

UNION FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE HUMAN PERSON

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APR 14 1944

In reply please
refer to: 494

Dear Sirs:

Your letter of February 1, 1944, to Secretary Hull, concerning the establishment of the War Refugee Board, has been referred to me.

I am glad to have your views on the problems with which the Board is confronted, and I assure you that the suggestions which you have submitted will receive careful consideration.

Your offer of the assistance of your organization is greatly appreciated. I shall be pleased to receive such further proposals and suggestions as you may wish to offer at any time.

Very truly yours,

J. W. Pehle
Executive Director

Mr. Boris Gourevitch,
Vice President,
Prof. Jacques Hadanard,
Baron Pierre de Gunzburg,
Union for the Protection of
the Human Person,
12 West 76th Street,
New York, New York.

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**UNION POUR LA DÉFENSE
DE LA PERSONNE HUMAINE**

par la collaboration internationale
sociale et économique

**UNION FOR THE PROTECTION
OF THE HUMAN PERSON**

by international
social and economic co-operation, inc.

12 West 76th Street, New York City
Telephone: ENdicott 2-5695

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New York City February 1, 1944

W. R. B. #494

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Committee for the Defense
of the Rights of
in Central and Eastern Europe Inc.

Date

Refer to Public

VISA DIVISION
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VISA DIVISION
FEB 10 1944

Honorable Cordell Hull,
Secretary of State
Department of State
Washington, D. C.

Reg. 15264

Dear Mr. Secretary,

We have learned with feelings of deepest satisfaction that a special War Refugee Board has been set up by Executive Decree of President Roosevelt on January 22, 1944, for the rescue of members of persecuted religious and political minorities, menaced by extermination at the hands of the Nazis. The creation of such an agency will bring profound gratification to all humanitarian organizations, which, for the past fourteen months, have been striving for the establishment of some form of international aid for millions of victims under the unheard-of Nazi cruelties. In our appeal, submitted to you and dated April 1943, we have already outlined (on pages 4-5) such forms of help in agonizing Europe as seemed to us to be most urgent. We take the liberty of enclosing herewith a copy of our Appeal.

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We think it expedient, however, to add some considerations on the practical aspect of the problem of the organization of help in Europe.

1) In our opinion, one of the first steps to be taken should be the conclusion of an agreement with the Government of Turkey, in order to obtain its consent for the establishment of temporary shelters, capable to accomodate the hundreds of thousands saved from concentration camps and ghettos, especially from Poland. Similar agreements, on a smaller scale, could be concluded with the Governments of Sweden and Switzerland, and eventually with Spain, if ways and means could be found to establish a route for the passage of refugees to these countries.

2) It would be most desirable to obtain, through the help of the International Red Cross, and through the Governments of neutral states, as well as through the Vatican, the consent of the Governments of Bulgaria and Roumania for the free passage of trains carrying the refugees (under the supervision of the Red Cross) through their territories.

3) After the conclusion of these preliminary agreements, it seems advisable to establish contact, through the same channels, (admitted by International Law in times of war), with the Government of Germany. Its consent should be sought for the International Red Cross to organize an evacuation from Poland of those elements of its population that are dying slowly of starvation and are menaced by mass extermination: the Jews

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in ghettos and camps, and the Christian intellectuals in concentration camps. In the number of Jews should also be included the Jews deported into Poland from France, Belgium, Italy, Holland, Denmark, Austria, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia.

The head of the German Government in three of his public speeches during this war, openly and clearly proclaimed his plans for the total extermination of all Jews in Europe. His official newspaper, the "Völkischer Beobachter", recently attributed the harsh and rigorous measures taken by the Nazis against European Jews in their power to the repeated refusal of the great democratic Powers to find a shelter for those people. It seems therefore highly probable that the Nazis will accept the idea of mass evacuation of the Jewish population from Poland. The German Government will probably refuse to allow the International Red Cross to bring medicines and food to the ghettos and camps before the departure of these persecuted and despairing people. Nevertheless, it may be that the advantage of being able to dispense even with that minimum of food which they are now obliged to give to these starved masses, might affect the Nazis so, that they should authorize a delegation of the International Red Cross; the mere presence of such a body would no doubt influence them to stop further murders.

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It would be quite in conformity with the spirit of the International Law to extend to the concentration camps for Christian intellectuals and the ghettos in Poland, and generally to concentration camps for civilians in Europe, the full supervision of the International Red Cross, exercised until now only over the camps for military prisoners of war. Elements of Polish civilian population, which seem so dangerous to German authorities, that they can only be confined to camps and their mass murder encouraged, surely have the same moral right for defence and protection by the International Red Cross, as the prisoners of war.

During the first world war, interned civilians received treatment identical to that of prisoners of war. The German Government had accepted the International Convention of July 29, 1929, for the protection of the prisoners of war. The "Revue Internationale de la Croix Rouge", No. 257, states that the International Red Cross had received a letter from the German Government, confirming that the Convention of 1929 has the validity of law in Germany, and would be applied to interned civilians. This Revue, (February 1940), points out that the German Government is applying to civilian internees the same treatment as applied to prisoners of war. Subsequent attempts of the German Government to consider the Jews in Nazi-occupied countries as "detained civilians", as opposed to "interned civilians", who have the rights to the protection of international conventions and of the International Red Cross, have not the slightest logical sense.

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The question of the establishment of temporary and permanent shelters for Jews and other refugees from the Nazi terror has found an eloquent expression in an appeal, issued on January 23, 1943 by the Archbishops of Canterbury, York and Wales, on behalf of the whole Anglican episcopate. We share their hopes that the allied and neutral nations will be able to provide sanctuary for these victims, finding refuge territories, giving them a possibility for life and work.

It is important that guarantees should be given to the German Government that the refugees will not be mobilized for military service in the present war.

We hope that this terrible problem can find its solution in the spirit animating the speech of President Roosevelt of October 17, 1939, and the resolution of the Delaware conference of the Protestant Churches of United States, a resolution favoring the international supervision of migration and colonization.

We would be very honored if we could be of some use to your Board in its studies and activities, and we are at its disposal at all times for such services.

Very respectfully,
For the Union,

Boris Gourevitch
Boris Gourevitch
Vice President

J. Hadamard
Prof. Jacques Hadamard

P. de Gunzburg
Baron Pierre de Gunzburg

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