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Sub-series A: Alphabetical, 1914-1965, undated.

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American Zionist Emergency Council, land and labor for
Palestine, 1948.

Western Reserve Historical Society

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American Jewish Archives

3101 Clifton Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio 45220
(513) 487-3000
AmericanJewishArchives.org

September, 1948.

Mr. Wellesley Aron,
Warwick Hotel,
54th Street,
6th Avenue,
N.Y.C.
U.S.A.
.....

Dear Wellesley:

This long overdue letter to you is ultimately being written now because Gideon Baratz's wife has volunteered to spend a day helping us catch up with our correspondence.

May I first of all compliment you on the regular receipt of the lists of people whom you despatch here, in time. The questionnaires enable us in many cases to find the right spot for the man long before he arrives.

We cabled and cabled to check on the compassionate reasons advanced by some of the volunteers to go home. Had we received answers in a short time, it would have enabled us to deal with these cases properly. For instance, we sent Sklar home on compassionate leave, and we learned from your cable of the 18th September that no one in his family is seriously ill.

We are sending home at the earliest possible moment three volunteers who are not to be sent back here. I am enclosing a copy of the decision in each case. All three of them are believed to have gone to the American Consul, and the decision to send them home included a decision that the facts of their service be known in America.

The selection of Americans absolutely shines by comparison with the selection of Canadians. We have had very much more trouble with the Canadians due, in most cases, to faulty selection in the first instance.

Procedures have now been set up to consider the requests of volunteers from abroad for compassionate leave or discharge, but effective functioning of this Discharge Committee is dependent upon prompt replies from your office when we cable to check the alleged reasons.

All the best to you,

Sincerely yours,

Harold Jaffer

HJ/BB

Land & Lohr

September 23, 1948

Mr. William Kapelman
295 Madison Avenue
New York 17, New York

My dear Friend:

I received your letter. I shall be in New York next Tuesday and Wednesday, stopping at the Sulgrave Hotel. Please get in touch with me there, and we shall talk over the matter which you discuss.

With all good wishes, I remain

Most cordially yours,

ABBA HILLEL SILVER

AHS:er

LAND AND LABOR FOR PALESTINE

1186 BROADWAY

NEW YORK 1, N. Y.

September 30, 1948

Dr. Abba Hillel Silver
19810 Shaker Blvd.
Cleveland, Ohio

Dear Dr. Silver:

1. I am enclosing herewith two reports which speak for themselves. May they be returned to us please after perusal.

2. It appears to me that they provide sufficient evidence to ensure that Mr. Faust of the State Department be dealt with in a manner called for by his obviously biased and prejudiced attitude to the American citizens involved.

3. Mr. Abraham Tulin of New York and I have been discussing the desirability of raising, either officially or unofficially, the whole question of principle involved in the granting of passports to American citizens (whether of military age or otherwise). This question is one which requires considerable judgment in the light of present developments.

I would appreciate hearing from you as to any suggested action which you consider is called for.

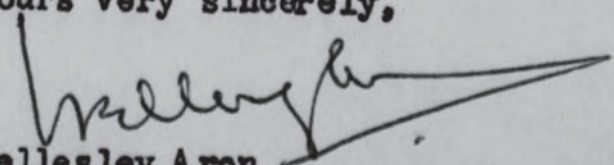
4. I was very perturbed by the story you related to me concerning the behavior of American young men in Paris. Could I ask you to be so kind as to let me have details as to the date and place of the occurrence in question? I should then be able to check back to see if the group had any connection with L & L, and if so, who they were and who was in charge.

5. I am taking up the question of Chaplains and no doubt these could be found, but the financial aspect would be a problem to overcome.

6. I talked to Dr. Goldstein regarding the Budget last night in accordance with your suggestion, and no doubt he will be communicating with you in the light of our discussion.

May I close with all good wishes to you, Mrs. Silver, Danny and the rest of the family on the occasion of the Jewish New Year. I hope we may attain our immediate objectives and have the opportunity to consolidate what has been won to date by virtue of all that you and those associated with you have put into the battle.

Yours very sincerely,


Wellesley Aron

WA:GH
Enc.

October 5, 1948

Major Wellesley Aron
Land and Labor for Palestine
1186 Broadway
New York 1, New York

My dear Major Aron:

Thank you for sending me the enclosed. I think the matter should be pursued further with the State Department.

