

PPF 5575  
Bowman, Isaiah

December 15, 1938.

557

Dear Dr. Bowman:-

All that you have done in regard to possibilities of white settlement in Africa and the Americas has been most helpful and I am duly grateful.

I feel that we are now wholly implemented in discussing the general refugee problem with other nations.

I hope to have the pleasure of seeing you soon.

With all good wishes of the Christmas Season,

Very sincerely yours,

Dr. Isaiah Bowman, President,  
The Johns Hopkins University,  
Baltimore,  
Maryland.

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THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY  
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

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November 4, 1938

THE WHITE HOUSE  
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My dear Mr. President:

It is with great pleasure that I receive your further inquiries about settlement possibilities in northern South America. I shall begin immediately the preparation of a few maps upon which critical settlement areas will be represented. The maps will be accompanied by summary explanations.

If there is a possibility that from fifty to one hundred thousand people may join in such a settlement, the situation is considerably altered. It was such large-group settlement that was one of the elements in giving the German migrants their stability in southwestern Brazil. I had supposed that you were thinking of a small stream of migration with new settlement groups brigaded with the old.

In the normal course of events the additional material will be ready in about two weeks. If this is satisfactory, you need not go to the trouble of acknowledging this letter.

Sincerely yours,

Isaiah Bowman

President Franklin D. Roosevelt  
The White House  
Washington, D. C.

THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY  
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

December 10, 1938

My dear Mr. President:

x 21 I am sending by special messenger, and through the kindness of Secretary Morgenthau, the African material which you requested recently and which deals with the possibilities of white settlement in that continent.

The material consists of:

1. A comprehensive memorandum of twenty-six pages which summarizes practically the whole literature on the question.
2. A small map showing the distribution of whites in Africa at the present time.
3. A large map of Africa, similar to the one for Northern South America sent you a few weeks ago, which shows the areas of cooler uplands where white settlement is feasible and summarizes in typed panels the number of white settlers which can be accommodated.

All of the above material can be summarized in the following terms:

1. About a half million white settlers could be accommodated in Central Africa, not counting the Union of South Africa or Ethiopia. This is maximum white population.
2. Each family would require capital to the extent of \$5,000 as an absolute minimum.
3. The governments concerned would have to embark upon a parallel spending on railroads to open up the available areas.
4. Concentrated settlement in any one colony on a large scale is undesirable politically and economically. The white settlers already in areas in question have great difficulties in putting their export products upon the world market. Tobacco, tea, coffee, minerals, etc. are the export goods. There is an International Tea Restriction agreement, and no expansion of the tea area in a new place would be possible without a change in the agreement after protest from settlers already established. There are similar difficulties with other products.

President Roosevelt: 2

December 10, 1938

The net conclusion from the above facts (which could be multiplied into books-full of words) is that the refugee problem must be solved by settlement planning on a world scale with absorption of settlers in limited numbers here, there, and elsewhere, and everywhere, so as to produce no shock to the economic structure of the receiving country. Put in another way, the absorption must be on such a limited scale in any one area that the people already established in the area will welcome the new settlers. That welcome will be greater in proportion as the new settlers are economically well founded, backed up by capital, and able to supply new skills that are desired in the area. All of this means special study of many areas, wise selection of groups to fit particular areas, and economic backing that will make each settlement project a sound business undertaking.

I believe that money of the order of \$500,000,000, expended on sound advice and based on the best detailed information, will put the refugees into new homes with more than a fair chance of successful absorption. Naturally, I would not want to publish this figure until more work has been done. Africa is not the whole answer to the question, nor is South America. Southeastern Asia has some possibilities, including Sumatra for example. There ~~are~~ also prospects in Australia that are promising if the scale of the enterprise is kept small. All available areas are required, to do the job with the least friction and the least disturbance of economic conditions such as would inevitably arouse local hostility.

Sincerely yours,

*Isaiah Bowman*

President Franklin D. Roosevelt  
The White House  
Washington, D. C.

