

RUBEL FAMILY PAPERS, 1940-1942
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Translations

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Lang, Ida, Ilse, Gerta, Fritz, Heinrich, Jenni, David, and Else, 1941-1942

Postcard from Ida Lang in Rivesaltes to Martin Lang. Dated August 1, 1941.

My Dears,

We received your package eight days ago through the Red Cross via Portugal. I had to pay 40 Francs. I had such great joy for the following: 1 pound of sugar, 1 bar of chocolate, 1 tin of cocoa, ½ pound margarine, 1 tin of honey, 1 tin of marmalade, 3 tin of sardines, one tin of meat, and some toilet paper. Tell everyone that we are very grateful and that it all tasted homemade. We are relatively well, only poor mother has a pain in her stomach and can only eat rice and grits, which we are unfortunately unable to purchase as we are we are completely destitute. 14 days ago dear Fritz was taken for work and we have not yet heard anything from him. I am completely inconsolable, Freya, thank God, is brave. [Censored line of text] Dear Mother, go to Else and tell her that she may wire us money by telegraph and also send packages via Portugal. They will certainly arrive. Ilse and Gerda receive one pound packages practically every day. How are things with you otherwise, my dears? Hopefully you are all in good health. We have now been gone for nearly 10 months. We hear very little from my relatives and it wears on my dear mother. We are all very distressed over this, it all takes far too much time for us. Now one needs completely different documentation for the U.S.A. as you have surely already heard, and what's more from Washington. I believe that we will see one another again in the New Year. Write again soon. We send our heartfelt hugs and kisses to you all, your very thankful Ida.

Postcard from Ida, Heinrich, and Jenni Lang in Rivesaltes to Ferdinand Rubel. Dated August 12, 1941.

[Recto]

My Dears,

As we have not heard from you I will write again. Hopefully you are all still in good health. We are doing passably well. Three weeks ago Fritz was taken for work and we still have no word from him. You can all imagine how afraid one is. He earned only very little each day and now we are completely destitute and without resources. Someone from the Jewish [illeg.] sent for me these past few days, and said that he had 300 Francs to distribute. I can't describe to you the kind of joy that I, as someone who no longer has anything, felt upon hearing this. As dear Else wrote in April, you were able to wire me the money through a friend of Ferdinand. I expect that it is this sum and I want to thank you all from my heart for it. Unfortunately it took quite a long time to arrive. In the meantime you have probably received all of our letters. I write to my dear mother-in-law and to you [in one letter] in order to save postage. 14 days ago we received a package via Portugal from dear Mother and were very pleased. Perhaps you can do the same dear Else, many here receive one pound packages. If you would also like to send us money, we would also be very thankful. Perhaps all loved ones might pool together for a transfer by telegraph. Everything is very expensive here. Why haven't we heard anything from your relatives in Chicago? Have

they all forgotten us already? In such a Goles? How is your darling child? She is already a big girl now. Our beloved Freya has gotten older, but is very small. The poor child is too pitiful, she often has to go without and is always hungry. One has their worries. Help us where you can. Hopefully sweet freedom will come again for us soon. Write again very soon to us poor people, and a 1000 thanks for everything. Heartfelt hugs and kisses from your Ida who loves you.

[Verso]

[Author 2]

My dears!

Ida has already written anything worth knowing, and we only have one wish anyway, which is to get out of this Goles. With God's help it will happen very soon, as on October 22 we will already have been away from home for 12 months. We are more than needy people. I have now had quite enough of it. With the most heartfelt hugs and kisses from your Uncle Heinrich

[Author 3]

My Dears!

Heartfelt hugs and kisses from me too, yours Aunt Jenni

Letter from David Lang and his wife Else Lang, Fritz Lang and his wife Ida Lang, and Gerta Lang (David and Fritz' step-mother) in Rivesaltes, to Mathilde Lang (David and Fritz's mother). Dated March 29, 1942.

[Recto]

[Author 1]

My Dear, Dear Mother!

It was with great joy that we received your kind letter, and it pleased us very much, particularly to hear that you are well, which can also be said for us. We regret, however, that Martin and Lucie have not even written us once. In the meantime you will have received a letter from us, in which we confirmed the receipt of the money. We have moved. I am in Ilot K, Ilse is in Ilot I barrack 38, this will be a tremendous rupture, hopefully it will be the last time we move in camp. If only the hour would come when we could once again be free persons, and no longer dependent on other people. Received 2 letters this week from South America, writing was very good. Yesterday we received spinach and salad from the Jewish committee, which we can readily use. Can't Martin send us anything? You can't possibly imagine how much we could use it. This week is Passover, the second one in the camp. God willing that it is the last we have here. I want to conclude, dear mother, and all loved ones, with a wish for good health and many hugs and kisses, yours David

[Author 2]

Dear Mother and Loved Ones!

