
La Wilpf e l'aiuto alle vittime del nazismo (1942-1944)

a cura di

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Nelle pagine che seguono riproduciamo in versione originale inglese due documenti sul tema degli aiuti alle vittime del nazismo: la lettera inviata il 27 novembre 1942 da Emily Greene Balch, presidente della Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (Wilpf), a Stephens S. Wise¹, presidente del World Jewish Congress, e il pamphlet a cura di Mercedes Moritz Randall, *The Voice of Thy Brother's Blood*, pubblicato a Washington nel febbraio del 1944 a cura della Wilpf.

Scrivendo a titolo personale al rabbino Wise, ma sicura di interpretare i sentimenti diffusi nell'organizzazione, Emily Greene Balch esprimeva tutto il proprio senso di colpa per non aver prevenuto né alleviato la tragedia della guerra e dello sterminio e per non aver saputo elaborare alcun metodo di resistenza nonviolenta². La Wilpf, pertanto era corresponsabile dei mali che si erano abbattuti sul mondo.

Balch concludeva la sua lettera riaffermando la propria volontà di "lavorare attivamente" affinché in futuro gli orrori dei campi di sterminio sarebbero stati impensabili.

Sarà Mercedes Randall, presidente della sezione Wilpf di Manhattan³, a fare appello all'opinione pubblica americana per un aiuto concreto alle vittime del nazismo con la pubblicazione di *The Voice of Thy Brother's Blood*, diffuso in 125.000 copie⁴. Introdotto da Harry Emerson Fosdick⁵, pacifista e predicatore protestante,

¹ La lettera è riprodotta in Mercedes M. Randall, *Beyond Nationalism: The Social Thought of Emily Greene Balch*, Twayne Publishers, New York 1972, pp. 194-196.

² Gertrude Baer – rappresentante della Wilpf presso la Società delle Nazioni – in una lettera circolare del giugno 1941, dopo aver ricordato l'invito più volte rivolto da Jane Addams all'organizzazione a prevedere "nei minimi dettagli" metodi di resistenza nonviolenta per opporsi alla tirannia e ai massacri, scriveva che la Wilpf in questo ambito aveva "completamente fallito". Gertrude Bussey-Margaret Tims, *Pioneers for Peace. Women's International League for Peace and Freedom 1915-1965*, Allen & Unwin, Oxford 1965, p. 173.

³ Mercedes M. Randall (1895-1977) nacque a Guatemala City da padre americano. Laureatasi in Storia presso la Columbia University, aderì alla Wilpf fin dal suo sorgere e all'interno dell'organizzazione ebbe incarichi di rilievo. Fu la prima biografa di Emily Greene Balch (presidente della Wilpf dal 1935 e premio Nobel per la pace nel 1946): *Improper Bostonian: Emily Greene Balch, Nobel Peace Laureate, 1946*, Twayne Publishers, New York 1964. Ella curò inoltre una raccolta di scritti di Balch dal titolo: *Beyond Nationalism*, cit.

⁴ Lo menziona il figlio in un ricordo della madre consultabile in internet all'indirizzo: <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~knower/mercedesmoritzrandallcareer>.

era il primo pamphlet apparso negli Stati Uniti in cui si offrivano le prove delle dimensioni dello sterminio, si indicavano le vie concrete per l'azione a favore dei perseguitati, si denunciava l'immobilismo del governo americano che non vedeva nell'impegno per trarre in salvo le vittime del nazismo un interesse prioritario per la nazione. Le leggi sull'immigrazione, infatti, non erano state mutate, né si era compiuto alcuno sforzo per accogliere un maggior numero di ebrei sulla base di quelle stesse leggi. Nel dicembre 1942 – sottolinea Randall – il presidente Roosevelt e il Ministro degli esteri britannico Antony Eden avevano rilasciato una dichiarazione congiunta in cui si riconoscevano gli orrori dei campi di sterminio, si prometteva la punizione, ma non veniva fatta alcuna menzione alla necessità di adottare misure pratiche per l'aiuto immediato alle vittime.

L'opuscolo – riconosce Randall – affrontava questioni che nel maggio del 1943 erano già state al centro di quello di Eleanor Rathbone, *Rescue the Perishing*⁶.

Gli scritti della deputata britannica e della *wilpfer* guatemalteca⁷ hanno posto i governi e l'opinione pubblica delle due maggiori democrazie di fronte alla questione della responsabilità individuale e collettiva in politica e hanno posto in primo piano una tragedia, quella delle deportazioni, delle espulsioni e dello sterminio che i governi democratici tentavano di occultare dalla scena politica e dalle coscienze.

Le loro voci si levarono al di sopra delle ragioni della guerra e della politica comunemente intesa per affermare il valore morale e politico della compassione e dell'aiuto, le uniche basi sulle quali si sarebbe potuto costruire una nuova convivenza umana.

Emily Greene Balch, *Letter to Rabbi Wise, November 27, 1942*

Dear Rabbi Wise,

As honorary international President of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom I am taking it upon myself, unauthorized, to write to you, and through you to all Jews, on behalf of the members of our international family who in every country, from New Zealand to Finland, are suffering from the feelings that I am so inadequately trying to express.

Our boundless horror, sympathy and grief cannot be put into words, as we think of those who are being murdered in masses and of those who while in personal safety are tortured by anxiety and horror over the fate of those near and dear to them.

⁵ Harry Emerson Fosdick (1878-1969), che nel 1917 aveva giustificato il primo conflitto mondiale sulla base dell'idea della "guerra giusta", a partire dal 1923 fu attivo nei movimenti pacifisti. Nel 1934, nel sermone *My Account with the Unknown Soldier*, fece voto solenne di non appoggiare mai più la guerra. Durante il Secondo conflitto mondiale continuò a condannare la guerra dal pulpito e sostenne Vera Brittain nella sua campagna contro i bombardamenti di massa. Harold Josephson (ed.), *Bibliographical Dictionary of Modern Peace Leaders*, Greenwood Press, Westport-London 1985, pp. 293-294.

⁶ Si veda la traduzione dell'opuscolo di Rathbone in questa stessa rivista, n. 12, 2010, pp. 163-178.

⁷ Per molti versi le due donne erano assai distanti. Sui rapporti tra Eleanor Rathbone e il pacifismo femminista nel corso della Seconda guerra mondiale si veda il mio *Eleanor Rathbone e l'etica della responsabilità. Profilo di una femminista (1872-1946)*, Unicopli, Milano 2012, pp. 153-163.

I want to express also our admiration for the heroic constancy of Jewish endurance and the noble freedom from the futility of hatred and thoughts of revenge, of which Jews have given such noble examples.

