

Eleanor Roosevelt Papers
102 Refugee Letters
1943 A-Z

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EX-102

International Rescue and Relief Committee

Incorporated

Combining: Emergency Rescue Committee, Inc.
International Relief Association, Inc.

2 WEST 43rd STREET, NEW YORK, N. Y.

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August 2, 1943. 102

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Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

As a sustaining member of the International Rescue and Relief Committee I think you will be interested in the enclosed folder which gives the latest account of our activities. The American Committee for Christian Refugees, the Unitarian Service Committee, and the International Rescue and Relief Committee, all of whom are engaged in assisting victims of the Hitler terror, have united in a coordinating committee known as Refugee Relief Trustees, Inc. to promote our common aims and to prevent duplication of effort in our chosen field. I want to inform you of this important step which I believe will have your approval.

For the year 1943 the activities of the three constituent organizations of Refugee Relief Trustees have been underwritten by the National War Fund, which has made a grant of \$893,000 to finance our combined work. The enclosed booklet shows in detail how this grant will be apportioned for the particular activities of each of the three committees. As you probably know, the National War Fund is a fund-raising philanthropic federation operating throughout the country, which has endorsed the work, and accepted the responsibility for the budgets, of seventeen agencies designed to relieve various forms of human need and distress arising out of the war. These agencies, of which we are one through our participation in Refugee Relief Trustees, have been selected as having, in the opinion of the Fund, "the leadership, the experience and the facilities to do well what the American people will want them to do."

The National War Fund Campaign for 1943 will begin in your community sometime this autumn. I hope that you will support it to the extent of your ability and in the knowledge that your contribution will help to further the work of the International Rescue and Relief Committee which you have so generously assisted since June, 1940.

Sincerely yours,

Frank Kingdon

**THE
WORK
OF
REFUGEE
RELIEF
TRUSTEES
IN
1943**



Participating in the
NATIONAL WAR FUND

Refugee Relief Trustees, Inc.

103 Park Avenue, New York, N. Y.

Chairman: L. HOLLINGSWORTH WOOD

A committee to coordinate the work of three co-operating agencies in the field of refugee relief; to allocate responsibilities; to receive and disburse funds.

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AMERICAN COMMITTEE FOR CHRISTIAN REFUGEES,
INCORPORATED

President: DR. LELAND REX ROBINSON

INTERNATIONAL RESCUE AND RELIEF COMMITTEE,
INCORPORATED

Chairman: DR. FRANK KINGDON

UNITARIAN SERVICE COMMITTEE

Chairman: DR. WILLIAM EMERSON

FOREWORD



Americans are a warm-hearted and generous people who respond impulsively to the demands of human need. The plight of the refugees from the Nazi and fascist dominated countries appealed to them, and they have done much to rescue thousands who have left all their material

possessions and fled to the free countries to save their souls. But our persistence is not always equal to our impulses, and in the case of the refugees there is a grave danger that in our zeal for military victory we shall leave the task of rescue half done. There are still many thousands of men, women, and children of all classes and professions, stranded in France, Spain, Portugal, and North Africa, waiting in the most pitiable circumstances for the final aid that will bring them out of their purgatory and restore them to conditions in which they may mend their broken lives and reenter human society.

Those who have come to our own shores have abundantly proved their deserts. They have created no labor problem, and have to an extraordinary degree shown their capacity for usefulness in our society and for overcoming the immense difficulties of adjustment to alien conditions.

In many departments of life they have made valuable contributions, for among them are many who represent the spiritual and intellectual elite of the countries from which an incredible cruelty and folly have driven them.

The duty and the opportunity offered by those who are still to be salvaged are so obvious that it is hard to argue for it. The principles which we profess lay a command upon us; our own fundamental decency leaves us no alternative. The methods to be used have been worked out and tested, the personnel to operate them are eager and ready; all that is necessary is that the funds should be supplied. The amounts necessary are an infinitesimal fraction of what we spend hourly on destruction. It is inconceivable that we should be so indifferent to the need and the opportunity of rebuilding that we should incur the shame of leaving this job half-done.

