

FREEMAN, DIWAH

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In reply please
refer to: 541

APR 22 1944

Dear Miss Freeman:

I have your letter of April 16, 1944, and its enclosure, concerning the plight of the Jews in occupied Europe.

I assure you that the War Refugee Board is doing everything in its power to provide speedy and effective rescue programs to save the persecuted minorities of Europe who are in imminent danger of death.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) J. W. Pehle

J. W. Pehle
Executive Director

Miss Dinah Freeman,
709 E. Church Lane,
Germantown,
Philadelphia, Pa.

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RBHutchison:agr 4-21-44 JED

709 E. CHURCH LANE
GERMANTOWN, PHILA. PA.

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April 16, 1944

War Refugee Board
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Peble:

Enclosed is a clipping which expresses so well what is in the hearts and minds of millions of American Jews and, no doubt, in the hearts and minds of many American Christians.

As Jews we have hoped so many times - through the Evian conference, the Bermuda conference, through abrogation of the White Paper - that something concrete would actually be done.

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Hope deferred maketh the heart sick
But perhaps it has been left for the
War Refugee Board, with its positive
leadership, to take the bold and
courageous steps required.

Perhaps at long last that will
be done before the problem solves
itself with the complete obliteration
of every Jew - adult and child -
in occupied Europe.

Respectfully yours,
(Miss) Hannel Freeman

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RECEIVED
WAR REFUGEE BOARD
WASHINGTON, D.C.

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part of the
for the
positive

**Samuel
Grafton**

Can We Do Less for Refugees?

We're Treating Our Foes Much Better Than Our Friends

We need a system of "free ports" for refugees. These would be reservations, fenced and guarded, which any person could enter without formality, no matter how homeless or stateless he might be. Until we set up free ports for refugees, we shall be asking the refugee to stand on one foot while we solve his problem, a position in which a man can wait just so long and a child less.

No rights would be acquired by anyone who entered such a reserved area, except the right to sit down, which is a rare right at the present moment in civilization's majestic march. By an easy legal fiction, entrance into a "free port" would not constitute legal entrance into the country, and stay in the "free port" would not constitute residence in the country.

We have used this same legal fiction, to establish free ports for goods. For reasons much too dull to tell you about here, these are of great advantage to our foreign trade in time of peace. There is a functioning free port in the New York city area, into which foreign merchandise and alien corn can be brought without payment of customs duties, parked for a while, then transhipped elsewhere. The stuff can stay here for a year without ever being considered to be in the country, and if we can use a legal fiction to make a dollar, we ought to be able to use a similar legal fiction to save a life.

PRACTICAL DIFFICULTIES

There are practical difficulties in the way of such a scheme, because storage facilities for living women and children have to be a bit more complex than storage facilities for wine and corsets.

Yet these difficulties are hardly great enough to stun the human imagination. Any Army camp scheduled for early abandonment might do, or a fence could be put around some of the excess housing facilities we have built in Eastern industrial areas. As to what agency would run the "free port" for refugees, the answer is, of course, the new War Refugee Board. With such

a "free port" in its pocket, the War Refugee Board would be in a position to go to other members of the United Nations and ask them to establish similar facilities, and it could not be turned down. The burden would thus be distributed around the world.

But if we ask other nations to set up facilities while we do not, the answer is going to be a low, leering laugh, accompanied by remarks about the pot and the kettle, etc.

WE DO IT FOR NAZIS

There are legal difficulties, too. But we are entertaining 130,000 Nazi prisoners of war at the moment in this country, and not one has entered under the quota. It is true that prisoners of war have certain established rights, including the right to a safe haven, where nobody shall make funny with them. But can we really argue, with shabby earnestness, that the innocent victims of these Nazis are not entitled to equal rights with their deadly and malicious enemies?

If we cannot give our friends, at least the same rights we give our enemies, then a host of questions is raised, including whether are we drifting? and what is wrong with our heads?

The refugees could be visited by consular and other officials of their own nations in these "free ports," they could be investigated, picked over, and perhaps, in time, outfitted with papers, and thus gradually raised to the lofty level of legal existence, as distinguished from the inconsequential level of mere physical existence.

Meanwhile, those Americans who do not want refugees here could have the assurance that they were not legally here at all; while Americans of a more humanitarian turn of mind and heart could have the assurance that refugees were being cared for; and this is, therefore, a democratic solution, in harmony with the traditional ingenuity and resourcefulness of Anglo-Saxon law-making.

As one looks it over it seems, also, to be a fairly repulsive solution. But that is all the refugees ask for; a repulsive solution. Can we give them less?

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