

Fact Sheet – Diplomatic Rescue in the Holocaust, 1933-1945

Compiled by Eric Saul

Whoever who has not gone through a country shaken by internal troubles, by war or foreign occupation, does not know the significant role that an identity card or an administrative rubber stamp can play in a person's life. In general, it is about a ridiculous piece of paper or an unimportant rubber stamp that a certain clerk had mindlessly affixed on a document. But, there are tens of thousands of persons, hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions who seek desperately to acquire such a rubber stamp. How many thousands of lists, how much money, patience, vital energy were expended by thousands of persons to take a hold of such a rubber stamp! So much happiness and unhappiness are involved in the legal or illegal possession of this type of paper.

- **Lion Feuchtwanger**, author and Holocaust survivor who was aided by American diplomat in Marseille, Myles Standish

Number of diplomats who rescued or helped Jews: **358**.

Number of diplomats officially honored by Yad Vashem as Righteous Among the Nations: **54**. (See compilation list: diplomats recognized by Yad Vashem.doc.)

Number of diplomats commended by Yad Vashem: **6+**

Number of countries diplomats represented (including Vatican/Holy See): **43**.

Number of countries in which diplomats rescued Jews: **24**.

Number of geographic regions in which diplomats rescued Jews: **38**

Years during which diplomatic rescue took place: **1933-1945**.

Estimated number of people who survived due to diplomatic rescue: **250,000 – 350,000**.

Largest number of diplomats rescuing Jews in one area: **50+** diplomats in **Budapest, Hungary**, 1944-1945. The diplomats were aided by hundreds of Jewish and non-Jewish volunteers.

Highest number of Jews saved by diplomats: more than **100,000** in **Budapest** (out of a population of 200,000 Jews); **thousands** of individuals were helped by Dr.

Aristides de Sousa Mendes in Bordeaux, France, June 1940; rescue action by Count Folke Bernadotte of the Swedish Red Cross in Germany: **19,839**, of which approximately **7,000** were Jews.

Countries with the largest number of diplomats rescuing Jews: **Italy (36), International Red Cross (36), USA (29), Sweden (26), Hungary (24), Switzerland (23), Turkey (23), Spain (21), Portugal (19), Romania (18), Poland (18), Great Britain (14), Germany (11), The Netherlands (9), Vatican/Holy See (9), Argentina (8).**

Number of diplomats killed: **6, Henryk Slawik***, Polish Chargé d'Affaires in Budapest, Hungary, issued thousands of documents certifying that Jewish refugees were Christians. He was caught and deported to Mauthausen, where he was murdered. **Frango Puncuch***, Yugoslavian Honorary Consul in Warsaw, Poland, 1939-1944, who was killed during the Warsaw uprising in 1944. **Otto Komoly***, Red Cross, **Dr. András Beregi***, and **Simcha Hunwald***, Swiss Glass House Budapest. **Raoul Wallenberg***, Swedish diplomat in Budapest, was arrested by the Soviet authorities after the liberation of Budapest in January 1945. His fate have never been officially determined. Dutch diplomat **Herman Laatsman** was deported to five concentration camps, along with members of his family. His son was killed in reprisal for his rescue activities. Turkish diplomat **Selahattin Ülkümen's** wife was killed by the Nazis in reprisal for his diplomatic rescue activities on the island of Rhodes. **Anna Binder**, a Czech diplomat, was deported to Auschwitz for helping Jews. She barely survived the war.

Diplomats who suffered the most economic hardship: **Dr. Aristides de Sousa Mendes** (Portugal), **Chiune Sugihara** (Japan).

Largest organized diplomatic rescue efforts: **33 Italian diplomats** were active in the Italian zones of occupation of **Yugoslavia, Greece and southern France and Tunisia**. Italian diplomats were responsible for saving tens of thousands of Jews in their zones of occupation. The diplomats worked in cooperation with the Italian army. Some estimates range as high as 45,000. **23 Turkish diplomats**, all of whom were Muslims, were active in Europe saving Jews.

Heads of State and royalty who saved, aided or advocated for Jews: **8 - King Christian X** of Denmark; **King Boris III** of Bulgaria; **Carl Gustav V**, King of Sweden; **Edvard Benes**, President of the Czechoslovakian Government in Exile; **Castenedu Castro**, President of El Salvador; **Jean-Marie Musy**, President of the Federal Council of Switzerland; **George Damaskinos**, Regent for Greek Government in Exile and Head of the Greek Orthodox Church; **Manuel L. Quezon**, President of the Philippines. Also deserving mention are **Princess Alice of Greece**; **Elizabeth, Queen Mother** of Belgium; **Queen Mother Helena** of Romania; and **Queen Wilhelmina** of Holland.

