

President's Secretary's File
Subject File
Carter, John F. Aug-Dec 1942
Box 98

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

August 12, 1942.

MEMORANDUM FOR

DR. HENRY FIELD and
JACK CARTER

TO READ AND RETURN FOR MY
FILES.

F.D.R.

Read and returned - Aug 13, 1942

J F Carter.
Henry Field.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

THE SECRETARY

August 5, 1942

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

I attach hereto a memorandum with reference to Mr. Hrdlicka's proposal and I shall be glad to discuss the matter with you at any time you so desire.

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REDISTRIBUTION OF POPULATIONS

Redistribution of populations is a subject which has for some time past received the attention of the Department of State. A study is now in process. The national aspects of redistribution are receiving the attention of other governments. Germany is engaged in transfers into Germany from conquered areas of large blocks of industrial as well as agricultural labor. The sadness of and the sordid motives actuating the transfers of Jewish deportees to regions in Poland and Russia has stultified the reputation of the Nazi regime and emphasized the sadistic quality of their philosophy.

These are present day examples of redistributions of populations born under the psychology of war and undertaken for selfish reasons without regard for higher humanitarian considerations. There are many others, noteworthy being the derelict mass of Poles, original refugees out of Poland eastward and now in terrible hegira from the Caucasus southward through Iran to unknown and as yet ephemeral destination.

Another present day example was recently mentioned by Mr. Jowitt in his public address in England contemplating the transfer of labor from one industry to another, for reasons of national economy to achieve a better geographical distribution of its industrial population. (London's 4097, July 23.)

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There will be others still before this maelstrom passes.

The suggestion contained in Mr. Hrdlicka's letter, however, presents the subject of which the foregoing are unhappy examples in a form which might promise a redistribution under happy omens, with humanitarian purpose and under the scrutiny and direction of science.

No doubt there are many fair lands now underpopulated. Likewise there are large regions overpopulated - teeming with humanity. Except for a few small areas in Europe, like Sicily, the most dense populations are East of Suez - India with 300,000,000, China with 400,000,000, Java with the most dense population in the world, and Japan itself with 73,000,000 in an area little more than half the size of Texas.

In Europe itself the population is thickest in the central part and in Italy. The central part would run from the Rhine east to the Pripet Marshes and from the southern end of the Baltic to the Mediterranean, but excluding the Balkans, the Iberian Peninsula and western France.

In this area there has been a growing tendency to congregate in cities, superinduced by the development of industry. Huddling together of persons for mutual protection on hilltops during the Middle Ages developed

cities

cities and like magnets the ports of sea-borne traffic and the crossroads of economic life have attracted more and more. The result has been huge masses of people bound together in small areas and entirely dependent upon the industrial, economic or financial resources of surrounding regions. When disturbances change the conditions in those regions the cities, like Vienna after 1920, like Warsaw, like Vilna, become temporarily or permanently affected by the change in the reasons which made them possible and, like ghosts, become spectres of former grandeur with fundamental effects upon the populations.

It is assumed that it is these populations and their cousins in the rural areas which are in the mind of Mr. Hrdlicka. That assumption excludes present consideration for the masses east of Suez, though the same philosophy may be expanded to incorporate them into consideration.

The anomalous part of recent history is that provision has been made for the redistribution of many of these dense populations though there has not been, except in a few instances, any organized effort to actually distribute the people. England, through hundreds of years, gradually amassed an Empire in which are some of

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the most sparsely settled fair lands of good climate, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa. France has North Africa, very sparsely settled, in her immediate neighborhood; Madagascar and other large regions potentially able to accommodate millions.

Italy had Eritrea and Somaliland which were adaptable for residence by the inhabitants of the thickly settled and hot areas of Southern Italy. Germany had, before the First World War, large habitable areas in Africa. Belgium has still an enormous and fertile region in the Congo. The Netherlands and Denmark have large, less attractive, areas but practical for resettlement.

But - during all the time control over these areas was or has been held hardly any European moved into those regions. They have all desired to hover in the neighborhood of their "home". Whatever the reasons may be they have stayed at home rather than risk the adventure of a new life beyond the horizon of their church spires. Liverpool, Leeds and London remain over-crowded - while Canada, Australia and South Africa are awaiting development by immigrants from "home". Paris, Lyon, Lille and Marseille remain crowded by millions of people who live in little cubbyholes up flights of rickety stairs, and just across the Mediterranean and

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in the untouched altitudes of Madagascar farms and a fulsome life await. Italy made the only organized attempt on large scale in modern times to settle a population in Ethiopia when she ruled that stricken country but it was only under coercion that the people reluctantly left their accustomed surroundings and set sail. Hamburg, Berlin and Munich continued to grow more crowded while Germany possessed her extensive and habitable colonies in Africa.

It may be that the cities in Europe remain over-crowded and that the rural areas are forced to support too many because no systematic, scientific effort has been put forth to redistribute the populations. It may be that a careful study of the economic and social questions conceivably concerned, would be productive of real good. The many questions involved can hardly be set out in advance. They include historical, political, religious, racial, social, psychological and many other factors which are not in the realm of the exact sciences in addition to some which would fall within that category.

In reviewing thus briefly a wide and complicated problem one thing stands out. The United States is the one place in the world many, if not most, of these people everywhere would like to migrate to. We can all sympathize with the reasons which inspire that happy attitude

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toward our favored country but at the same time we recognize the impracticability of receiving into our midst all those who may care to share our advantages.

One other thing stands out. Of all the governments in the world the United States is the only one which during the last half century has encouraged immigration on a large scale (though we have prohibited Orientals). We have thereby profited and have absorbed many millions into our social body. We are the only country in the world today which continues to permit immigration from enemy countries.

There are many fair lands capable of receiving many millions of citizens. The suggestion that they be utilized has often been made. But the problems it raises are so profound that the study of them should include approaches from many angles. Any group engaged upon such a study should be broad-minded, erudite, comprehending - and, in the last analysis, realistic. It is superfluous to add that the problems raised are delicate from the political point of view.

South and Central America have not been mentioned in this memorandum. This omission has not been for the purpose of excluding them as possibilities and as fields to be included in a program. In mentioning those regions now and in recognizing their place along with other

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places mentioned as fields to be included it is felt that the present day political aspects mentioned in the memorandum of May 30 are controlling. By that is meant that any approach to any of them under present circumstances might be misunderstood and might cause unexpected repercussions.

The results of the studies proceeding in the Department would of course be made available to the President when they are completed. Intermediate reports might be made available to the President if he desired it.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

THE SECRETARY

May 30, 1942.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

My dear Mr. President:

The present is probably not a propitious moment to approach the Central and South American countries with a proposal for settlement by groups of foreigners. They are having a contemporary experience of dissatisfaction with groups having settled there from Germany, Italy, Japan and other nations of that group and are presently engaged in expelling thousands of them who have been working against the interest of those countries by acting as spies or as agents of propaganda and subversive activity. The United States Government is helping them rid themselves of these people and has transported to the United States about 3000 offensive foreign residents of German, Italian and Japanese nationality who were dangerous to the political and economical existence of each of the countries to the south - except only Argentina and Chile.

With the migration back to Europe now proceeding and with the memory of the recent unwholesome activity of group leaders quite real and fresh in their minds it is doubtful if the present is or that the near future will be a propitious time for the United States to suggest those countries receive fresh groups under other leaders.

C.H