The incident that I referred to occurred some time during my stay in Tel Aviv towards the end of August. I do not recall the exact date. The trouble occurred in the hotel adjoining the Gad Rimon where I stayed. I am sure that you will have no trouble in tracing down the facts.

With all good wishes for a very happy New Year in which Mrs. Silver joins me, I remain

Most cordially yours,

ABBA HILLEL SILVER

AHS:er
Enc.

LAND AND LABOR FOR PALESTINE

1186 BROADWAY

NEW YORK 1, N. Y.

October 7, 1948

Dr. Abba Hillel Silver
American Zionist Emergency Council
East 105th Street at Ansel Road
Cleveland, Ohio

Dear Dr. Silver:

This is to acknowledge receipt of your letter of October 5 contents of which have been duly noted.

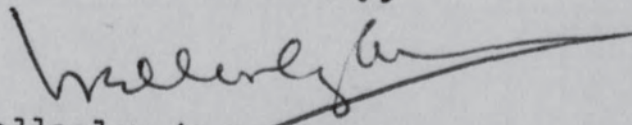
Regarding the first paragraph, I assume that you will see to it that the State Department is approached by the responsible persons at the proper moment. Should you wish me to take any further action, please let me know.

I am afraid it is going to be almost impossible to trace the incident if it took place in Tel Aviv since so many of the soldiers from so many different countries circulate in the street in question. In regard to the general criticism which I have heard from you and one or two other persons, I have today received a letter from Harold Jaffer, copy of which is enclosed herewith for your information. As you will see we are being given a very definite compliment in respect to our methods of selection.

I have spoken to Dr. Goldstein several times regarding the Budget and believe that early next week a decision will be taken regarding the future methods of procedure.

Thank you for your good wishes. I remain, with kind personal regards,

Yours very sincerely,



Wellesley Aron
Executive Director

gmg
enc.

LAND AND LABOR FOR PALESTINE

1186 BROADWAY

NEW YORK 1, N. Y.

October 29, 1948

Dr. Abba Hillel Silver
19810 Shaker Blvd.
Cleveland 22, Ohio

Dear Dr. Silver:

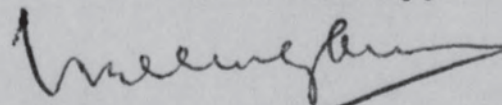
Further to my telephone conversation with you and in accordance with your request, I prepared the attached suggestions in regard to the future of Land and Labor.

I have also forwarded copies of these suggestions to Hammer at the Jewish Agency for the consideration of the Executive.

I have already taken steps to curtail expenditure and movement throughout the country so that by the middle of November the organization will have been transformed into a purely "voluntary" one, whilst maintaining a complete record of all those who have been associated with us, so that should the Agency or any other body wish to pick up the threads in the future, this can be easily arranged.

I hope you will let me know when you are coming in to New York, so that we can discuss these matters and others of a more personal nature which arise therefrom.

Yours very sincerely,



Wellesley Aron

WA:GH
Enc.

Returns

As has been indicated, there are presently in this country approximately 26 men who were sent to Palestine under the auspices of L & L and have returned. Some of these men have been interviewed by representatives of the Department of Justice, as will appear. We are advised that in no case have any statements been made which would tend to confirm any claim that L & L was engaged in recruiting military personnel. Essentially, these men have insisted that they went to Palestine for personal reasons and have also maintained that they were not in the army.

The following represents the information available as to all of these men, arranged in alphabetical order:

Nathan Abramson

He resides at 108 North Lapear Drive, Los Angeles, and was originally interviewed in the California office on June 2, 1948. His questionnaire indicates that he held a certificate as a gunner, including side arms, carbon, rifle and heavy guns; that he was 23 years old. A memorandum placed on his questionnaire indicates that he "wants to help establish a Jewish State. The man is alert, intelligent, and seems well instructed in medical work." It also appears that he "did not leave through usual channels."

Leopold Berman

He resides at 1585 Washington Avenue, Miami Beach; was sent to Palestine on the Marine Marlin on May 15, 1948. The records available indicate that he got into trouble in Palestine and was put into jail there. He was then transferred to another unit, where he again got into trouble for refusing to obey an order on the ground that he was an American citizen and could not be compelled. He had been a

member of the Lincoln Brigade in Spain. He left his unit and went to the American Consul and demanded that he be repatriated. He also demanded to be sent home on the ground that his wife and two children needed support. It was finally decided to send him home and this was done.