We are borne down by the sense of the powerlessness not only of individuals but of the most powerful governments to stop these unexampled cruelties. But most of all those of us who are not Jews are oppressed by a sense of our own responsibility, for we too are guilty. We are all answerable in part for the development of a state of things where the moral insanity of Hitler Germany was possible. And for a state of things where the civilized world can find no better way out than competition in reciprocal slaughter and destruction. We were not ready in time with any other method than this slow and cruel one.

When matters had reached a point where prevention of these wrongs was no longer possible we might still have done far more to alleviate them than we have done, both in the way of welcoming refugees to this country on an adequate scale and by adequate contribution to relief. We have been far too un-understanding, cold-hearted and self-regarding.

Neither have we kept ourselves clean of the contagion of the destructive feeling of race *prejudice*. *Nostra culpa, nostra maxima culpa*.

Even in this dark hour we can believe – or if we cannot believe we can hope – that in spite of everything we are on the way to liberation from race prejudice and that the day is coming when such cruelties, as those now going on in Poland and elsewhere may be unthinkable. And we can not merely hope, we can work actively in many ways to bring that day nearer.

Yours in deepest fellow-feeling Emily G. Balch

Mercedes Moritz Randall, *The Voice of Thy Brother's Blood. An Eleventh-Hour Appeal to All Americans*

Foreword by Harry Emerson Fosdick

This pamphlet contains a brief factual statement concerning one of the most appalling tragedies of all history, now taking place in Europe, along with an appeal for action to save as many as may yet be saved from the starvation and slaughter that threaten them. Accustomed as we have become in recent years to monstrous deeds and ghastly suffering, no one can read this statement unmoved. It is a vivid presentation-compiled with painstaking care and phrased with restraint of the essential facts concerning the catastrophe which the Jews of Europe are enduring now.

To the Christian conscience of America in particular I commend the reading of this statement. What we can do may be but little in comparison with the vast wrong irretrievably done already, but at least that little we can do now; and later, with opening doors of opportunity as military victory comes, we can do much more. If however we are to bring help in this tragedy, we must care enough to face the facts about it. The endeavor of the Nazis to exterminate the Jews of Europe is a grisly

business, so diabolical in its conception and hideous in its execution, that for us to sit in any balcony of comparative comfort watching it, without doing anything to help, is to deny everything that we as Christians profess.

This pamphlet presents at least some things that can be done.

It is not a plea for vengeance; no vindictive retribution will bring back the lives that have been destroyed. It is a plea for compassion and humaneness, generosity and constructive statesmanship, to save as many as may yet be saved from the awful hell that still confronts the Jews of Europe. To the Women's International League of Peace and Freedom we owe a debt of gratitude for this succinct and forceful statement of one of the most urgent matters of our time. May the response of our people and our government be commensurate with the tragic need! [3].

We Passed by on the other side

When the Nazis leveled to the ground the little Czech village of Lidice, shot the entire male population of three hundred and fifty, deported every woman, scattered all the children, and wiped out, as they thought, the very name of the town, the whole world arose in protest. We were shaken to the very depths of our souls.

Since that day, not one but a thousand Lidices have been reenacted. The dark curtain that hangs over occupied Europe lifts from time to time to reveal the successive acts of a tragedy so stark – so grim – so terrible that the civilized mind refuses to take it in. The butchery of something like three million Jews – three million human beings, three million individual tragedies – is a crime that staggers the imagination. And four million more Jews in Europe are waiting – waiting their turn.

Each day the tempo of extermination is speeded up. Thousands of Jewish victims – citizens of France, Italy, Belgium – are packed into sealed cattle-cars, and either shunted off to die on their feet, without food, water, or elementary conveniences, or else deposited in concentration camps somewhere in the Eastern marshes of Hitler's empire. Of those who survive this ordeal, the strongest are sent to penal labor colonies. The others – the old, the infirm, the women and children – are rounded up for slaughter at human "extermination centers" like cattle in the Chicago stockyards.

These men and women and children are not being put to death for anything they have done, or said, or thought: they are being killed wantonly for no other reason than that they are Jews. The hand of Hitler has lain heavily on other innocent peoples to – on the Poles, the Czechs, the Greeks. They perish in the onslaught of invasion. They are executed as hostages. They are swept by famine. But the Jews of Europe have been reserved for a special fate. *They are the only people that has been singled out by a calculated national policy for total annihilation* [4].

By our standards many of them are not even Jews at all. Some have only one Jewish grandparent. Many, especially in Germany, come from families that have been Christian believers and church members for several generations. Catholics die with the name of Jesus and the Holy Mother on their lips, side by side with orthodox Jews praying for the last time, "Hear, O Israel!". All mingle their blood in the same arena of martyrdom.

Not so long ago, in London, a certain Samuel Ziegelboim, an exile, and a member of the Polish National Council, who had worked untiringly for the rescue of his fellow-Jews in Poland, was found dead by his own hand. There might have been no further record of the life and career of Samuel Ziegelboim, had he not left behind him a letter. This letter was addressed to the late Polish Premier Sikorski. It was also addressed to me – and to you. It reads:

From the latest information received from Poland, it is evident that the Germans, with ruthless cruelty, are now murdering the few remaining Jews in Poland. Behind the ghetto's walls the last act of a tragedy unprecedented in history is being performed.

The responsibility for the crime of murdering the entire Jewish population of Poland falls in the first instance on the perpetrators, but indirectly it falls also on the whole of humanity, the people and the governments of the Allied States which thus far have made no effort toward concrete action for the purpose of curtailing this crime.

By passively looking on at this murder of defenseless millions, and at the maltreatment of children, women, and old men, these countries have become the accomplices of the criminals. From some 3.500.000 Polish Jews and about 700.000 other Jews deported to Poland from other countries, there remained in April of this year only about 300.000, and the murder still goes on.

I cannot be silent – I cannot live – while remnants of the Jewish people of Poland, of whom I am a representative, are perishing.

My comrades in the Warsaw ghetto took weapons in their hands on that last heroic impulse. It was not my destiny to die there together with them, but I belong to them, and in their mass graves. By my death I wish to express my strongest protest against the inactivity with which the world is looking on and permitting the extermination of my people.

I know how little human life is worth today; but, as I was unable to do anything during my life, perhaps by my death I shall contribute to breaking [5] down that indifference of those who may now – at the last moment – rescue the few Polish Jews still alive from certain annihilation.

