

42

I, the undersigned Dr. Rudolf Kasztner, born in Cluj (Roumania) on April 14, 1906, lawyer, former Co-President of the Zionist Organization in Hungary, at present Geneva, Pension Sergy, 16, Chemin Krieg, herewith make the following statement:

In the course of the negotiations with various German authorities in Budapest, carried on in the interest of the rescuing of Jews - which were known to the Allied Governments and especially to the State Department-, the Germans promised and partly fulfilled certain concessions.

CB

The German delegate for these negotiations: Standartenfuhrer of the Waffen-SS, Kurt Becher, succeeded in obtaining from Himmler the exit from Germany of several groups of Jews and has prevented the execution of almost 100,000 Hungarian Jews in the Budapest ghetto, etc.

Originally, the German authorities demanded - as an equivalent - the delivery of goods by neutral countries. Later on, they contented themselves with the valuables: gold, jewels and platinum - made available to them in Budapest.

These valuables were originally in possession of Hungarian Jews who placed them at the disposal of the Rescue and Relief Committee of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, which carried on its activity in Budapest illegally, in order to be used for purposes of rescue and relief.

CB

As the leader of this Committee, I took over these valuables in Budapest and delivered them to Kurt Becher, as a kind of ransom for the concessions made by the Germans in their anti-Jewish policy.

Until the end of the War these valuables, amounting to 11 million Swiss Francs according to our estimate, formed the financial basis of our negotiations with the Germans and rendered possible the extortion of further considerable con-

cessions.

When Becher took over these valuables in Budapest between Juen 15th and 20th, 1944, I asked him to consider them as a kind of deposit, not to remit them to their superior authorities in order not to be used for German war-purposes, and to restore them after the end of the War, if possible. Becher promised me to do so.

In August 1944, through its representative for Switzerland, the American Joint Distribution Committee was drawn into these negotiations.

Further details regarding these negotiations and their results are contained in the Final Summary Report of the War Refugee Board. }

I wish to mention that the valuables delivered to Becher by me, according to the legal prescriptions of that time ought to have been delivered up to the Hungarian Government.

Dr. Rudolf Kasztner