

SECRET

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

LEGAL ADVISER

TO : L  
ARA

MAY 28 1948

DATE: May 27, 1948

FROM : DS

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

SUBJECT: Investigation of the activities of RESETTLEMENT, Inc. in procuring Latin-American visas.

DCR  
File

837.111/843478

Following the study of Vienna's despatch of August 13, 1947 regarding the activities of Resettlement Inc. of New York and the Reisebuero Central Vindobona at Vienna in procuring Latin American visas for a price, it was agreed upon by NWC, DS and L that CSA should be requested to make an investigation of the activities of Resettlement Inc.

The information contained in Vienna's despatch seemed to indicate that Cuban, Ecuadoran and other Latin-American consuls were possibly enriching themselves by selling visas and there seemed to be some possibility that high-ranking Foreign Office officials were doing the same thing, for visas apparently were granted automatically upon the presentation of a photostat letter from Resettlement Inc. It seemed doubtful that any American law was being violated but it seemed desirable to inform our Embassies in Latin-America of any facts uncovered by CSA indicating a widespread violation of Latin-American visa laws.

Attached is the comprehensive report furnished by CSA, together with the back file on this case. Briefly, there appears to be nothing too irregular about the activities of Resettlement Inc. Latin-American consuls in Europe receive no part of the heavy fees paid and there is no evidence that employees or officials in the respective foreign offices receive bribes in return for the authorization of visas although of course there is a strong suspicion that such must be the case. Everything is handled through a lawyer in the respective capital and it is this lawyer who collects the bulk of the fee. Resettlement Inc. gets only \$50.00 for each visa issued. It is highly probable that the lawyer obtaining the visa at Habana or Quito pays a good portion of the money he receives to some official to facilitate the issuance of the visa. On the other hand, applicants for visas must fulfill the normal legal requirements of the respective country. The lawyer simply "expedites" the case.

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The United States is interested in this activity primarily because most of the people obtaining Latin-American visas in this fashion do so with the intention of proceeding to the United States at the first opportunity. This explains the popularity of Cuban visas. On the other hand there does not appear to be anything the Department can do about this matter.

Since no startling information has been revealed other than that some Latin-American officials may be susceptible to bribes in expediting visa cases, DS recommends that no further action be taken in this matter unless ARA wishes to have a brief summary of the CSA findings transmitted to our interested Embassies.

*WJM*  
DS:WJMarx:JFM

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