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“No Truck with Himmler”

The Politics of Rescue and the Swedish Red Cross Mission,
March–May 1945

On March 9, 1945, the first element of the Swedish Red Cross rescue mission embarked for Germany. Eventually consisting of 75 vehicles and 250 people, carrying its own supplies, fuel, and medicine, its official task at that moment was to organize a camp inside Germany at Neuengamme for all Danish and Norwegian citizens held in German concentration camps. For nearly eight weeks, the Swedes worked within Germany, exposed to attacks from the combatants, and in fear that the operation would be cancelled at any moment. By early May, 20,937 German held internees – from over 20 countries – had been transported to Sweden. It was by far the largest and most successful rescue effort in German territory during the war. Yet its history has been largely ignored by scholars. Who initiated this mission? What goals did it have? Who was responsible for its direction? Why was it so successful?

The impetus for the rescue mission came from the conditions of 1944. Most importantly, Germany was losing the war. The defeat of Germany was no longer in question, although the nature and extent of the defeat remained open. European governments, especially neutrals such as Sweden and Switzerland, worried about the nature of the post-war order. Sweden feared that German Baltic hegemony would be replaced by a Russian sphere of influence. Sweden wished, while maintaining its neutrality, to build goodwill and understanding in the Anglo-Saxon countries for its independent position and to insure that Britain and the United States maintained a lively interest in the future of Northern Europe. Sweden wanted the restoration of free and independent Denmark, Norway, and Finland. It was also anxious to demonstrate to its Scandinavian neighbors that Swedish neutrality could serve their interests as the war drew to a conclusion. Sweden's fears of a German attack were minimal in the last fourteen months of the war. The primary question for the Swedish government was how to aid its Scandinavian brothers without being drawn into the conflict.¹

Possibilities for Sweden to help its neighbors had been few. Finland found itself caught in an increasingly uncomfortable war with the Soviet

Union in which Germany was a "co-combatant." Sweden tried during 1944 to mediate between Finland and the Soviet Union. Denmark and Norway were occupied by German forces. Sweden believed that the Allies might attempt a landing on either's west coast, thereby bringing the war to Scandinavian in a much more direct fashion and endangering Sweden's non-belligerency. The likelihood of such an occurrence decreased significantly after the Allied landings in France. What remained to be done was to insure that at war's end, the remaining German troops would not put up a last ditch struggle within the Scandinavian states and to try to find ways to aid and comfort Danes and Norwegians that had been arrested by Germany and sent to the concentration camps.

The desire of the Swedish government to help its Scandinavian neighbors undoubtedly had broad public support. Swedish papers had been publishing stories of German persecution and atrocities in Denmark and Norway throughout the entire period of occupation. Attacks on church leaders, students, professors, and the Jews received particular prominence. In December 1942, a Gallup poll inquired "which event from 1942 will you remember most?" 25 % of the respondents named persecution of the Jews in Norway while Stalingrad was a distant second at 12 %.² The successful rescue of the Danish Jews in October 1943 produced pride among the Swedes as well as goodwill in the Western countries.³ As underground activities increased in Denmark and Norway in 1944, German authorities reacted with expectable harshness. Many of these conflicts were reported in the Swedish press. A broad consensus existed in Sweden that as much as possible should be done to aid other Scandinavians as long as such activities did not lead Sweden into the war.

Sweden's attitude was not the only factor that contributed to the circumstances surrounding the rescue mission. The Norwegian government in exile was anxious to try to mount a rescue effort for imprisoned Norwegians as soon as possible. Its representative in Stockholm, Niels Christian Ditleff, was energetic in proposing and organizing such a mission. By September, 1944, Ditleff had convinced the Swedish Foreign Office that a rescue effort might be possible and began to organize it.⁴ Ditleff's proposals concerned only Norwegians held in Germany. The Danish government also began to prepare lists of Danish prisoners including the approximately 500 Danish Jews incarcerated at Theresienstadt.

The Jewish question also figured prominently in the rescue mission. By 1944, it was broadly recognized that Germany was conducting a campaign to murder systematically all of Europe's Jews.⁵ In January, President Roosevelt had established the War Refugee Board whose purpose it was to attempt to find the means to aid Jews. Yet the overriding attitude of the American government was that the defeat of Germany was the best way to help Jews as well as other oppressed peoples. That there might not be many Jews left at the end of the war did not greatly affect American policy. The

establishment of the WRB was more a symbol of America's concerns that an institution to accomplish great tasks. Great Britain also refused to give helping Europe's Jews a high priority.⁶ Jewish organizations such as the World Jewish Congress (WJC), the American Joint Distribution Committee, and the Jewish Agency in conjunction with sympathetic individuals in politics, religious institutions, and the media, found themselves trying to influence various governments all of whom had other, more pressing concerns. Throughout 1944, these groups, or individuals within them, devised various schemes. Many of them involved either Switzerland or Sweden.

Of course, the main problem for any rescue effort was Germany itself. As long as Adolph Hitler exercised absolute authority in Germany, rescue missions had little chance of success. However, it was possible to save people in occupied countries as the Danish Jewish episode had demonstrated. German civilian and military officials in Denmark had been in general unsympathetic to the application of the "Final Solution" to Denmark and therefore contributed to the escape of most of Denmark's Jews. By August 1944, after the attempt of Hitler's life in July, Hitler's authority even among leading Nazi officials became easier to doubt, if not yet to challenge. Hitler's determination to see Germany destroyed along with his regime led some high ranking Nazis, especially Heinrich Himmler, to question the wisdom of the Führer. Himmler's doubts did not immediately lead to action but they provided a base upon which others could build. Two individuals who proved adept at manipulating Himmler in the last phases of the war were his adjutant, Walter Schellenberg, and his masseur, Felix Kersten.

Felix Kersten was a Balt who during the war carried Finnish citizenship. Educated in Berlin as a physical therapist, Kersten became Himmler's masseur prior to the war. As the conflict progressed, Kersten established his home in Stockholm and commuted to Berlin to care for his famous patient. Kersten did not share Himmler's political beliefs and tried to use Himmler's dependence on his treatments to aid various individuals and groups. In October, 1944, for example, after consultation with Christian Günther, Swedish Foreign Minister, he successfully interceded with Himmler on behalf of Swedish businessmen condemned to death for espionage in Poland. Earlier, he had showed a particular interest in trying to help Jews.⁷ Kersten's problem was that he was viewed equivocally in the West and in Sweden. Sir Victor Mallet, British ambassador to Sweden, thought that he was thoroughly tainted by his contact with Himmler:

Kersten is known to me as a Nazi and a thoroughly bad man. He has a home in Stockholm to which he has brought a big collection of pictures. They are reported to be Dutch but I have little information on this point.⁸

Swedish opinion of Kersten varied sharply. Günther's experience with Kersten's help in the matter of the "Warsaw Swedes" convinced him that Kersten could be of great value. On February 2, 1945, Günther's colleagues considered recommending Kersten for Swedish citizenship. Two voted in favor, while three voted against. One of the negative voices underscored the difficulty Kersten faced in trying to establish his credibility: "Kersten is, according to my opinion, a war criminal, nothing more and nothing less."⁹ It would be eight years before Kersten received Swedish citizenship.¹⁰