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Prime Ministers who saved Jews: **Per Albin Hansson**, Prime Minister of Sweden, allowed tens of thousands of refugees to immigrate to Sweden; Prime Minister **Miklós Kállay** of Hungary; Prime Minister **Calinescu** of Romania allowed Jews to pass through Romania before the war broke out.

Foreign Ministers who saved Jews: **Giuseppe Bastiannini**, Italy, Governor of Dalmatia, 1941-43, and Undersecretary, Italian Foreign Ministry, 1944-45. On at least two occasions, Bastiannini talked Italian dictator Mussolini out of deporting and handing over Jews to the Nazis. **Christian Guenther**, Swedish Foreign Minister, negotiated the release of Danish and Norwegian prisoners of war held in German camps. He later authorized the rescue of Scandinavian Jewish prisoners of war from German concentration camps. **Rolf Whitting**, Foreign Minister of **Finland**, refused to cooperate in the deportation of Finnish Jews and Jewish refugees in Finland. More than 2,000 Jews living in Finland were saved.

Most famous diplomat to save Jews: **Archbishop Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli**, who became **Pope John XXIII** in 1958. He is credited with saving thousands of Jews by issuing Vatican protective papers to Jews trapped in central Europe. He served as Pope until his death in 1963. He was responsible for instituting the Vatican II.

Number of Vatican nuncios (diplomats) rescuing Jews in Europe: **9** - **Monsignor-Archbishop Duca Francesco Borgonicini**, **Monsignor Giuseppe Burzio** in Bratislava, Slovakia, **Monsignor Philippe Bernardini** in Bern, Switzerland, **Monsignor Andrea Cassulo** in Bucharest, Romania, **Archbishop Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli** in Istanbul, Turkey, **Monsignor Angelo Rotta** in Sofia, Bulgaria and in Budapest, and **Father Gennaro Verolino** and **Father Köhler** in Budapest, Hungary, **Father O'Flaherty** in Rome.

Most successful rescue effort by a single diplomat: **Carl Lutz**, Swiss Vice Consul in Budapest, Hungary, 1942-45. With the aid of the Jewish community in Budapest, Lutz is credited by the Jewish Agency for Palestine with materially aiding in the rescue of numerous Jews in Budapest. Lutz was aided by 50 fellow diplomats and by hundreds of Zionist youth volunteers.

Swiss lawyers appointed by Carl Lutz: **Peter Zürcher** and **Ernst Vonrufs**, along with Swedish diplomat **Raoul Wallenberg***, were credited with helping to save the Pest ghetto, with over thousands of Jewish inhabitants. Zürcher, Vonrufs and Wallenberg threatened the German SS commander with war crimes prosecution if he carried out his order to destroy the Pest ghetto.

There were a number of collaborative efforts by diplomats working as a group. One of the most famous was the **Lados Group**, also known as the **Bernese Group**. It was composed of Polish diplomats stationed in Switzerland. Among its diplomatic rescuers were **Ambassador Aleksander Lados**, **Consul Dr. Julius Kuhl**,

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Deputy Consul Konstanty Rokicki, and **Stefan Jan Ryniewicz**, who was the head of the consular section. They obtained South American visas, which were in turn distributed through Jewish rescue networks, including Recha Sternbuch, of Vaad Hatzalah, Dr. Abraham Silberschein, of the Relief Committee for Jewish War Victims, and Chaim Yisroel Eiss, of the Agudat Yisrael movement.

Most successful rescue effort by a diplomat unaided: Portuguese diplomat **Dr. Aristides de Sousa Mendes** in Bordeaux, France, June 17-19, 1940. Mendes has been credited with saving thousands of individuals in Bordeaux and Bayonne.

Number of Jewish diplomats who saved Jewish and non-Jewish refugees: **40+**
Ambassador Laurence Steinhardt, US Ambassador to the Soviet Union and Turkey, 1938-1945; **George Mandel Mantello**, diplomat representing El Salvador in Geneva, Switzerland; **Julius Kuhl**, Polish diplomat stationed in Bern, Switzerland; **Solomon Ezrati**, Spanish Consul in Salonika, Greece, 1941-45; **Zimmerman**, aid to Polish diplomat Henryk Slawik; **Sally Guggenheim**, honorary consul for Yugoslavia; a refugee himself, **Stefan Schwamm**, posed as Red Cross diplomat in Rome; **Willi Perl** posed as a diplomat in various countries. **György (George) Adam** posed as a Vatican diplomat in Budapest. **Ottó Komoly*** served as director of Department A of the Red Cross, also in Budapest along with **Miklós (Moshe) Krausz**, **Simcha Hunwald***, Managers of the Swiss Glass House, **Lazlo Szamosi**, Spanish Legation/Red Cross, **Dr. György Gergely**, **Sandor Gyorgy Ujvary** who worked with Papal Nuncio Angelo Rotta. **Leonard Ackerman** (Spain and Portugal), **Ira Hirschmann** (Romania and Turkey), and **Herbert Katski** (Turkey) were War Refugee Board (WRB) representatives and were accredited to the State Department during their missions.

