

President's Secretary's File  
Departmental File  
State: Hull, Cordell Oct 1939-1940  
Box 74

Hull  
State

CONFIDENTIAL

October 2, 1939.

MEMORANDUM FOR

THE SECRETARY OF STATE

This is a wholly original thought with me and I have discussed it with no one else.

We have, I think, all of us the thought that at the termination of the European War, whether it comes soon or next Summer or three years or five years from now, there will be a very large number of refugees -- refugees of various Christian faiths, as well as Jewish -- refugees coming not from one country but from many countries, including even England and France and Italy.

These people may be refugees because the place they live in will no longer allow them to stay; or they may be refugees whose homes and property have been utterly destroyed and have no chance to start life anew in the old setting; refugees who for reasons of conscience, Christian and Jewish, feel that they can no longer tolerate the civilization in which they have been brought up; refugees whose family ties have been destroyed and who want to start life in a wholly new environment.

It is my personal belief that there will be, in all probability, more Christian refugees than Jewish refugees.

A problem is, therefore, raised as to whether, because a very large number of them will be Catholics, the Vatican itself may not desire to take an active interest in helping the Catholic refugees to find homes in wholly new surroundings.

I am wondering, therefore, if you and I should not begin the consideration, while the war is still on, of discussing the whole subject with the Vatican and with the representatives of the Federal Council of Churches in America and some similar organizations in Europe.

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Foreign Relations of the United States  
1939 Vol. II General, The British  
Commonwealth, and Europe

The contact with the Jews has already been made through the Myron Taylor Committee, which will meet here in October, and which has concerned itself directly with the Jewish problem.

The contact with Protestant churches can readily be made in this country and with the equivalent organizations abroad.

But a contact with the Catholic Church ought to be made directly with the Vatican itself, because this question is of infinitely more importance to European Catholics than to American Catholics.

It is my thought, therefore, that while there is no particular reason for haste, we might give consideration to sending at a later date a special Minister or Ambassador on Special Mission to the Vatican, in order that we could have a direct system of communication covering the subject of European Catholic refugees.

I am inclined to think that this is not only a practical idea but that it also puts the whole refugee problem on a broad religious basis, thereby making it possible to gain the kind of world-wide support that a mere Jewish relief set-up would not evoke.

You might think this over and talk with me about it at your convenience.

F. D. R.

Department of State copy published in *state*  
Foreign Relations of the United States  
1939 Vol. II General, The British  
Commonwealth, and Europe

page 698.

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

October 19, 1939.

MEMORANDUM FOR

THE SECRETARY OF STATE

Now that a definite Polish Government has been set up in France and former President Moscicki is no longer President, I recur to the historic United States friendship for Poland and the historic fact that we have always welcomed refugees from defeated democracies.

I wonder, therefore, whether it would not be a fine thing to do if we were to tell the Roumanian Government that the United States would be glad to receive former President Moscicki if he cares to visit this country; that we have held no communication with him and that this message is being sent without his knowledge.

He is an old man, in poor health, and I think the moral

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

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effect of such action on our part  
would be good throughout the world.

We might even make it easier  
for the Roumanian Government to  
release him if we send it in the  
form of an invitation to the  
former President to visit us.

F. D. R.

PSF: Hull  
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November 1, 1939.

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL.

Memorandum for Bernard M. Baruch:

I had a check-up made by various embassies on the recent visit of that world-renowned, selfless statesman, Honorable Ham Fish, to Europe this past summer. Here is an excerpt which I think will amuse you because I am quite certain that neither you nor I, who belong to the more practical school of thought, would ever have commissioned Honorable Ham to represent us or speak for us.

I wish this great Pooch-bah would go back to Harvard and play tackle on the football team. He is qualified for that job.

F. D. R.

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"From London,  
August 3rd.

"Charge d' affaires Johnson received a telegram from Fish, who was then in Dublin, asking for immediate appointments with Prime Minister and Foreign Minister. August 4th, Fish saw Lord Halifax. His desire was to acquaint Lord Halifax with a proposal which he intended to place before the Inter-Parliamentary Conference at Oslo, containing a suggestion that a large area of

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British territory in Central Africa be set aside for the settlement of Jews, and Fish assured Lord Halifax that the people with whom he was connected in the United States would be able to finance such an undertaking.

"Fish left London the next day for Paris. On his return to England he met Mr. McDonald, Minister for the Colonies. The only subject then discussed was Mr. Fish's proposal, originally suggested to Lord Halifax, that a large area in Central Africa be set aside for settlement of Jewish refugees.

