

Requests for Specific Aid: ENGLISH, L.

000353

FEB 16 1944

In reply please
refer to: 119

Dear Mr. Ehrlich:

Reference is made to your letter of February 6, 1944, and its enclosure, on behalf of a friend whose family is at present in Rome, Italy.

I think that you will understand that the task of the Board is so great that, of necessity, it will have to confine itself to projects involving the relief or rescue of groups of persons, and that it cannot deal with problems limited to seeking out and rescuing any specific individuals. I suggest that you communicate with the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society, 425 Lafayette Street, New York 3, New York, or the American Friends Service Committee, 20 South 12th Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. I am advised that these organizations may be in a position to be of help in cases such as yours.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) J. W. Pehls

J. W. Pehls
Acting Executive Director

Mr. L. Ehrlich,
305 West 52nd Street,
New York 19, New York.

E. B. T.

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305 West 52 St.
apt. 4 K
New York, N.Y.
Feb. 6th, 1944

War Refugee Board
Washington D. C.

118
FILING AUTHORITY
To: Mail & Files
A. S. P. O.
INITIALS
DATE

Dear Sirs:

A friend of mine, ^{requesting} an Italian refugee, of Jewish faith, requests me to write to you, in reference to the newspaper article herein enclosed, regarding the possibility of bringing over to America his family, who at present lives in Rome, Italy.

Any information that you may send me on his behalf, will be greatly appreciated

Thanking you
yours very truly
L. Ehrlich

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ROOSEVELT SETS UP WAR REFUGEE BOARD

Hull, Morgenthau and Stimson
Are Directed to Aid Rescue
of Victims of Axis Rule

FOR 'IMMEDIATE' ACTION

President Urges Forestalling
Nazi Plan 'to Exterminate All
Jews and Other Minorities'

WASHINGTON, Jan. 22 (UP)—President Roosevelt set up a War Refugee Board tonight "to take action for the immediate rescue from the Nazis of as many as possible of the persecuted minorities of Europe—racial, religious or political."

The board will be composed of Secretary Hull, Secretary Morgenthau and Secretary Stimson.

The Executive Order established this as the policy of our Government:

"To take all measures within its power to rescue the victims of en-

emy oppression who are in imminent danger of death and otherwise to afford such victims all possible relief and assistance consistent with the successful prosecution of the war."

Mr. Roosevelt made the board responsible to him for seeing that this policy is carried out. He instructed it to develop plans for the rescue, transportation, maintenance and relief of the victims of enemy oppression, and the establishment of havens of temporary refuge for such victims.

Cooperating Agencies

Set up directly under the Executive office of the President, the new organization was directed to cooperate directly with the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees, the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration and other interested international organizations, including all present or future organizations concerned with problems "of refugee rescue, maintenance, transportation, relief, rehabilitation and resettlement."

A White House statement accompanying the Executive Order said:

"The President stated that he expected to obtain the cooperation of all members of the United Nations and other foreign governments in carrying out this difficult but important task. He stated that the existing facilities of the State, Treasury and War Departments would be employed to aid Axis victims to the fullest extent possible.

"He stressed that it was urgent

that action be taken at once to forestall the plan of the Nazis to exterminate all the Jews and other persecuted minorities in Europe."

Envoy Status for Attachés

A full-time executive director will be appointed by the board to carry on its work, and the State Department will appoint special attachés with diplomatic status to work overseas where they may aid refugees.

State Department officials declined to give any estimate of the numbers of persecuted persons in whose interests the new organization will work. Many thousands, however, are known to be in various concentration camps throughout Europe.

One argument against undertaking direct action in their behalf in the past has been that Germany might be able to smuggle out spies and saboteurs along with the bona fide refugees liberated through negotiation. The President's instruction that "havens of temporary refuge" be established for refugees was taken to mean, however, that they would go to areas where Nazi agents would be of little value to the enemy.

Negotiations for the release of refugees in areas yet to be liberated presumably would be conducted through the Swiss or other neutral governments.

It is thought that relief, which can be supplied through private contributions to the board, as well as with public funds, probably will be handled through the International Red Cross.

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