My life belongs to the Jewish people of Poland and I therefore give it to them. I wish that this remaining handful of the original several millions of Polish Jews could live to see the liberation of a new world of freedom, and the justice of true socialism I believe that such a world will come and such a Poland will arise”.

The newspaper story added: “This was the letter. It suggests that possibly Samuel Ziegelboim will have accomplished as much in dying as he did in living”.

This pamphlet is written in the hope that some of these remaining Jews may yet be saved. No individual and no government is powerful enough to save all these lives, or perhaps even a large proportion of them. But it is not impossible to rescue several thousands, or even tens of thousands. And every human individual, with his unique personality, is worth saving.

We who issue this appeal are members of an organization of women to whom the anguish of their fellow-humans across the sea has become unbearable. We feel their fate is bound up with our own. We cannot remain silent when such things happen, or the very stones will cry out. “The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground”. Pity, however vast, is not enough. Pity must be translated into action, and into effective action.

This pamphlet is addressed to you, American men and women, proverbially humane, generous and clear-sighted. It is addressed to you, fathers and mothers of the nation; to you, ministers and teachers; to you, business men, workers and farmers, who are engaged in waging a war for the right of men everywhere to live, to all

who constitute the great-hearted American public. You are asked not to be content with eloquent condemnations. Expressions of sympathy which lead to no attempts at rescue become a hollow mockery in the ears of the dying.

We believe that our record of seeming inhumanity and inaction [6] is due in part to the fact that the American public is not even today fully acquainted with the facts. Americans still do not realize the extent and horror of the special tragedy endured by the Jewish people in Europe, the desperate urgency of their need for help and our responsibility to offer them at least a temporary asylum.

We believe that our indifference arises also from the lack of that imagination that is the core of moral sensitivity. Perhaps we have succumbed to the insidious blunting process of war, which dims the perceptions and deadens compassion. We cannot grasp the sum-total of so much human misery.

How to Exterminate a Whole People

The story of what has happened to European Jewry will probably never be known – certainly not till the end of the war. Some of its most terrible pages are being written as you sit reading these words.

According to the best available estimates, based partly on governmental reports, some *three million Jews of Europe have perished* since the war began four years ago. Out of a former Jewish population of 8.250.000 in the areas at present occupied or dominated by the Nazis, there now remain a little over 3.300.000 Jews. Of those who escaped, some 1.800.000 were evacuated into the interior of the Soviet Union, and about 180.000 have migrated elsewhere. But probably 3.000.000 are dead. About 230.000 – 8% of the Jewish dead – have fallen in actual warfare. *The others died because they were Jews.*

The systematic mass extermination began as early as September, 1942. It was achieved through deliberate means: planned starvation, forced labor, mass deportation, pogroms and methodical murders.

You have heard the words “planned starvation”. Do you know what they mean – you who complain about rationing? They mean [7] that the Jews are not even permitted to starve on the same basis as the rest of the conquered populations. They are allowed less than half the food granted to the Poles or Belgians, or about twenty per cent of what Germans get. Jews receive none of the essential protective and vitamin foods: no meat, no fish, no poultry, no milk, no cheese, no butter, no eggs, no white flour, no vegetables, no fruits, no fruit juices. The weekly ration for Jews in Polish ghettos amounts at best to a pound of black bread, two ounces of so-called jam or marmalade, an ounce of sugar, and perhaps a few potatoes. They may use their ration cards only at restricted times, often not until the goods are exhausted. They are forbidden to buy food outside the ghetto or even to accept gifts of food from compassionate neighbors. Little hunger-crazed Jewish children who tried to slip past the Gestapo guards have been shot on the spot. In 1941 the death rate of Jewish children in the Warsaw ghetto was thirty times as high as among Polish children. Typhus and tuberculosis raged. “If there only were this soup”, wrote one of the Jewish laborers who had been promised soup in addition to the black bread which was all he and his fellow stone-quarry workers received.

The Cold Facts

Exact figures are impossible for the duration. The best estimates run:

In Poland, with a pre-war Jewish population of 3.300.000, probably no fewer than 1.600.000 Jews have been killed.

Of the 525.000 Jews living in Germany when Hitler came to power it is estimated that only some 5.000 still remain in the country. About 75.000 perished in the course of deportation; some 25.000 were killed or committed suicide in concentration camps; 10.000 are still in France, Belgium and Holland, awaiting deportation to the East; and 75.000 German Jews may still be alive in the [8] ghettos and labor camps of Poland and occupied Soviet territory. The rest, about half of those originally in Germany, have migrated.

In Rumania, which had a Jewish population of about 850.000, some 230.000 have perished.

In Norway, out of 1.400 Jews, all have been deported or have fled; not one remains.

In Denmark, only the other day the 5.000 Jews fled and were rescued by Sweden.

What the world has lost in brilliant minds and valuable personalities we shall never know.

This is *the manner* in which three million European Jews lost their lives:

Some 1.700.000 were victims of organized massacre and pogroms. Starvation and its consequences account for about 750.000 Jewish lives – a conservative estimate. In Warsaw, during 1941 alone, there perished 47.000 Jews, or nearly ten per cent of the total Jewish population.

Deportations have taken nearly 350.000 additional lives. Obersturmführer Hiege, Himmler's expert for deportations, stated in 1942 that thirty per cent of the deportees perish en route. Since many Jews are deported from one locality after another, the percentage of casualties is even higher.

These are the figures. While not exact, they give some sense of the vastness of the tragedy. They are not given for the sake of atrocity-mongering. They are not given in order to stir up hatred against the Germans. For better or worse, the Germans have tended to that themselves. With vengeance or the desire for vengeance and retribution, those who are issuing this pamphlet can have no part. Whether a passionate demand for retribution, such as seems to have been made an official policy of the United Nations, is good for our own souls, is a matter worth pondering. But it is wholly irrelevant to the question at hand. Whatever the exaction of retribution may do to the guilty, or to ourselves, it will not right a single [9] wrong, or bring one murdered child back into the sunlight. And it is dear that the threat of retribution is having no effect whatever upon those against whom it is being made. It is easy, all too easy, to justify our reluctance to do what is our dear moral duty to-day, by means of dire threats of what we are going to do to the wicked tomorrow. It may help our feelings to contemplate bringing the criminals to justice in the future. But for the problem with which we are here passionately concerned, retribution will in the nature of the case be both too little and too late.

We have here one purpose and one only: the desire to save as many as possible of our tortured and threatened fellow human beings as we can. We should like to approach the problem in the spirit of those Quakers who come into a situation of havoc, caused by the blunderings and ineptitudes of men, not to pass judgment, not to condemn, but simply to promote human life and to relieve human suffering. There is neither victory nor defeat to a problem – there is a solution.