The remaining figure who was to play a conspicuous part in the rescue mission was Count Folke Bernadotte. In 1944, Bernadotte served as vice chairman of the Swedish Red Cross. As nephew of King Gustav V, and chairman of the Swedish Boy Scouts, Bernadotte was a prominent figure in Sweden. During the war, the Swedish Red Cross maintained a broad range of humanitarian activities including large scale aid to Greece, prisoner of war exchanges, and aid to Scandinavian children. The Swedish Red Cross had been involved in an attempt to help Norwegian Jews in 1942. The Swedish government used the Red Cross for various diplomatic purposes when conventional diplomacy seemed inappropriate or likely to be ineffectual. When Hungary's Jews found themselves in the maelstrom of the Final Solution in 1944, suggestions were made in Hungary that the Swedish Red Cross and Folke Bernadotte should lead an expedition to Budapest to help the endangered Jews.¹¹ Bernadotte himself was eager to play a role in world events. In his capacity with the Red Cross, he travelled abroad frequently and, in 1944, was exposed to many individuals in London and Paris who had ideas about how to rescue people caught in German concentration camps. Bernadotte appears in the light of the events of 1945 to have been a resourceful negotiator and administrator, pro-Western but sensitive to Germany as well, and a little naive.¹²

These conditions and personae provide the background for the Red Cross mission. Three sources actually initiated the rescue effort: Ditleff; the World Jewish Congress; and Bernadotte. Each had a different goal. None were mutually exclusive. The main problems were diplomatic and organizational. The key was Himmler's willingness to permit such a mission. What becomes clear in the following account is that there were no fixed agreements between Himmler and those representing the Swedes: Bernadotte, Kersten, Norbert Masur, and Arvid Richert. As the war progressed through its final weeks, Himmler granted a series of concessions. The ability of the Swedes *in Germany* to capitalize on those concessions made it possible for the rescue to succeed.

Ditleff's role has already been indicated. It was he as Norwegian representative who constantly pressed the Swedes for action. Already in the summer of 1944, the Swedish government deliberated making a formal *démarche* in Berlin to request that Germany either release the Norwegians

outright or send them to Sweden. On September 6, the Swedish ambassador in Berlin, Arvid Richert, was requested to inquire on behalf of Günther for release of the Norwegians. Richert reported back that some possibilities existed.¹³ From early September then, the Swedish government believed that it might be possible to effect a rescue of the Scandinavians held in German camps. It remained unclear however exactly how to manage such an enterprise. By October-November, the idea of utilizing the Red Cross instead of regular diplomatic channels had crystalized. Günther in particular was enthusiastic about the project. Every relevant Foreign Office document, from November to March 1945, showed that the mission was perceived to be one to rescue Scandinavians – of all religious persuasions. The man who was expected to lead the expedition, if and when it could be mounted, was Count Folke Bernadotte.

During 1944, Bernadotte indicated an active interest in trying to find ways to aid Scandinavians.¹⁴ He shared the predispositions of Günther and others that helping the Norwegians and Danes was of highest priority. But he was not uninterested in other groups. Bernadotte had taken a trip on behalf of the Red Cross, October 29–November 14, to London and Paris. Its primary purpose was to identify what Sweden could do with regard to post-war reconstruction, but at the same time Bernadotte met with representatives of various organizations who hoped to engage the Swedish Red Cross in a variety of activities. The General Secretary of the WJC, L Zelmanovits, talked with him about the possibility of a rescue mission for Jews.¹⁵ In Paris, Bernadotte met with Raoul Nordling and others who encouraged him to aid a large number of French women at Ravensbruck. Bernadotte found the idea of helping the French women appealing and promised to investigate the possibilities:

Count Bernadotte promised to investigate the possibilities about reaching an agreement with the Germans (about the 20,000 French women at Ravensbruck) and examine the resources which the Red Cross had for such a rescue mission.¹⁶

This notion remained with Bernadotte throughout the following months. When the opportunity developed to expand the mission to aid Scandinavians, Bernadotte's interest led the expedition to Ravensbruck but the chief beneficiary of this twist was to be Polish Jewesses not huge numbers of French women.

The Jewish aspect of the rescue mission has been in many ways the most confusing part. The little literature that does exist on the expedition emphasizes aid to the Jews, and, in the case of Trevor-Roper, accuses Bernadotte of not being sensitive to the Jewish question. Actually the initiative for the Jewish part of the expedition came last. It emanated from the WJC. Gillel Storch, WJC representative in Stockholm, had been very active through-

hout the war in trying to help Jews on the continent. His greatest success was to develop a large scale aid program in the form of food and medicines for Jewish internees in German concentration camps. He also had participated in Sweden activities in Hungary. The Swedish Foreign Office had received a number of schemes to aid Jews.

Storch had been involved in an unsuccessful plan to rescue 2,000 Latvian Jews in July 1944. The incident was of interest because of the reactions it produced. Iver Olsen, WRB representative in Stockholm, fully supported the idea and offered funding. The State Department had a less optimistic view and believed the effort was primarily intended by the three Germans involved to make some money. Mallet reported that the Swedish Foreign Office believed the idea had originated from Himmler who was attempting to "gain credit for himself in Sweden and elsewhere for more humane policy toward Jews. This is no doubt with an eye to saving his own skin later."¹⁷ The Swedes themselves were surprised by Olsen's attitude, believing that the whole scheme was not credible, and indicated a continued preference to try to rescue "a relatively few Jews" for which numerous attempts had been made in Berlin.¹⁸ The Swedish Foreign Office remained skeptical of the chances of success of a direct effort to rescue Jews, but was not unwilling to try.

In late January 1945, the WJC once again urged Sweden to take action on behalf of the Jews.¹⁹ An inquiry was sent to Richert in Berlin for opinions about what might be done. Richert advised against any Swedish action on the grounds that it would be a "waste of time" because the Germans would never agree.²⁰ By February 3, the Swedes were pursuing the idea of a joint Swedish-Swiss-Vatican *démarche* in Berlin for the Jews. Richert reported on February 7 that all neutral representatives and the papal nuncio were against the idea of a joint *démarche*. The Swedish ambassador in Bern, Westrup, informed Stockholm that Switzerland agreed in principle with the idea of a *démarche* but preferred not to do it jointly.²¹ At the same time, Westrup reported that the former Swiss president, Musy, had negotiated with Himmler about the release of Jews to Switzerland. The success of Musy likely stimulated both the decision to launch the Red Cross mission to aid Scandinavians and the issuance of a formal *démarche* on the Jewish question in Berlin.²²

On February 10, Richert was instructed to make a spectacular offer: Sweden was willing to receive all Jews in German concentration camps "especially those at Theresienstadt and Bergen-Belsen concentration camps. The note was delivered on the thirteenth."²³ Simultaneously a decision had been taken to send Bernadotte to Berlin to negotiate with Himmler over the release of the Scandinavians. There exists no evidence to suggest that the Swedish Foreign Ministry actually thought that the German government would respond positively to their *démarche*. On numerous other occasions when a formal request had been made to the German Foreign