WILLIAM ALLAN NEILSON

The Refugee Faced The Enemy First



L. Hollingsworth Wood,
Chairman, Refugee Relief
Trustees, Inc.

The first people to feel the devastating effect of the Nazi-fascist philosophy were those men and women who had worked and struggled against that philosophy in their own countries. Almost immediately after Hitler came to power in 1933, he launched a bitter offensive against the active democratic elements in Germany. This persecution was directed against all classes of society, all fields of workers: writers, doctors, lawyers, trade union leaders and members, teachers, and everyone who still claimed the right to criticize openly the narrow despotism that was being established as the government of Germany. Democracy has always been the great enemy of Hitler's system, and democrats were seized and imprisoned in Germany from the beginning of his regime. Freedom-loving men and women began to leave Germany in ever-increasing numbers. Some went to France or neighboring countries to carry on the struggle against Hitler outside his borders—others preferred to start life afresh in one of the democratic countries of the New World. Besides their varied skills and training they brought with them a deep conviction of the horror of the Nazi system and a determined love for the democratic ideal.

After the defeat of France in June 1940, the plight of the anti-Nazi refugees became desperate. Many thousands had settled in France and were known in the communities where they lived as firm anti-Nazis. Under the terms of the Armistice, the Vichy government agreed to surrender on demand to the Germans any of these men and women that Hitler might designate. Among those directly menaced were some of the most distinguished figures of our day: the novelists Franz Werfel and Heinrich Mann; world famous painters; doctors, lawyers and scholars; and former political leaders of the democratic movement in Germany.

American public opinion was aroused by the desperate plight of fellow democrats. At the urgent request of liberal, labor and church groups all over the country, the State Department granted emergency visas to prominent anti-Nazis believed to be in special danger. But to get in touch with these men and women, widely scattered and often living under assumed names and in hiding, was a long, difficult, and dangerous task, quite outside the power of our Consuls abroad.

Representatives of private relief agencies undertook the task, inspecting concentration camps, interviewing old associates of the endangered men, ingeniously following up every lead, until they had started the potential victims of Hitler's terror on the road to freedom.

In this tide of despairing and often starving men, women and children, the private American relief agencies stood as the one link with the democratic world, a light and a hope on the rapidly darkening European continent. Not all the anti-Nazi refugees wanted to emigrate, but many thousands needed help, advice, and care. Clinics were set up for the sick, homes were established where lost children could be cared for, farms and small factories were operated by the refugees on a cooperative self-supporting basis. And all this work was made possible through the generosity of unknown, sympathetic, democratic Americans. To secure transportation on the crowded boats running from Lisbon and North Africa sometimes took months; meanwhile the refugee families must live, eat, and be cared for. Through the joint agency of the three leading independent organizations, the American Committee for Christian Refugees, the International Rescue and Relief Committee, and the Unitarian Service Committee, the American people gave nearly \$1,500,000 to help anti-fascist refugees and bring them to safety in democratic countries, in the two years after the fall of France.

Thousands of anti-Nazi refugees have been established in new homes in the United States and in Latin America. Unusually intelligent, independent, and courageous, many of them are also highly gifted and trained, and bring valuable talent and abilities to the service of democracy. The independent relief committees will continue to assume responsibility until all these men and women have once more taken their place in the active ranks of the democratic world.



Anti-fascist refugee family, leaving Lisbon for a new home in a democratic country.

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF

Refugee Relief Trustees assume direct responsibility, to the American people acting through the National War Fund, for the coordination and supervision of the many services rendered to refugees by their cooperating agencies. The work of these agencies has been carefully divided and related to ensure that no service is either neglected or duplicated.

American Committee for Christian Refugees

Work with refugees recently arrived in the United States is the special province of the American Committee for Christian Refugees. Most of the anti-totalitarian refugees from Europe have already found their useful place in American life; others however are in need of direct relief, counsel, vocational guidance, retraining, resettlement, assistance in determining and changing their status under the immigration and naturalization laws and regulations, migration service for separated families, or all these forms of assistance.

Volunteer committees have been formed in many communities throughout the United States to assist in projects of family resettlement in small cities or towns away from over-crowded metropolitan areas.

Overseas work continues to be an important function of the Committee, particularly in Switzerland, Cuba, and other Latin American countries.

International Rescue & Relief Committee

The chief concern of the International Rescue and Relief Committee is with the rescue from immediate danger and the evacuation to safety overseas of men and women with a long record of anti-Nazi activity. Since the fall of France, nearly two thousand such first-line fighters for democracy have been saved. Today the French frontier is officially closed, but hundreds of refugees cross the border clandestinely

One of Vichy's concentration camps for democrats.



REFUGEE RELIEF TRUSTEES, Inc.

into Switzerland or Spain. We are able to obtain visas with the cooperation of the State Department, or arrange for emigration to one of the countries of Latin America. Regular sailing schedules are still maintained by neutral ships from Spain and Portugal to ports in the United States and South America.