The Story Behind the Figures

Still the refugees stream over the borders, without passports, without guarantees, without means. Night by night the precarious process of escape continues, over the Pyrenees in bitter weather, by foot, into Spain; over the snowy passes of the Alps to Switzerland; across the Black Sea in unseaworthy ships to Turkey. Many refugees have found themselves trapped for a second, a third, and even for a fourth time. Children, hidden in knapsacks during night crossings over frontiers, have been sometimes given sedatives to keep them quiet while passing Gestapo guards.

Here belong the sagas of the Wandering Children. Little ones from two to five years old were found in Paris after the brutal round-ups, in streets, cellars and abandoned rooms. There was no way of identifying them. They were deported – “destination unknown”. Girls and boys of ten and eleven, orphans of deported [10] refugees or of concentration camp suicides, wandered entirely alone through the Low Countries, making their way into France. They had been told by desperate parents “to walk south and keep on walking”, till they reached the demarcation line. Most heartbreaking of all was the fate of the five thousand Jewish children on special “children’s rescue visas”. After agonizing setbacks, several hundred were escorted to Marseilles, to embark for America and freedom. They were examined by physicians, pronounced fit for emigration, and after further suspense five hundred exit permits were finally granted by the Vichy government. At that very moment the American and British landed in North Africa and the Germans raced into southern France, cutting off every road of escape. Thousands of Jewish mothers and fathers, assuming that they survive, will never know what became of their children. Thousands of children will never know who their parents were.

Here too belong the odysseys of the refugee ships, sailing from port to port in vain, hoping to unload their cargoes of desperate human beings. Here belong the stories of the floating death-houses on the Danube. Most familiar is that of the steamship *Struma*, the Rumanian boat equipped for 120 people which set out in midwinter with 769 Jews, 300 of them women and 149 children, bound for Palestine. The engine had been salvaged from the bottom of the Danube, the radio was out of order, there were no lifeboats, no water supply, no heating. After repeated breakdowns and repairs, the ship reached Istanbul. Since the passengers had no permits to enter Palestine, permission to land was refused by the Turkish government. The *Struma* turned back. A few hours later she blew up, and the passengers went to their deaths in the churning, oil-flaming waters of the Black Sea. There was one survivor. Shortly thereafter, the British authorities gave permission to admit the children under sixteen to Palestine. It was too late [11].

What the United Nations have already done

Until December 17, 1942, little of what was happening to the Jews reached the general public. On that day the first international action was taken in a United Nations declaration denouncing Hitler's oft-repeated intention to annihilate the Jewish people of Europe. President Roosevelt for the Americans and Foreign Secretary Eden for the British issued a joint statement. This gave recognition to the unique martyrdom endured by the Jews of Europe, and to the special problems which this martyrdom presented.

From all the occupied countries, Jews are being transported in conditions of appalling horror and brutality to eastern Europe.

In Poland, which has been made the principal Nazi slaughter house, the ghettos established by the German invader are being systematically emptied of all Jews except a few highly skilled workers required for war industries.

None of those taken away are ever heard of again. The able-bodied are slowly worked to death in labor camps. The infirm are left to die of exposure and starvation or are deliberately massacred in mass executions.

The number of victims of these bloody cruelties is reckoned in many hundreds of thousands of entirely innocent men, women and children.

The above-mentioned governments [United Nations] and the French National Committee condemn in the strongest possible terms this bestial policy of cold blooded extermination. They declare that such events can only strengthen the resolve of all freedom-loving peoples to overthrow the barbarous Hitlerite tyranny.

They reaffirm their solemn resolution to insure that those responsible for the crimes shall not escape retribution and to press on with the necessary practical measures to this end.

The reading of this statement in the British House of Commons was followed by an impressive demonstration in which every member arose from his seat and stood in silence.

Some three months later, on March 9 and March 18, 1943, both houses of the American Congress adopted a resolution reading:

These brutal and indefensible outrages against millions of helpless men, women and children should be, and they are hereby, condemned as unworthy of any nation or any regime which pretends to be civilized.

The dictates of humanity and honorable conduct demand that this inexcusable slaughter and mistreatment shall cease and it is the sense of this [12] Congress that those guilty, directly and indirectly, of these criminal acts shall be held accountable and punished in a manner commensurate with the offenses for which they are responsible.

It is worth noting that in both these statements the "practical" measures promised were for punishment and retribution, not for rescue or immediate aid.

In contrast to these expressions of outraged feelings was the following resolution passed by the House of Lords on March 23, 1943, on the motion of the Archbishop of Canterbury:

In view of the massacres and starvation of Jews and others in enemy and enemy-occupied countries, this House desires to assure His Majesty's Government of its fullest support for immediate measures, on the largest and most generous scale compatible with the requirements

of military operations and security, for providing help and temporary asylum to persons in danger of massacre who are able to leave enemy and enemy-occupied countries.

Meantime the massacres and deportations have continued, and thousands of Jews have fallen into graves they were forced to dig for themselves. The warnings of retribution have had no deterrent effect whatever on the Nazis. On the contrary, they have been an incentive for the Nazis to redouble their efforts to win the war and to involve so many other Germans with them in their moral guilt that retreat and surrender would be unthinkable.

The statement on atrocities contained in the Moscow Agreement signed by President Roosevelt, Prime Minister Churchill and Premier Stalin makes no specific mention of the Jews, but promises to pursue the guilty "to the uttermost ends of the earth and deliver them to their accusers". The Jews are still dying.

How the British People Feel About It

In Britain public opinion is far ahead of governmental action. The Church in particular has been outspoken in urging bold and swift measures of rescue. The Archbishops of Canterbury, York and Wales, speaking for the entire Anglican Episcopate, called [13] on the British Government "to give a lead to the world in finding immediate refuge territories within British Empire", and declared that "it is the duty of civilized nations, whether neutral or allied, to exert themselves to the utmost to provide sanctuary for these victims". The Anglican appeal was immediately endorsed by Cardinal Hinsley, spiritual leader of Britain's Roman Catholics.

These Christian leaders have realized that Hitler's attack on the Jews is really an attack on the democratic way of life, an attack on the whole Hebrew-Christian tradition, an attack on religion itself. The Jew, with his belief in the innate dignity and worth of every human soul, is the living symbol of the doctrine of human equality and of the inalienable rights of man. This doctrine is in eternal conflict with the Nazi conception of a hierarchy of men and of races. The Nazis' war against the Jews, therefore, is a war against the basic ideals of any Christian civilization.