Office on behalf of single Jews or large groups, the replies had always been negative. Richert's attitude reflected the frustrations of three years of failures in this area. In fact, there is good evidence that suggests that the Swedish Foreign Office worried that any intervention on behalf of the Jews might hurt efforts to aid the Scandinavians. Wrote one leading Foreign Office official:

My heartfelt thanks for your letter of the seventh with Kleist, I would like to inform you however that while we are indeed interested in the possibility of Jews coming to Sweden, the most pressing issue at the moment is to use all possible means to expedite the repatriation of the Norwegians from Germany to Norway. I am sure that you fully understood that but I wanted to write these lines so that you might get an opportunity to underscore our great interest in the return of the Norwegians – especially if the Germans tried to block the Norwegian issue with the excuse about investigating the possibility of the Jewish effort.²⁴

On February 10, the Foreign Office decided to try to launch the rescue mission.²⁵ The months of preparation, the interests of Ditleff, Günther, Bernadotte, and the WJC, served as a base. The success of Musy in negotiating with Himmler the release of approximately 1500 Jews seemed to have been the deciding factor in sending Bernadotte to Germany. On February 12, Bernadotte received formal instructions from the chairman of the Red Cross, Prince Carl, to fly to Berlin to negotiate with the Germans about "civilian prisoners in Germany their internment and their possible removal."²⁶ It was understood that the success of the mission depended upon Himmler. Therefore Günther once again sought out Himmler's masseur, Felix Kersten.²⁷

Kersten had not been involved with the rescue mission until Günther asked him to telephone Himmler to smooth the way for Bernadotte.²⁸ Richert was also asked to seek out Himmler's adjutant, Walter Schellenberg, for the same purpose.²⁹ Schellenberg had proved to be a useful contact for the Swedes since he was anxious to see Himmler distance himself from Hitler. On February 16, Bernadotte flew to Berlin to begin negotiations.

The negotiations proved awkward and difficult. Hitler exploded when he learned of Himmler's deal with Musy; Himmler temporarily became more cautious. Himmler insisted consistently that whatever arrangements agreed upon would have to be kept completely out of public view. The suc-

cess of the Swedish government in minimizing publicity about the mission contributed greatly to Himmler's willingness to make concessions later in the mission.³⁰ During these first negotiations, Himmler refused to allow any transfer of internees to Sweden. He did approve of the general idea of a Red Cross mission in Germany that would gather all Scandinavian prisoners and place them in one camp, Neuengamme, near the Danish border.³¹ Bernadotte had taken the first critical step, but no details had been arranged. The actual operation of the mission depended on the development of events in March.

Bernadotte returned to Stockholm prepared to lead the mission into Germany to rescue Scandinavians. At the same time, the issue of helping Jews also had to be addressed. On February 19, Storch had written to Bernadotte asking him to enlarge his activities to include aid to Jews.³² Bernadotte replied that he too thought something might be accomplished for the Jews:

As you yourself know, Swedish authorities have made very serious attempts, and given permission, for some Jews to come to Sweden. . . . even in this Swedish action (i.e. the Red Cross mission) some positive results should be achievable.³³

This positive response was a personal opinion only, no change in the rescue effort had been made by the government. Storch decided to expand his efforts. He sought out Kersten.

Kersten and Storch had never met. The latter used a German banker in Stockholm as intermediary in arranging a meeting "in late February."³⁴ It was agreed that Kersten on his next visit to Germany scheduled for early March, would attempt to get Himmler to accept a four point program:

1. To grant permission to send food and medicine to the camps.
2. To put all Jews in a few camps and call on the International Red Cross to run them until the World Jewish Congress could take responsibility.
3. To free certain persons specified on lists carried by Kersten.
4. To free certain numbers of Jews to Sweden and Switzerland. The number for Sweden was estimated at 5–10,000.

Kersten left for Berlin on March 3. He had been also requested by Günther to help with Bernadotte's efforts.³⁵

The events of March occurred amid increasing confusion. Communication between Germany and Stockholm deteriorated; understanding of who controlled what in Germany lessened; and the diplomatic channels between Stockholm and London and Washington and the Allied command under General Eisenhower proved incapable of providing information and

advice in time to be pertinent. Once committed, the Red Cross mission in Germany depended on the skill of its leader, Bernadotte, and his staff, along with the important aid he got from Kersten with regard to Himmler. Decisions were frequently reached "on the spot" and Kersten and Bernadotte had to try to insure that they would not be countermanded by Himmler or his aides. Schellenberg remained a steadfast support to both throughout the next two months.

On March 1, Erik von Post, head of the Political Department of the Swedish Foreign Office, provided details of the mission to be British ambassador in Stockholm. He asked Mallet to suggest how the mission could be managed safely. It intended to work within areas under intense air attacks from Allied aircraft. The same request was made to the Americans.³⁶ Two days later, the British approved the idea of the mission but warned that no guarantees of safety could be given. A suggestion to paint the buses white was made. It was hoped that such markings would be easily distinguishable from the air.³⁷ The United States asked for more time to study the Swedish inquiry. It responded positively in early April – in the middle of the mission itself.³⁸ Despite efforts by the British to warn SHAFE, Foreign Office officials worried about the ramifications if Allied military forces attacked the Swedes either in air or sea operations.³⁹ They understood that there was indeed a great likelihood that such incidents would occur.

For a brief moment, it appeared as though the whole mission would be scrapped. A report from the Swedish embassy in Berlin came to Stockholm that said that the Germans had already begun to move the Scandinavians to Neuengamme and that there was no need for the Red Cross mission. Mallet wrote to London: "It is thought doubtful whether any of Bernadotte's scheme will ever materialize."⁴⁰ Uncertain of the situation, Bernadotte was sent back to Berlin, March 6–8. His visit overlapped with that of Kersten who continued his treatment of and discussions with Himmler.

Kersten's negotiations initially went poorly. Although Himmler promised to maintain the concentration camps until the Allies liberated them, he wanted to trade the release of all Jews held in Germany for a 2–3 week pause in the Allied bombing campaign. Himmler stalled on most of the specific proposals Kersten carried with him – just as he had done earlier with Bernadotte. Kersten fully understood that the Allies would not bargain with Himmler about a bombing cessation and that Himmler was procrastinating.⁴¹ Bernadotte was slightly more successful with his negotiations; final approval was given on March 7 to begin the Red Cross mission. Its official purpose was to establish a camp at Neuengamme for all German-held Scandinavian internees. Doubt still – Still existed in Stockholm about the possibilities of the mission.