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THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY  
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

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THE WHITE HOUSE

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July 7, 1943

Dear Mr. President:

A few weeks ago we discussed the cost of modern settlement projects. I promised you a memorandum on the subject. The accompanying document is in fulfillment of that promise.

The author of it, Mr. Charles J. Liebman, is well and favorably known to me. He is as level-headed and painstaking a person as one can find. He and I have discussed settlement matters thoroughly and often. In my judgment you can rely upon the accuracy of his figures and conclusions.

Please command me if further data are desired.

Sincerely yours,

Isaiah Bowman

The President  
The White House  
Washington, D.C.

P. P. F.

53-75-

October 14, 1938.

Dear Bowman:-

I have been reading with great interest your "Limits of Land Settlement". I wish I could get some information about settlement areas in Venezuela -- the plateau land north or south of the Orinoco. Do you suppose you can give me a line on sources of information for that territory?

Very sincerely yours,

President Isaiah Bowman, #  
Johns Hopkins University,  
Baltimore,  
Maryland.

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THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY  
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY  
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND  
OCT 17 1938

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

October 15, 1938

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My dear Mr. President:

It is kind of you to mention my book, "Limits of Land Settlement." I am taking steps immediately to gather together some material on the Orinoco country and within a week it will be in your hands - mostly clippings from magazines and books, to save your time. If you would like to have me go over it with you please say the word.

In Venezuela, at the present time, is an American, Mr. William E. Rudolph. He is a young engineer of much experience and a wholly reliable and honest individual. During the past ten years he has been working chiefly in South America for American mining and irrigation companies. He is intimately acquainted with some of the problems of land settlement.

I would like to pass along a word about your interest in this question to the Council of the American Geographical Society, your old associates in that organization. Like myself, they would be delighted to learn of your interest and it is possible that they could find a way of securing the modest sum that Rudolph would require to make a special study of the Orinoco area. Mr. Rudolph is studying road projects for the Venezuelan government - a highway from Caracas to Lake Maracaibo across the northern outposts of the Andes. In connection with this work, or following it, he could make a special reconnaissance at small cost and report on specific questions of settlement. A telephone message from one of your secretaries is all that is necessary to start this ball rolling.

x pp 7 1577

Sincerely yours,

Isiah Bowman  
#

President Franklin D. Roosevelt  
The White House  
Washington, D. C.

5575

November 2, 1936.

Dear Bowman:

Many thanks for taking the trouble to send me that interesting letter about the Llanos of Venezuela -- even though your description is not encouraging to the possibility of colonization.

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Frankly, what I am rather looking for is the possibility of uninhabited or sparsely inhabited good agricultural lands to which Jewish colonies might be sent.

x76-6  
x11-19

Such colonies need not be large but, in all probability, should be large enough for mutual cooperation and assistance -- say fifty to one hundred thousand people in a given area.

I take it from your letter that the territories in Venezuela that you described are north of Orinoco River. Is there any information about the country south of the Orinoco but on a good deal higher level -- say three to five thousand feet?

Also, do you think there is any possibility in Western Venezuelan country on the Eastern slope of the Andes?

Or do you think there are any possibilities in Colombia itself?

All of this is merely for my own information because there are no specific plans on foot -- but I am grateful to you for the interest you have taken.

Very sincerely yours,

President Isaiah Bowman, #  
Johns Hopkins University,  
Baltimore, Maryland.

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brief paragraphs. Though the size of the llanos country is impressive (100,000 square miles), and though the predominance of

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Hyde Park, New York,  
November 18, 1939.

My dear Dr. Bowman:

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I am very glad to have your letter of November 2, 1939 with the enclosed copy of your letter to Lionel Curtis, as I was particularly interested in your observation concerning the ultimate aims of Germany and the difficulties inherent in obtaining a "fair" peace. \*

Thank you for your thoughtfulness in sending me this letter.