How great was our joy, dear Mother, when we this week we received your letter and that from Lilly, as this whole month we had not received any correspondence from you. We only had one letter from dear Meta. My brother in New York doesn't write at all. We write you all very often and send word to you through the Red Cross. We confirmed the receipt of the money to you right away, Mother. There was a total of 450 Francs which we split with Fritz and confirmed right away – in the meantime, however, 40 men were taken on Thursday for work and David and Fritz were among them. We only received a postcard from them today from Perpygnan [sic]. It happened very suddenly as everything happens here, the clearing of the Ilots at midday and off the next morning. Just now we received a card from both of them, they write that they are both cheerful and content working in the labor detail and with God's help perhaps this will be a way to freedom. They have free time in the evenings, for the moment it is not far

[from us] and we expect them back on Sunday. It is very different today than it was back in the summer we spent in Brest. We often long for that time. From the address you can tell that we have moved to another llot, and as it is a good quarter hour walk to the new location, it was a good thing that the men were still here help. We now have 1 bedstead each with freshly filled straw sacks. Coincidentally we arrived in the same barrack as Ida and all lie all three next to one another. We no longer receive meals in the barrack, but rather in the cafeteria. A barrack with tables and benches has been converted for this purpose. Today is the first day of Passover, and we received our matzos yesterday, 3 pieces per person, of which we recklessly ate too much of already.

[Verso]

[Author 3]

My dear loved ones, and dear mother,

It gave me great joy to receive correspondence from you, dear mother and dear Lilli. When one thinks that they have not had any mail from their loved ones in months, then so much greater is the joy when it does arrive. As you can see we are now in a different llot and together with Ida in the barrack. We also have bedlike bunks, upon which one sleeps better than on planks. We are together with about 50 people in our barrack, so you can imagine the noise of the whole operation and can be glad that it is going to be summer soon. How is dear Lilli? Does she have a good position? I should be brave and follow her lead. The day after tomorrow is the eve of Passover and Fritz intends to go to the cemetery Tuesday. I can't bear to think that my beloved Albert has already been gone from me a year. With God's help I will still have the good fortune to go to come to you. We have missed your well wishes very much, Luizie, as we have yours, Martin. Many hugs and kisses, yours Gerta

[Author 4]

My Dear, Dear Mother! I am happy that you are all in good health, we could all be better off as both parents are in the infirmary. Hopefully we won't be in the camp much longer. We are now having our second Passover in the camp, one can't imagine it. Dear mother, if possible can you send us something? We still need the necessities. Remain in good health, hugs and kisses, Fritz

[Author 2, resumes from previous page]

My letter was interrupted as David and Fritz were here for a few hours, they are happy to be away from here and working. [Censored line of text] Fred too writes that circumstances could be better, which troubles me because of the children. If only by the grace of God that this were all over soon. How are you, dear mother? Do you still work in the home? Do you too have a job again, Martin? You should write at length some time. Dear mother, please let us know why Martin and Lucie have yet to write even once. I will conclude this letter for today. Lots of hugs and kisses, particularly to you, dear Mother, and to your darling girls Ilse.

Arthur von Lindheim wrote that he sent all three of us some money. Best regards to him as well. My cousin Siegfried is also gone. The dear Frankfurters are still here.

[Author 5]

My dears! I too was happy over your lines, particularly that you are all still in good health. We could be better. My beloved parents are ill. My father is better than my mother, though they are both very weakened. This week David and Fritz were taken for work, and both are very happy and content to be gone from here. We hope for the best. We have wonderful news, thank God, regarding dear Freyle (Freya). She is wonderfully taken care of where she is and she likes it very much. She can already make her bed by herself, wash her hair, etc. Yes Mother, how the times change, and so too the people. I never

believed that the child would get out of here, but she has learned a great deal here that has matured her. She will soon be 8 years old and is experiencing many things for the first time. At home I often daydream. Hopefully we will all be free soon, we have already been here 1 ½ years. How are my dear relatives? I received a letter from Else Rubel sent November 27, 1941. I wrote her as well as everyone else, but not by airmail as it is too expensive. In the meantime you have surely received everything from me. I still have not yet received the money Else sent, I could certainly use it. Our loved ones should continue to support us, even those in Chicago, please see to it dear Else. My address is Ida Lang, née Bähr, no. 6431, Ilot I, Barrack 38. Hugs and kisses, your Ida

Mann, Regina, 1940-1941

Letter from Regina Mann in Steinbach to the Rubel Family. Dated September 29, 1940.