Indeed there had been considerable opposition to the whole idea of dealing with Himmler within the Swedish governmental bureaucracy. Sven Grafström, assistant director of the Political Department of the Foreign

Office and one of its more pro-Allied members, had tried to stop the mission in February. he called it a 'light headed notion,' and feared the ramifications for Sweden of negotiating with "Hitler's Number 1 thug." The chief of the Swedish secret service, General Ehrensvärd, also opposed it. But the leadership of the Foreign Office – Günther, Boheman, and von Post – remained enthusiastic. Grafström complained that the Foreign Office "has become a sub-section of the Red Cross and nothing else."⁴² The criticism had little effect; Günther wanted to take the risks and hoped that Kersten would serve as a form of insurance in case something went amiss.⁴³

On March 9, the mission began its departure from Sweden. Its size had been reduced as a result of Bernadotte's negotiations with Himmler and Schellenberg.⁴⁴ A base of operations was established at the Bismarck family estate at Friedrichsruh, not far from the camp at Neuengamme. The support which the grandson of Germany's Iron Chancellor gave to the mission impressed the Swedes:

. . . can you believe that *Otto Bismarck himself*, [!] along with a Russian, worked with his own hands for a whole day helping unload a railroad car of Norwegian packages . . .⁴⁵

The mission's activities concentrated solely on bringing the Scandinavians to Neuengamme. Sachsenhausen near Berlin was the first camp to be visited. 349 Scandinavians were released. The Swedes made the same nine hour trip to Sachsenhausen five more times. Another column drove south reaching Dachau and Mauthausen. The Scandinavians were put into the regular camp at Neuengamme which the Swedes did not view as acceptable. The general conditions of the camp which held approximately 50,000 inmates were deemed extremely unhealthy. As the Scandinavians had received better treatment in general, the Swedes wanted to maintain their relatively privileged circumstances with a specially created "Scandinavian camp" alongside or within Neuengamme where the Red Cross personnel could move freely. They were not permitted inside the regular camp.⁴⁶

By March 27, 4,800 Scandinavians had been relocated at Neuengamme. Still to be aided were 1,400 Danish policemen, 800 Scandinavian Jews at Theresienstadt, and approximately 1000 "mental patients."⁴⁷ The policemen and the Jews were believed to be the groups most difficult for the Germans to release. Therefore their rescue had been placed last.⁴⁸ Bernadotte also reported that he expected the Scandinavian Jews to be somewhat reluctant to move from Theresienstadt:

As far as the Jews were concerned, both the Norwegians and the Danes felt that the Jews would be rather unwilling to be transported to Neuengamme, a piece of information

that came as a surprise to me. In discussions with the Danes and Norwegians, it was agreed to get permission (from the Germans) to bring the Jews to Neuengamme and even here, I achieved positive results. One must expect however that the Jews will not have much enthusiasm for the idea, at least in the beginning. In a longer perspective, however, we are convinced that it will be to their advantage.⁴⁹

The reticence of the Jews – if it existed – probably depended on the combination of fear of what any transport from Theresienstadt usually meant and the relatively mild treatment the Danish Jews had experienced since their arrest in 1943.

Retrieval of the outstanding Scandinavians was not the only remaining problem. Conditions at Neuengamme were still not acceptable. Himmler refused to concede the main objective to the mission – the transferral of the Scandinavians to Sweden. Bernadotte and Kersten continued to try to convince Himmler to be more generous. The latter worked for acceptance of the WJC proposals. In late March, both returned to Stockholm. Kersten carried a remarkable offer.

Himmler offered Kersten on March 21 the opportunity to free 10,000 Jews and send them to Sweden. Himmler indicated that he was willing to *negotiate* with a representative of the WJC on the matter.⁵⁰ The immediate Swedish response was very positive. They were "very interested in freeing Jews even if one must provide compensation . . ." The Foreign Office had received other indications that a large scale rescue of the Jews might be possible.⁵¹ However, Richert reported on the twenty-first that Musy was back in Berlin on behalf of the Jews and that Hitler had expressly forbidden Himmler to negotiate with anyone.⁵²

It was amidst these contradictory pieces of information that the Swedes formally considered their strategy for the following weeks. Despite Richert's news of Hitler's intervention, there was considerable optimism about the future of the mission.⁵³ On March 26, Bernadotte, Erik Bohe-man, and von Post met. The meeting produced a much broadened agenda for the mission. A memorandum of the meeting listed the Swedish goals:

- A. Most importantly, that all Scandinavians currently held at Neuengamme be permitted to be moved to Sweden.
- B. Request that Swedish Red Cross personnel be permitted to move throughout the whole of the Neuengamme camp.
- C. Offer to use Swedish Red Cross buses to transport non-Scandinavians, particularly 25,000 French women, to Neuengamme.

The memo ended with the following note:

Today the above was complemented with instructions to Bernadotte that when he found it suitable and did not threaten the above points, he could request that a number of Jews be sent to Sweden.⁵⁴

What appears to be the consequence of this meeting was both the reaffirmation of the priorities of the mission as they had developed prior to February and its extension in the direction of Bernadotte's concern for the French women and the Jews. The primary goal remained the transfer of the Scandinavian internees to Sweden. Yet the Swedes had enough confidence to try to expand their activities within the whole of Neuengamme and to attempt to rescue non-Scandinavians as well. No indication exists that there were any differences of opinion between the three Swedish policy makers. Boheman, the most influential of the three, it might be noted, was the only high ranking member of the Swedish government apparatus during the war who would have been classified as "Jewish" according to German race laws.⁵⁵

Adoption of an expanded policy did not mean that it would be accomplished. Much negotiation lay ahead in Germany with Bernadotte and Kersten serving as chief negotiators. Storch sent Himmler's offer westwards with a request that he be given permission by the WJC to negotiate with Himmler on the offer of the release of 10,000 Jews.⁵⁶ This request which was sent via the Swedish diplomatic dispatches as well as through the British and US embassies produced some special problems for the Western countries.

Both Western embassies in Stockholm doubted the wisdom of permitting Storch to negotiate with Himmler:

... in no circumstances must Storch be allowed to go to Germany ... Storch is a Latvian stateless Jew. Very rich, self-important and very nearly a lunatic in some respects (e.g. 17 of his family were murdered by the Germans but he asked Wilhelmstrasse for a testimonial of his good work for the Jews and then asked U D for a similar document).⁵⁷

The most awkward aspects of Storch's request came in London. Some of the Foreign Office officials in London who received the Storch request pla-

inly viewed the idea of rescue of the Jews as bad policy for Britain to be involved with.

A minute was prepared for Winston Churchill in which it was noted that the British had decided not to forward Storch's telegram to the Jewish Agency and suggested that Britain not get involved with the scheme in any way. Sweden, it was noted, could manage the situation alone. The minute introduced Kersten to Churchill, argued that Britain should not be involved in negotiations with Himmler in any fashion, and that "Jewish societies" were willing to insist on the rescue of Jews "at any price."⁵⁸ Anthony Eden supported these recommendations and passed them to Churchill. Churchill's response typified the man: "I agree. No truck with Himmler."⁵⁹

In fact, the continued fate of the Red Cross mission and its ability to extend its activities became more intertwined in Himmler's efforts to negotiate a separate peace with the Western powers. Indeed his initial offer to Kersten on March 21 might have been an attempt to open direct negotiations with the West, even through the WJC. When Bernadotte returned on April 2 to his negotiations with Himmler, the separate peace question was the issue Himmler wanted to discuss most earnestly. Bernadotte was to serve as a conduit for Himmler to make "peace feelers" to the Western powers. Himmler's proposals fell on deaf ears. The Swedish government was under no illusion about the probability of these efforts succeeding. Rather they were concerned about two matters: 1. Control and disposal of the German troops in Norway and Denmark, and 2. using Himmler's dependence on a neutral power to forward his offers to widen the activities of the Red Cross mission.⁶⁰

Himmler's concessions came slowly. In late March, he allowed the Swedes to move freely within Neuengamme.⁶¹ On April 2, he refused Bernadotte a blanket request to permit all Scandinavians at Neuengamme to leave for Sweden. However, he did accept the idea of some leaving, including all women, those ill, and a few specific political prisoners.⁶² He rejected any transfer of non-Scandinavians to Neuengamme. Almost immediately Scandinavian internees began their journey across Denmark to Sweden.

