

Cooperation with other Governments: Other Countries: Afghanistan

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*ZURB*  
*Treas*

LEGATION OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

*afghanistan*  
Kabul, December 5, 1944.

No. 608.

Subject: Relief and Repatriation of German Refugees.

*Mr. [unclear]*  
*Mr. [unclear]*  
*Mr. [unclear]*

The Honorable  
The Secretary of State,  
Washington.

**CONTROL COPY**

Sir:

I have the honor to report that German refugees residing in Kabul have recently asked this Legation for information concerning arrangements which have been made, or are being made, for the relief of refugees still in Nazi hands and for the repatriation of refugees who have escaped abroad.

Specific inquiry has been made concerning an organization in New York which is understood to forward food parcels to persons interned in a concentration camp for aged Jews at Theresienstadt in Czechoslovakia. It is stated that this organization also assists in arranging the release and emigration from Nazi-controlled territory of persons interned at Theresienstadt.

Local German refugees who wish later to return to liberated portions of their homeland are interested in reports that the Inter-Governmental Committee on Refugees at a meeting in London in August 1944 proposed that religious and political refugees be repatriated by the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. They wish to know what procedure should be followed by refugees who desire repatriation.

Any information which the Department can provide in this connection would be much appreciated by the interested parties.

Respectfully yours,

*[Signature]*  
Van H. Engert

File No. 848

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**CONTROL COPY** DEPARTMENT OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

3 WRB (Pres)

Kabul, March 5, 1944.

No. 405.

Subject: Situation of Refugees in Afghanistan.

The Honorable  
The Secretary of State,  
Washington.

Sir:

With reference to the Department's circular airgram of January 26, 7 p.m., 1944, concerning measures to be taken for the immediate rescue and relief of victims of Axis oppression, I have the honor to report (a) that there are no public or private agencies interested in such measures in Afghanistan, (b) that there is little scope for the settlement of refugees from Axis oppression in Afghanistan, with the possible exception of a small number of professionally and technically qualified persons, and (c) that in view of the foregoing circumstances I have not approached the Afghan Government in this connection.

With respect to (b), there are in Afghanistan perhaps a hundred Czechoslovaks, Poles, French, Germans and Yugoslavs, all of whom might be considered victims of Axis oppression to the extent that they are unable to return to their native lands. The majority of this group came to Afghanistan prior to the outbreak of war and are not, strictly speaking, refugees. Probably not more than twenty percent are of the Jewish race or faith. Almost all arrived in pursuance of offers of employment from the Afghan Government, chiefly as technicians in industrial establishments and as teachers.

Due to the primitive economy and low standard of living of Afghanistan, there is practically no opportunity for Europeans in the fields of domestic commerce, agriculture, or the service trades. Foreign trade and domestic industry are almost exclusively in the hands of Government monopolies. The only practicable activities for Europeans are those of a professional or technical nature, usually in the employ of the Afghan Government. As that Government has in the past welcomed the coming of qualified professional men and technicians, it may be presumed that a very small number of refugees from Axis oppression - perhaps a maximum of fifty professional men and technicians, and their dependents - could be placed in Afghanistan. If so meager a contribution to the solution of the refugee problem is of interest to the War Refugee Board, I shall be glad to submit

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to the Afghan Government the names and qualifications of persons whom the Board might propose for settlement in this country. I might add that although Jews are not popular in this fanatically Muslim country, there has been no serious discrimination against them.

It should be noted that the willingness of the Afghan Government to admit qualified Europeans is probably exceeded by the reluctance of such persons to come to Afghanistan and, more particularly, to remain here. The compensation paid to foreigners by the Afghan Government is low, and living conditions in Afghanistan are hard. Moreover, only rarely do foreigners find it possible to utilize to the fullest extent their specialized knowledge and training.

As stated in the first paragraph of this despatch, I have not approached the Afghan Government in this connection. I should be most reluctant to discuss this matter with the Government unless I had an indication from the Department that there is some likelihood that refugees will be proposed for settlement in Afghanistan.

As was indicated by my despatches Nos. 182 of May 25, and 295 of October 4, 1943, concerning certain Estonian refugees in Kabul, I have already informally interested myself in the welfare of refugees in Afghanistan. I shall continue to give careful attention to the Afghan attitude toward and treatment of refugees and to report significant developments to the Department.

Respectfully yours,

  
Van H. Engery

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File No. 840.1.

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