Very sincerely yours,

#  
Isaiah Bowman, Ph.D., LL.D.,  
President,  
The Johns Hopkins University,  
Baltimore, Maryland.

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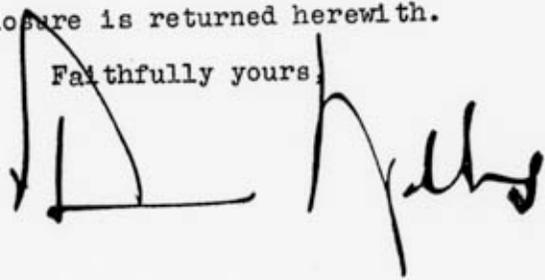
DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

November 17, 1939

My dear Mr. President:

In response to your request of November 14, I am transmitting herewith a draft of a reply to the letter of November 2 from Dr. Isaiah Bowman. Dr. Bowman's letter with its enclosure is returned herewith.

Faithfully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "D. H. H. H.", written over the typed name "D. H. H. H.".

Enclosures:

1. From Dr. Bowman,  
November 2, 1939.
2. Draft of reply.

The President,  
The White House.

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

November 14, 1939.

MEMORANDUM FOR SUMNER WELLES: *x 20* *B*

For preparation of reply.

F.D.R.

Letter from Dr. Isaiah Bowman, President, The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland, 11/2/39 to the President, with enclosed copy of letter he has written to Lionel Curtis of England, in which Dr. Bowman made some observations which may be of interest to the President in connection with the present war in Europe.

THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY  
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

November 2, 1939

My dear Mr. President:

In correspondence with Lionel Curtis of England, I have made some observations which may be of interest to you in connection with the present war in Europe.

A copy of my letter to Curtis is enclosed herewith for such consideration as you may care to give it.

With best wishes,

Sincerely yours,

*Isaiiah Bowman*

President Franklin D. Roosevelt  
The White House  
Washington, D. C.

REPRODUCED FROM HOLDINGS AT THE FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT LIBRARY

Copy for President Roosevelt.

See paragraphs  
marked in red

COPY

November 2, 1939

My dear Curtis:

In response to your letter of October 17th, I am glad to send you further comments on the relation of Hitler to K. Haushofer of Munich. I hope the observations may be of interest to Warden Fisher. They are being sent through Lord Lothian's office with a personal letter to him. The facts are drawn mainly from sources within Germany (summer of 1938) and others are from German scholars recently here; they are not colored by the emotional responses of refugees.

I

Haushofer has written a number of books of which the following are the chief. It is to them that the following remarks apply.

Grenzen, 1927

Bausteine zur Geopolitik, 1928

Die Grossmächte vor und nach dem Weltkriege, 1930

Jenseits der Grossmächte, 1932

Haushofer is married to either a full Jewess or half Jewess, yet he has continued to hold his Professorship of Political Geography at Munich. He is also President of the German Academy. The latter organization corresponds with the British Council in devoting itself to cultural exchanges. It is not like the Royal Academy, or the "National Academy of Sciences" in this country. Haushofer's continuance in these positions is a striking exception to the general rule in Germany and is due to his special relations to Hitler and Hitler's strategy. However, he is not a member of the National Socialist Party. Except for this, he is a member of the Nazi family, so to speak, and has the most extraordinary influence upon Hitler's broad strategical concepts.

Haushofer is intimately related with Neidermeyer and Epp who have considerable influence, but it is Haushofer's long-standing and deep friendship with both Hess and Hitler which is the important point. While Hitler was in prison, Haushofer visited him each week, advising him and supplying him with memoranda and reference material, and Hitler's "Mein Kampf" bears the clear imprint of Haushofer's lines of thought as developed in the books quoted above. Haushofer's work has often been put in contrast to my book "The New World", since both deal with problems in the field of political geography, my own no doubt colored by my position in the Western world and in a country which was one of the Allied and Associated Powers of the World War, while Haushofer's book looks out from within a defeated country and reviews world events from the standpoint of cynicism and frustration.