Without any publicity, the streets of the Danish cities were filled with crying, flag waving Danes, as the white buses passed by. The Swedes were greeted as heroes. On April 9, 1945, five years to the day of Germany's attack on Denmark and Norway, the first wave of internees arrived in Helsingborg. Preparations for their arrival had been underway for over six months. Yet no one in Sweden had imagined that this first contingent of a 132 women from Ravensbruck would be the beginning of a flood of 20,000 refugees, most of whom were ill nourished, sick, and in need of instant care. Before a month had passed, nearly every available space in southern Sweden had been commandeered to care for the internees. It was a remarkable effort – partially planned, partially spontaneous.

News of the new arrivals was almost completely blacked out. Himmler insisted upon total silence so that Hitler would not stop the mission. The Swedish censorship continued to work with impressive effectiveness. Some stories appeared but they were few until late April. The physical conditions of the internees especially in terms of malnutrition and disease shocked the Swedes and confirmed the worst stories that had been circulating in Swedish papers since 1942. The success of the censor aided Bernadotte and Kersten in their efforts to expand the mission beyond Scandinavians.⁶³

By early April, there remained only two issues related to the Scandinavians: to get an agreement from Himmler for the release of all Scandinavians to Sweden; and to pick up the Scandinavian Jews at Theresienstadt. This latter operation represented the longest journey of the mission: four days were needed to complete it. On April 12, 35 buses left Friedrichsruh for Theresienstadt via Belzig, Zweikau, Hof, Bayreuth, and Eger.⁶⁴ On April 16, the Scandinavian Jews were in Lübeck. The group consisted of 423 people; 215 men, 185 women, and 25 children. They arrived in Malmö on April 18.⁶⁵ Resolution of the former problem came unexpectedly on April 19.

Red Cross officials in Germany suddenly received orders from Berlin: remove all Danes and Norwegians from Neuengamme and transport them to Denmark. Within 24 hours, all Scandinavians were removed from Germany.⁶⁶ These orders from Himmler's headquarters forbade, however, further movement to Sweden unless war broke out in Denmark. On April 24, Bernadotte got Himmler to agree to permit all internees to be taken to Sweden. The circumstances of the war were rapidly changing the conditions of the mission. Himmler grew more bold as Hitler further isolated himself in his Berlin bunker. Allied aircraft attacked some of the Red Cross convoys. By the end of April, the question was no longer what Himmler would allow but rather what was feasible, given the military conditions.

The threat of Allied attack had always existed; SHAFE could not guarantee the safety of the Red Cross buses. The British warned the Swedes on April 10 of the increasing risks:

Air Ministry had pointed out that the tactical battle zone was approaching the area in which the Bernadotte expedition was operating, and the danger from Allied aircraft to all road movements was likely to increase. I imagine that this is no news to you.⁶⁷

The mission was hit three times by Allied planes with 16 internees killed and many more wounded. One Swede died.⁶⁸ These incidents no doubt

hastened the desire of the Swedes to conclude the mission as soon as possible with as little loss of life as possible.

At the diplomatic level, difficulties continued to exist over the idea of sending a diplomatic representative of the WJC with Kersten to Berlin to negotiate with Himmler. The idea of using Storch had encountered resistance among the Allied legations in Stockholm, the British had washed their hands of the whole adventure, and Storch himself had misgivings.⁶⁸ The priorities of the WJC apparently differed slightly from the question of the release of 10,000 Jews. They wanted Himmler to fulfill his promise to keep the concentration camps intact, especially Bergen-Belsen and Buchenwald.⁶⁹ At this juncture in the war, more Jews could be saved by keeping them in the camps than by exposing them to forced marches.

On April 13, two seats under the name "Kersten" were requested for transport to Berlin.⁷⁰ Three days later, special "passes" were written for Storch and Kersten, while on the nineteenth, another similar document was written for Norbert Masur, a Swedish Jew and prominent figure in the Stockholm congregation.⁷¹ Masur learned that day that Himmler would receive him and Kersten outside Berlin on the following day.

The drama of Himmler's negotiations with a representative of the WJC has been captured in Masur's memoir, *A Jew Talks With Himmler*. His report for the Swedish Foreign Office of his meetings with Himmler and Schellenberg on April 20–21 confirms the details of Kersten's version provided in his memorandum of April 23, 1945. The primary purpose of the negotiations was to insure that no more Jews were killed and to reaffirm that the remaining camps would be left intact for the Allied armies. On these points, Himmler conceded. On the matter of releasing internees, especially Jews, Himmler apparently was far less pliable. While Himmler agreed to free certain people on lists provided by the Swedes and 1000 French Jewesses from Ravensbruck, there was no mention of the release of 10,000 Jews. In substance, the Masur-Himmler-Kersten meeting served to reinforce what had already been on-going for a month and even in its limited success did not guarantee anything. Masur warned the Swedes in his report as he urged immediate action to help the Jews: "Himmler's word is naturally absolutely nothing to depend upon. Even during our discussions, he told many lies."⁷²

Bernadotte, too, returned to Germany to negotiate with Himmler. Himmler received him on April 21, just hours after Masur and Kersten had departed. Himmler now conceded that the Swedes could take all the internees at Ravensbruck. In their last meeting on the night of April 23–24, Himmler gave his permission for Bernadotte to take anyone he wished without limitation.⁷³ Himmler's concessions depended on his increasingly frenetic attempts to open communications with the Western powers. He gave Sweden *carte blanche*.

