Eleanor Roosevelt Papers
102 Refugee Letters
1942-1945 US Committee for the Care of European Children
July 8, 1942

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

You will be interested to know that the United States Committee is continuing its efforts to bring European children to safety in the United States. The fifty youngsters described and pictured in the clippings reproduced inside range from 5 to 15 years of age and include 13 German, 13 Polish, 1 Czechoslovakian and 23 Spanish children.

The 23 Spanish children constitute the first group of Spanish refugees arriving under the auspices of this Committee. Included in the group were many children who had been living in concentration camps.

The officers of the U. S. Committee weighed the risk of transportation against the severity of conditions in France for refugees. The best information we could get indicated that the children faced certain death if they remained in Europe. As you know, there isn't enough food in unoccupied France and apparently no possibility of getting enough food. Theoretically the children should get 1,000 calories of food a day, but actually this is impossible.

I hope very much that we shall have your continued interest and support of the United States Committee work.

Sincerely yours,

[Signature]

Marshall Field
The Long Waiting Over -- They're in a Free Land

Innocents

Crowded Ship Brings In 50 Kids Rescued From Concentration Camps Look For New Homes Here

Refugee Says French Ships Carried Arms to Rommel

50 Boys and Girls From Aryan Demolished Europe Show Happiness in Song

23 SPANISH YOUNGSTERS

Ros de Dax, Among Arrivals - Mutter Says France Wants Fight on U.S. Side

677 Refugees Land

Many JFK Children

CHILD REFUGEES HERE FROM DETENTION CAMPS

CHICAGO DAILY NEWS

677 Refugees Land

Many JFK Children
50 Refugee Children, Including Germans, Arrive—and Eat

Fifty child refugees from Hitler's war-torn Europe saw the Statue of Liberty today and walked for the first time since 1930 in a land of freedom.

The children were among the 500,000 persons brought here from Europe today by the S.S. Committee for the Care of European Children. The ship carried 2,063 passengers.

They arrived with 207 adult passengers, they walked. The children had been brought by the Committee for the Care of European Children. The ship carried 2,063 passengers.

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The children were among the 500,000 persons brought here from Europe today by the S.S. Committee for the Care of European Children. The ship carried 2,063 passengers.
July 25, 1942

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

You will be happy to learn that the fifty child refugees from Nazi-conquered countries who landed here three weeks ago have found the United States a grand place to be. The pitifully lean meals and the inhumanity common in Hitler’s Europe already seem unreal to them. The pictures on the inside pages show that the children still remaining in the reception center are enjoying our American hospitality.

I am sure we can all be happy that we have engaged in this work of rescuing children who have been driven from their homes and separated from surviving members of their families. My only regret is that money has not been available for saving more of these boys and girls.

We have a continuing obligation to some 1650 children, more than half of whom are British. I hope that either now or when you are making up your charitable budget you will make just as generous a gift as possible to the United States Committee.

Sincerely yours,

Marshall Field

Marshall Field
Europe's Refugee Children Find Happiness Here . . .

These are European refugee children who arrived here three weeks ago, undernourished and scared.

Good Care Makes Them Forget the Wartime Horrors That Swept Away Their Homes

By Emmett V. Maun

Three weeks ago, I sat on a steamship pier in Staten Island and watched 50 bedraggled, frightened children disembark from an aged Portuguese liner. Most of the children had come from regimented countries; many of them were badly undernourished and a number were orphans.

The youngsters were taken in charge by the U. S. Committee for the Care of European Children and taken to the lovely, spacious Edwin Gould Foundation in Pelham, there to await removal to carefully investigated foster homes. Yesterday I went to Pelham to see how they had adapted themselves to a new world, away from the frightfulness that they had known so well.

The children, with the resiliency of their age, no longer talked of war as they did upon arrival. They were clean, boisterous and each an individual again.