Gilbert Bernetein

He resides at 1216 Avenue T, Brooklyn, New York; is 18 years of age; and was sent on May 15, 1948, on the Marine Marlin. The Israeli authorities found him to be unsuitable and suspected that he was mentally unbalanced. The men in his unit reported that he was not a good soldier and apparently could never be. It appears that he visited the American Consul. He was given a medical discharge by the Israeli Army.

Gershon Bloom

He was a resident of Detroit, Michigan, and had been a lieutenant, senior grade, in the United States Navy, having served as a communications officer, doing radio and radar work. He went to Paris by air originally on June 24, 1948, and returned on September 9, 1948. He was sent as a specialist in view of his qualifications, and arrangements were made to compensate him accordingly. Although his qualifications had been communicated to Israel prior to his departure, when he arrived in Haifa it developed that another person had been assigned to the work which it had been intended he was to perform. He spent a few months in Palestine, doing other work, and finally returned to this country at his own request upon the claim that his mother was ill. When he returned to New York, he saw Dr. Kurland and discussed with him a claim for additional compensation. This talk resulted in an adjustment of the matter, and Bloom was apparently satisfied. When he returned

to Detroit, however, it developed that he still had a grievance. Accordingly, on August 31, 1948, he wrote Dr. Kurland, stating that he sought a settlement for his services in Israel for the period from June 19, 1948 to August 17, 1948. He complained that he had originally been told that he would receive the same remuneration as other engineers, but that when he arrived in Tel Aviv he was paid only £4 per month and was told that the balance would be forthcoming upon his return to this country. He added that other men in his category received \$6.50 per day for expenses, plus \$150 per month salary. He demanded total compensation of \$746.02. On September 3, 1948, Kurland replied, indicating that he did not consider that there was any sum due Bloom. On September 10, 1948, Bloom wrote again, stating that he "did not ask you for a contract because you assured me all my expenses would be paid, plus a livable salary." Major Aron wrote a letter on September 13, 1948, expressing his views on this matter. Major Aron also wrote Rabbi Klausner, head of the Chicago office, on this matter, and in this communication Major Aron pointed out that there was inevitably "a great deal of loss and inefficiency in the formation of any substantial group of human beings and their organization into an army or air force or navy." After some more letter-writing on this subject, Bloom, on October 8, 1948, wrote Major Aron, complaining that L & L was trying to take advantage of him and that unless he received full payment within ten days, he intended to submit to the Detroit Free Press "a complete detailed account of how the office works, including the way passports are obtained and used by people in Europe and the underground channels in D.P. camps used for Americans who did not have the proper papers." Bloom also said that there were two other men in Detroit who served in Israel at the time he did and that they would substantiate

his story.

When this letter was received, it was decided that instead of attempting to handle the matter through L & L, it might be advisable to have the Jewish Community in Detroit deal with Bloom on a personal basis. Ultimately, it was disposed of by Mr. Lawrence W. Crohn, a Detroit business man, who settled with Bloom by paying him \$400. This expenditure was thereafter reimbursed by L & L.

Constantine Brelis

He resided

He was a specialist who was sent to France by air on June 20, 1948. Despite the fact that he had an excellent military background as a parachutist, as the result of various misunderstandings, his services were never employed. On September 9, 1948, he returned to this country. On his arrival, he was interviewed by representatives of the FBI. His story was that he had traveled to Paris as a journalist and there ran into some Palestinians who interested him in Palestine. He thereafter traveled to Israel with these friends and subsequently returned. He denied any connection with the Israeli Army and, of course, said nothing about L & L.

Myriek Cohen

He is a resident of Lynn, Mass., and served in the United States Navy and had experience in small arms, maintenance and repair, instruction, and in the use of all sizes of guns from 22 calibre to 20 inch. He was sent to Palestine on the Marine Carp on March 29, 1948, and returned in October, 1948. Upon his return, he was met in East Boston by two FBI men. He told them that he had taken a trip to Europe and thereafter, when he saw a chance to get to Palestine, decided to go. He denied that he had served in

the Israeli Army and did not mention L & L. He observed that they had a complete file on him and also noted that they had a picture of L & L volunteers, taken in Haifa. It has been ascertained that frequently, when a group of L & L men arrived in Haifa their pictures were taken by the British police, who maintained offices near the port.

