

RG 59 - General Records of the
Department of State

Records of the
Special War Problems Division

Inspection Reports on
War Relocation Centers, 1942-1946

[Box 2 of 3]

[Lot File No. 58 D 7]

Box 20

C O P Y

Swiss Detainees
Alien Detention Station
P.O.B. 119
Kenedy, Texas

February
January 4, 1943

Mr. W. Bruppacher
Department of German Interests
Legation of Switzerland
1439 Mass. Ave., N.W.
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Bruppacher:

We beg to confirm herewith our conversation with you of January 28, the main points of which were the following:

1. Relief payments.

As the January remittance from the National Refugee Service had not arrived at that time, we asked you kindly to arrange for regular payment of that monthly pocket money in the future. (Meanwhile, the January check has arrived and the money has been paid out to the needy members of our group, nearly two months after the arrival of the December check.)

2. Censorship.

We asked you to see to it that correspondence with you generally should not be hindered by censorship, nor should correspondence with other persons in this country as far as its contents do not violate the posted censorship rules.

3. Housing, etc.

We pointed your attention to the fact that it is an undue hardship for us that five men have to live in each house, the more so as we are forced to stay in our houses much more than the majority of the detainees, due to the conditions you know. Furthermore, there is a considerable percentage of men with high school and college education in our group, which implies more intellectual interests among us than among the majority of the detainees in this camp. As a consequence, most of us spend much time (part of us all their time) studying a variety of matters, and some even writing books; but it is quite impossible to concentrate on any serious work with five men herded together so tightly all day. On the other hand, there is no better room in the camp which we could use for that purpose. We have been promised the use of one schoolroom for a still undetermined number of hours weekly, but this will only be enough, if at all, for the actual classes we hold, or intend to hold, and we still will have to stay and work in our houses most of the time.

4. Transfer to another camp.

This housing problem, we told you, is closely connected with

The general problem of our stationing in this camp together with a number of German nationals. We have to stick to our houses so much, partly because the German majority practically excludes us from the use of several facilities which the others have, partly because we have to keep away from them as far as possible, in order to avoid trouble. On the other hand, the administration considers it not feasible to put up separate facilities for us, because our group is too small.

The result is that we have to use the Japanese bath and latrine and should use the Japanese recreation room (which is practically impossible anyway, because great numbers of Germans are using it, too); that we have to renounce certain facilities and can use others only at a few fixed hours according to schedules arranged by the administration; and that we still are forced to meet the Germans several times each day. This, as we have told you, gave and gives occasion to repeated insults and provocations against the Jewish group, which we have to suffer, as the administration is willing to punish physical attacks but not verbal injuries.

Summarizing: We are forced to live close to our worst enemies, exposed to their abuses. We are at a disadvantage and hampered in our activities because of the practically inevitable restrictions in the use of the camp's institutions, caused by the aforesaid conditions. All this, added to the depression caused by the captivity anyway, puts under a continuous, heavy nervous and psychical strain, which makes the detention under these conditions almost unbearable for us - in this station as well as, before, at Stringtown where, as you know, conditions were similar.

If a separate stationing of the Jewish detainees - which would do away with all these problems - should not be expedient due to our small number, it should be possible at least to detain us in some camp without Germans, where we would be on equal footing with the other detainees not only de iure, but also de facto, and where the difficulties we described to you would not exist.

This opinion, as far as we know, is shared by the administration of this Station, as well as by Mr. Cardineaux of the International Red Cross and by Mr. Fischer of the YMCA who observed these conditions during their recent visits to Kenedy.

We urged you therefore, as we did before (while at Stringtown) and do again herewith, to explain the situation to the proper authorities and to induce them to remedy it and to bring about conditions which would release us from the psychical pressure we are suffering now - and which, besides, would be more in accordance with the conception of humanity cherished by the American people.

5. Treatment.

We submitted to you evidence that one of the officers, Mr. Low, apparently was not aware that we are only civilians detained because of wartime measures and not convicts.

