

## Sternbuch, Recha

(1905–1971), Swiss Jewish rescue activist who served, along with her husband, Isaac, as Swiss representative of the *Va'ad ha-Hatsala* –the rescue committee of the American Union of Orthodox Rabbis.

The Sternbuchs began their rescue activities by helping Jewish refugees in Switzerland. Next, they headed the "Relief Organization for Jewish Refugees in Shanghai," set up in 1941 to help rabbis and *yeshiva* students who had escaped to Shanghai, China (see also Rescue of Polish Jews via East Asia). Later they changed the organization's name to "Relief Organization for Jewish Refugees Abroad." Under that heading, they sent aid packages to Jews in Poland and Czechoslovakia; tried to rescue Jews by obtaining Latin American passports for them; kept in close contact with Jewish leaders in occupied Hungary and Slovakia; and kept tabs on what was happening throughout occupied Europe.

In September 1942 the Sternbuchs gave information to Jewish leaders in the United States about the mass deportations from the Warsaw Ghetto and begged them to get help from the American authorities. Later, the couple participated in negotiations with the Nazis that ultimately led to the transfer of 1,200 Jews from Theresienstadt to Switzerland in February 1945. After the war, Recha Sternbuch devoted herself to retrieving surviving Jewish children from non-Jewish orphanages, convents, and private homes.