"While in Paris on August 10th, he saw M. Bonnet, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and M. Mandel, Minister of Colonies. He spoke of the refugee problem in general, mentioned his interesting talk with Lord Halifax and said that the idea was advanced by a private American group who authorized the Congressman to speak in their behalf, looking to colonization of an area south and west of Lake Tchad -- land to be provided by Great Britain and France -- colonization to be financed by the American group. He told the French that he also planned a similar discussion with Herr von Ribbentrop and, if possible, with Herr Hitler.

"He contemplated a sweeping attack of the entire problem on a large scale. He talked in terms of two million or three million persons; that it is up to Great Britain and France to make available suitable land from their colonial possessions in Africa. He said it is not a question of money as the American group will make available ample funds, as much as one hundred million dollars.

"M. Bonnet referred him to M. Mandel.

"He repeated to Mandel what he had said to Bonnet and added that in his opinion Madagascar could accommodate several tens of thousands of refugees, and in addition, New Caledonia, the Hebrides and the Marquesas Islands would be available.

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"He pointed out that the study of the American Committee had shown that seventy thousand francs per family would be enough in a French colonial possession. He repeated the willingness and the ability of his group to raise one hundred million dollars. He spoke of a ten year period.

"He seemed to be under the impression that the Cameroons is still German territory and said he would talk with Ribbentrop and Hitler about this.

"Our American Embassy man, Counselor of Embassy, Murphy, asked Fish who were included in the American group and Fish said that the matter boiled down more or less to Bernard Baruch, from whom he had gotten the idea. He said that Mr. Baruch had assured him it would not be difficult to raise as much as one hundred million dollars for the purpose. Mr. Baruch said that he and a number of his friends would be willing to give ten per cent of their fortunes to such a project. Mr. Baruch alone would contribute about three million dollars."

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Honorable Bernard Baruch,  
577 Madison Avenue,  
New York City.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
WASHINGTON  
October 30, 1939

My dear Mr. President:

With reference to your memorandum of August 29, requesting that a report be made on Representative Hamilton Fish's activities in Europe, I enclose copies of despatches which have been received respectively from the American Embassies at London, Paris and Berlin, and from the American Legations at Helsinki and Oslo.

Mr. Fish visited London on August 3 and 4 and later at the close of the Interparliamentary meeting at Oslo. During his visits to London Mr. Fish arranged appointments through the Embassy with Lord Halifax, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and Mr. Malcolm McDonald, the Minister for Colonies, with whom he discussed on behalf of the "people with whom I am connected in the United States"--whom he subsequently identified to the Counselor of the Paris Embassy as Mr. Bernard Baruch and some  
unspecified

The President,

The White House

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unspecified persons who are associated with Mr. Baruch-- an ambitious scheme for the settlement of Jewish refugees in Central Africa.

After London, Mr. Fish visited Paris where he arranged through the Embassy appointments with M. Bonnet, the Foreign Minister, and M. Georges Mandel, the Minister of Colonies. In his conversations with MM. Bonnet and Mandel Mr. Fish adverted to his plan for the settlement of refugees on land in Africa to be provided by Britain and France and financed by the American group. In his conversation with M. Bonnet he also touched upon political questions and explained his views with regard to American neutrality.

On August 12 Mr. Fish arrived in Berlin. During his visit in the German Capital he was accompanied by a member of the staff of the German Foreign Office and was received, at Salzburg, by Herr von Ribbentrop, the German Foreign Minister. Mr. Fish refrained from taking the Embassy into his confidence with regard to his conversation with Herr von Ribbentrop. He made various statements to the press, however, which indicated that he had discussed major political questions with the German Foreign Minister and, among other things, that he was willing to act as arbitrator of the Danzig issue.

Mr. Fish

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Mr. Fish made a second visit to Berlin at the close of the Oslo meeting but had to leave suddenly due to the outbreak of war.

Mr. Fish arrived in Oslo on August 15 in Herr von Ribbentrop's private airplane. He left Oslo on August 19 upon the termination of the Interparliamentary meeting. Mr. Fish distinguished himself at the Oslo meeting notably by moving a resolution that the Conference request the British, French, German and Italian Governments to arrange a thirty-day or more "moratorium on war". His motion was not well received by the meeting and Mr. Hambro, President of the Norwegian Storting, made the point that the members of the Interparliamentary Union should not act over the heads of responsible Governments at the risk of complicating rather than aiding their task.