British public Opinion has been further stirred by articles in the daily papers, and by the moving pamphlet, *Let My People Go*, written by the British author and publisher Victor Gollancz. Another effective pamphlet, *Rescue the Perishing*, was written by the distinguished member of Parliament, Eleanor F. Rathbone, and issued by the National Committee for Rescue from Nazi Terror. Letters in the London *Times* have borne such signatures as those of Gilbert Murray, Harold Nicolson, Bernard Shaw, R. H. Tawney, Beatrice Webb, Lady Rhondda, and Lord Sankey. The interest in practical action has not been restricted to any one group. A Public Opinion poll, taken in March, 1943, indicated that 78% of the public wanted the government to accept refugees able to escape from occupied Europe. Most significant of all, as showing the extent of the responsible support for measures of rescue, was the cable sent to Secretary Eden in Washington just before the Bermuda Conference. The 206 signatures, collected in three days, included those of four Archbishops, the leaders of nearly every religious denomination, the Lord Mayors of almost [14] every large city, the heads of many of the Oxford and Cambridge colleges, the Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor of nearly every university in England,

Scotland and Wales, many labor and trade union leaders, and many of those most famous in science, literature, music and the arts. The cable read:

With reference to the forthcoming Anglo-American Conference on massacre of Jews and others by Nazis, we assure you of the fullest support of public opinion in this country for treating problem as one of extreme urgency calling for immediate and boldest measures of rescue. *British conscience so deeply stirred that country prepared for any sacrifice consistent with not delaying victory.* We hope that the great opportunity afforded by your visit may be used for the speedy achievement of definite results.

“No message”, adds Eleanor Rathbone, “more strongly worded or more weightily signed has, perhaps, ever been dispatched to a British statesman abroad”.

As a result of this, great pressure of an aroused British public opinion, Britain has admitted since 1940, in spite of the dangerous scarcity of food and housing, some 75.000 refugees – as many as came in the years before the war.

How the American People Feel About It

There has been no American poll of opinion comparable to the British one; but public feeling in the United States appears to have been less strongly stirred than in Britain. This is partly because we are farther from the scene of the tragedy, and partly because in such matters we Americans “haven’t got the habit of it”.

So far the advocates of immediate action here have been recruited chiefly from the Jewish groups. For two years our statesmen made no public mention of the mounting slaughters in Europe. We acknowledge with shame that it was left for a distinguished delegation of American Jews, in December, 1942, to call the attention of the President of the United States and Secretary Hull to the accounts of the massacres in Poland and elsewhere.

Most of the efforts to mitigate Jewish suffering abroad and to [15] urge acceptance of a substantial number of Hitler’s victims upon our shores have been made by Jews themselves. They have worked through their various organizations and more recently through the American Jewish Conference, the most representative body of American Jewry. The voice of Christian America has not yet spoken in unmistakable accents of moral leadership. The faith of the great American Jewish community in the justice, the humanity, and the essential Christianity of their fellow-Americans must be deeply wounded. We can only guess at the mute anguish in each Jewish heart as the Christian turns and passes by on the other side.

There have been some outstanding exceptions. The American Friends Service Committee (Quakers), several organizations for refugee service, the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, have been working quietly, both here and abroad, at the day-by-day processes of providing affidavits of support, procuring visas, finding means of transportation, and transacting the thousand and one delicate and complicated negotiations necessary to release each single refugee. There have been valiant articles and editorials, like those of Freda Kirchwey and Dorothy Thompson. The “New Republic” devoted an entire supplement to its issue of August 30, 1943, to *The Jews of Europe and How to Help Them*. There have been public meetings, beginning with the huge demonstration under joint auspices in Madison Square Garden, New York City, on March 1, 1943. Anne O’Hare

McCormick wrote of this meeting that “the shame of the world filled the Garden that night”.

The Christian churches of America joined in a Day of Compassion on Sunday, May 2, 1943, The Federal Council of Churches, the Church Peace Union, and the World Alliance for International Friendship through the Churches have issued excellent leaflets reviewing the situation and suggesting steps for releasing the Jews. The National Conference of Christians and Jews has published *Christians Protest Persecution*, a compendium of statements made by church leaders in America and abroad. The executive [16] committee of the Christian Council on Palestine has recommended eight steps as specific solutions for a tragic problem.

Slowly the Christian world in America is taking up the challenge flung to it by Hitler.

Reaction in the Smaller European Countries

The shining examples of some of the smaller European countries have broken through the blackness of our time like beacons of light giving promise of better days to come. The Swiss people, living under the shadow of the Hakenkreuz, have been magnificent in their outspoken opposition to anti-Semitism. Since the war began they have received over 60.000 refugees – in spite of the food difficulties in a tiny country cut off from the sea and entirely surrounded by Nazi territory. Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg before the invasion welcomed numbers out of all proportion to their own size and population. Only recently the Swedish Government won the undying admiration of all freedom-loving peoples by protesting, with greater official candor than has been ventured by any other government, the persecution of the Jews of Denmark, and by offering them free asylum in their time of dire need. The deportation ships were waiting in the harbor of Copenhagen ready to take them towards Poland. With the help and connivance of Danish officials and of the Danish people, and with the backing of the Swedish Government and people, about 6.000 Danes (5.000 of them Jewish) fled secretly and by night across the Sound separating Denmark from Sweden, in every kind of boat available. The physicist Niels Bohr, Nobel prize-winner, was one of the Danish Jews who escaped to Sweden in a rowboat.

The Bermuda Conference of April, 1943

Mounting public indignation against the absence of governments measures was probably responsible for the calling of the Anglo-American Conference on Refugees in Bermuda on April 19, 1943 [17].

It was definitely announced by Secretary Eden that no practical measures would be taken – that the conference was to be “exploratory in character”. The island cho-

sen as the meeting place was remote. The discussions were confined to official delegates of the two governments and took place behind closed doors. The press was not admitted. No government in exile was invited to send an observer. The Russian Government, tens of thousands of whose citizens have been murdered in occupied territory, was not represented. The Jewish organizations of America and Britain were denied access to the conference. Great international bodies like the International Red Cross, which could play an important part in the work of rescue, were not called into consultation. No representative of labor was present.

While no official report of their decisions has been made public, it is known authoritatively that the delegates decided that large scale movements of people from Nazi-controlled Europe were impossible under war conditions. Only military victory, they agreed, could help the masses of Nazi victims. Above all, the conference did not see its way to recommending that the governments unlock their doors to the entry of additional refugees, even on a temporary basis.