By April 25, the first 4,000 women from Ravensbruck were on their way

to Sweden. Approximately 7,000 would be moved from the camp. The number rescued far exceeded anyone's expectations. The luck of finding a usable train allowed the Swedes to move far more internees than their buses could manage.⁷⁴ In total, nearly 21,000 internees from a variety of camps were transported from Germany through Denmark to southern Sweden before the end of the war. An American consular official in Stockholm expressed the amazement of nearly everyone at the success of the mission:

... the job being done by the Swedes
in caring for far less fortunate people
is nothing short of miraculous.⁷⁵

Who were those rescued? A Red Cross document listed 20,937 internees divided into the following nationalities:⁷⁶

Danes and Norwegians: 8,000
Poles: 5,911
French: 2,629
stateless Jews: 1,615
Germans: 1,124
Belgians: 632
Dutch: 387
Hungarians: 290
Balts: 191
Luxembourgers: 79
Slovaks: 28
Brithish: 14
Americans: 9
Roumanians: 6
Finns: 5
Italians: 4
Spanish: 3
Others: 9

How many were Jews? This question was impossible to answer definitely. Sweden had stopped registering refugees by religion in 1943. The WJC compiled two lists of "Liberated Jews arrived in Sweden in 1945." Comparing these lists with Red Cross materials taken from specific camps at the time of rescue indicated only an approximate 50 % overlap. The refugees often had little reason to indicate their religion when Swedish officials showed no interest in it. After all they had just experienced unimaginable terror as a result of their Jewishness. More than one Swede has recorded how fearful and uncertain the refugees were when they reached Swedish soil. When they arrived in Sweden, officials asked them to take off their pest in-

fectured clothing and enter showers to clean themselves. "I am so old, you do not need to gas me," one Jewish woman cried in Trelleborg.⁷⁷

Gillel Storch estimated that the Red Cross saved approximately 6,500 Jews. Hugo Valentin, an historian and active Zionist in the Stockholm congregation, has suggested approximately 3,500, "mostly women from Ravensbruck." Masur indicated that approximately 50 % of the 7000 women from Ravensbruck were Jewish. Clearly, Valentin's estimate was far short of the actual number. Approximately 500 Scandinavian Jews and 1,615 stateless Jews were registered by Swedish or Scandinavian authorities. Certainly 50 % of the Poles were Jewesses. Storch's figure of 6,500 seemed quite reasonable.⁷⁸ Whatever the actual count, the Red Cross mission represented one of the most successful efforts to aid Jews during the war.

Taken as a whole, the success of the Red Cross mission should not be credited to a single individual. One can understand the frustration of Felix Kersten for not getting his share of the credit and for having his citizenship held up for eight years. The internal inconsistencies of his publications chronicle his rising disappointment. The excesses of a professional historian, i e Hugh Trevor-Roper, are more difficult to appreciate. His attempt to deny the key role that Bernadotte played in the rescue mission ignored both the reality of the experience and the evidence. The personal partisanship that has so long played a part in the understanding of the Red Cross mission has only distracted historians from the key issue: the politics of rescue itself.

Was Germany willing to barter for Jewish lives, under what circumstances, and in what time periods? How far were the Allies willing to go to help Jews once it was apparent that they were being systematically slaughtered? Could Jewish groups in Allied countries have brought more pressure on their own politicians to give high priority toward helping the Jews? If so, why was it not done? What could the neutrals like Sweden and Switzerland have done to save more Jews? The history of the Red Cross mission despite its peculiar circumstances suggests, like other successful rescue operations, that if there had been a more determined effort on the part of the democratic countries to intercede on behalf of the Jews, countless lives might have (could have) been saved.

NOTES

1. Literature on Swedish foreign policy is extensive. The best study is Wilhelm Carlgren, *Svensk Utrikespolitik 1939–1945* (Stockholm: Allmänna förlaget, 1973). The most recent study which includes an excellent bibliography is *Scandinavia during the Second World War*, ed. Henrik Nissen (Minneapolis: Univ of Minnesota Press, 1983). Other works of particular interest are those of Krister Wahlbäck, Alf Johansson, and Per Andreen.
2. *Dagens Nyheter*, December 31, 1942, pg 1.
3. See Leni Yahil, *The Rescue of Danish Jewry* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1969). For examples of the goodwill created by Sweden's action, see Riksarkivet, Swedish Foreign Office archive (UD), 1920 års, HP 1056, Boström to Swedish Foreign Office, October 4, 1943; Nowogrodsky (American Representative of General Jewish Workers of Poland) to P A Hansson, October 5, 1943; also, Public Records Office, FO 371, 42752, Selbourne to Prytz, January 19, 1944.
4. See *1945 års Svenska hjälpexpedition till Tyskland* (Stockholm: Norstedts, 1956), p 6–7; and Göte Friberg, *Stormcentrum Öresund*, 2nd ed, (Borås: Centraltryckriker, 1978), p 204.
5. Literature on the holocaust continues to expand. The classic study remains Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jewry* (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1961). More recent studies include Yehuda Bauer, *American Jewry and the Holocaust: the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1939–1945* (Detroit: Wayne State Univ Press, 1981); Sarah Gordon, *Hitler, Germans and the "Jewish Question"* (Princeton: Princeton Univ Press, 1984); Martin Gilbert, *Auschwitz and the Allies* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1981); and David S Wyman, *The Abandonment of the Jews* (New York: Pantheon, 1984) Walter Laqueur, *The Terrible Secret* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1980). For a general overview of Sweden's response to the Final Solution, see Steven Koblik, "Sweden's Attempts to Aid Jews, 1939–1945," *Scandinavian Studies*, 56/2 (1984), 89–113.
6. See Bernard Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews of Europe, 1939–1945* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979).
7. Kersten remains a controversial figure. Hugh Trevor-Roper believes him to be an important figure in a variety of rescue activities and attempts to moderate Himmler's behavior: *The Last Days of Hitler* (New York: Macmillan Co, 1947); "Kersten, Himmler, and Count Bernadotte," *The Atlantic*, 44 (February 1953); and *The Kersten Memoirs, 1939–1945* (London: Hutchinson, 1956). Kersten himself produced his memoirs in Swedish, German, and English. The former two differ considerably from the latter. Felix Kersten, *Samtal med Himmler* (Stockholm: Ljus, 1947). He also forged documents in the fifties: Gillel Storch archive, Storch to Fleming, April 6, 1976, and Fleming to Storch, September 10, 1976; also, Storch to Koblik, March 29, 1983. Two Dutch scholars, Posthumous and de Jong, disagree about his role in helping Dutchmen. Norwegian Professor Dietherik Seip gives Kersten credit for convincing Himmler to have German troops in Norway capitulate. Finnish scholars are also divided in their view of his role in German-Finnish relations. Kersten's role in the release of the "Warsaw Swedes" is not controversial. *1945 års*, p 228–229.