Dear Rubel family,

Every day I endeavored to write, time passed, and I pushed it off from one day to the next; I was also ill and had many concerns last winter, things are now improved, you will therefore excuse my long silence. I grew very thin. I weigh 96 pounds again and have regained my old figure and feel much better. Now how are you Mrs. Rubel? I hope that you, as well as little Evelyn and Ferdinand, find yourselves in the best of health. You have a lovely girl, it would make me very happy if I were to receive a photo of her! We received a photo of our dear Edith and Herbert in April. Those two have grown quite big and look well. We have great worries over the children, and I am very homesick. We heard nothing from our children for 6 months. Yesterday we received a postcard from dear Edith, you cannot imagine my joy. The children are staying in a hostel in Southern France and they are doing well. Edith turned 10 years old in April, and dear Herbert turned 15 in August. Herbert has yet to write. Edith wrote us his address. He is seemingly with private citizens, or farmers, and must work. He too is in Southern France. We have only one wish, which is to be reunited with our children in good health. May God continue to protect us and let us remain healthy. My brother-in-law, Ludwig Mann, who lives in Elizabeth New Jersey, at 1143 Elizabeth Ave, will see to our citizenship. Ludwig and Erich are also at home. Ludwig is 1,70 meters tall and Erich 1,60 meters tall; they are off working. I wish you all the best in the New Year, and to Mrs. Rubel senior too. Many kind regards, yours Regina Mann.

Postcard from Luitpold and Regina Mann in Rivesaltes to Elsie Rubel. Dated November 16, 1941.

[Recto]

Dear Mrs. Rubel,

You gave us great joy with the two packages you sent, and I hereby declare my sincerest thanks. We shared them with one another, everything tasted marvelous. Dear Mrs. Rubel, you can't possibly imagine how glad we were—that you are all in good health, I presume. We are well enough. We have heard nothing from Herbert and Edith since the 20th of October, but hope to receive mail by sometime next week. If only it were possible that we should be able to go to our children soon. Ludwig is free, he works in a department of some kind, where I don't yet know. Hopefully you will have received our last letter.

[Correspondence continues on edge]

And many kind regards to your mother and Ferdinand.

Farewell, Regina Mann.

Many heartfelt regards, your thankful (Regina Mann).

Extra well wishes and a kiss to Eveline.

[Verso]

Dear Rubel family,

Thank you very much for your great courtesy, the sardines and chocolate tasted very good to us. Hopefully you are all very well, we wish that we could all be with you. The time will also come for us, and God may that it be very soon. Send love to all with hope that we will hear good news from you soon. In thanks, Luitpold Mann.

Rubel, Ferdinand and Elsa, 1941

Postcard from Else Rubel to Bertha Stückgold. Returned to sender undelivered. Dated September 1941.

Dear Aunt!

It has been a long time since we have heard from you, and I am surprised as we sent you 300 Francs some time ago which was to be paid out by a Ms. Wertheim. Please write us to let us know if you have received it, if not, claim it at Gurs. Best wishes for the turn of the New Year, we hope that will be here soon. I sent you a package via Portugal with provisions and hope that you receive it. After you receive it, please write to us. The Waldbotts visited us for 8 days as well as Julchen. Say hello to Aurelia's sister for us. Heartfelt hugs and kisses from Ferdinand, Mother, and Evelyn. Yours, Else

Rubel, Robert, 1940-1941

Letter from Robert Rubel in Gurs to Ferdinand Rubel. Dated December 22, 1940.

My Dears,

I hope you are all in good health and that you will inform dear Berthold of our, alas, so tragic fate that I wrote you of immediately after our arrival here on October 28. I am well, thank God, though I suffered recently from the common illness (diarrhea), of which many here remain suffering. It was primarily older people who were afflicted; among others, Mr. Hoffmann, Mr. Kirsch, Mrs. Safrin, Jakob Altschuler (of Neckarsulm), Mr. Steiner, Mr. Traub, Mrs. Kahn (the bakery), Mrs. Meier Gerugros, etc., etc. Even though the camp leadership tries to cast our lot here so that it is somewhat bearable, hunger and cold do enough to break our resilience. We former soldiers know barrack life, and if it rains on one's head he drags his straw mattress back a bit. Men and women are separated and can see only another once every 14 days or so. About 1000-1200 persons are united in one llot (small town in camp). I recently visited Uncle Louis, and last week I visited Erna and Mother. I credit Erna for your address, as the address book, along with almost everything else, remains in Ulm. As with most of it, the address book has probably been long auctioned off. We were allowed to take 100 Reichmarks, for which we received 2000 Francs, and which under good management might last 6 months. Many today, however, have no money left and wait for help that isn't there.