The difficulties confronting the Bermuda Conference are not to be underestimated. But we cannot help wondering whether the decisions might not have been different if the delegates had had wives, children or parents among those living in darkness and pain in the death houses of Europe.

The Fear of Increasing Anti-Semitism

Behind the reluctance of government circles to take action, behind the reluctance of private groups, is the fear, expressed or unexpressed, that the admission of more Jews into the United States will increase our already growing anti-Semitic prejudices. This is too intricate a problem to dwell on here. Anti-Semitism is [18] spread by contagion from Hitlerism, and is unworthy of the American people.

But it should be pointed out what a small proportion of our population numerically is Jewish. In this great country of ours, with its 132,000,000 people, only 4 and 3/4 million are Jews – a little over 3 1/2%. Those who think that perhaps Hitler may have had some justification in fearing that the Germans might be dominated by the German Jews, should remember that at no time among the 70 million inhabitants of Germany before 1938 were there more than 600,000 Jews – one per cent of the population. And in a world of over two billion souls, with 400 million in China and 350 million in India, there are scattered in the countries of the Diaspora a tiny handful of 16 million Jews in all – less the three million whose lives may have just been snuffed out by the Nazis. It is well to remember these figures when the Nazis at our own hearths start their whispering.

What Can Be Done?

Tremendous obstacles stand in the way of any program for the immediate rescue of European Jews. If we are to accomplish anything, we must be realistic. Reluctantly we must face the fact that there is very little possibility that the Jews in Poland and German-occupied Eastern Europe can be helped by anything which the United Nations, humanly speaking, can hope to do. It is extremely difficult to con-

ceive conditions under which their governments would be at present willing to negotiate with the Nazis.

But this does not mean that nothing can be done. Many Jews are escaping from Nazidom to neutral countries, to Spain, Switzerland, Sweden, and Turkey. Many are fleeing to the Balkan lands. There is today more hope that pressure can be brought upon the German satellite countries, now only too anxious to escape the consequences of their long subjection. If those Jews who have already [19] found a refuge outside the German lines could be taken care of or transported elsewhere, there would be more room to receive new refugees.

At just this point we encounter the hurdles of apathy, indifference and short-sighted self-interest, on the part of our own peoples.

How can we encourage the Jews to flee from Hitler unless we are willing to offer them asylum ourselves, at least a temporary refuge? How can we reconcile our own failure to do this much with our professed war aims? Our inaction has been a powerful weapon in the hands of Nazi propagandists. They sneer at our "sanctimonious protests", our "crocodile tears". "For years", they say, "the democratic world has had time to demonstrate its alleged love for Jewry by opening its frontiers to them". Since the outbreak of the war the doors have been closed still more tightly.

Proposals for Action

A number of detailed programs of rescue have been drafted by responsible Jewish and non-Jewish organizations and experts, and submitted to the State Department. In the main they outline the following proposals:

1. Our American immigration laws should be administered so as to place the fewest obstacles in the way of refugees applying for entry into the country under the present quota system.

2. We should provide temporary asylum in this country, under carefully controlled conditions, for political refugees.

3. The United Nations should provide further financial help and food supplies to neutral countries to take care of the refugees there, and should guarantee that their refugee population will eventually find homes in other lands.

4. The British authorities, in the light of the changed military situation, should relax the rigid restrictions placed on Jewish immigration into Palestine.

5. We should consider seriously a program for feeding both [20] needy nationals and refugees in Nazi-held territory, on the model of the successful Greek feeding plan.

6. The United States should set up an official agency specially charged with the task of saving as many of the Jewish people of Europe as possible.

The crucial problem is to provide asylum, permanent or temporary, for those who can escape. We cannot ask others to open their doors while the gates to our own vast territories remain virtually closed. The need for such asylum will not be greatly lessened with the stopping of hostilities. There will be little immediate opportunity even then for repatriating large numbers of people. Large parts of Europe will, for a considerable period of time, remain uninhabitable by Jewish populations.

The rescue of the Jews is both an immediate crisis and a long-range problem. Everything we can possibly do now will save just that many human souls. It will also be a beginning on the long and hard task of trying to atone to the Jewish people for what they have so cruelly been made to suffer. We cannot too soon search our own hearts, and begin to act. The long-range problem offers a supreme challenge to human statesmanship.

1. Improved Administration of Existing American Immigration Laws

It is not widely known that the present methods of administering our immigration laws prevent the admission of many refugees who might enter the United States under the existing quotas. Since 1924 we have had a quota law which allows 153,774 immigrants to enter the country annually. In actual fact, immigration has dwindled from year to year to a point where it is now practically insignificant. For the year ending in July, 1942, only 28,781 immigrants were admitted. Of this number only 11,153 came from Europe, under the quota system; the rest came from Canada and [21] Latin-America. *About half a million more immigrants could have been admitted since the war began*, without increasing the total number allowed under the law, had Congress been willing, or had public opinion compelled it to act. No one knows how many thousands have been condemned to the charnel-houses of Europe by the legalistic policy of our government.

The technical process of admitting each individual immigrant in war time is so hedged about with complicated restrictions and executive orders, that the visa, when finally granted, often comes too late. Large numbers of refugees who were awaiting visas in France before the complete German occupation of November, 1942, were doomed by this delay. One refugee wrote: "I needed a piece of paper to save two lives, and I did not get it".

This does not mean that our officials are hard-boiled or merciless. But they operate within the framework of the law. It is not a question of amending immigration laws that have been passed by Congress (though that too could be done if public opinion demanded it) but of urging that they be interpreted and applied in a humane and liberal spirit. If there is danger that spies might slip in disguised as refugees, all could be detained in camps for a full investigation. The number of doubtful cases admitted has proved very small.

There is a widespread opinion that any efforts at rescue would be fruitless because there just is not any transportation available. This is contrary to fact. Neutral Spanish and Portuguese ships are making regular voyages to the Western hemisphere. For the most part they come in with their passenger quarters practically empty. Transportation accommodations are today far in excess of the number of visas being issued.

2. Temporary Asylum

In line with a more generous policy of administering our present immigration laws for the duration of the war is the resolution [22] introduced by Congressman Samuel Dickstein (H. J. Res. 154, Sept. 14, 1943), which urges the temporary admission of political and religious refugees. "Despite the emphasis on "temporary", such a resolution is not likely to find smooth sailing in Congress, but it is well to remember that such diverse groups as the National Democratic and Republican Clubs and the American Federation of Labor have recently declared themselves in favor of temporary asylum outside the quota. The resolution to this effect adopted by the American Federation of Labor at its recent convention is particularly significant because the Federation speaks for a large body of workers who ordinarily might fear an over-glutting of the labor market in the post-war world. Though they were reassured by the stress on the word "temporary", nevertheless the unanimous passage of the resolution indicates a heartening breath of spirit. Organized labor in general resents the libel that it is the workers who bar the lifting of restrictions. The Canadian Trades and Labor Congress, the A. F. of L., and the heads of the C. I. O. have emphatically declared themselves for temporary asylum in words which leave "no doubt as to their sympathies or their willingness to help"⁸.

