

President's Secretary's File
Departmental File
State: Welles, Summer June -
Box 77 Dec
1941

FBI: WELLS TO ALL

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

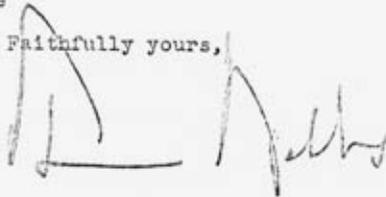
June 9, 1941

My dear Mr. President:

I have received from the British Embassy a confidential communication regarding the steps which will be taken by the British Government in order to make it possible for the Jews in Palestine to participate more actively in defense measures. Since I know this matter has been brought to your attention, I am enclosing a copy of this communication for your information.

Believe me

Faithfully yours,



Enc.

The President,
The White House.

DECLASSIFIED

By Authority of British

BRITISH EMBASSY,
WASHINGTON.

REF. 555/31/41

Post, telegram 1-12-72
By Jf Date MAR 9 1972

May 4th, 1941

My dear Mr. Under-Secretary,

You may recollect that on May 8th you passed to the Ambassador a message from Rabbi Stephen S. Wise containing a request that the Jews in Palestine be permitted to form regiments and a Home Guard. We have now received from London a statement of His Majesty's Government's attitude in this connexion. They realise of course that the Jewish desire for the means of self-protection in Palestine is natural, and have been considering how best to meet it.

2. We have now been authorised to inform you in confidence that they have approved the following proposals submitted by the High Commissioner:

- (1) Expansion of the Jewish settlement police to its former strength during the disturbances, with the possibility of future expansion if this is successful.
- (2) More intensive training of the special rural constabulary.
- (3) Expansion on a more restricted scale of the urban special constabulary.

The Honourable
Sumner Welles,
Under-Secretary of State of the United States,
Washington, D. C.

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- (4) Continued equal opportunity for enlistment into the Palestine Infantry battalions for both Jews and Arabs, and completion of the accepted recruiting programme on the Jewish side irrespective of the rate of enlistment of Arabs.

3. In addition, the possibility is not excluded, provided equipment and assistance are available, of expanding the above on the following lines:

- (1) Conversion of Jewish settlements into strong points.
- (2) Training Jewish settlement police (a) to deal with parachute troops and minor air borne landings (b) to engage in tank hunting (c) to adopt guerilla tactics against enemy detachments and lines of communication (d) to protect without assistance from British troops or police the Jewish settlements against rebellious Arab bands.

4. The above have been communicated in strict confidence to Dr. Namier of the Jewish Agency, who has expressed much satisfaction. It is not however intended to make any public announcement, since apart from giving valuable information to the enemy this might have the worst possible effect upon Arab opinion in the Middle East. It will be appreciated that with the present situation in Iraq and Syria any precipitate arming of the Jews might lead to deterioration

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in the internal security in Palestine, which could only be restored by the diversion of the British troops from more vital operations.

5. Even if arms were available for general distribution, such action would not in the judgment of His Majesty's Government contribute to local security and would have little military value against trained troops. They feel that the military authorities must be left full discretion to use the equipment available to them to the best advantage.

6. We are arranging to inform Rabbi Wise orally and in confidence that the question of the Jews forming regiments and a Home Guard has been under active consideration by His Majesty's Government who have approved certain proposals for action submitted by the High Commissioner, and that the gist of these steps has been communicated in strict confidence to Dr. Namier in London and Mr. Sher-tok in Jerusalem, both of whom have expressed their satisfaction. The details of the proposals are not being disclosed to Rabbi Wise.

Yours very sincerely,

NEVILLE BUTLER

PSF: *Walter Fisher*

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

June 14, 1941.

MEMORANDUM FOR
THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE

I think this story from
Morris about the closing of the
Christian Science churches in Germany
should be leaked to the newspapers
here.

F. D. R.

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Note: Letter of May 8 addressed to
Asst. Secy. Long by Ambassador
Steinhardt, returned to State Dept.
as per their request.

djb

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

July 5, 1941.

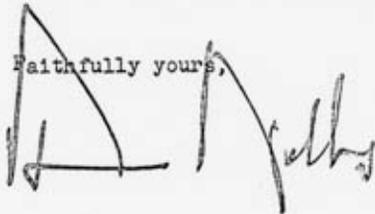
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Confidential
Welles
(Stat)

My dear Mr. President:

In response to the inquiry contained in your memorandum of June 27, I am transmitting herewith a memorandum covering the information which the Department has with regard to this situation and I am likewise enclosing for your information a letter dated May 8 addressed to Assistant Secretary Long by Ambassador Steinhardt which deals with this problem.