Mr. Curtis: 2

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November 2, 1939

Haushofer's philosophy also includes a principle that he derives from Sir Halford Mackinder's "Democratic Ideals and Reality" (1918) which has received almost no attention either in this country or abroad. Mackinder's term "Heartland" is very much in Haushofer's thought. In striking terms, Mackinder puts in opposition the land power and the sea power of Europe. Rich in historical illustration and in suggestiveness, his account reviews the long struggle and the possibility of an ultimate clash which might turn the scales against sea power. Clearly, if Europe is overrun by a consolidated Might and lesser countries wiped out, the ports and industries of continental Europe will be available for ship building on a scale which could surpass the rest of the world and which would yield a power that might bring the entire world into subjection. Only a balance between Russia and Germany and their separation by a chain of lesser states would put the rest of Europe into a secure position, said Mackinder.

Both direct and indirect evidence shows that this philosophy, adapted to Germany's present position, has been adopted by Hitler and that all of his pretensions of limited territorial objectives are plainly deceitful. He has one object and that is to push his boundaries farther and farther until he obtains a sufficient number of salt-water bases to make his final thrust at England. Once England is subdued the rest of the world is Hitler's oyster, runs the argument.

The fly in this ointment, from Hitler's standpoint, is Russia. This is also the weakness of Mackinder's argument. Whenever a single power grows to menacing size, new foci of power are established and grow rapidly upon new power bases and parallel or borrowed techniques. From Hitler's own standpoint, his recognition of and cooperation with Russia are fatal. This strengthens the Stalin regime and doubles or trebles the prestige of Russia. In my view, the strengthening of Russia may produce such disastrous effects upon Hitler's plans that it is neither idiotic nor fanciful to say that within ten years France and England may be fighting side by side with Germany in order to hold Russia in check.

## II

Let me add a few additional observations on things in general. It is widely believed in this country that there is danger that English and French propaganda may bring us into the war. My own opinion is that Americans are now quite sophisticated with respect to propaganda. Shriill groups are and will continue to be heard but the mass of the people are not going to go into another world war in an emotional storm. The current fashion of opinion is summed up in "Let's mind our own business". It is therefore logical to say that we will fight only if an outsider interferes with our business, but logic will not determine the outcome of our relations with Germany-at-war. We now think it is our business to stay out of the fighting zones but the time may come when we will regard it as our business to know how Germany treats conquered people forced to live under her rule. In my opinion, America will not fight to maintain the integrity of the British empire. She will not be stirred by Great Britain's loss of former German colonies. On the other hand,

Mr. Curtis: 3

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November 2, 1939

she would be stirred profoundly should Germany invade the Netherlands or Switzerland. These two countries have a spiritual hold on America out of all proportion to their power, population, and wealth. They stand for free institutions in a quite special sense. Should Germany touch either one of them, and especially the Netherlands where the effect upon the naval and aerial balance would be immediately seen, America would at once realize that only British naval vessels stand between the German thrust and the American shore. There are no subtleties in this argument and no complexities of logic. British leaders will then have the simple task of pointing out that the destruction of their fighting ships means German control of the sea and the wiping out of that ten per cent of our total commerce which is foreign and which gives stimulus and underpinning to our internal economy.

When one has pushed the argument thus far it is necessary to come back to the baseline and trace other possible courses of action and destiny. What will Russia be doing in the meantime? I believe that Russia is waiting for the exhaustion of Germany, that Russia is unable to prevent that exhaustion by sparing supplies, and that limited objectives constitute Stalin's present program. When the rest of Europe is exhausted economically and spiritually, then will it be seed-time for Stalin and for Communist doctrine. To us in this country it seems as if both Germany and England-France must have this in mind in carrying on what seems at this distance to be a limited war.

