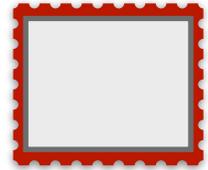

Sending for Help | Letter 6



This letter was posted six years after the Nazis come to power
... six months after Kristallnacht
... four months until the war begins in Europe.

Dear Sirs,

I am writing you for information as well as help and will appreciate to whatever you can do for me.

I have been corresponding with my Mother's brother's daughter, who is my cousin Malie Landsmann whom I have been trying to bring over to this country with her husband Chaim and their daughters, Ida and Peppi. I have sent affidavits to the American Consul in Berlin in December with all requirements that were necessary according to our Rabbi, who has been helping me get up these papers. He is on the Refugee Committee, so I do believe I have given them whatever they have asked for. [...]

The reason I am asking you is that I would like to find out how I am to get them to Cuba, where they can stay until their number is called. I have written to the Cuban Consul in Savannah Georgia, Luis M. Perdomo, and he suggests that I write and get in touch with you. I have also heard from my cousin, Malie Landsmann, and she said it is very hard to get any help to get to Cuba in Berlin. In the first place, the Consul is not in Berlin, but in Hamburg. She also tells me that the best way to get out of Berlin and into Cuba is through the United States. I am also writing to the Cuban Consul for any information he can give me and am asking that you also give me all the help you can.

I realize it will take a long time to get these people to America but would like for the present just to get them out of Germany. The address of these people is as follows: Mrs. Malie Landsmann, Hirtenstr. 17th, Berlin C2, Germany.

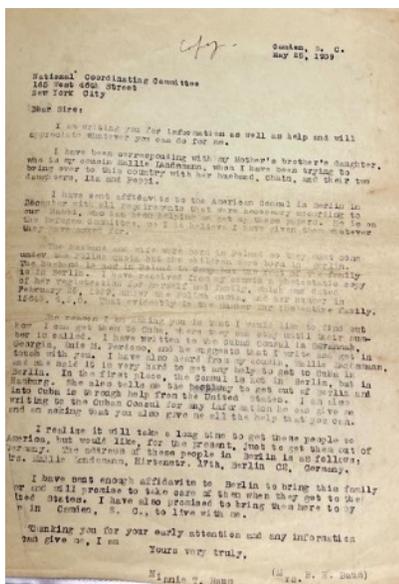
I have sent enough affidavits to Berlin to bring this family here and will promise to take care of them when they get to the United States. I have also promised to bring them here to my house in Camden, S.C, to live with me.

Thanking you for you early attention and any information you can give me, I am

Yours very truly,
Mrs. B. H. Baum



Discussing the Letter



*Minnie to the National
Coordinating Committee
May 25, 1939*

This letter is an insight into Minnie's communication with various agencies on behalf of her European family members. In this letter, she details her attempts to secure passage for the Landsmanns by way of Cuba. There are obstacles to this plan on both sides of the Atlantic: Minnie cannot seem to get clear information about timeline or there process of immigrating to Cuba and Malie cannot make the journey to Hamburg to see the Cuban Consul in Germany.

The National Coordinating Committee for Aid to Refugees was founded in 1934 with the intent of assisting Jews fleeing Nazi Germany. They worked closely with other organizations such as the National Joint Distribution Committee and the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society or HIAS. During the war, the European headquarters for HIAS was located in Lisbon—a neutral port that the Landsmanns planned to travel through other way to the United States. In other letters, the Baums are informed that HIAS itself is not able to send for immigrants and that this work must be done by the family.

It should also be noted that organizations were not the only voices calling attention to and assisting Jews fleeing Europe. Rabbi Stephen Samuel Wise, for instance, was a loud advocate for refugees. Throughout the war and especially as reports about atrocities began to make their way across the ocean, Rabbi Wise tried to lobby the government to offer more aid and allow more refugees into the United States.

Key Themes:

Jewish organizations, HIAS, National Coordinating Committee, Jewish Self-help, Emigration



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Discussion Questions:

1. What was the National Coordinating Committee?
2. What other World War II era American Jewish organizations are you aware of? What were their functions?
3. Look up a Jewish organization active in the United States during the Holocaust and list some of their activities. did they attempt to help European Jews? If so, how?