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FILE NO. RHG:HP



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

THE FOREIGN SERVICE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL

Berlin, Germany, December 12, 1938.

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Confidential

Dear Mr. Messersmith:

I must leave it to the correspondents in Berlin through their reports to inform you of the havoc and distress among the Jewish people. But a few words about how this tragedy affects our friends and acquaintances and what added responsibilities it thrusts upon me will be of interest to you.

Many prominent people in the Berlin society of past days have had their whole means of livelihood imperilled and all security of existence taken away. Old Mrs. Clara Goldberger (Olga's aunt), 78 years old, must leave her apartment and betake herself to the slums of Alexanderplatz. I am looking after her like a child. They may not touch a hair of her. She is getting a visa for America.

* Fritz Kreisler, now in America, made apparently false statements and the Reich Music Chamber, through the Reich-Sippenforschung-Bureau, has proved that he is a full Jew, and not a "Mischling", as he deposed on oath. The consequence is that the whole Kreisler fortune and property here are imperilled and I am the naturally appointed defender. This causes me great anxiety as Harriet is in some personal danger herself. These are great burdens and hardships. Mrs. Lili Deutsch, the sister of the deceased Otto H. Kahn, is

Very confidential

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The Honorable
George S. Messersmith,
Assistant Secretary of State,
Washington, D.C.

* *Harriet swears that Fritz always believed he was half-jew.*

in danger and comes to me for help. Dennie Heinemann is greatly perturbed about her. The Germans seized all her jewelry and are forcing the old lady to flee the country. I am looking after her. My old friend, Generaldirektor Bie (formerly head of the Allgemeine Kokswerke) is virtually ruined and held a prisoner. He is slowly losing his control of mind; and I am trying to save him. I think I shall succeed. I am going to get him out to Holland. I have got many out of the concentration camps including Fritz Warburg. Your friend Dr. Schwedenberg has been going to pieces and both he and his wife created quite a scene in my office this week, where in front of me his wife begged him to take heart and that if he killed himself she would do the same. They declared I was their last hope and, needless to say, I promised to get them out of the country. He said that he had seen you in Washington this summer and that you thought he would better not emigrate from Germany. I did not think the Regime intended to cut the possibility of such people living here so long as they had means; but this is not so. All have to sink into a horrible ghetto, no matter what their positions are.

Mr. Baerwald's sister is caught in Frankfort. Emil Ludwig's sister and her husband are in desperate circumstances here. These are only a few of the tragic cases that come to me daily. Fritz Eichberg's brother Siegfried has been spirited away and sent to Dachau; and Fritz and Bonnie Lee are sending urgent appeals to me from Belgium. I am working hard on the case.

My landlady's husband, Dr. Alfred Berliner, 77 years old, for fifty years one of the leading industrialists of Germany, friend of William II., and organizer and builder of the great Siemens concern, was threatened with 20 years in concentration camp because his nephew had forgotten an old army gun and it was found in Berliner's castle at Schermeisel. The old man lived in terror of his life for several days until I appealed to Goering personally through his adjutant, General von Bodenschatz. Yesterday the general called me at my house (where I am now sick for a few days with a bad cold) and said the Field Marshall had ordered that no proceedings were to be

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taken against Berliner.

Another friend, Dr. Henniger (a close friend of Sigrid Schulz) has either to divorce his wife because she is half Jewish or go with her to the ghetto. They are trying to leave the country. They are considering taking their lives.

When I was pursuing my graduate work at the University and specializing, as I did over a period of years, in medieval life, literature and institutions, I marvelled that men could be so cruel, benighted and murderous during those dark ages; but now it seems to me out of their ignorance and superstition such cruelties and barbarities could naturally and even in all sincere honesty arise and be perpetrated in a holy belief that it was right; but who can pardon these men in Germany for the unspeakable horrors and cruelties to which they are subjecting these fine and worthy people. It would seem that henceforth civilization must be nauseated with the name of "Germany", so that even a thousand years of decent conduct would not wipe out this ineradicable stain.

I go every day to the office with a heavy step because I know the tragedies which await me there. Yet I am glad that I am able to help and find ways to save the existence of decent people. I must be very careful; as the strain is pretty heavy and I am forced to go ahead a good deal on my own responsibility.

I think George Gordon in The Hague is interested in taking up with the Department my request directed to the Dutch Consul General here in Berlin that Holland admit certain refugees waiting for visas here and whose turns will not come for some time, 4 to 6 months. The Dutch have taken a too technical view of the plan; and while they seem to have turned the proposition down they appear to want to get the American Government to give some sort of guaranty. Which, of course, cannot be done. The matter can go no further than between the Dutch Consul General and me. I do not have time to carry a discussion of this question farther; and I hope the Department won't trouble me about the question further. I don't need the Dutch as bad as they think I

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do. By the time they decide to help, the refugees will all be dead. If the Dutch Minister calls to raise the question in Washington I hope the Department will give him a friendly but brief answer, pointing out that I am so overwhelmed with work that I have not time to go into academic discussions about a simple and practical matter which, if it cannot be done, at least there is no time to talk about. The fact of the matter is if one of my colleagues here cannot decide whether or not he can admit people waiting for visas to the United States under his own existing instructions and authority, I shall pass him by and not allow him to take the question up with his Foreign Office. It is merely a waste of time.

I hope the situation will calm down sufficiently for me to get a little nerve rest before the new year. I should like to take ten days around the holidays; and will do so if there is any chance at all; as it is important that I keep my health and strength. I have been glad to see that you took a few days more. I know how much you need rest and change.

With sincerest regards, I am ever

Faithfully yours,

Raymond

*I think great got a much needed tick over
the holidays. Bill*

*He's carrying a figuratively heavy
load. RS*