

SECRET

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May 2nd, 1945

UNITED NATIONS WAR CRIMES COMMISSION

PROPOSAL CONCERNING THE INVESTIGATION OF CRIMES  
COMMITTED IN BUCHENWALD, BELSEN AND DACHAU  
by Dr. Ecer

With regard to the result of the visit of the United Nations War Crimes Commission to Buchenwald, I modify and amend my original proposal of April 18th 1945 as follows:

1. The result of the visits of various parliamentary delegates of Great Britain and the United States of America and of various groups of reporters gave an impressive description of horrors in Belsen and Buchenwald. The report about our own visit to Buchenwald will confirm the facts already described and published.
2. The former prisoners of these camps and our peoples are expecting the second logical step: the investigation of crimes committed in these camps. Most of the national offices are unable to do this work as long as the ex-prisoners are in Germany. To wait for their return to their countries would cause a harmful delay. Moreover, the whole work should be done as a common action of the United Nations, thus the United Nations War Crimes Commission seems to be the only legitimate body for this purpose.
3. The investigation of crimes committed in the three above-mentioned camps and possibly in other camps is, in my opinion, a test case for the Commission. If we prove - and I am sure that we are able to prove it - our capacity to help the United Nations Governments and the SHAEF in these matters, our suggestions concerning the general scheme and machinery to be set up in Germany will be accepted by SHAEF and other allied authorities with great understanding. The practical results of our work in Buchenwald, Belsen and Dachau would be the best recommendation for our suggestions. Under such circumstances we should undertake immediately the first practical step: to organise a thorough investigation of crimes committed in the above-mentioned camps through machinery set up for this special and particular purpose. Moreover, according to my personal experience in Buchenwald, we will be able to set up teams of experienced lawyers, police officers, civil servants and medical experts on the spot in the camps among the ex-prisoners themselves, who will help us in every direction, so, for instance, I was able to bring to London a complete and precise list of 2,662 Czechoslovak ex-prisoners in Buchenwald who are, at the same time eye-witnesses of crimes committed in this camp. My countrymen worked all through the night of April 26th/27th in order to compile this list.
4. Thus I suggest:
  - a) To set up a Committee of Enquiry composed of five or six members of the U.N.W.C.C. who are willing to serve, for investigation of war crimes committed in the camps of Buchenwald, Belsen and Dachau or others.
  - b) Every member of the Committee should take with him an adequate number of staff and complete his team by qualified persons among the ex-prisoners.
  - c) The chairman of this committee should be authorised to take - in accordance with the members of the Committee - on the spot, all necessary measures in order to ensure the success of the investigation.
  - d) The chairman of our Commission should be authorised to contact immediately the competent authorities in order to obtain for the Committee and its staff permission, travel facilities and instructions for the commanders of camps to be visited.