I have no inside knowledge of the governing ideas in the minds of the higher commands of these countries but I am guessing that each is waiting to see what internal strains are disclosed by war of the present light intensity and that a judgment on the wisdom of waging a more intensive war will come when the internal strains are more clearly perceived. If Germany begins to crack, England could then afford to be generous and make overtures of peace. She could do this with wider approval if Russia were markedly aggressive on Germany's eastern border but, in my judgment, such aggression will not be displayed lest it have precisely the effect of bringing Germany and England together.

The refugee problem has stirred a section of the American people but I do not think that it has stirred the masses so deeply that it will affect the war issue. The scale of the refugee problem is clearly beyond private resources, a matter for governments to handle. It took a large part of the world's shipping to transport several millions of soldiers from America during the World War and provide a service of supply. No such vital need is felt in connection with the placement of refugees so far as the man on the street is concerned. It is generally felt here that the refugee problem will have to be settled in Europe, whatever sympathy and whatever help small-scale settlement in limited areas may contribute towards the bolstering of hopes.

To return to "the command of the sea". Is not the test of its value going to be determined on technical grounds in the first instance? Do we not have to wait for the first signs of impaired strength in Germany because of a failing supply of critical minerals and "machinery", using the word in its most general sense? Already keyed to the strain of intensive war, the civilian population can hardly be other than dejected. Is Hitler's delay in the West

November 2, 1939

due to the fact that he wishes to wait **COPY** he is ready for a lightning war or is it due to the fact that he cannot risk defeat since he is already defeated on the internal front? I incline to the latter view. I believe that he feels that he can make but one throw. If he misses the target the first time, he is finished. That raises the interesting question whether or not he is finished already.

This brings me back to Haushofer and Hess. Both of them are giving intensive thought to the internal economy. Both of them believe that with colonies Germany could start a new economic era. It is foolish to point to the present resources of those colonies and assert the idleness of their dreams. We do not know what German technology could now do with former colonies in the way of surpassing their present production. Germany requires colonies for prestige and raw materials but it requires in a far higher degree the resumption of world trade. A year ago when I was in Germany, every banking and business consultant was saying that Germany must export or die and only recently Hitler repeated the phrase.

It is asserted that the democratic Allies are fighting for a moral principle, that peace must be built upon morals because they are the underpinning of confidence. The interest of the American people is not aroused by this argument. Cynics and super-realists are saying that most of continental Europe is immoral and that the history of the British Empire is full of episodes of the sort that England now condemns. In my opinion, and speaking broadly, I think that America would approve the return of the German colonies. It would not approve of such a return to Hitler in the face of his broken promises. If Hitler's defeat were coupled with the return of colonies and other acts of generosity on the part of Great Britain, it would stir America profoundly. It is in some such terms that America is thinking in its present effort to interpret Lord Halifax's reference some time ago to the need at the close of the war of a "magnanimous peace".

What we have here are two incommensurable quantities: a moral principle of confidence opposed to economic and territorial tangibles. The moral principle evokes wide interest in America but its meaning and strength are being diluted by daily reminders that confidence itself must rest upon fair dealing and that no one is wise enough at the present moment to say what is fair. We are unprepared for peace: England, France, Germany and ourselves. If victory for England came tomorrow no one is wise enough to say what that victory means or should mean. Let us assume that we are with you and that we have won the war today: what is it that we would have won? If we say "confidence", the term is empty of meaning until embodied in specific acts or things - territories, trade, disarmament, etc. The moment we touch one of these things we touch a nerve center, we touch something that may be vital to a future combination to resist force of unknown strength, for example Russia. The tragedy of the world is that it does not know how to make peace. The nationalistic machinery is running wild without a stabilized governor in sight. At least twenty groups in this country are trying to think out the terms of an acceptable peace. I do not see in any of the discussion thus far even the shadow of a hope that a formula can be found. I dread to think that that formula must be found on the field of battle.

After this long letter I expect you to be completely exhausted and that you will probably not invite a further torrent of comment for the duration of the war!

As always,

Sincerely yours,

Lionel Curtis, Esquire  
Balliol College  
Oxford, England

(Signed) Isaiah Bowman