The Honorable
Tom Connally
United States Senate
Washington, D.C.

My dear Senator Connally:

Mr. Dean Acheson has relayed to me the substance of a conversation which you had with him which has disturbed me no end. While I am, of course, confident that it did not reflect your personal views, I can frankly say that nothing that has happened for a very long time has distressed me more deeply.

As I understand it, you advised Mr. Acheson that it was felt by many that, as Director General of UNRRA, (1) I have appointed an unfair proportion of Jews to important positions; and (2) in furnishing relief I would give primary concern to the needs of those of my own Faith. Any fair analysis would disclose that both charges are entirely untrue and unfounded. To date I have made appointments to twenty key positions here and in London. Of these just two are filled by Jews.

I am glad to say that many members of my Faith have sought to take part in what they, along with all right-thinking people, conceive to be a great human enterprise. I am also glad that my staff includes members of my Faith who, along with members of yours, and other faiths are serving loyally, unselfishly and devotedly without regard to their own comfort and convenience. I have not permitted, nor do I intend to permit, religion or racial origin to affect employment in UNRRA. I have sought to make UNRRA a truly international organization representative of many faiths and nationalities. Americans, British, Russians, Poles, Canadians, Chinese, Czechs and other nationalities are all working well together, side by side, and I believe with confidence in each other's good faith and purpose. I have insisted and will continue to insist that the sole requisites for employment be character, competence, experience and an understanding of the problems and ideals of the organization which was brought into
being for the sole purpose of helping to restore to suffering humanity some of those necessities of life, without which peoples cannot exist, and to help restore to the world a future of hope, dignity and security.

Now to the second and more serious question to which expression has been given, namely, the fear that among the millions of needy and starving the world over, I would single out, for primary consideration, those of my own Faith. It has come to me as a great shock that even a remote suspicion of this character would be held by anyone. I should have thought that my record throughout my life and especially during the many years of my public service, during which it has been an open book, would have given the lie to any such ugly thought. Never has a similar charge been made against me, even in the heat of a campaign, by those whose political, religious or ideological philosophies were at variance with my own. And I should not be true to myself or to the work I have undertaken if I allowed such an accusation to remain unchallenged. Let me assure you I am making no apology or defense for myself — I need none. I am merely registering my utter revulsion at the thought that the success of UNRRA might be hampered by such insidious and totally unfounded "whisperings".

The task which has been assigned to me is of unprecedented magnitude and one which will tax the maximum strength and resourcefulness of anyone. I did not seek it but, as the unanimous choice of forty-four nations, accepted it with the hope of being able to render service to the suffering peoples of the world. I shall continue to give of myself without stint. In the interest of a better world, I hope with all my heart, as I know you do, that this first international organization since the beginning of the world war, will succeed in its objectives. To do so, however, it must have the full support and confidence of all people. If suspicions reflecting on its good faith are permitted to exist UNRRA, no matter who heads it, will be foredoomed to failure and the suffering people of the world will be deprived of any chance for recovery. I am sure that you will do all in your power to refute such suspicions. I hope that you will always feel free to come to me direct with any questions that may arise in connection with my work.

With best wishes, I am

Very sincerely yours,

Herbert H. Lehman
Director General

Lehman/gs