

Eleanor Roosevelt Papers

102 Refugee Letters

1942-1945 US Committee for the Care of European Children

NOTED

*2/10*  
**United States Committee for the Care of European Children, Inc.**

215 FOURTH AVENUE, NEW YORK CITY

Telephone ALgonquin 4-5162

MRS. FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT, HONORARY PRESIDENT  
MARSHALL FIELD, PRESIDENT  
AGNES KING INGLIS, SECRETARY  
JACKSON MARTINDELL, TREASURER

ROBERT LANG  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

July 8, 1942

JUL 9 - 1942  
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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,

*Marshall Field*

Marshall Field

NEW YORK WORLD-TELEGRAM TRIBUNE, JUNE 16, 1942

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



**The New York Times**  
May 11, 1942, p. 10  
"The New York Times"  
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The inquiring mind, the adventurous spirit—Alice Gurev, a boy today, has tackled a reporter as she was arriving on the ship. They don't know where their parents are. But on the ship came up the bay they were the only ones to cheer.



Breathless—these children have them. They are some of the 50 who were brought to the Sarga Pinta today by the U.S. Committee for the Care of European Children. They don't know where their parents are. But on the ship came up the bay they were the only ones to cheer.

### Innocents



These were among 30 orphaned Portuguese escapees. The youngsters, relatives, range in age from 12 to 1. Captured by the Nazis, they were rescued by the U.S. Committee for the Care of European Children.

## 8 P.M.'S DAILY PICTURE

### Crowded Ship Brings In 50

#### Kids Rescued From Concentration Camps Look For New Homes Here

By **EMERY V. MANN**  
The aged Portuguese liner Sarga Pinta arrived yesterday from Lisbon, by way of Casablanca and Bermuda, desperately crowded with refugees from nearly every country in occupied Europe. There were 607 men, women and children packed into every inch of regular and irregular space.

About 50 of the passengers failed to pass the final immigration barrier, however, and were sent to Ellis Island for further examination and possible deportation.

From 5 to 15  
In the lot were 30 orphans boys and girls, ranging from 5 to 15, who were pulled up in Europe by the United States Committee for the Care of European Children, by the American Friends Service Committee and by several Jewish agencies.

They came from Poland, Czechoslovakia, Spain and France. Many of them had spent months in concentration camps with their mothers when the Nazis broke up the Jewish homes. Most of them remember their fathers only vaguely and none of them were orphans who had been lusted about successfully by Hitler's emissaries.

The adult passengers who came from France were extremely bitter at the Laval Government, expressing the deepest hatred for Hitler's regime. The French people are organizing a powerful underground army which is said to reach 500,000 men now and will be ready to join the second front if it is spread on the French coast.

Supplies for Rome  
A disappointed-looking leader from Marseille charged that the Laval government was hoarding supplies for the Axis ships being sent back to Italy, but only for the French population.

People told of the profits, the and the other collapse of assets to save the puppet governments since since. The situation is so hopeless that it is no chance of the French people unless the democratic nations of the West back the present government.



These 30 children, of several who will find shelter and in makeshift orphanages.



Antonio Stern's father did concentration camp, his worst lesson.



These two Polish boys were in a concentration camp when mother still is held.

### 677 REFUGEES LAND; MANY ARE CHILDREN

#### 50 Boys and Girls From Axis-Dominated Europe Show Happiness in Song

#### 23 SPANISH YOUNGSTERS

#### Son of Dreyfus Among Arrivals—Banker Says Wants to Fight on U. S. Side

The Portuguese liner Sarga Pinta docked at a Staten Island pier just before noon yesterday with 677 refugees from Axis-dominated Europe. Fifty boys and girls, the largest group to come here in several months, arrived on the ship under the auspices of the United States Committee for the Care of European Children. There were twenty-one girls and twenty-nine boys, ranging in age from 1 to 15 years, and they welcomed the fresh refuge landing with a song. They seemed about the happiest happy, accepted lunch, but not before of elaborate meals prepared by welfare workers, and gathered together around their empty baggage to sing. Despite the strains of the past two years they were still bright-eyed and cheerful.

Officers said that several of the children were to be taken to Ellis Island for observation, but that all would probably be released. They said they would be taken to a child care home in the Bronx for observation.

Many Children From Spain  
According to Robert Lang, executive director of the committee, the group included 150 Spaniards, 100 from Germany, 100 from France, and 100 from Italy. The largest group of Spanish refugees brought here in a long time. They were met at the pier by Mrs. Bernard L. Lee, former Spanish ambassador in the United States.

One of the children was a boy identified only as Jacques 2, because of the fear that members of the family still in a concentration camp in Southern France might come to harm. His father was a Polish soldier, but before the outbreak of the war he had been a member of the family.

the plane overcame caution and he wrote a desperate letter to his mother. He was arrested and returned to the camp. He said he was not at all sure that he had not been shot at any time.

Jacques said he did not know where his father was, but a feeling that he is well and his whereabouts, saying he is to liberate my mother.

Captain Pierre Dreyfus, an Army Air Corps pilot, was in France when he was captured by the Germans. He was held in a prison camp for several months.

Another passenger, a former French banker who would not give his name, declared that the French people get only 30 per cent of the food supplies that reached Munich, and that the rest was taken by Germany. German troops in France are causing large amounts of food and other supplies to be sent to the United States.

The banker said the French people were hoping for a second front in France and that they would like to fight alongside Americans.

The Sarga Pinta left Lisbon on June 7, sailing at Casablanca, where most of the refugees were taken on, and later at Bermuda. Agents of the American Joint Distribution Committee, who were in charge of the ship, said they were willing to take as many as 1,000 of their own.