There is one thing that I urgently want to ask of you, my dears.

[Second page of letter begins here]

Go to both the Liebmanns and Ferdinand Rubel at once, send them my kind regards (hopefully you have the addresses), and ask them to send 3 new affidavits straight away to the American Consulate in Marseilles with reference to my Stuttgart card number, (number) 9088. It was promised that upon their receipt of the requested affidavits, they would give us visas via Lisbon. It would also be necessary for you to find people who would be able to deposit about 450 dollars for me with HIAS New York, for passage. I believe that this will now be more likely, as we have fellow Jews, particularly those in the

U.S.A., who are in the position and willing to help us. There is one other thing to be enclosed with the affidavits:

For citizens (in the case of American citizens), or in the case of a famous American persons, it is necessary to provide certification of the following:

"That the individual knows Jon Doe as a person who is morally and politically reliable, and who has in no way carried out political activities or other acts that are contrary to the interests of the U.S.A."
This notarized certification must be confirmed by someone who is known in the U.S.A. Weeks ago I managed to write to the loved ones in Ulm by way of Switzerland, however I have not yet had a response. They are all staying in the Jewish hospital where dear Nelly is a nurse. Please send word to all acquaintances with the request that they write me, as I don't have any of their addresses here. To this very day I have no idea where Aunt Jeanette might be. Perhaps you can find out the address of of the Liebmanns and that of my relatives in Kansas City and send them to me. Please write again soon, heartfelt hugs and kisses from your Robert.

[Postscript]

F HIAS, New York, 485 Lafayette Street
An extras kiss to dear little Inge.
Where is dear Ruth? Still in England?

[Correspondence continues on edge]

Have had no news whatsoever from Erez. Julius Rubel, 154 Ben Jehnda Street.

Letter from Robert Rubel in Gurs to Ludwig Liebmann. Dated April 21, 1941.

[Recto]

Dear Ludwig!

My best thanks for your dear lines from March 26 (arrived April 16). Although they were regrettably very brief, they were still very, very revealing to me. It was also with this letter that I heard, although very little, for the first time from my loved ones in Erez, and it came as a great surprise that dear Julius is married. Did he write you anything about it, with whom and where? Naturally it would interest me very much. In the interim please send him my heartfelt congratulations.

Now to you. I cannot thank you enough for sending the \$10, and then \$20 dollars. Both transfers came at just the right time. Pay little mind to the fact that it cannot leave the camp, as it is woe unto him who does not have money in pocket! The various committees have promised us we might have matzos for Passover, though I have personally not detected much more of these provisions that have been promoted with such great elan. The committees have a to do in order to help all those that have their papers in order, but who have not yet obtained their passage, to escape as soon as possible from a Europe without peace. If it were possible to receive wire transfers here from Erez I would not worry about it so much myself. If there is no other way, I ask that you deposit 250 dollars on my behalf with Aicem [sic., see: ICEM], New York, with instruction to then wire the sum to the corresponding shipping line only when I telegram you.

[Correspondence continues on edge]

A letter has just now arrived from dear Julius dated December 1, 1940. You can all imagine my joy. He sent photos from his wedding, I know his wife. He informed me of the financial situation and the unsuccessful passage on the Dreyfus. So dear Ludwig, get in touch with Dr. Maier as I wrote on the reverse. Again, my warmest regards, yours Robert.

[Verso]

250 dollars is approximately the cost of a journey from Marseilles to New York via Martinique including all expenses and eventual train fare, etc., etc. The total cost of passage on this route costs about \$176-\$200. The route from Lisbon to New York costs almost double and is sold out from now until November. With joy I derived from your letters dear Ludwig that you as well as dear Hase [nickname? "Rabbit" or "Bunny"] long ago sent the papers directly to Marseilles and furthermore on the same day I received a letter from dear Ferdinand reporting that he too had sent an affidavit on my behalf. I thank you all for your very active assistance and I may have a small glimmer of hope to get out of this Golus. If our guest country did not suffer so greatly from food shortage it would not have been so hard, for so long, to endure these difficult times. Here one must remain in good health before all else, and this is my most pressing challenge.