Most amount of money spent by a private individual in diplomatic rescue: **George Mandel Mantello**, Consul to El Salvador, spent tens of thousands of his own dollars printing and distributing protective papers throughout Europe.

Most unorthodox “diplomatic” rescues: Unauthorized diplomatic rescue was accomplished by **Laszlo Szamosi**, **Zoltan Farkas**, and **Giorgio (Jorge) Perlasca**, who cooperated in rescuing numerous Jews, working in the Spanish legation in Budapest, 1944-1945. **Stefan Schwamm**, a Jew posed as a Red Cross representative in Rome in 1943 where he rescued Jews. **Giuseppe Magno**, honorary consul for Portugal in Milan, was relieved of his post for saving Jews, but refused to leave his position and continued to help Jews until the end of the war. **Willi Perl**, an Austrian Jew, created *Af-Al-Pi* (“Despite Everything”), a rescue agency to help Jews emigrate from Central Europe. Unable to get exit visas, he appointed himself a consul and printed his own. **György (George) Adam**, a Jew posed as a Vatican diplomat in Budapest and went on numerous missions to rescue Jews from deportation centers. **Bernard Storfer**, also a Jew posed as a diplomatic commercial attaché.

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Number of women diplomats and wives of diplomats who rescued Jews: **12+** – **Aracy de Carvalho-Guimaraes Rosa**, Brazil, stationed in Berlin; **Nina Langlet**, Swedish Red Cross and wife of Dr. Valdemar Langlet, and **Asta Nilsson**, Swedish Red Cross in Budapest; **Gertrud Lutz**, wife of Swiss diplomat Charles Lutz, was awarded the Righteous title by Yad Vashem for her lifesaving efforts in Budapest; **Elizabeth Kasser**, wife of Swedish Red Cross rescuer Alexander Kasser and assistant to Raoul Wallenberg; **Carmen Santaella**, wife of Spanish diplomat Dr. Jose Santaella, was also designated Righteous Among the Nations; **Hansi Brand**, wife of Joel Brand, Budapest Relief and Rescue Committee, Department A, International Committee of the Red Cross; **Lea Komoly**, wife of Otto Komoly, children's residence of the Spanish embassy and the International Committee of the Red Cross; **Valerie Torres**, Italian Consulate in Salonika, Greece, helped save Jews, working under Consul Generals Zamboni and Castrucci; **Solange Pinzauti-Fivé**, French Consulate in Rome, Italy, 1943, helped Jews and other refugees in Rome during the Nazi occupation; **Eugenia Szamosi**, Spanish Legation in Budapest, helped Jews and other refugees by forging lifesaving documents on her typewriter in Budapest during the Nazi occupation; **Anna Binder**, Czech diplomat in Prague, aided Jewish refugees, for which she was subsequently arrested and deported to Auschwitz.

Number of German diplomats who saved Jews: **11** – **Georg Ferdinand Duckwitz** (Copenhagen), **Gerhardt Feine** (Budapest), **Fritz Kolb** (Berlin), **Wilhelm Melchers** (Berlin), **Eitel Friedrich Möllhausen** (Rome), **Baron Wolfgang zu Putlitz** (London), **Dr. Riensberg** (Stockholm), **Werner Otto von Hentig** (Berlin), **Heinrich Wolff** (Jerusalem), **Timotheus Wurst** (Palestine), and **German Consul in Zagreb**.

Number of diplomats who were from Nazi-allied nations: **36** – **33 Italian diplomats**; **Chiune Sugihara**, Japanese consul in Kovno, Lithuania, 1940; **Boyan Atanassov**, Bulgarian Diplomat in Paris, France, 1940; and **Kauko Supanen**, Vice Consul for Finland in Vienna, Austria, 1938.

Largest percentage of Jews saved in a Nazi-occupied country, directly saved by the intervention of a foreign diplomat: **99.7%** of **Danish** Jews (7,900 individuals) survived because of the intervention of German diplomat and intelligence officer **Georg Ferdinand Duckwitz**.