They drank three or four glasses of milk at each meal. They had butter and bread and ice cream. They are being taught to swim in the Foundation's pool. They are picking up the English language, all except the idioms OK which their teachers think they'll learn soon enough without being told.

The hosts are amazed that few of them care for chocolate ice cream. They all take vanilla.
... Planning Their Futures, Learning American Ways

Encarnacion, 12
Had been under bombings in various countries and within sound of war as long as she can remember. Her father is dead; she gets her guidance from an older brother in Europe who writes long, thoughtful letters. Encarnacion is still amazed at New York skyscrapers. She would like to be a movie actress.

Serita, 11
Wants to be a dancer. She already has given several recitals for the entertainment of her companions. She sings, too. Of America, she said: "I like the movies best, but I like the cake better." She has demonstrated excellent leadership among the children, both while in Europe and at the home.

Lucia, 10
Says she knows nine words of English already. They are: "Good morning, goodnight, how are you and thank you." The American things that impress her most are technicolor in movies, the swimming pool at the home, and brick ice cream served in slices of three separate flavors. When she grows up she wants to "have a home."

Arsenio, 11
Was the son of a longshoreman killed in the war. He remembers war vividly and his face takes on a look of bitter hatred when it is mentioned. He wants to be an accountant, "because I am good at figures." American baseball fascinates him, so does the idea of swimming in a pool.

Josefa, 10
Mischiefously moans that she cannot understand a word of English but, put through a drill she responded readily. She is very self-reliant and teams up with Serita in offering leadership for the younger and less confident youngsters. Josefa can't believe Radio City Music hall, was surprised to book down on the Normandie.

Julian, 13
Is the most serious and one of the most intelligent boys in the group. He wants to be an aviator in fighting planes, but is more interested now in getting a home where he can study. He lived in a French camp where only the "young boys got milk and nobody got any butter or ice cream."
TWO FIFTY PARK AVENUE
NEW YORK

November 30, 1942

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

The twenty-eight escorts whom the United States Committee for the Care of European Children sent abroad to bring back the shipload of refugee children who had exit visas from Vichy-France are now in Lisbon. We are instructing the escorts to remain in Lisbon temporarily to utilize the opportunity to save the lives of children through rescue.

When you compare the enclosed cable received November 25, the day before Thanksgiving, from Mr. Bennet Schauffler, our chief escort who is on leave of absence as regional director of the National Labor Relations Board, 4th district, (Philadelphia area) with the cable received today, the day after Thanksgiving, you will see that the situation is a changing one. I have also attached the cable received today by the Quakers’ headquarters in Philadelphia from Philip Conard, their representative in Lisbon.

To summarize: it now looks as though, provided the necessary cooperation can be secured from the European Governments, that we may be able to save up to 500 refugee children from Spain and Portugal, and, if the negotiations through the Swiss Government and the Swiss and French Red Cross are successful, we may be able to save the lives of a much larger number of refugee children now in Southern France.

Because of the delicacy of the negotiations, may I ask that no printed publicity be given to the information contained in these cables.

Again, I appreciate your interest in our program and I shall make every effort to keep you informed.

Sincerely yours,

[Signature]

Marshall Field
Cable received November 25, 1942

"Escort Group arrived safely. Emigration of children from France for time being impossible, though still continuing efforts in the hope situation may change. At present time approximately 200 children all nationalities formerly from unoccupied France now in desperate situation in Spanish prisons. Also some children in Portugal. Most urgent that every effort be made to save these children as soon as possible. Would therefore strongly urge you recommend State Department that visas assigned for children be authorized for groups now in Spain and Portugal. Presence of trained escort group in Lisbon affords unusual opportunity for transport under optimum conditions if immediate action taken."

Bennet Schaufler.

Cable received November 27, 1942

"Indispensable that State Department enlist support Swiss Government in effecting removal children from France and ask that Swiss legation Vichy be instructed to take up discussion with French authorities where Pinckney Tuck (U.S. Charge d'affaires to Vichy France prior to November 7) left off. We have taken measures to enlist French and Swiss Red Cross cooperation to handle transport to French border and continue all necessary negotiations."