(X) → 7

Robert Epstein

He is a resident of New Orleans, La., and originally went to Israel on June 3, 1948. He returned on August 25, 1948, suffering from a concussion and sunstroke. He went as a member of the merchant marine, his questionnaire indicating that he had merchant seaman papers and that he had a knowledge of loading and unloading ships.

Gideon Stephen Esrati

He resides in Boston, Mass., and was on the Marine Carp and left for Palestine on May 4, 1948. He had served in the American Army as a military policeman and also had had 17 weeks basic infantry training. When he returned to this country, he became involved in some dispute as to the nature of his activities in Palestine, which culminated in his writing a letter to the editor of a local newspaper in Boston, in which he stated that when he signed up in L & L, he understood that he had joined the Haganah.

Harlow Geberer

He resides in New York City and departed for Palestine on May 4, 1948 on the Marine Carp. He appears to have had experience in the United States Army as a radio operator and in communications generally, having seen service in France and Germany. He returned on June 14, 1948.

David L. Goldstein

He resides in Brooklyn, New York, and went to Palestine on the S.S. Mala on June 3, 1948. He went as a merchant seaman. His record indicates that he has experience as an entertainer and a hairdresser. He did not sign a contract, the reason being that L & L had no interest in his going to Palestine. He made his own arrangements for transportation and generally went there on his own.

Bernard Greene

He resides in Brooklyn, New York. Originally left for Israel on the Marine Carp on May 4, 1948; returned on June 14, 1948; and then went back to Israel on August 11, 1948, on the Marine Jumper. He served in the United States Coast Guard, having attained the rank of Seaman Second Class. His questionnaire indicates that he had experience as a writer and that his desire was to go to Palestine where he would "accept whatever work is assigned to me."

Robert S. Jacobs

He resides in New York and traveled to Palestine on the Marine Carp on May 4, 1948, returning on June 14, 1948. He was a member of the Fire Department and the Police Department and for a period from April, 1942 to October, 1945, was in the United States Navy, having attained the rank of boatswain's mate.

Ely Kalmanowitz

He resides in the Bronx, New York, and also went to Israel on the Marine Carp on May 4, 1948, returning on July 14, 1948. He was in the Merchant Marine for three years and also for a period from September, 1947 to March, 1948, was employed by the Haganah in connection with fund-raising.

He is now connected with Materials for Palestine.

Murray Kadish

He resides in Miami, Fla., and traveled to Israel on the Marine Carp on May 4, 1948. On the return trip from Israel, he jumped ship in Italy and returned to Palestine. Thereafter, on July 7, 1948, he applied for leave to return home, on the ground that his mother was ill. It appeared further that he was a disturbing element and that his services were not desired. On September 21, 1948, he was discharged from the Israeli Army and returned to this country. When he returned he was interviewed by a representative of the FBI, but insisted that he had not been in the Israeli Army.

Raymond Kaplan

He resides in Brooklyn, New York, and went to Israel on the Marine Carp on May 4, 1948, returning on June 14, 1948. His questionnaire indicates that he had a background as an electrical engineer, was a graduate of MIT and served in the United States Navy for a period of two years between 1944 and 1946.

Sherman Kaminsky

He resides in Boston, Mass., and originally went to Palestine as a seaman on the S.S. Mala on June 3, 1948. He returned in December, 1948 and was interviewed by the FBI. He insisted that he had not been in the Israeli Army.

Harry Krivitsky

He resides in Roxberry, Mass., and went to Palestine on March 29, 1948. He lost an eye in the Palestinian Army and returned to this country in November, 1948. He traveled on an American passport with a visa for Palestine. When he was interviewed, he stated that he went there to search for

his grandmother, and indicated that he had no interest in Palestine as such.

Lawrence S. Levine

He resides in Boston, Mass., and went to Palestine on the S.S. Ernie Pyle on June 23, 1948. On July 21, 1948, he requested a discharge from the Army and asked that he be returned to Boston, claiming that he was ill. The Palestinian Medical Board determined that he was fit for light duties and that his condition did not warrant his being sent home. Thereafter, however, it was found impossible to find a suitable task for him and he was returned to this country.