Believe me

Faithfully yours,



Encs.

The President,
The White House.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ASSISTANT SECRETARY

MEMORANDUM

July 1, 1941.

The Agudas Chasidei Chabad is one of several organizations of orthodox Jews in the United States. Each of the agudas has approached the Department through its rabbis to secure special treatment for its fellow religionists as prospective immigrants. Rabbi Schneersohn, Rabbi Silver, Rabbi Teitelbaum - each representing different agudas - and various other rabbis associated with them or acting independently have been to the Department time and again during the last twelve months. In all, they have submitted to the Department in the neighborhood of 10,000 names. In many instances, the name of the individual does not include the persons of his household who desire to accompany him and for whom application is automatically made. Relatives include wife, children, children-in-law, brothers and sisters-in-law and persons of varying other degrees of consanguinity or relationship by marriage. A great many

of

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of them are stated to be rabbis and a large number are alleged to be rabbinical students. They mostly found themselves in Poland, Lithuania, Eastern Germany, Latvia and Southwestern Russia before either the Russian or the German armies moved into Lithuania and back into Russia when they were closedⁱⁿ by the Russian absorption of the Baltic states. At that time communication became very difficult, even practically impossible, because of restrictions imposed by the Russian Government and by the action of that Government in closing our Consulates.

Notwithstanding the restrictions and the impediments, the Department showed every inclination to be of assistance to them as far as the law and a regard for other sects would permit. One list that was submitted contained 3,800 names but the rabbis were asked to restrict it further and to cull from it names, and they returned a list of approximately 980 culled out of the larger list.

A great many of these persons to whom visas were issued have arrived in the United States. A large number of rabbis have arrived and large groups of rabbinical students came to the United States not necessarily as groups but were entitled to entry into the United States because as individuals they

belonged

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belonged to one of these groups which were endorsed by rabbis resident in the United States.

Many of the persons who left Russia left prematurely and not only without American visas, but without any provision whatsoever for American visas, stating, however, that they were coming to the United States and on the basis of that statement received exit permits from the Russian Government. A number of these people got as far as Manchuria and Japan and there are a thousand or 1,500 of them still in Japan, others having left there and proceeding to Shanghai, where they presently reside. While the Japanese Government has not been hospitably inclined to refugees, they have permitted them transit permits and have extended their stays from time to time, and apparently would always afford them an opportunity to proceed from Japan to Shanghai. The Japanese Government has not indicated its intention to send them back into Russia. Consequently, because of the Government of the United States, they have been able to escape from the localities where they were in danger and now find themselves in a place where they are not to be persecuted and where their lives are not in danger.

Unfortunately,

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Unfortunately, in a comparatively few cases persons who held visas to the United States were caught by the Department's general orders. These orders were issued after careful consideration of all the facts concerned and envisaged the danger to the safety of the United States because of the practices of the German and Russian Governments in connection with persons emigrating from territories under their jurisdiction to the United States. These persons have been told that when they assemble their families and can come to the United States with their families and when the immigration quotas permit visas to be issued to them, there will be no reason why they might not be favorably considered for immigrant visas - of course with the precautionary proviso that each case will be examined on its own merits.

See letter attached.

*PS F. D. R. Welles Files
1-41*

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

December 22, 1941.

MEMORANDUM FOR SUMNER WELLES:

The Yugoslavian Minister handed me the enclosed December 20th. I have not the time to go through it carefully, but it relates to the horrors of the German occupation of Yugoslavia. He suggested that I make a public statement which could be broadcast from Boston, etc. (not by me personally, of course) strongly deprecating these atrocities.

I am wondering if it would not be better to have you and Donovan's office prepare six or eight broadcasts, each one covering a specific situation such as the Yugoslav, the Rumanian, the Greek and Albanian, the occupied France, the Belgium, the Dutch and the Norwegian. Instead of putting these in the first person, something like this could be stated:

"The President of the United States is deeply concerned by the reported situation in _____ and will always remember the terrible sufferings, murders, imprisonment, etc. which are being visited among the innocent men, women and children by the brutal German occupation. He will always remember what these countries are going through and the United States will use every effort to destroy the conqueror and restore self-government to these lands."

F.D.R.

Lengthy account of the sufferings of the Yugoslav people as reported in letter of Dec. 5th to the Pres. from Yugoslav Minister