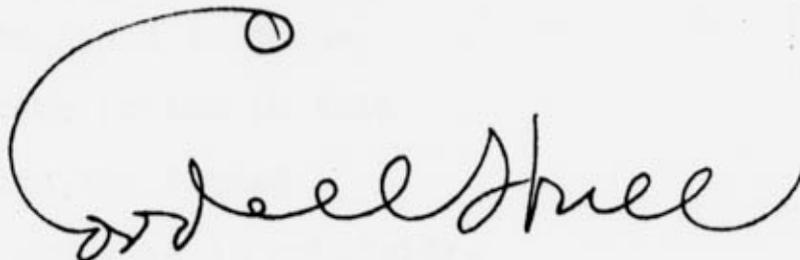
From Oslo Mr. Fish went to Helsinki, where he conferred with the Foreign Minister. He referred to his conversation with Herr von Ribbentrop and expressed his opinion that there was no problem in Europe which would justify war and that Danzig was overwhelmingly German and should be returned to Germany. From Helsinki Mr. Fish returned to Berlin, which he was obliged to leave almost immediately, and sailed to the United States from England.

Mr.

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Mr. Fish gave out numerous interviews to the press during his visits in the various European Capitals, expressing his views on the current political situation. The texts of those interviews are enclosed.

Faithfully yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Cordell Hull". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed text "Faithfully yours,".

Enclosures:

Despatches from:

1. Helsinki
2. Oslo
3. London
4. Paris
5. Berlin

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

*REF: Hall  
State*

January 19, 1940.

MEMORANDUM FOR  
THE SECRETARY OF STATE

I am inclined to think  
we should take action on this  
directly with the German  
Government and give it publicity.

F. D. R.

No. 39 from Rome in re appeal  
to the President by Polish  
professors of the Jagellonian  
University at Cracow to help  
them. They are in concentration  
camps and are inhumanly treated.

PSF  
Hull  
Stat

April 17, 1940.

Dear Mr. Secretary:-

I, too, had heard of the speech made by Mr. Norem, American Minister to Lithuania. He is, as I understand it, a Minister of the Lutheran Church. There seems to be no doubt that his speech was violently anti-Semitic.

In view of his apparent failure to follow the instructions of the State Department, I suggest the following procedure:

(1) That you confer with Senator Shipstead and Senator Murray, who were his original sponsors, explaining the situation to them, and tell them that you see nothing for it but to ask for his immediate resignation as Minister to Lithuania.

(2) Send to Mr. Norem a direct request for his immediate resignation on the ground of the speech and on the further ground that he failed to carry out the instructions of the Department.

Very sincerely yours,

The Honorable  
The Secretary of State,  
Washington, D. C.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

April 16, 1940

My dear Mr. President:

It is my duty to lay before you what I consider a serious dereliction on the part of Mr. Owen J. C. Norem, American Minister to Lithuania.

As you were advised by Senator Wheeler, Mr. Norem made an address in Minneapolis while he was in the United States on leave which was criticized by former Governor Benson and several other credible and responsible witnesses as being violently anti-Semitic. In addition to the communication from Senator Wheeler the Department was advised by Representative Bloom that he had heard from Rabbi Wise and several others highly critical comment about Mr. Norem's address.

Mr. Norem was summoned to the Department where he prepared from memory a statement of the remarks he had made which were considerably at variance with the statements made by those who heard his remarks.

At the request of Representative Bloom Mr. Norem

was

The President,

The White House.

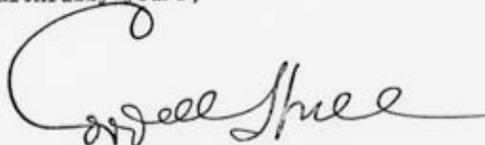
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was instructed to call upon the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House and to discuss the matter with him. Mr. Norem left Washington without calling upon Representative Bloom. Subsequently he was reached at his hotel in New York and instructed to call Congressman Bloom on the telephone before he sailed. He demurred and said that he had discussed the matter with Senator Shipstead and Senator Murray and that the latter had advised him not to talk to Congressman Bloom. Being again instructed to do so he gave the impression over the telephone of a reluctance to comply with the instruction but did not decline to do so. However, he sailed from New York Saturday, April 6, without having communicated with Mr. Bloom in contravention of the instructions of the Department.

All the circumstances of the case constitute a flagrant violation of the Department's standing instructions and of the Department's specific instructions and are of such gravity that I feel it proper to bring the matter to your attention.

You may remember that Mr. Norem was appointed Minister on the recommendation of Senator Murray of Montana and that Senator Wheeler protested at the time against his appointment.

Faithfully yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Cordell Hull". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed text "Faithfully yours,".