## The Sun CHILD REFUGEES HERE FROM DETENTION CAMPS



Some of the fifty children brought here by the United States Committee for the Care of European Children.

### Refugee Says French Ships Carried Arms to Rommel

#### Reports Some Sailors Revolted and Italians Took Over—Fifty Children Arrive From Detention Camps.

Mathew Erwin Rommel's successful Libyan army was supplied with material sent on French ships from Marseilles to Tunisia, a French refugee, one of 677 passengers to reach here aboard the Portuguese ship the Sarga Pinta, said today. The refugee asserted that this fact was not as commonly known here as he said it was.

There were 677 children, 50 of whom were orphans, on the ship. The rest were children of French parents who had been in detention camps. The children were brought here by the United States Committee for the Care of European Children.

before any armaments were taken to the ship. The latter was intended to be used as a transport ship for the Axis forces, but it was not used.

Some of the children who were brought here by the United States Committee for the Care of European Children.

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World Afire



who arrived from Europe... which bought 427 pa-... were brought here by the... European Children, which... Though they have... even adult women, they... 14 sailing.

FIFTY NEWS, FRIDAY, JUNE 26, 1942

# REFUGEE KIDS ARRIVE—HAPPY? YOU BET!



## SAFE VOYAGE

When the S. S. *Serra* docked yesterday at Staten Island, these smiling youngsters were among 50 refugees brought from Europe by the United States Committee for the Care of European Children. Their ages range from 5 to 15 and they include natives of Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Spain. See foto at right.



## 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 1939 in a land of freedom.



THESE TWO youths were among the 21 girls and 29 boys brought here from Europe today by the U. S. Committee for the Care of European Children. The ship carried 477 passengers.

They arrived with 427 adult refugees aboard the Portuguese *Serra* docked at Pier 8, Stapleton, S. I., from Casablanca, French Morocco. There were 21 girls and 29 boys, ranging from 5 to 15 years. Thirteen were German and 13 others Polish; one was Czech and 23 were Spanish. They came here under the auspices of the U. S. Committee for the Care of European Children, of which Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt is a founder. They had seen their parents dead or insane and whose father, he is Danish. Slaving still, they were taken in hours to a home in the Bronx and later will be distributed to foster homes.

MAGAZINE

## Refugee Children



and religious, arrived from Lisbon yesterday hoping to find foster parents in until they grow up. The children were found in concentration camps and Nazi in Occupied France. Photos by Steven Dory, PM



Alice Gottlieb was only a few weeks old when the Nazis overran Paris when her father had a fee business. The family wandered over Unoccupied France for two years waiting for a chance to get to America.

## CUTE and hungry. Little Antoinette Steur, 8, sits for her lunch in a big way. Her Germanian camp.

—Story on page 8

## Refugees Reach Land of Freedom From the Prison That Is Europe



## Pale Children, Refugees, Quit Ship With Song

Show Bravery on Arrival, but Real Change Comes With First Food in U. S.

They were and seemed children among the 477 passengers of the Portuguese *Serra* docked at Staten Island yesterday. They were the 50 European children, which included 21 girls and 29 boys, ranging from 5 to 15 years. Thirteen were German and 13 others Polish; one was Czech and 23 were Spanish. They came here under the auspices of the U. S. Committee for the Care of European Children, of which Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt is a founder. They had seen their parents dead or insane and whose father, he is Danish. Slaving still, they were taken in hours to a home in the Bronx and later will be distributed to foster homes.

of them were girls. They were about 10 years old and had been in the hands of the Nazis since 1939. They were brought to the United States by the United States Committee for the Care of European Children. They were found in concentration camps and Nazi in Occupied France. Photos by Steven Dory, PM

"We are doing really well here," said one of the children. "We are doing really well here," said one of the children. "We are doing really well here," said one of the children.

*File*  
United States Committee for the Care of European Children, Inc.

215 FOURTH AVENUE, NEW YORK CITY

Telephone ALgonquin 4-5162

JUL 27 1942

MRS. FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT, HONORARY PRESIDENT

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JACKSON MARTINDELL, TREASURER

ROBERT LANG

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

*10/2*  
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.



The children set the tables, do their dishes.

### 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 sadly 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 idiom 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."



Arseno, 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.

Photos by Peter Killian, PM



Josefa, 10

Mischievously insists 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 true, was surprised to look 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

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*file*

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 Schaufler, 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,

*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 Schauffler.

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 Schauffler.

Cable received November 27, 1942.

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

Philip Conard

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UNITED STATES COMMITTEE FOR THE CARE OF EUROPEAN CHILDREN, INC.

*fn*

February 4, 1943

Memorandum to Mrs. Roosevelt, Mr. Field, Mrs. Gibbons, Miss Inglis, Dr. Kenworthy, Mr. Mulholland, 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;
4. Conflict and confusion regarding what constitutes State Department instruction for emigrating children.

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 Bilbao, 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.

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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 Dr. Sequerra's selection of children for presentation be closely scrutinized and that the 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 Schwartz 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. Schauflier 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.

# United States Committee for the Care of European Children, Inc.

215 FOURTH AVENUE, NEW YORK CITY

Telephone ALgonquin 4-5162

MRS. FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT, HONORARY PRESIDENT  
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JACKSON MARTINDELL, TREASURER

ROBERT LANG  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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.

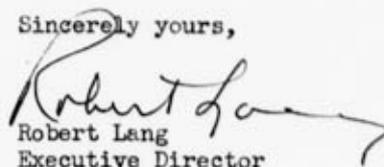
In the Iberian Peninsula this ruling eliminates many children who would otherwise be eligible for evacuation to the United States. These children face the same dangers and hazards as those children who were in what was unoccupied France, from where the United States Committee brought 284 children. Many 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,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Robert Lang". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Robert Lang  
Executive Director