These lines are also intended for dear Hase's family, as I do not have his address here.

I hope that you are all in the best of health. Where is dear Berthold and his family? Why doesn't he write? Here one is happy to receive every line from a loved one, so write more often. Hugs and kisses to you all, from you Robert.

[Postscript]

Again, thank you from my heart for the two transfers. I received the \$10 (425 Francs) sent December 12 on January 3, 1941, and the \$20 (870 Francs, minus 40 Francs for bank costs) on February 18. As there was no sender indicated I can only offer you my directed thanks today. The postal receipt for the first transfer only indicated that it was sent by way of the New Yorker Bank.

[Correspondence continues on edge]

Perhaps a better avenue can be found for future money transfers. You may want to get in touch on this score with Mr. Ludwig Maier of 1711 University Avenue, New York City. His wife is the daughter of our mutual friend Max Valfer who is in my barrack. He is happy to provide you with more specific information. Again, best wishes, your Robert.

Stückgold, Bertha, 1941

Postcard from Bertha Stückgold in camp de Noé to the Rubel family, undated.

My Dears!

Yesterday I obtained your address from Ida and want to provide you a sign of life from me with this letter. I am as well as to be expected. I lost 35 pounds in spite of the inactive lifestyle. The conditions are too much for me and I could use money, food, clothing items, and shoes in size 9/9.5. I don't wish to complain to you about everything, as the French are very gracious. How are all of you? And how is your daughter? Write to me at your earliest convenience. You have surely also heard about me from the relatives in Chicago, and I also expect help from Robert. There is so much more I could tell you if I were there. But then I would be a burden to you. I work here on corsets as do all the other women who have grown thin here. Could you perhaps approach the Davids, address follows: Eugen David c/o Levy 530 West 157th Street, Apt 2C, New York. Send him my best wishes and the same to all of you too. In the meantime I hope to hear something from you soon. Heartfelt hugs and kisses. Yours, Aunt Berta

Postcard from Bertha Stückgold in camp de Noé to the Rubel family. Dated August 31, 1941.

My Dears!

Hopefully you are all keeping well, you can expect the same from me. It is completely incomprehensible to me that I don't receive any word from you given that I have heard from Ida Lang that you have sent money to me that to this day I have yet to receive. I still wish to hear from you, but one restrains oneself from hope in such matters. What is new with you? I also have no word from the relatives in Chicago. How happy I had been when you all visited me in Mannheim. Even Däv seems to have forgotten me entirely. Am I still on earth? Last week I received the Davids letter from my people in New York, and two pictures from the daughter. Even the wife sent money on July 20th. I don't wish to get on your nerves. Send everyone my best wishes, heartfelt hugs and kisses to you all from your unfortunate aunt Berta

Postcard from Bertha Stückgold in camp de Noé to the Rubel family. Dated September 8, 1941.

My Dears!

After I received no response from you or from Chicago whatsoever I wanted to send you the following. I wish you all the best for the holidays. I hope that you are all well, I hope you wish me the same. The poverty here is terrible, and I would be so thankful to you if you could help me. To endure this all at my age is awful and outrageous. I have suffered greatly when I lost my brother, but I also wish to be with him. Enough of that misery, please write to me soon through the Quakers. I hear nothing from the Bärs. How is your little daughter? She must be the sunshine in your house. In New York she will soon grow in to a little American. I wish that I could see her. So my dears, all the best to you, and lots of hugs and kisses from your old aunt Berta.

[Postscript]

Please give my best wishes to all friends and family. The Davids, Gerstals, etcetera.

Now I will write to your mother and siblings.

Postcard from Bertha Stückgold in camp de Noé to the Rubel family. Dated October 4, 1941.

My Dears!

Don't be angry with me that I have written you again. I hope that the present holidays went well and that you all prayed, by my here things also went well. I hope that you also prayed for me too. Your daughter must have gotten big and [Illeg.]. Today I am coming to you with my wish that you might write me and send me a few dollars to the address written below. I need winter clothes; a house coat, socks, shoes size 9, etc., as I had to leave everything behind at home. I hope that you are not angry with me. I have yet to hear a single word from Chicago, and yet I remember how happy I used to be when you all would visit me. Thank you very much in advance.

Address: Mr. Zacharius Myrtil
Avocat Villa Le Lancier
La Ciotat B du R
Marseilles

And a thousand hugs and kisses from your poor old aunt Berta who loves you