8. FO 371, 48026,, Mallet to Foreign Office, February 25, 1945.
9. Sven Grafström's archive, *Anteckningar*, February 2, 1945, pp 4–5.
10. The issue of Kersten's Swedish citizenship is one of the major reasons for Kersten's behavior in the post-1945 period. It also contributed to the enflamed relations between Trevor-Roper and Bernadotte. Günther tried to get Kersten Swedish citizenship on numerous occasions after the war. He had however little influence on the post-war Social Democratic governments who decided the matter. Trevor-Roper's attack on Bernadotte – post-mortem – in 1953 claimed to be based on the injustice suffered by Kersten at the hands of the Swedes. Bernadotte did not mention Kersten's role in the rescue mission in his popular memoir, *Slutet* (Stockholm: Norstedts, 1945), which was also published in English as *The Curtain Falls* (New York: Knopf, 1945). Bernadotte also failed to mention Kersten in some of his briefings with Swedish officials during the actual rescue mission. for example, see Informationsstyrelsen's archive, Diskussionsprotokoll, April 16, 1945, V 7. His wife, Estelle Bernadotte, has claimed that her husband was fully aware of his memoirs shortcomings but had been convinced to publish it. Arvid Richert's archive, Estelle Bernadotte to Richert, May 3, 1956.
11. Per Anger Archive, Valdemar Langlet to Swedish Red Cross, July 28, 1944. Also, Eugene Levai, *The Black Book of the Martyrdom of Hungarian Jewry* (Zurich: Central European Times, 1948), p 275.
12. Personal characterizations are always difficult. Trevor-Roper's work on Kersten unfortunately included vindictive attacks on Bernadotte. Trevor-Roper accused him of being an anti-semite, “a transport officer no more,” and a bad judge of character – most importantly Walter Schellenberg. Besides previously mentioned works (footnote 7), see Storch Archive, Trevor-Roper to Storch, February 9, 1949. Trevor-Roper provides little documentation for his conclusions about Bernadotte and his essays are riddled with factual errors. Henrik Beer, a Swedish Red Cross official, wrote a clear rebuttal to Trevor-Roper, “Sanningen om Folke Bernadotte,” *Vecko-Journalen* 14 (1956). Sven Grafström characterized Bernadotte as something of a boy scout – *Anteckningar*, February 11, 1945, pp 8–9. This author has found no indication of anti-semitism in Bernadotte's behavior or attitudes. Gillel Storch, WJC representative in Stockholm, has drawn the same conclusions: “Insatser av WJC:s sektion,” *Judisk Krönika*, 31 (1962), 137. Trevor-Roper and Bernadotte corresponded with each other when the former wrote his *Last Days*. Bernadotte objected to certain sections of the work and sent copies of his objections to influential friends in Britain. *Kersten Memoirs*, p 7. Trevor-Roper was clearly embittered by Bernadotte's attacks. They disagreed over Walter Schellenberg whom Bernadotte tried to help after the war because Schellenberg had been so helpful in the success of the rescue mission. Bernadotte was assassinated in Palestine by the Stern gang in 1948 while serving as the United Nations mediator. Ishak Shamir, among others, has been implicated in the planning of Bernadotte's assassination.
13. *UD*, 1920 års, HP 1616, Cabinet to Rickert, September 6, 1944, and Rickert to Günther, September 7, 1944.
14. For example, see *Ibid*, von Post to Kumlin, January 7, 1944.
15. *UD*, 1920 års, HP 1050, Swedish Embassy (London) to Lundborg, January 17, 1945. Zelmanovits had written Bernadotte as well and as of January had received no response.
16. Swedish Red Cross archive, Folke Bernadotte, II:7, v 32, Memorandum of Folke Bernadotte's trip, October 29–November 14, 1944 undated but certainly November 1944.
17. *UD*, 1920 års, HP 1050, Memorandum to Erlander, etc, July 7, 1944; and FO 371, British Embassy (Washington) to Foreign Office, July 6, 1944; and Mallet to Foreign Office, July 12, 1944.

18. Memorandum to Erlander, etc.
19. *UD*, 1920 års, HP 1950, Swedish Embassy (London) to Lundborg, January 17, 1945, Boström to UD, January 21 & 23, 1945, and von Post to Rickert, January 25, 1945.
20. *Ibid*, von Post to Rickert, January 25 & 27, 1945, and Rickert to von Post, January 29, 1945.
21. *Ibid*, Rickert to von Post, February 7, 1945, and Westrup to UD, February 8, 1945. Westrup also telephoned on the same day to say that the Swiss believed that further rescue actions to help the Jews was possible with “Himmler’s suport.”
22. *Ibid*, PM om diplomatisk aktion in Berlin till förmån för judarna, February 19, 1945.
23. *Ibid*; see also Cabinet to Rickert, February 12, 1945. A German agent in Stockholm, Dr Kleist, had informed the Swedes that there were good possibilities to rescue 2,000 Jews in Bergen-Belsen.
24. Swedish Berlin Embassy archive, v 73c, von Post to Nylander, January 9, 1945.
25. *UD*, 1920 års, HP 1618, Cabinet to Rickert, February 10, 1945; also, Sven Grafström’s archive, *Anteckningar*, February 11, 1945, pp. 8–9.
26. SRC, Folke Bernadotte, II:7 v 2, Prince Carl to Bernadotte, February 12, 1945. Note that neither Scandinavians nor Jews were mentioned specifically in Bernadotte’s instructions. See also FO 371, 48046, Mallet to FO, February 6, 1945.
27. *Anteckningar*, pp 8–9; Fo 371, 48046, Mallet to FO, February 11, 1945; *UD*, 1920 års, HP 1682, Günther to Engzell, November 4, 1948; and FO 371, 48026, Mallet to FO, February 25 & 27, 1945.
28. Trevor-Roper claimed in his *Atlantic* article, op cit, and in the introduction to the *Kersten Memoirs* that Kersten had already negotiated with Himmler about both the release of the Scandinavians and the Jews. *Kersten Memoirs*, p 14; and *Atlantic*, p 44. He even used the word “treaty” to describe the arrangement. Not only was Kersten incapable of signing a treaty (not to mention Himmler) but Kersten apparently was working with the Swiss for release of the Jews. *Samtal med Himmler*, pp 231–231, ff. It very well may be that he talked generally with Himmler about the potential goodwill to be achieved by the release of Scandinavian prisoners. Kersten presented the Swedish Foreign Office with a memorandum on all his humanitarian activities dated June 12, 1945. *UD*, 1920 års, HP 1050, (known hereafter as Kersten PM). This summary conforms rather closely with *Samtal* but has important discrepancies from his memoirs.
29. 1945 års, pp 18–19. Kaltenbrunner reported to the Swedish Embassy in Berlin that it would be easy to arrange a meeting between Bernadotte and Himmler. *UD*, 1920 års, HP 1618,, Brandel to von Post, February 14, 1945.
30. Censorship worked efficiently in Sweden. A wartime law gave the government the right to stop publication of any information judged potentially injurious to Sweden’s security. A special department, *Informationsstyrelsen*, was created to monitor the media. The result was a system of formal censorship as well as informal contacts between the government and the media which controlled the flow of information to the public. One newspaper, *Dagens Nyheter*, broke ranks on the rescue mission story apparently as a deliberate challenge to the authority of the censorship board. It was a symbolic act and the newspaper published little information about the mission after a brief story in early March.
31. *Ibid*, Folke Bernadotte PM on visit to Germany, February 16–21, 1945, 17 pages. Bernadotte met with Kaltenbrunner, Ribbentrop twice, Schellenberg three times, and Himmler. He was unimpressed by Ribbentrop. The meeting with Himmler apparently was quite cordial. Bernadotte obviously tried to establish a positive relationship with Himmler. Himmler talked about the Bolshevik threat. No mention was made about the Jews. The

impression of the report is of a skillful negotiator that is attempting to build the basis for further agreements.

