:

WALSAND, Moses,	"Convoy Leader"
KORMAN, Jacob,	- do -
HEER, Josef,	Driver
HOMER, Friedrich,	- do -
HEBER, Victor,	- do -
STERNBERG, Franz,	- do -
WALSAND, Max,	- do -

NOTE: The OMER Traveler Control books were very neatly kept and gave full names, names of drivers, convoy leaders, identity or other documents held by travellers, etc. It was thought fit to leave the task of more detailed investigation to MIL P.S.S.

(d) The OMER stated that the convoys were accompanied to the frontier by what they described as "British soldiers" who did not enter ITALY.

NOTE: Para 9 of the BULFANG C.I.C.'s report reads as follows:

"Two Polish Army trucks on loan to the American Joint Distribution Committee, Austria were recently halted in the AUSTRIA area, and the four passengers questioned. Two were members of the Palestinian Brigade, on leave from Brussels, in uniform with shoulder flashes marked P.A.S.C. The other two were also in British Battle Dress though in fact they were civilian members of the A.J.D.C. The P.S.S. told them they had no right to be in British uniform and let them go".

(e) The OMER stated that convoys proceeded to AERANO where 379 the drafts were accommodated at an A.J.D.C. hostel situated in

authority (U.S. zone of influence of Germany).
One "Allied Travel Permit" in particular, pertaining to the group that passed through on 3/4, bore the serial No. 67840 and was issued by the "Military Government - S. YEMAL - BALNEUM".

(e) Lorries had each a spare driver and each convoy was accompanied by "Convoy Leaders". Lorries, Drivers and "Convoy Leaders" usually returned to AINBIA one, two at the maximum, three days after entering ITALY.

The following drivers and "convoy leaders" accompanied the drafts that passed through AINBIA on 3 April:

WASSAN, Moses,	"Convoy Leader"
KORNAK, Jacob,	- do -
HEER, Josef,	Driver
HOMER, Krasovich,	- do -
HEINZ, Victor,	- do -
SPRENGER, Franz,	- do -
PERCHOLD, Max,	- do -

NOTE: The OMER Frontier Control books were very neatly kept and give full names, names of drivers, convoy leaders, identity or other documents held by travellers, etc. It was thought fit to leave the task of more detailed investigation to XII F.A.S.

(d) The OMER stated that the convoys were accompanied to the frontier by what they described as "British soldiers" who did not enter ITALY.

NOTE: Para 9 of the AINBIA C.I.C.'s report reads as follows:

"Two Polish Army trucks on loan to the American Joint Distribution Committee, Austria were recently halted in the AINBIA area, and the four passengers questioned. Two were members of the Palestinian Brigade, on leave from Bruxelles, in uniform with similar flashes marked R.A.S.C. The other two were also in British Battle Dress though in fact they were civilian members of the A.J.D.C. The F.S.S. told them they had no right to be in British uniform and let them go".

(e) The OMER stated that convoys proceeded to AINBIA where the drafts were accompanied at an A.J.D.C. hostel situated in Via MARZANI (Tel: AINBIA 1530).

NOTE: A check at the AINBIA telephone exchange revealed that the 'phone number "MARZANI 1530" was that of the "Organizzazione Ebraica" situated at 26 Via MARZANI. Neither F.A.S. or C.I.C. had heard of its existence.

(f) The OMER stated that a further convoy was expected through the AINBIA Pass on the 7th May though they were not sure whether it would materialise owing to what they described as "changed policy". Reported to C.I.C. and F.A.S.

COMMENT: "Changed Policy" might well be the recent announcement that the Anglo-American Commission had recommended the granting of 100,000 immigration certificates to Jews in Europe.

(g) When asked why they were allowing these convoys of Jews to enter ITALY, the CRR stated that they were acting in accordance with instructions contained in a circular "No. di Protocollo 326" dated 13 January, 1946 emanating from the "Pubblica Sicurezza del Benigno" Office in BOLZANO, who in turn, the CRR Brigadiere believed, had received their orders from their superiors in MILAN.

The Circular in question, of which the Frontier Control Post had a copy, contained descriptions of A.P.P. policy towards frontal residents, etc, and a statement that "MIGRA would, in the future, be organizing convoys through ITALY".

The MIGRA stamp on the Allied travel permit, the "British soldiers" and the A.F.D.G. hotel at MERANO, coupled with the fact that an P.S.S. Sergeant had pursued their books, had, according to the CRR, lent every semblance of legality to the entrance into ITALY of persons when they referred to all the time as "prisoners".