Number of International Committee of the Red Cross representatives helping to save Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe: **36+**. **Richard Allen**, American Red Cross, Marseilles, **Jean de Bavier**, Swiss Red Cross, Budapest; **Folke Bernadotte**, Swedish Red Cross, Germany; **Dr. Istvan Biro**, International Red Cross Budapest, **Hans Bon**, International Committee of the Red Cross, Northern Italy, **Friedrich Born**, International Red Cross, Budapest, Hungary; **Edouard Chapuisat**, International Red Cross in southeastern Europe, **Georges Dunand**, International Red Cross, Slovakia; **Dr. Gyorgy Gergely**, Red Cross Director, Budapest,

Hungary, 1939-1945; **Alexander Kasser**, Swedish Red Cross, Budapest; **Karl Kolb**, International Red Cross, Romania; **Otto Komoly*** Department A International Red Cross, Budapest, **Valdemar** and **Nina Langlet**, Swedish Red Cross, Budapest; **Sarolta Lukács**, Hungarian Red Cross, Budapest; **Roland Marti**, International Red Cross, Berlin, Germany; **Asta Nilsson**, Swedish Red Cross, Budapest; **Dr. Robert Schirmer**, the Red Cross delegate Berlin, **Vladimir de Steiger**, Delegate to the International Red Cross in Transnistria; **Reverend Gábor Sztehló** Volunteer, International Red Cross, Section B, Budapest, **Sándor György Ujváry** International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Papal Nuncio, **Hans Weyermann**, Chargé of the International Red Cross, Budapest. In addition, Hungarians volunteered to work with the Red Cross in Hungary including **Lázló Szamosi**, Spanish Legation Budapest, Resistance, Department A International Red Cross, **Dr. György Wilhelm**, Leader, Clothes Collecting Company, Hungarian Labor Company, Section T of the International Committee of the Red Cross. Otto Komoly's colleagues in Department A in Budapest were **Hansi Brand**, **Sholem [Sándor] Offenbach**, **Rezo Kasztner**, **Andre Biss**, **Sandor Groszman**, **Dezső Bilitzer**, **Dr. Osterweil**, **András Beregi*** and **Andras Fenyo**. Department A had 550 personal and cared for between 5,000 and 6,000 Jewish children. It quickly expanded to administering children's homes, orphanages, kitchens and 24 temporary hospitals throughout the city.

Number of Asian diplomats who saved Jews: **6**. Japanese diplomat **Chiune Sugihara** saved approximately 3,500 Jews in Kovno, Lithuania, in July and August 1940. **Dr. Feng Shan Ho** a Chinese diplomat issued thousands of visas to Austrian Jews in Vienna in 1938-1940. The visas they issued were unauthorized, and both diplomats were reprimanded for their actions. In addition, there were Chinese diplomats helping Jews in Berlin, Milan, Hamburg and Marseilles.

Diplomats who saved famous Jewish refugees: **Myles Standish**, US Vice Consul in charge of visas in Marseilles, France, in 1940-1941, and his assistant, Vice Consul **Hiram "Harry" Bingham, IV**; **Gilberto Bosques**, Mexican Consul General in Vichy, in 1940-1943; **Vladimir Vochoc**, Czech Consul. These diplomats worked closely with the Nimes Committee (Camp Committee), headed by Dr. Donald Lowrie of the YMCA and Czech Aide, and his deputies **Slavomir Brzak** and **Vratislav Stula**, who worked with Varian Fry and the Emergency Rescue Committee, Martha and Waitstill Sharp of the Unitarian Service Committee (USC), and the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC; Quakers). They helped save such notable Jewish artists and intellectuals as Marc Chagall, André Breton, Max Ernst, Heinrich Mann, Leon Feuchtwanger, and several Jewish Nobel Prize winners.

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First diplomat to save Jews: **Frank Foley**, British consul in charge of visas, stationed in Berlin, Germany, 1933. Foley is credited with issuing 10,000 visas. Foley worked with US diplomat **Raymond Hermann Geist**.

Diplomats related to royalty – 1: **Count Folke Bernadotte** was nephew to the Swedish **King Carl Gustav V**. King Gustav approved of the rescue of Danish Jews and protested the deportation of Hungarian Jews.

Field agents of the War Refugee Board, of the US Treasury Department, were accredited by the US State Department as diplomats. These included **Dr. Robert Dexter**, serving in Portugal; **Iver Olson**, in Sweden; **Roswell McClelland**, formerly of the American Friends' Service Committee (AFSC), in France; **Ira Hirschmann**, in Turkey, formerly a member of the Emergency Committee to Save the Jewish People in Europe; and **Raoul Wallenberg**, in Budapest, Hungary.

Jewish youth organizations that worked directly with international diplomats: **Beitar, Bnei Akiva, Dror Habonim (Dror), Gordonia Group, Hanoar Hatzioni, Hashomer Hatzair, Hatzioni Haclali'im, He Halutz, Maccabi Hatzair, Mizrahi, Shimoni Group**.

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“Visas! We began to live visas day and night. When we were awake, we were obsessed by visas. We talked about them all the time. Exit visas. Transit visas. Entrance visas. Where could we go? During the day we tried to get the proper documents, approvals, stamps. At night, in bed, we tossed about and dreamed about long lines, officials, visas. Visas.”

- **Austrian visa recipient**