Bennet Schaufler.

Cable received November 27, 1942.

"New telephonic conversation with Geneva Sunday indicates delegates hope for eventual exit children."

Philip Conard
February 4, 1943

Memorandum to Mrs. Roosevelt, Mr. Field, Mrs. Gibbons, Miss Inglis, Dr. Kenworthy, Mr. Bulholland, Mr. Morgan, Mr. Weiss, Mr. Warren, Miss Margaret Frawley of the American Friends Service Committee and Mr. Moses Leavitt of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee.

Of major importance to the U. S. Committee are (1) the questions concerning prospects of a continuing children's refugee program from the Iberian Peninsula; (2) the probabilities of developments concerning the remaining fiscal year 1943 and 1944; (3) major types of problems relating to the present status of development of the children's refugee program.

The following memorandum is brought together after discussions with Dr. Joseph Schwartz, Joint Distribution Committee representative from Lisbon, discussion with Mr. Philip Conard, American Friends Service Committee representative from Lisbon, and conversations and discussions with the escort party recently returned.

Conard and Schwartz agree that a mass evacuation program cannot be considered for the following reasons and that the program will be a continuing one with the numbers of children able to sail for this country being less than a hundred in individual groups:

1. The effect of rumours relating to Mexico and Belgian Congo, and other similar rumours involving family migration;

2. The rumour of the sinking of a refugee ship;

3. The lack of organized relief and welfare agencies and personnel in Spain;


Although it is stated that there are about twenty children in Lisbon ready for the next sailing, some twenty-five eligible children in Madrid, and upwards of one hundred in Barcelona and only eight to ten in Vigo and Bilboa, the total number of children cannot be determined until some survey can be accomplished covering the various Spanish areas. The numbers of children under sixteen are smaller than might be expected in a refugee group of some fifteen to eighteen thousand—because of the severity of crossing the Pyrenees and the fact that the refugees are mostly men and/or women unaccompanied by a normal ratio of children. About one hundred fifty a day are at present estimated to be working into Spain from France.

In respect to those children in France who so nearly were able to leave, they have been returned from Marseille and Lyons to the various Ose homes or other sources from which they were originally gathered. Schwartz and Conard are agreed that the French refugee program is definitely closed. Switzerland is not accepting any children, although a tentative plan may be attempted based on a guarantee of visas from Argentina for upwards of one thousand children who would be accepted by Switzerland for care for the duration, but Switzerland also would require financing for maintenance.
Regarding the question of selection of children, it is highly important that any children selected in Spain should be carefully chosen in order that their presentation to the Consuls at such time as the Consuls will accept presentation will not offer the Consuls an excuse for refusing them. In view of this, it is in order that Herbert Katzki be informed that in his next conversations with Dr. Sequerra that Dr. Sequerra’s selection of children for presentation be closely scrutinized and that first children be most carefully considered.

In view of the conference with Mr. Travers in Washington yesterday, there is every reason to believe that requests for quota numbers should be coming through from the Barcelona and Madrid Consulates. Thus, instructions to Katzki for Sequerra should be sent off immediately urging future precautions.

With the approach of spring and summer it is not unlikely that the proportion of children escaping into Spain from France will be increasing. It is quite likely therefore, that there is a definite problem of a child evacuee program to be considered for the remainder of the present fiscal year. On this basis, the U. S. Committee is continuing its finance program of $907,000, from War Chests and is looking to other commitments in due time for appropriate acknowledgment.