On this occasion we beg of you to support our suggestion that the count, which is conducted twice a day, should begin about an equal number of times at either end of the line. Our group is especially interested in this, as we stay at the farthest end of the line and as things are now, have to wait every time until all the

others are counted and checked.

Following your desire, we discussed part of what we had told you with Mr. Herrick, immediately after leaving you. He took notice of what we told him, and he, too, was willing to take up our problems with the proper authorities, especially regarding an eventual transfer. Would you, therefore, be kind enough to give him a copy of this letter?

Hoping that you will be able to arrange for a solution of the problems we submitted to you, and thanking you again for the troubles you are taking in our behalf, we are

Yours very truly

Dr. F. K. Kaul

Fred L. Kappel

Hans J. Müller

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Authority *AND 193002*

*S. D. Files
Camp Kennedy, Texas*

copy

LEGATION OF SWITZERLAND
NEW WASHINGTON, D. C.
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

SPECIAL
DIVISION
FEB 18 1943
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

1943 FEB 15 1943

Paragraph 3 of **PROVISION OF COMMUNICATIONS AND RECORDS** - The question presented under this paragraph is whether you will readily understand that your intervention, which would resolve the content problems, **Reference: I-KJ-1**

Jewish Detainee Group
Alien Detention Station
Kennedy, Texas

Very truly yours,

Gentlemen:

Your letter of February 4 has found our usual attention and may be answered as follows:

1. Relief Payments. - Verbal assurances have been received that in the future no delays will occur with regard to transfer of pocket money to your group by the National Refugee Service, Inc., and Miss Bazovsky was greatly perturbed about the confusion which took place during her illness. Record has been established, however, so that in the future the transfers will be made automatically.
2. Censorship. - It is recalled that during the visit of the writer you intimated that you were not permitted to address yourselves direct to various organizations in this country, and the matter has consequently been taken up. We therefore feel that the indications given in your letter are identical with those previously mentioned. We shall communicate with you on this subject in due course.
3. Housing. - This subject has also been duly noted, and we are given to understand that certain changes are contemplated which would no longer require that any individual action be taken with regard to your present situation.
4. Transfer to Another Camp. - This problem, which has been partly answered under "3." above, is no doubt the most important one, and there is certain indication that the proper authorities might give consideration to your plight. Having discussed this matter with you at length, we are no doubt in the best position to support any change which might be planned.

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PC/MW

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Immigration Station
114
New York, New York

February
January 4, 1943

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5. Treatment.- The question presented under Paragraph 5 of your letter you will readily understand should not be subject to our intervention, which we would reserve for more important problems.

Very truly yours,

Dear Mr. Bruppacher:

We beg to confirm herewith our conversation with you of January 28, the main points of which were the following:

1. Relief payments.

As the January remittance from the National Refugee Service had not arrived at that time, we asked you kindly to arrange for regular payment of that monthly pocket money in the future. (Meanwhile, the January check has arrived and the money has been paid out to the needy members of our group, about two weeks after the arrival of the December check.)

2. Correspondence.

We asked you to say to what correspondence with you generally should not be hindered by censorship, our official correspondence with other persons in this country or the way its contents do not violate the postal censorship rules.

3. Housing, etc.

We pointed your attention to the fact that it is an undue hardship for us that five men have to live in each house, the more so as we are forced to stay in our houses much more than the majority of the detainees, due to the conditions you know. Furthermore, there is a considerable percentage of men with high school and college education in our group, which implies more intellectual interests among us than among the majority of the detainees in this camp. As a consequence, most of us spend much time (part of us all their time) studying a variety of matters, and some even writing books; but it is quite impossible to concentrate on any serious work with five men herded together so tightly all day. On the other hand, there is no better room in the camp which we could use for that purpose. We have been promised the use of one schoolroom for a still undetermined number of hours weekly, but this will only be enough, if at all, for the actual classes we hold, or intend to hold, and we still will have to stay and work in our houses most of the time.

4. Transfer to another camp.

This housing problem, we told you, is closely connected with

REGALON DE CHUTE
D. C. KENNEDY
JAN 10 1943
TO THE DIRECTOR
IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE
WASHINGTON, D. C.

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