Leonard Loeb

He resides in Kew Gardens, Long Island, and went to Palestine on the Marine Carp on May 4, 1948. He returned on June 14, 1948, having first jumped ship in Europe. He had no military experience, being 18 years of age when he left for Palestine. His questionnaire also indicates that his left eye was of no use and that his educational background included three years of drafting, and that he had worked for two weeks on a farm. He had also been a boy scout for five years.

Irving Maurer

He resides in the Bronx, N. Y., and went to Palestine originally on the Marine Carp on May 4, 1948, returning in June, 1948. He had had some machine shop experience and also had attended Yeshiva College and had been a Hebrew teacher. He appears to have had no military experience.

Alan Munro

He resides in Miami, Fla., and arrangements for him to go to Palestine had originally been made by the air people. When he came up to New York, however, he was rejected by this group and turned over to Kurland. He stayed around in New York for some time because of his great anxiety to get to Palestine and finally was sent there by the air people, not by L & L. In November, 1948, he was back at the office of L & L., having been returned to this country because of a heart condition. He could not find the air people and therefore went to see Kurland. He was sick and Sobell and Kurland went up to the Hotel Chesterfield, where he was staying, to visit him. Thereafter, arrangements were made for the air people to contact Munro, and a settlement was made with him. He was given his carfare back to Miami, but on his way back he was picked up in Baltimore on some charge by the local police, and not by the FBI. He traveled originally on an American passport, claiming to be a representative of a Miami business concern.

Milton Michels

He resides in New York City and originally went to Palestine on July 17, 1948. He returned in November, 1948, having seen considerable active service in the Israeli Army. He had had extensive experience in the United States Army and saw service in the Pacific and in Europe, having served in various tank units and armored divisions. He was a lieutenant in the United States Army and also was given high rank in the various Palestinian units with which he served. He is presently connected with Materials for Palestine and under the auspices of that organization, is engaged in making addresses to various gatherings, in which he describes his experiences in the Palestinian Army.

Jeosh M. Nardimon

He resides in Brooklyn, N. Y. He went to Palestine on the Marine Carp on May 4, 1948, and returned in June, 1948. His record indicates that he had had experience in operating tractors and in general farm work and also as an ordinary seaman. It does not appear that he had any military background. Between 1943 and 1945, he had been in the Merchant Marine.

Bernard Schliferstein

He resides in the Bronx, New York, and traveled to Palestine on the Marine Marlin on May 15, 1948. He was returned from France on July 8, 1948, by the local Israeli representatives as being too immature and helpless. He had originally been rejected by the L & L interviewer, but the decision of the interviewer had been overruled by Major Aron. He had been in the Army Air Corps between October, 1945 and September, 1947, and had worked on airplane motors as a mechanic. His questionnaire characterizes him as a "grease monkey".

Theodore Steinberg

He resides in New Britain, Conn., and went to Palestine on the Marine Carp on May 4, 1948, and returned to this country on June 12, 1948. He was 19 years of age, had no military experience, but had attended Yeshiva College for three years. He had been employed in a Venetian blind concern and had done some unskilled work in using woodworking machines.

Michael Stomachin

He resides in the Bronx, New York, and went to Palestine on the Marine Carp on May 4, 1948, and returned on June 12, 1948. He had no military experience, but his

questionnaire indicates that he had worked for two years on a milk farm, and also had been engaged as an electrician, working for himself, doing odd electrical and mechanical jobs. In his questionnaire he stated that though he had very little schooling, he was "very good with his hands."

Arnold Shrear

He resides in Los Angeles and went to Palestine on his own. No transportation arrangements were made by L & L. He served for two years in the United States Navy, having had experience with anti-aircraft guns, and saw service in the Philippines.

Alvin Yagid

He resides in Brooklyn and went to Palestine on the Marine Carp on March 29, 1948. He returned in September, 1948, and in October, 1948, a cable was received from Israel, indicating that he was not to be returned to Palestine. He had served in the United States Navy Amphibious Forces and had had the rank of Pharmacist Mate, Second Class. He went to Palestine originally on an American passport, with a visa for Israel. He was interviewed by the FBI on his return, but stated that he had not been in the military service in Israel.

