Bridgewater, Connecticut
September 21st, 1949

Dear Mr. Lehman,

Though I've never had the pleasure of meeting you, I take the liberty of writing to you about a matter that may interest you. My friend Helen Kellar, who was at my house here last night, is very anxious to visit Israel, and I believe that the results of such a visit might be of service to a great many people. You may know that Helen Keller, partly because of her Biblical studies, has a deeply religious feeling about the Jewish people, and she would surely have something to say to the people there, still more than what she recently said to the people of Japan. On her return, moreover, she would have much to say about Israel to the people of this country, and, since she is now approaching seventy, this might be her last chance to make a voyage of this kind and help
to bring two peoples together. But how is she to do it? She has a small salary from the Foundation for the Blind, for which she does a day's work every day, but she could not well pay for this trip for herself and her companion. It would not be expensive, as such things go; for both she and Polly Thompson said they would gladly go in the steerage, for they think nothing of comforts, -- if they could go to Israeli. They have been so deeply moved by its foundings and its growth. Now I am not asking for your personal aid but only for answers to two questions which you can answer better than anyone else: 1, What would be the right auspices under which Helen Keller should go? and 2, Is there any organization that might pay her and her companion's expenses? It is understood that they would travel in the simplest possible way and that the trip would be of brief duration. But it is important that they should not go under the wrong auspices. Helen Keller
interest is religious and humanitarian, and her visit ought to be entirely non-political.

You spoke in a recent radio address about a refugee ship on which you yourself travelled to Israel. My wife, who heard you, greatly moved, said, "That's just the way Helen Keller and Polly would like to go."

Helen Keller is a great soul, with much to say that she has not said, and I write to you in the belief that it may appeal to you to assist her in making this memorable journey.

With great respect,

I am

Yours sincerely,

Van Wyck Brooks

*But she is extremely realistic politically. I must take the most intelligent and economic attitude toward it. She would like to go in the spring of 1950.