



Photo: Swiss citizens evacuated from Hungary and other countries liberated by the Red Army on the deck of the *SS Drottningholm* voyaging from Istanbul to Lisbon, April 1945. Photograph reproduced courtesy of the Carl Lutz Stiftung © Budapest.

SS Drottningholm, 1945

Istanbul–Lisboa

In his correspondence dated April 18th, 1945, the head of the Swiss Foreign Office Walter Stucki informed the Swiss ambassador in Budapest about the arrival of forty-nine Swiss citizens in Turkey.¹ Twenty were functionaries of the Political Department who, along with their families, were evacuated after having been denied residence by Russian military authorities.

Among the people mentioned in the letter were Vice Consul Charles [Carl] Lutz and his wife Gertrud (in the photograph from the SS Drottningholm they are the fourth and fifth from the left) and Franz Bischoff and his wife Martha (seventh and ninth from the left).² Other passengers included Hans Steiner, his wife Marie, and their son Hans; Emmanuel Laroche; Bettina Scharplaz; Anton Hürli-mann; Elsa Kradolfer; Hedwig Lehmann; Käty Wyss; Gustav Mohn; Sady Albert Jaquier and his wife Raymonde; Margarethe von Walterskirchen; Paul Greiner and his wife Elisabeth; and Max Ember.

Carl Lutz (1859–1975) is credited with having saved more than 62,000 Jews during his service in Budapest from 1942 until this forced sea voyage. Although he was criticized by Swiss officials for having overstepped his authority, he was rehabilitated in 1958. In 1965 he was awarded the title of Righteous Among the Nations.

Twenty-nine more Swiss citizens traveling from Hungary joined them in Istanbul, where they were also joined by people from the Swiss embassies in Sofia, Brăila, and Ankara. They were all travelling on the Swedish steamboat SS Drottningholm bound for Lisbon..

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Sources:

1. Letter: sig. [Walter] Stucki to B.21.218.Budapest.-DO., Bern, den 18. April 1945. See also J. O. Kehrli. 1944. *Bericht an das Eidg. Politische Departement über die Verhältnisse in Budapest vor, während und nach der Besetzung durch die Russen*, 15. Dezember 1944 – April 1945. Erstattet im Auftrag des Chefs des Politischen Departements, Bern, <http://db.dodis.ch/document/18858> [accessed 2015-05-22]
2. We were unable to identify the other persons in the photograph.