COMMENT: The CRR at MERANO seemed genuinely surprised when told that such moves were unauthorized. Similarly, the CRR O.C. at BOLZANO, who told about the moves and taxed that he had only recently reported that no illegal movements into ITALY were taking place across frontiers under his control, stated that he thought such convoys were part of an organized Allied BP programme, and that he had in no way tried to mislead the C.L.O. by his previous statement.

COMMENT ON RUSSIA PASS INFORMATION:

An extract of a report dated 26 February 1946 from a confidential source reads as follows:

"The member of the Anglo-American Investigation Committee told Colonel LAGAN-GRAY (Note: Director of BP and BP Division - A.C.A.) that they had uncovered during their investigations in AUSTRIA that Jews from HUNGARY are being conveyed by train direct to VIENNA where they are placed in a large TRANSIT CAMP in the U.S. Sector of the city. There they remain for 72 hours or less. The Americans then put them on to through trains to LITZ in the U.S. Zone. After that we understand that they move on daily via a series of TRANSIT CAMPS, NOT U.S. Camps, and eventually end up in BAVARIA!! No one quite understands why it should be BAVARIA, nor can we discover their subsequent destination. We imagine that they must turn South eventually, but up to now we have no more information. We understand that they never stay longer than 72 hours in any TRANSIT CAMP en route to BAVARIA. It is as a result of this organization of course, that the flow of Jews into the British Zone of AUSTRIA has practically ceased and also to the fact they know that no help can now be expected in British Zones".

12. A source considered reliable recently visited a Jewish "Kacharoth" situated at TANDART (about 30 miles North of MILAN). The "Kacharoth" had 500 members, all disciplined and drilled to parade, march, meals and camp chores. They even marched in step to the local village

"TITRA would, in the future, be organizing convoys through ITALY".

The UMBRA stamp on the Allied travel permits, the "British soldiers" and the A.J.D.C. hospital at MEDANO, coupled with the fact that on P.S.S. Sergeant had perused their books, had, according to the OMB, lent every semblance of legality to the entrance into ITALY of persons whom they referred to all the time as "prisoners".

COMMENT: The OMB at MEDANO seemed genuinely surprised when told that such moves were unauthorized. Similarly, the OMB C.O. at MEDANO, when told about the moves and taxed that he had only recently reported that no illegal movements into ITALY were taking place across frontiers under his control, stated that he thought such convoys were part of an organized Allied W program, and that he had in no way tried to advise the C.I.C. by his previous statement.

COMMENT ON RUSIA PASS INFORMATION:

In extract of a report dated 26 February 1946 from a confidential source reads as follows:

"The member of the Anglo-American Investigation Committee told Colonel LOGAN-GRAY (Note: Director of IV and IV Division - A.C.A.) that they had uncovered during their investigations in AUSTRIA that Jews from BUDAPEST are being conveyed by train direct to VIENNA where they are placed in a large TRANSIT CAMP in the U.S. Sector of the city. There they remain for 72 hours or less. The Americans then put them on to through trains to LITZ in the U.S. Zone. After that we understand that they move on daily via a series of TRANSIT CAMPS, NOW D.P. Camps, and eventually end up in BAVARIA. No one quite understands why it should be BAVARIA, nor can we discover their subsequent destination. We imagine that they must turn south eventually, but up to now we have no more information. We understand that they never stay longer than 72 hours in any TRANSIT CAMP en route to BAVARIA. It is as a result of this organization of course, that the flow of JEWS into the British Zone of AUSTRIA has practically ceased and also to the fact they know that no help can now be expected in British Zones".

12. A source considered reliable recently visited a Jewish "Makharoth" situated at TANDARI (about 30 miles North of MILAN). The "Makharoth" had 800 members, all disciplined and drilled to parade, march, and camp chores. They even marched in step to the local village cinema.

The same source stated that there were about 25 other "Makharoth" in the area.

13. A "Makharoth" situated at ITASCANT in a beautiful villa which was at one time HESSELMAN's Headquarters was recently paid a second visit by a source who had been there two months ago. The second visit was unaccompanied by any representative of Jewish organizations. Source, who was thought to be a Jew by the inmates, was well received and free conversation was established.

.../sources reacted....

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Source remarked that the inmates of the "Haitsharoth" were not the same as those he had met on his last visit and was told that the previous "Kebuts" had left. On being jokingly asked if the "Kebuts" in question had left with the "YA SUGIA" Jews, an affirmative answer was received.

A number of members of the new "Kebuts" installed in the Villa had only recently come from RUSSIA. They said that there existed a certain amount of anti-Semitic feeling in RUSSIA, principally taking the form of favoritism to Gentiles over questions of rehabilitation in devastated areas. They alleged that the Russian authorities were indifferent to whether they left the Soviet Union or stayed.

(COMMENT: A Soviet equivalent of acquiescence?)

17 May, 1946.

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