Our example would undoubtedly help to liberalize the immigration procedures in the various Latin-American countries.

3. Financial Help and Guarantees to Neutrals

If we took the lead ourselves, it would encourage the neutral countries bordering on Nazi-occupied lands to receive even more refugees "than they have already generously welcomed. These neutral countries should receive further assurances of financial help and food supplies from the United Nations, and guarantees that their swelling refugee populations will eventually find homes in other lands. It seems that suggestions of this sort were one of the concrete proposals made at the Bermuda Conference. Public opinion [23] should see to it that these suggestions receive implementation and generous support from the United States government.

4. Palestine as an Asylum

It would seem that Palestine, internationally recognized as "the Jewish national home", could be the ideal refuge for many of the dispossessed of Europe. Here is a large Jewish community eager to welcome its brethren, well provided with funds and easy of access from the Balkans. The remarkable success of the Palestinian Jews since the Balfour Declaration of 1917 seems to most American Jews an almost providential answer to the present need of their people for sanctuary.

Palestine is the country to whose protection stateless Jews would seem to have the clearest moral and legal right to appeal, by historic tradition, by solemn pledge and international agreement. Only one obstacle stands in the way. The British Gov-

⁸ From an excellent article by Marie Syrkin, "A Jew to His Fellow Americans", in *Common Ground* for December, 1943 (N.d.A).

ernment has placed narrower and narrower limitations on the number of Jews allowed to enter Palestine. In a White Paper issued in May, 1939, Britain restricted this number to 10.000 a year until April 1, 1944, after which date immigration was to cease entirely. In view of the plight of refugees, 25.000 more could come during this five-year period: 75.000 in all. Even this cruel restriction has been so administered that by September 30, 1943, only some 45.000 had been admitted. Not unnaturally, Jews the world over regard this policy as a clear violation of solemn international covenants.

The reasons for British policy are clear. For over a thousand years Palestine has been inhabited not by Jews but by Arabs, who form part of the great Arab population stretching from Egypt to India. There are still twice as many Arabs as Jews in the country. And under the pressures of the first World War, Britain not only promised the Jews a "homeland" in Palestine, she also promised Palestine to the Arabs.

From the standpoint of British imperial policy, Palestine plays [24] a minor role in the much more important Pan-Arab and Pan-Islam question, which touches the very nerve of empire in India and in Africa. Even before 1933 the Italians, and later the Germans, made it a policy to stir up opposition among the Arabs of Palestine and the Near East to the newly-arrived Jewish immigrants. The British administration found the Jews much easier to "handle" than the Arabs; it was the Arabs who naturally got most of the concessions. This led in turn to the rise of influential though minority groups among the Jews whose extreme demands did not lessen the general tension.

With the jockeying for position up to 1939, and with the outbreak of actual war, appeasement of the Arabs was essential to British interests. The German extermination policy of 1942 coincided with the darkest days of the British Empire. Hordes of refugees clamored for admission to Palestine at the very time Rommel was thundering at the gates of Suez and the Nazis were sweeping into the Caucasus. It seemed that at any moment the whole Arab-dominated Near East might explode. It was a supreme tragedy for the Jews that their bitter need came into violent conflict with the political and military demands of winning the war. Even then, it would have been easier to make Palestine an asylum, had all the parties concerned, British, Arabs, and even extremist Jews, been over the years more reasonable, more far-seeing, less humanly fallible.

But the military and political situation is now greatly changed; the dangers attendant on possible Near Eastern disorder are diminished. It is now possible for Britain to begin to relax the restrictions on Palestinian immigration without endangering her victory in the war. Under public pressure the deadline of April 1, 1944, has in fact been raised. The time has come when effective pressure can take advantage of the altered situation. The American government, without the imperial responsibilities of the British, can exert influence on Britain in support of the legal rights of Jews to enter [25] Palestine. Britain can even begin to enjoy the luxury of keeping her promises; Jews can once more hope for asylum in Palestine. You and I can urge our own government to hasten this process. We need no longer feel that in demanding that more Jews be admitted to Palestine, we are interfering with military necessities.

5. Feeding on the Greek Plan

The Joint Emergency Committee for European Jewish Affairs urged a program of feeding Jews in Nazi-held territory. This would have to be done on the same basis as the feeding of needy nationals of those lands.

The Jewish captives face imminent death by starvation. They are not even permitted the luxury of bread to eat in sorrow. The experience in the case of the Greeks might be a partial answer to German organized starvation of the Jews. The Red Cross is sending food supplies to Greece; effective supervision by a Swedish-Swiss Commission keeps the Germans from diverting the supplies to their own use. Our State Department is authority for the fact that the Germans do not take any of the 19,000 tons of food going to Greece each month. We still have a large surplus of grain; and fat, meat and milk could be brought from South America.

6. An American Rescue Commission-the President's War Refugee Board

Finally, the lack of adequate machinery and personnel partly explains our failure to put into effect any of the promising proposals for rescue. Problems of such epic proportions should not and need not be left to officials and statesmen already heavily overburdened with the administration of a global war. There has now been established an official United States agency specially charged with the task of saving the Jewish and other persecuted peoples of Europe. By executive order President Roosevelt set up on January 22, 1944, a War Refugee Board, consisting of Secretary Hull, Secretary Morgenthau, and Secretary Stimson, "to take [26] action for the immediate rescue from the Nazis of as many as possible of the persecuted minorities of Europe, racial, religious or political, all civilian victims of enemy savagery". An able executive, John W. Pehle, was appointed director. The War Refugee Board, acclaimed as a welcome answer to the plea of American Jewry, needs the co-operation of every American. At this eleventh hour, everything humanly possible should be done. In this task of salvation, speedy action is absolutely essential.

The whole Jewish rescue problem is in a state of constant flux, varying from month to month as the fortunes of the war change. Every governmental proposal that promises to take first steps first should be applauded and supported, and scrutinized for its sincerity and effectiveness. A distinguished group of Americans headed by Justice Frank Murphy of the U. S. Supreme Court has recently faced this responsibility by organizing the National Committee against Nazi Persecution and Extermination of the Jews. The purposes of this committee are:

1. To rally the full force of the public conscience in America against the extermination of the Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe.
2. To support sustained and vigorous action by our government to rescue those who may yet be saved.
3. To recognize and combat hateful propaganda against American citizens of Jewish descent as a powerful secret Nazi weapon.