In terms of a program for 1944 involving a child refugee program, there are far too many imponderables. In discussions with Schwarts and Conard, the fiscal position of the U. S. Committee in terms of the financial fund raising structures in this country were pointed out, and each, I think, more clearly understands, and each agreed that he would attempt to keep in the back of his mind the question as to developing trends and events so that as early as June or July we might be able to discuss more adequately the 1944 fiscal program in order that the U. S. Committee could be taken into War Chests’ campaigns in this country to be a full participating member in the campaign rather than, by necessity, requesting an allotment from the contingency funds.

It is my conviction that the relief agencies in respect to the refugee program in the Iberian Peninsula may suddenly find themselves in a comparable position to the situation regarding unoccupied France, and that when an emergency of the severest nature presents itself that the time allowed will not be adequate, and that the official attitude will be the same as in France so that while there is still an opportunity, even though no dire emergency exists, it is sound and practical to remove as many children as are eligible to the United States. In initiating this program in Spain, it is essential that the initial presentations of children to the Consulates be carefully chosen children. At such time as an emergency should develop and again the question of mass removal of children thrusts itself forward, the channels involving experience in the reception, care and selection of children, Consulate acceptances of procedure, and transportation shall be in good enough working order to accommodate an emergency demand.

From the conference in Washington on February 3rd with Travers, the following summarization relates itself to this memorandum:

Mr. Travers sent a cable during the conference with Mr. Warren, Mr. Schaffier and Miss Lowy to the Ambassador at Madrid directing him to follow the instructions previously wired to Lisbon and Madrid and to follow the same procedure as was used in Lisbon authorizing visas for refugee children who should be presented to the Consulates by representatives of the American Friends Service Committee and Joint
Distribution Committee, children whose parents wish them to go to the United States and children whose parents have been deported.

Another cable is being prepared by Mr. Travers regarding the cases of children whose papers have been lost and children who have arrived in Lisbon and Spain without parents so that there will be no difficulty about issuing visas to children whose parents or guardians are not there to vouch for them.

Mr. Travers promised immediate action on the applications of the five merit cases which had been received that day from Lisbon.
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MRS. FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT, HONORARY PRESIDENT
MARSHALL FIELD, PRESIDENT
AGNES KING INGLIS, SECRETARY
JACKSON MARTINDELL, TREASURER

April 28, 1943

Mr. Louis S. Weiss
61 Broadway
New York City

Dear Mr. Weiss:

Within the past month a ruling has been established by the United States Department of State to the effect that those persons who left Germany before March 15, 1938 are not to be considered refugees and in this sense not eligible for evacuation to the United States under the provisions of the United States Committee for the Care of European Children, Inc.

In the Iberian Peninsula this ruling eliminates many children who would otherwise be eligible for evacuation to the United States. These children face the same dangers and hazards as those children who were in what was unoccupied France, from where the United States Committee brought 234 children. Many of these children were refugees in the sense that they had been on the road ahead of Nazi pogroms prior to the 1938 Anschluss date. These children from the Iberian Peninsula are not Spanish. They come to the United States unaccompanied. The remaining parents, if any, sign an agreement with the Consul whereby their eventual visa requests are not to be influenced by the fact that their children are in the United States. These people will not be allowed to remain in Spain forever, the dangers and hardships created by this war makes them eligible for evacuation as refugees, and invasion possibilities place them in the same position as the children in France.

There will not be great numbers of children in the sense of large evacuation groups. Rather, the present evacuation program prospect would be one of a continuing series of smaller groups of children.

The order setting forth the date determining when a child is or is not a refugee was issued by sources which require us to go beyond Mr. H. K. Travers, Chief of the Visa Division, with whom this matter has been discussed. Previously, Mr. George Warren of the President's Advisory Committee on Refugees assisted us on these matters, but Mr. Warren is now attached to the State Department and is in Bermuda at the Refugee Conference.
This matter has been discussed by the Advisory Committee of the United States Committee on the child refugee problem. We do not know just why this date was established, and it is the wish of this Committee that you explore possibilities of determining "why this ruling", and whether or not it may be rescinded.

Sincerely yours,

Robert Lang
Executive Director