

Project Witness

Rena Reichman and the Rescue Connection in Tangier

PWA0033-2

Dates:

February 1991

Level of Description:

Item

Extent and Medium:

1 document

Conditions of Access:

Unknown

Collection Description

Scope and Content

Dr. David Kranzler The bleak era of the Holocaust was relieved by very few bright spots; one of them was a small network of Orthodox rescue activists located throughout the free world: in the U.S., Britain, Switzerland, Turkey, Eretz Yisroel, Sweden, and Tangier. Only recently have some of their extraordinary efforts come to light. These people were not professional relief or even communal workers, or heads of Jewish defense organizations. They were rabbis, roshei yeshiva, laymen and women, whose dedication to the Torah's dicta of areivus (collective responsibility), pikuach nefesh (rescue), and pidyon shevuyim (redemption of captives) catapulted them to leadership in unchartered arenas, and guided them to resort to unorthodox means of rescue which the Jewish establishment was loathe to use. Several books have been written on the topic, notably *Thy Brother's Blood*, by David Kranzler, author of the following article. Among the fifteen chapters in the book portraying heroic efforts to rescue Jewish lives during that tragic period, one deals briefly with the efforts of Mrs. Renee Reichman, "y-a striking example of what a mother and housewife can achieve in times of national crisis. We present the following report on Mrs. Reichmann's remarkable

Reichmann and the Tangier Rescue Connection L ESCAPE TO SPAIN like Mrs. Recha Sternbuch,¹ another woman of valor, Mrs. Reichmann would have preferred to concentrate on the care of her husband and the raising of her children (one teenage daughter and five younger sons) rather than involvement in the life-and-death struggles of European Jewry. Moreover, while the Sternbuchs resided as citizens in Switzerland, the Reichmanns were refugees in Tangier, Spanish Morocco, and were trying to adjust to their new environment. But the call of destiny does not wait for convenience. Scion of the well-known Gestetner family, Renee hailed from Gyor while her husband came from Beled, both in Hungary. The Reichmanns were living in Vienna where Reb Shmaya (Samuel) had established a thriving wholesale egg business. Following the Anschluss, in March 1938, when Hitler marched into Austria, the Reichmanns sought a safe haven in Paris. Their respite in France was rather short, however, for on Erev Shavuot, with the rapid collapse of the French Army, the Reichmanns made a hasty flight southward, a few steps ahead of the Nazi troops. They readily obtained a ten-day transit visa through Spain and wended their way toward the southern border. Mr. Reichmann went ahead into Spain to explore the situation. He had no problems at the border, where not even his passport was de- The Jewish Observer, February 1991