The Committee has agents in Portugal, Switzerland, Sweden, Spain and Mexico.

The Unitarian Service Committee

The European headquarters of the Unitarian Service Committee are in Lisbon, where, under the direction of a competent American staff, an important work is carried on mainly for refugees. The committee administers general relief, and maintains social and educational centers at Caldas da Rainha and Ericeira where most of the refugees are congregated. Refugees are helped with visas and with assistance in their migration problems. Lisbon is an important center of communication with our work in Switzerland, with the Allied governments in England, and with other American organizations that we officially represent.

From Portugal, also, the Committee works on problems of visas and transportation for refugees caught in Spain, and to them it sends, as far as possible, food packages and money remittances for their relief.

The committee has offices in Geneva, with two American directors, and there a new and helpful service, medical, surgical and dental, is being developed. For many months, we have also been serving refugees in North Africa.

All of this work is administered from Boston, where publicity and promotion work centers, and where the work of our foreign offices is supported by securing affidavits for refugees and by other assistance for them when they enter this country.

Anti-fascist refugee families entering New York harbor.



American Committee For Christian Refugees



The American Committee for Christian Refugees is in its tenth year of service on behalf of the victims and foes of Nazism. In the early days of Hitler's power the impression prevailed generally that refugee problems were exclusively Jewish. It was by understanding and in collabora-

tion with Jewish agencies that a service organization was set up to handle the multiplying thousands of cases which on racial and religious grounds deserved understanding help from other than Jewish sources. These had borne their full share and more; it was essential that prompt action be taken to put total American aid to refugees above sectarian or racial levels.

The men and women who with their families have been and are being assisted by the American Committee represent every type of persecution of which the Axis is guilty. The depravities of Hitlerism can best be high-lighted by the qualities of its enemies, and it is not surprising that the clients of the American Committee have been mainly drawn from the professional classes. They represent the cream of Europe, capable of enormously enriching our cultural and economic life.

By agreement with its cooperating agencies in Refugee Relief Trustees, the American Committee as its primary task undertakes to interpret America sympathetically for bewildered refugees and to help them place their full talents at the disposal of their adopted country in these years of total war.

Thousands more who are being aided overseas will never reach our shores. Among the gravest problems to be faced by the post-war world will be the repatriation or resettlement elsewhere of refugees, as well as their guidance and care during the protracted period of misery and disorder through which their European homelands must go.

In the meantime the American Committee works in the conviction that our feeling toward refugees, our appreciation of their problems, our capacity to appraise and utilize their varied skills, make a touchstone of American sincerity. In their turn the refugees bring to people of similar birth among us an oft-needed conviction of the vast gulf that separates their one-time homeland from the brutal oligarchy which now enslaves and defiles it. They are straws in our bricks of national unity.

LELAND REX ROBINSON

International Rescue and Relief Committee



The International Rescue and Relief Committee is a combination of two committees that formerly worked under the names of the Emergency Rescue Committee and the International Relief Association.

The Emergency Rescue Committee was formed immediately after the fall of France to devote itself to the rescue from Europe of all anti-Nazi and proved democratic artists, writers and political and labor leaders of all nationalities. It was an expression of the conviction that the creative and liberal minds of all the world are so definitely a part of the republic of the spirit that overleaps all national boundaries, that all of us had a responsibility for all leaders from all places who carried the flame of liberty in their hearts. We compiled a list of some three thousand names of people for whom we would specifically work, and, in the less than three years since the dreadful day that saw the soldiers of Hitler invade the soil of a surrendered France, we have managed to bring to the safety of the Western World more than two thousand of them. These have included men and women of all faiths and nationalities, for we have allowed no barriers of sectarianism or chauvinism to halt our efforts for all whom we recognized as members of the fraternity of free minds.

The International Relief Association was already at work when the Emergency Rescue Committee was formed. For years it had sent aid to the victims of Nazi oppression in Europe, and had kept alive men, women and children who, without its help, would have been destitute—suffering for no crime save that, before the world woke up to the nature of the new tyranny, they had taken up arms against it.

It was natural, as the crisis deepened, that two groups having so common a motivation should merge into active cooperation. The International Rescue and Relief Committee is the fruit of their union.

There are many who yet can be saved, and we shall not cease our work until the day comes when security is once more guaranteed to all who strive to give expression to the deepest feelings and convictions of the human heart and intelligence. We count ourselves the advocates of all who supply the current of inspiration and the spark of loyalty to the lamp of Liberty.

