Message From French Prison Camp: 'Help Now!'

Postcard From Anti-Fascist Prisoner Tells of Urgent Need for Aid; 'This May Be My Last Word.' It Says: 'Firing Squads Ready.'

AN OPEN LETTER TO SECRETARY CORDELL HULL AND THE PAN AMERICAN CONFERENCE OF FOREIGN MINISTERS -- ON BEHALF OF THE ANTI-FASCIST REFUGEES TRAPPED IN FRANCE.
The Honorable Cordell Hull
Pan-American Conference of Foreign Ministers
Havana, Cuba

Dear Mr. Secretary:

The terms of the armistice under which France surrendered to Germany and Italy endanger the lives of a large number of anti-fascist refugees, many of great distinction, who now, as German and Italian subjects, are to be returned to their respective countries. This includes large numbers of Poles, Czechs, and Austrians who are regarded as German subjects. Some of them are in especial danger because of their service in the former International Brigade of the Spanish Republican Government. Others, including internationally known scientists, writers, doctors, lawyers, etc., have long been marked men by reason of their anti-fascist activities of varied types. In addition, approximately 160,000 Spanish Republican men, women and children are in exile in France and are now faced with forcible return to Fascist Spain.

Mexico and other Latin-American countries have signified their willingness to admit a large number of these refugees. Mexico has, in addition, offered the protection of its government to these refugees while they are in France, both in German-occupied and French-occupied territory. The Chilean and Cuban Embassies in Washington and the Bolivian Legations have recommended to their respective governments a similar program of protection. These plans would be greatly furthered by the co-operation of all American governments and relief agencies, including the Red Cross societies.

Inasmuch as the agenda of the forthcoming Havana Pan-American Conference of Foreign Ministers provides for a discussion of this subject, we urge

A. That our government immediately instruct the United States delegation to the Havana Conference to propose to the Conference that all American governments extend their protection at once to the anti-fascist refugees in France whose lives are in danger, and that this protection be offered to all such refugees without distinction or discrimination.

B. That the American governments immediately notify the French government and the governments of all belligerent nations of such offer of protection.

C. That the American governments immediately instruct their diplomatic representatives in France to issue visas to the refugees, such visas to be good for either temporary or permanent entry to the American countries issuing them and their numbers to be as large as the conditions and laws of the respective countries make possible.

D. That the diplomatic representatives of the American countries in France be instructed to transport, under their protection, the refugees to French-occupied and/or Portuguese ports, transportation to be provided and paid for by the American governments, Red Cross societies and other interested agencies.
E. That a commission be set up consisting of representative of the American governments, Red Cross societies, relief agencies, labor groups, and other interested organizations, to arrange the protection, evacuation, and rehabilitation of the refugees.

Further, we urge that, in keeping with the generous offers of asylum made by Latin American countries, our Department of State cooperate with the proper government agencies to make available ships for the transportation of the refugees to the American countries admitting them, the cost to be born by the United States government and/or the American Red Cross and other interested organizations.

Respectfully yours,

Rev. Henry A. Atkinson
Church Peace Union, N. Y.

Prof. Ruth Benedict
Columbia University, N. Y.

Prof. Franz Boas
Columbia University, N. Y.

Prof. Walter B. Cannon
Harvard Medical School, Mass.

Dr. J. McKeen Cattell
New York, N. Y.

Dr. Henry S. Coffin
Union Theological Seminary, N. Y.

Prof. Robert L. Hale
Columbia University, N. Y.

Dr. Robert S. Lynd
Columbia University, N. Y.

Helen Merrell Lynd
Sarah Lawrence College, N. Y.

Dean Charles M. McConn
New York University, N. Y.

Bishop Francis S. McConnell
Methodist Church, N. Y.

Dr. Kirtley F. Mather
Harvard University, Mass.

Prof. Clyde R. Miller
Columbia University, N. Y.

Prof. S. A. Mitchell
University of Virginia

Dr. Roscoe Pulliam
Southern Illinois Normal University

Prof. Walter Rautenstrauch
Columbia University, N. Y.

Prof. Harlow Shapley
Harvard University, Mass.

Prof. L. J. Stadler
University of Missouri

Dr. Ordway Tead
New York, N. Y.

Dr. Randall Thompson
Curtis Institute of Music

Prof. Harold C. Urey
Columbia University, N. Y.

Carleton Washburne
Winnetka, Ill.

Dr. Mary E. Woolley
Westport, N. Y.

YOU CAN TAKE....
THESE STEPS

1. Cable Secretary Hull in Havana urging the five-point program embodied in the enclosed open letter.

2. Write to your local congressmen and senators and the national office of the Red Cross in Washington to the same effect.

3. Write to your local newspapers asking for editorial support of this program.