What Each One of Us Can Actually Do

The heart of the problem is whether *we*, as active citizens in a democracy, care enough, and care deeply enough, to bring our wishes home to our legislators. Governments are not willing to undertake action unless there is a large and influential body of public opinion behind them. Neither do they act in defiance of public wishes. The responsibility of whether or not the War Refugee Board succeeds in its mission rests squarely upon us. The guilt will be ours, if through our indifference, our fears and our [27] prejudices we become accessories to the greatest crime in recorded history – the mass crucifixion of a people.

For the chances of rescuing more than a few depend almost entirely on the atmosphere of public opinion. And *we* are public opinion. Our legislators are our public servants. It is for us to charge them with our deep and anguished concern in this matter. Our officials in Washington are not unfriendly towards these efforts. And there is overwhelming evidence that this cause is very popular throughout the British Isles. The task is now yours and mine.

All the democratic avenues of action are open to us. We can take this matter up in our societies, clubs, lodges, trade unions, and religious organizations. We can make our influence felt in private conversation with our friends and neighbors. We can ask our minister to preach about it. We can send letters to our local papers and ask the editors to write editorials on the subject. We can distribute this pamphlet giving the facts to Parent-Teacher Associations, to social, business, war relief and service clubs.

We must make sure that our two Senators (Senate Office Building, Washington, D. C.), and our Congressman (House Office Building, Washington, D. C.), know how we feel about the matter. Especially we should write to the President, to the Secretary and Under-Secretary of State, pointing out the public interest and the urgency of altering of administration of our immigration laws. Our letters can be a powerful and constructive factor in speeding action. You may be sure that they count.

The letters should be brief and to the point, and should be addressed:

The Hon. Franklin D. Roosevelt
The White House, Washington, D. C.
The Hon. Cordell Hull, The Hon. Edward R. Stettinius, Jr.
Department of State Washington, D. C. [28]

The American Dream: “I Left my lamp beside the golden door”

Our tradition of granting asylum to the oppressed, the persecuted and the hunted of all lands is inextricably woven into the entire pattern of American history. It is a policy that has helped to make us the greatest single power in the world today. Most of us in the United States are here today because in the past the doors were left open and immigration encouraged. The forebears of many who read this pamphlet came here during the last three hundred years as political and religious refugees, refugees from the oppressions, the persecutions and the stagnation of the old world. “We have built a nation out of the thwarted dreams of Europe”. If we give

up our tradition of asylum now, something as important and precious as it is wise will be irretrievably lost in America.

“Nor can any democratic country”, says Dorothy Thompson, “wash its hands of this problem if it wishes to retain its own soul. The very essence of the democratic principle is humanistic; it involves respect for human dignity and human personality; it implies a revulsion against persecution of individuals; it rejects arbitrary edicts. When its capacity for righteous indignation is exhausted by weariness or by callousness, then the democratic principle will die”.

Yes, we are dealing with a huge undertaking, and a difficult one. But it is not nearly so difficult as marshalling the entire genius, energies and resources of a great people for global war as we are doing now. Like all large plans, it needs imaginative insight, inexhaustible energy, and faith in our human capacity to deal rationally with man-made problems. It needs a passionate humanity, backed by a realistic sense of the possible. Above all it needs a gift for practical organization – a capacity we like to think of as the supremely American gift.

For us who issue this appeal, as an organization of women, it is a matter of international housekeeping-an extension of our functions as preservers and fosterers of life [29].

If we fail to feel, to speak, to act, it bespeaks a tragedy more fateful than the tragedy of the Jews. But we must have democratic faith in the ultimate decency of American men and women. We have confidence in the power of America to mobilize to meet the terrible emergencies of our time.

We have passed by on the other side. We passed by when the Nazis first came into power, and the Jews fell among robbers. We passed by when, a year ago, the Jews were stripped and beaten, and left half dead. Shall we pass by now, when the sword is at their very throats? Shall we have to live out our lives with that terrible cry upon our lips, “Am I my brother’s keeper?”

Mercedes M. Randall

Epilogue: to our Jewish fellow-sufferers⁹

Our boundless horror, sympathy and grief cannot be put into words, as we think of those who are being murdered in masses and of those who, while in personal safety, are tortured by anxiety and horror over the fate of those near and dear to them. I want to express also our admiration for the heroic constancy of Jewish endurance and the noble freedom from the futility of hatred and thoughts of revenge, of which Jews have given such admirable examples.

We are borne down by the sense of the powerlessness not only of individuals but of the most powerful governments to stop these unexampled cruelties. But most of all, those of us who are not Jews are oppressed by a sense of our own responsibility, for we too are guilty. We are all answerable in part for the development of a

⁹ Questo *Epilogo* a firma di Emily Greene Balch riprende e amplia la lettera al rabbino Wise poco più di un anno prima.

state of things where the moral insanity of Hitler Germany was possible. And for a state of things where the civilized world can find no better way out than competition in reciprocal slaughter and destruction. We were not ready in time with any other method than this slow and cruel one [30].

When matters had reached a point where prevention of these wrongs was no longer possible, we might still have done far more to alleviate them than we have done, both in the way of welcoming refugees to this country on an adequate scale, and by adequate contribution to relief. We have been far too un-understanding, cold-hearted and self-regarding. Neither have we kept ourselves clean of the contagion of the destructive feeling of racial and religious prejudice. *Nostra culpa, nostra maxima culpa*. From the beginning the method of the Nazis has been to conquer by dividing – by dividing country from country, group from group, man from fellow-man. Even today, in this country, Nazi sympathizers are constantly at work to raise doubts, suspicions and prejudices between one group and another, and especially between Christians and Jews. It is for us to make it emphatically clear that what Hitler is doing to the Jews of Europe has made it forever impossible for this now-familiar Nazi pattern to succeed in America. It has instead brought the great mass of Americans together, through the unbreakable bonds of sorrow and sympathy, and of a common sense of guilt, in the resolve to cast out the last traces of the poison of anti-Semitism lurking in their own hearts.

Even in this dark hour we can believe – or if we cannot believe we can hope – that in spite of everything we are on the way to liberation from all such prejudices, and that the day is coming when such cruelties as those now going on in Poland and elsewhere may be unthinkable. And we can not merely hope, we can work actively in many ways to bring that day nearer.

Emily Greene Balch
Honorary International President,
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom [31].