32. *UD*, 1920 års, HP 1050, Storch to Engzell, February 19, 1945.
33. Storch archive, Bernadotte to Storch, February 26, 1945.
34. Kersten, *Samtal*, p 231; and *Kersten PM*.
35. *Ibid*.
36. FO 371, 48046,, Mallet to FO, March 1, 1945.
37. *Ibid*, Foreign Office to Mallet, March 3, 1945.
38. *UD*, 1920 års, HP 1619, PM from von Post, April 5, 1945. Although the Americans approved the mission which had already been at work nearly a month, it refused to promise that Sweden would receive more food supplies as a result of the mission.
39. FO 371, 48046, Mallet to FO, March 5 and 12, 1945, and Halifax to FO, March 22, 1945.
40. *Ibid*, Mallet to FO, March 3, 1945; SRC, Folke Bernadotte, II:7, v 2, Brandel to Bernadotte, March 1, 1945.
41. *Kersten PM*.
42. Grafström Archive, *Anteckningar*, February 11 and March 3, 1945.
43. *UD*, 1920 års HP 1075, Cabinet to Rickert, March 14, 1945.
44. SRC, Folke Bernadotte, II:7, Bernadotte to Schellenberg, February 24, 1945; See also, Åke Svenson, *De vita bussarna* (Stockholm: Bonniers, 1945), p 10.
45. *UD*, 1920 års, HP 1618, Rickert to von Post, March 4, 1945. Underlining was done on original by the reader (von Post?).
46. Svenson, p 57, ff.
47. *UD*, 1920 års, HP 1619, PM on Red Cross mission, March 27, 1945.
48. *Ibid*, HP 1618, Swedish Embassy (Berlin) to von Post, March 10, 1945.
49. *Ibid*, Folke Bernadotte to SRC Board, March 16, 1945. This report underscored the close cooperation that existed between the Norwegian and Danish officials in Germany and Bernadotte.
50. *Ibid*, HP 1050, Storch to Adler Rudel, March 27, 1945.
51. *Ibid*, HP 1051, Engzell to Rickert, March 22, 1945.
52. *Ibid*, Rickert to UD, March 21, 1945.
53. *Ibid*, Nylander to Engzell, March 26, 1945, and Engzell to Rickert, March 22, 1945. HP 1692, Rickert to von Post, March 22, 1945.
54. *Ibid*, HP 1619, PM of March 27, 1945. This document was sent to Trevor-Roper in 1955. It apparently had no effect on his writing despite its great importance.
55. Boheman had one grandparent who was Jewish. His “quarter-Jewishness” was known and commented upon by his colleagues.
56. FO 371, 51194, Mallet to FO, March 27, 1945.
57. FO 188, 525, Intelligence note in British embassy, Stockholm, March 25, 1945.
58. FO 371, 51194, Minute for Churchill on Kersten/Himmler, April 1, 1945.
59. FO 954, 23, Eden to Churchill, April 1, 1945. Churchill’s comment is dated April 5, 1945. There is no evidence that Churchill agreed with the Foreign Office comments on

“Jewish societies.” His main concern was obviously not being involved in negotiations with Himmler.

60. *UD*, 1920 års, HP 1619, Bernadotte notes about discussions, March 29-April 6, 1945; Calgren, *op cit*; and Informationsstyrelsens archive, v 7, Discussion of April 16, 1945. This latter document provided the clearest insight into Bernadotte’s negotiating technique. Bernadotte appeared in front of the censorship board to explain his activities, ask for cooperation, and answer any questions that they wished to pose. Asked for his personal impression of Himmler, Bernadotte explained how he tried to reinforce the impression that Himmler had something to gain by cooperating on the rescue mission. He described Himmler as romantic and gifted him with a book on Nordic runestones. He also agreed that Himmler would not have responded positively to such a rescue effort if Himmler had not already concluded that the war and the Third Reich were lost.
61. *Ibid*, HP 1619, Pm from U D, March 29, 1945.
62. *Ibid*, Bernadotte to Hansson, April 3, 1945.
63. SRC, Folke Bernadotte, II:7, v 2, Rickert to von Post, April 10, 1945.
64. *UD*, 1920 års, HP 1619, PM of Tamm, April 12, 1945.
65. *Ibid*, Telephone from Captain Melin, April, 17, 1945. See also, Marcus Melchior, *Darkness over Denmark* (London: New English Library, 1973), p 147. Melchoir had been appointed by the Swedish government as rabbi for the Danish Jewish refugees. A controversial figure in pre-war Denmark, Melchoir became chief Rabbi in Denmark after the war. The book offered many interesting insights into Scandinavian Jewish life.
66. *Ibid*, Brandel to Boheman, April 20, 1945, and Bernadotte to Grafström, April 22, 1945.
67. SRC, Folke Bernadotte, II:7, v 2, Labouchere to von Post, April 11, 1945.
68. FO 371, 48047, Mallet to FO, April 19 and 26, 1945.
69. Storch has claimed that he decided not to go to Berlin because it was feared that Himmler would try to use Storch to have Stephen Wise, president of the WJC, request of Roosevelt that Allied bombings be stopped. Storch to Koblik, March 29, 1983.
70. SRC, Folke Bernadotte, II:7, v 8, Bernadotte to Storch, April 17, 1945; Norbert Masur, *En jude talar med Himmler* (Stockholm: Bonniers, 1945), p 5; Storch archive, Storch to Gerald Fleming, April 6, 1976, and Storch to Robert Rock, April 11, 1980.
71. *UD*, 1920 års, HP 1057, von Essen to Aerotransport, April 13, 1945.
72. *Ibid*, HP 1692, April 16 and 19, 1945.
73. *Ibid*, HP 1050, Norbert Masur memorandum, April 23, 1945, and Kersten to Günther, April 23, 1945. There are discrepancies between these two contemporary documents and books written by both men after the war.
74. Storch, “Insatser,” *op cit*; 1945 års, pp 28–29; and Masur, p 34.
75. *UD*, 1920 års, HP 1619, Telephone from Friedrichsruh, April 25, 1945. See also, Svenson, *op cit*.
76. FO 371, 51193, Whisler to Johnson, May 4, 1945. See also, SRC, Folke Bernadotte, II:7, v 2, von Post memorandum, April 25, 1945.
77. SRC, II:1, v 506. Professor Birgitta Oden of the University of Lund reported similar expressions of fear when she aided arriving Jews in Malmö. May 24, 1984.
78. *Judisk Krönika*, 14 (5–6), May–June 1945, p 88.
79. Masur, p 34; Storch, “insatser,” p 31; Hugo Valentin, “Rescue and Relief,” *YIVO Annual of Jewish Social Science*, 8 (1953), 224–51; SRC, II:7, v 33, has a variety of lists of

Jews rescued. There are many problems related to attempting an estimate of the number of Jewish refugees. What definition of Jew is one to use? If one used the Nazi terminology, I suspect that the number rescued was considerably higher than Storch's estimate of 6,500. If the definition includes only people who are practicing Jews or born of two Jewish parents, the Storch estimate is probably reasonable although my own suspicions lean toward a slightly higher figure. Valentin's evaluation and those of the WJC underestimate the number saved by nearly half. Leni Yahil, "Scandinavian Countries to the Rescue of Concentration Camp Prisoners," *Yad Vashem Studies*, 6 (1967), 181–220, had limited access to Swedish archives and underestimates both the total number of individuals rescued in the Bernadotte mission and the Jewish totals.