1 August 1944

Mr. Dean Acheson
Assistant Secretary of State
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Acheson:

A key part of UNRRA's educational and informational program is cooperation through each member government with the schools and the organized adult groups whose purpose is study and understanding of public affairs.

This must also be a key part of the educational and informational programs of the other international agencies such as the International Labor Office, the Commission on Food and Agriculture, and the organization which will evolve out of the arrangements just completed by the world financial conference at Bretton Woods.

We realize that a member government such as the United States with a highly organized school system and an intricate grouping of adult organizations for study and discussion faces a problem of correlating the requests for cooperation going to these agencies. In laying plans for the educational program of 1944-45 to submit to member governments we have taken this situation into account. We have come to the conclusion that it would be most useful to the people of the United States to develop an educational program which brings together in one course the facts about the participation of the United States in all of the international agencies to which this nation has adhered.

We hope that in the coming year teachers and leaders of adult groups may be supplied with an authoritative document specifically designed as a manual or handbook to guide such study and discussion. In 1942 the U. S. Office of Education sponsored a study-discussion program through the schools and colleges of the United States on the United Nations. In cooperation with periodicals having educational departments an attractive United Nations Discussion Guide, outlining a study program in five units, was issued and some 300,000 copies were distributed to educational institutions and adult groups. This
The document was enthusiastically received and was used widely in social studies classes in the secondary schools as well as by thousands of adult groups. I understand that the U. S. Office of Education is now preparing in cooperation with the United Nations Information Office a teachers' kit on the nations themselves.

My suggestion is that the Secretary of State call upon the Administrator of the Federal Security Agency to invite the U. S. Commissioner of Education to cooperate with the Department of State in sponsoring a nation-wide educational program through the educational institutions and adult groups for the purpose of developing understanding of international organizations such as UNRRA in which the United States is participating. Specifically, the suggestion might be made that the U. S. Office of Education in cooperation with professional educational bodies and periodicals produce a Handbook on Winning the Peace for widespread distribution this winter.

I believe that if such a document is produced in the United States with the help and guidance of the Department of State, UNRRA and other international agencies in which U. S. has part, it will stimulate the educational authorities in other United Nations to organize similar educational programs. Indeed, many of them may adapt the basic document to their own needs and thus provide us with an inspiring example of a common study of a common international program. This happened in the case of the United Nations Discussion Guide on a limited scale. The British educational authorities adapted this document to their own schools with great success.

I would like to stress the fact that UNRRA does not conceive of such an educational program as special pleading or suggest that educational institutions be asked to conduct a propaganda campaign. Rather, I am eager that the processes of critical study and discussion be brought to bear on the complicated problems of this international organization by institutions of learning whose function it is to spread knowledge and develop understanding. Cooperation as well as intelligent criticism depend upon a widely diffused public understanding of the facts. I think we can depend upon the U. S. Office of Education as the federal agency to which the State and local authorities look for guidance in educational matters to encourage the kind of program which will meet the present interest and avoid the pitfalls of unprofessional handling.
While I am anxious at this stage that the people of the member nations shall understand the problems of relief and rehabilitation and the role of UNRRA, it strikes me as good policy to make a concerted drive for understanding of the several international bodies now tackling postwar problems. It would no doubt be impractical to ask for separate educational programs on one international field after another. These international organizations have much in common both in structure and their approach to related problems, so that an integrated handbook would have a cumulative effect. I am sure it would be more enthusiastically received and used by teachers and leaders with crowded schedules than a series of unrelated documents. As additional international agencies are created and begin to function, supplementary material may be produced in such a program. The new developments would be considered in the light of a foundation study of the first steps in international organization. This too would have a cumulative effect.

Please be assured that so far as UNRRA is concerned every facility will be placed at your disposal in assisting such a program. We have added to our staff in the Office of Public Information a Chief of Educational Programs who has had long experience in dealing with educational institutions and organized groups in the adult field. He and the other members of the Public Information staff will be at the disposal of the member governments in all educational projects they wish to undertake. If you want further information about the project here suggested, Mr. Salisbury, the Director of Public Information, or Mr. Williams, the Chief of Educational Programs, will be glad to provide it for you.

This project would be greatly furthered by the endorsement of the Secretary of State. I enclose a draft for a letter from him to Administrator McMillin of the Federal Security Agency which he and you may wish to consider.

Sincerely yours,

Herbert H. Lehman
Director General

Enclosure