Gilbert Ziff

He resides in Hartford, Conn., and went to Palestine on the Marine Carp on May 4, 1948, returning in June, 1948. His record indicates that he had experience as a salesman and a high school education. It does not appear that he had any military experience.

Jack Zucker

He resides in Philadelphia, Pa., and went to Palestine on the Marine Carp on May 4, 1948, returning in June, 1948. He had attended Yeshiva College from 1945 to 1948, and does not appear to have had any military experience.

The Barker Incident

Early in July, 1948, the idea was conceived of attempting to arrange for the transportation to Israel of a complete tank or anti-tank unit. In connection with this enterprise, Abe Baum, a member of the Military Panel of L & L, together with J. Hamburger,^{an} Israeli officer, traveled to Hollywood and conferred there with Bernard Fineman, head of the San Francisco office, and with the prospective members of this tank unit. Through Fineman, a contact had been established with one Hal Barker, who had had considerable tank experience in the United States Army. Barker had undertaken to procure the participation of five or six other men, including persons whose names appeared to be Minton, Klorman, Baker and Horton. A considerable amount of money was spent in connection with these arrangements. For example, the weekly expense account sheet submitted by Fineman for the week ending July 14, 1948, indicates that \$808.56 was spent in this matter. This document is initialed by Kurland. There are numerous other similar expense vouchers which indicate that possibly \$1500 or \$2000 was spent in the Barker venture.

Ultimately, after considerable long distance telephoning in and about San Francisco and many conferences, the men were brought to New York. By this time, however, several of the men had fallen by the wayside, so that only Barker and two others arrived here. In the meantime, the

FBI had called at Barker's home in California and had visited the man who had given Barker a letter to the effect that Barker was to be his business representative in Europe. This was the letter which Barker had used in filing his application for a passport. It also was learned that Baum had been followed to New York. As a result, it was determined to abandon the entire venture. Keiles then went to see Barker and Minton and made a financial settlement with them, paying in cash. The records of L & L contain complete documentation with respect to the amount of money expended in this connection. There are no other documents, however, which reflect the nature of the matter.

A memorandum, however, entitled "Weekly Report of Activities", dated July 12-16, 1948, contains this description of the venture:

"On Monday, July 12, had a meeting at Abe Baum's office with Teddy and Joseph Hamburger and discussed the Los Angeles Mission. Baum stated that he picked six men for staff college, to be headed by Hal Barker. Each man's background and ability had been gone over and fully approved by Teddy. I then instructed Fineman via telephone to have books issued to the men. Fineman insisted that Barker should be paid on payroll immediately retroactive two weeks, inasmuch as he had rendered invaluable service to the project. This had been approved by Teddy."

The Karmatz Incident

Bernard Karmatz, head of the Philadelphia office of L & L, obtained some stationery from a business concern without their knowledge. Using this stationery, he wrote a letter, indicating that one Milton Gave was employed to represent this particular concern in Europe as a salesman. Gave thereupon used this letter to obtain a passport.

Thereafter, he was ^{interviewed regarding} indicted in this transaction, ^{by the FBI,} being charged, presumably, with making a false statement in applying for a passport. According to our information, he

has not implicated Karmatz in the transaction. Gave has
stated merely that he met some unidentified person who gave
him a ^{letter} passport.



(X)

RIDER - MYRICK COHEN

Sometime in October, 1948, Cohen received a telephone call requesting that he visit the Boston office of the FBI, and was told to see Mr. Lynch. When he met Lynch, the latter said that there was talk that he (Cohen) had gone to Palestine for the money that was in it. It was indicated that at their previous interview, Cohen had refused to give them the information they wanted. Lynch said that he did not blame him for withholding the information originally, since he undoubtedly thought that he was doing the right thing; but that he ought to feel differently about it now, in view of the way he was being treated by the people for whom he went over to fight. Cohen replied that he did not go over to fight in the first place, and that all he made while he was in Israel was six dollars a month. They told him that they knew that he went through L & L organization "on Washington Street" and that he made four visits there before he left. Cohen replied that he bought an engagement ring on the second floor of that building and that he was trying to return it. They told him not to be foolish; that they were not guessing at the facts, but knew them, and that they thought that he ought to cooperate with the government of this country.