FRANK KINGDON

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FRANK KINGDON

Unitarian Service Committee



The Unitarian Service Committee was organized by the American Unitarian Association to uphold the American tradition of brotherly love, sacrificial service, and devotion to freedom of thought, speech, and life.

To help our fellow men in Czechoslovakia, who were among the first to suffer the deprivation of civil and religious rights, the Commission for Service in Czechoslovakia was established in October 1938, in collaboration with the American Friends Service Committee. This work was the foundation and living guarantee of the help experts could give through personal service to individuals in desperate need. In May 1940, the Unitarian Service Committee was formed "to offer sacrificial service for the alleviation of suffering caused by the war." It was hoped that belief in the brotherhood of man might receive concrete expression in terms of response to human needs in the present crisis.

To help some of the individuals whose lives are in danger escape to freedom, with affidavits, visas, and transportation; to relieve some of the cold, hunger, darkness, disease, and mortal despair of some of the thousands in internment camps; to bring children to refuges of safety, health, and education; to trace families, resettle skilled workers, build morale and faith in those who have suffered for their work and belief in democracy—these are the special purposes and program of the Unitarian Service Committee today, so far as the foreign field is concerned.

Its help is given individually and directly—through the field workers selected to give personal service where such service is most needed, and wherever its known allegiance to freedom of thought, speech, and action permits it to work. Its help is given to all people in need, whatever their race, creed, nationality, belief or occupation. Catholic priests and Protestant missionaries, Jews and Gentiles, scientists and doctors, farmers and cabinet makers, children, old people—all who ask for help receive all the help its funds and abilities make possible.

This work for the thousands of refugees who come, singly and in groups, officially and individually, to present their simple avowals of misery and their complicated problems, needs the support and help of all who care for their fellow men.

WILLIAM EMERSON

Refugees Have Enriched American Life



ALBERT EINSTEIN



JACQUES MARITAIN



COUNT CARLO SFORZA

SIGRID UNSET



THOMAS MANN



FRANZ WERFEL



REFUGEE RELIEF TRUSTEES'

BUDGET FOR THE YEAR 1943

	American Committee for Christian Refugees	International Rescue & Relief Committee	Unitarian Service Committee	TOTAL
Relief Work in:				
North Africa	\$ —	\$ —	\$ 73,800.00	\$ 73,800.00
Spain	—	—	50,400.00	50,400.00
Portugal	—	—	29,400.00	29,400.00
Sweden	—	6,000.00	—	6,000.00
Switzerland	51,000.00	65,000.00	29,400.00	145,400.00
Latin America	66,000.00	—	60,000.00	126,000.00
United States	122,000.00	—	—	122,000.00
Evacuation	—	175,000.00	—	175,000.00
Administration				
Service here for Refugees Abroad	—	20,000.00	—	20,000.00
Administration and Salaries paid in U. S. for Overseas Work	—	—	16,000.00	16,000.00
Publicity and Administra- tion Expenses	28,000.00	10,000.00	16,000.00	54,000.00
Reserve (For Unforeseen Projects)	25,000.00	25,000.00	25,000.00	75,000.00
Total	\$292,000.00	\$301,000.00	\$300,000.00	\$893,000.00

This Budget has been approved and accepted by the National War Fund, to be included in the Fund's Campaign for 1943. We urge all who have contributed in the past to the work of our cooperating Committees to continue their support through the National War Fund Drive.



A STATEMENT

The organization of Refugee Relief Trustees is the result of an honest effort by Americans who are distressed at the crushing impact of the world's mistakes upon those unfortunate men and women who do not fit into the organized pattern of control in the world today.

It has seemed as if the world were callous to the agony of minorities, and that utterly unnecessary cruelty has been imposed upon human beings through no fault of their own. It is not only Jews and Christians and political exiles that are involved. We are all involved in the guilt of permitting our governments to close the doors of freedom and opportunity in the face of human beings struggling to escape the inhuman treatment meted out to them by the organized societies of which they have been a part. To the organizers of Refugee Relief Trustees the tradition of political asylum which has so enriched our American life is still a reality.

It is not only members of this organization who feel themselves trustees for refugee relief. The great mass of men and women who feel that human rights must have preference over property rights are the real trustees, and for them this organization tries to make articulate the appeal of countless thousands of suffering humanity.

—L. HOLLINGSWORTH WOOD,
Chairman, Refugee Relief Trustees, Inc.