

Henry Morgenthau Jr Papers
Box 184
Herbert Lehman & Family

April 18, 1940.

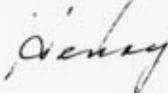
Dear Herbert:

I have your letter of April 16th, telling me of the meeting that will be held at your home on Wednesday, May 8th, and urging me to be present.

I need not tell you that I am deeply interested in the work which you will discuss. I am very sorry to say, however, that it will be absolutely impossible for me to be in New York at the time of the meeting, and so I must send you my very real regret at missing it.

With warm regards,

Sincerely,



✓
Honorable Herbert H. Lehman,
Governor of the State of New York,
Albany, New York.

GEF/dbs

copy in Invitations file - 5/8/40

Copy to Mrs. Farrell

HERBERT H. LEHMAN
ALBANY-NEW YORK

April 16, 1940

Honorable Henry Morgenthau, Jr.
Treasury Department
Office of the Secretary
Washington, D. C.

Dear Henry:

Will you please meet with me and a number of other community leaders on Wednesday, May 8th, at 8:30 P. M., at my home, 820 Park Avenue.

Latest developments in the war abroad place a compelling mandate on us, who live in peace, demanding the rallying of all our forces and all our energies to do all that is humanly possible for the war sufferers and refugees overseas. In addition, refugee immigration to the United States constitutes a problem on our doorstep, which we are pledged to solve "within the family", and on which we must follow through.

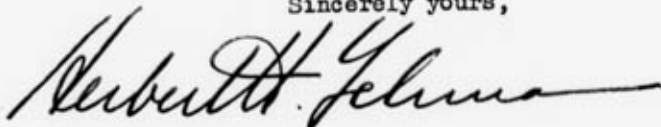
Fortunately, as a group and as individual citizens, we have built up a rich tradition for meeting and surmounting difficult communal problems. It is a tradition which I feel sure will help arouse that type of extraordinary community devotion required of each of us at this moment.

I consider it extremely important that you attend the conference at my home, which I am calling, of course, in the capacity of a private citizen.

As you know, Mr. Edward M. M. Warburg has shouldered the enormous responsibility devolving on the chairmanship of the New York campaign of the United Jewish Appeal. Now it is our duty to come forward to do all we can to assist him, and to assume whatever measure of individual responsibility is required of us in this emergency.

Please write me at 1 William Street, New York City, telling me that you will join us at my home on May 8th.

Sincerely yours,



hhl/aw

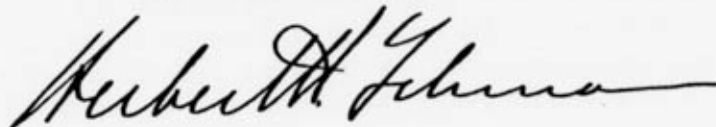
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own cities would respond in a similar fashion to the unprecedented campaign of the United Jewish Appeal for Refugees and Overseas Needs.

I wish that I had the time to write you fully about this meeting but Rabbi Jonah B. Wise has told me that he will write to you in greater detail. It has been a source of deep encouragement to witness the unanimity of response made by men and women of influence in America to the challenge that faces everyone of us today, not alone as Jews but as Americans, anxious to preserve freedom and democracy for the world by resisting the encroachments that are narrowing the life of our people abroad.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Herbert H. Lehman". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name "Sincerely yours,".

RABBI JONAH B. WISE
35 E. 62ND ST. • New York, N. Y.

April 7, 1939

Mr. Henry Morgenthau, Jr.,
Treasury Department,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Friend:

The meeting called by Governor Lehman to consider the problems of the Jews in the present crisis was held on April 2nd. The response to the meeting was so great that we could not hold it at the Governor's home and it was, therefore, held at the Harmonie Club. The out-of-town men represented the very best leadership in the whole country. I am profoundly sorry that you could not have been amongst them because I know it would have shown you how completely the American Jewish community is dedicated to the quick and complete raising of the \$20,000,000 goal of the United Jewish Appeal for Refugees and Overseas Needs.

I cannot adequately describe the meeting for you but I can say this, that from the moment that Sol Stroock led us in one of the most beautiful prayers of consecration I have ever heard and the Governor of the State of New York arose and presented the case of our persecuted brethren to the time when we adjourned at dark, there was a spirit of eagerness to help which was simply over-powering.

The people from New York who were present spontaneously made their contributions. It was the largest and finest gathering of New York Jews which I have ever seen. Mr. David Podell, Mr. Henry Ittleston and Mr. Albert D. Lasker stated the case in the briefest terms after which Mr. Edward M. M. Warburg asked for contributions. Within forty-five minutes, more than \$3,000,000 was subscribed by two hundred people who also demanded that the leaders of the campaign canvass Greater New York until it had achieved the local goal of \$10,000,000 or more. The gifts announced at the meeting were all for the United Jewish Appeal since there is no Welfare Fund in New York City.

The feeling expressed was that there is no standard of giving in the past which applies to the present and that all men and women must give of their substance and not of their superfluity in order that we can during this year help the victims of Nazi persecution and propaganda.

We strictly refused to publish the facts of this meeting in the press but Governor Lehman has given me permission to send you for your confidential information a copy of his statement in which I believe you will be interested. I feel that you will also want to have a copy of the prayer in which Mr. Stroock led us. I am sending you this letter, with the enclosures, for your private use and for you at your discretion to communicate to your friends and to urge on them to treble their efforts

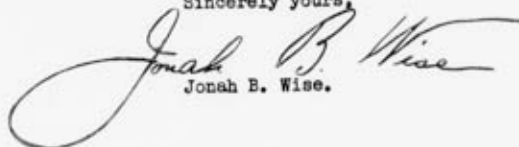
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in the cause so that every community may be accounted for and no community fall below the necessary amount to make up its quota for the attainment of the \$20,000,000 goal.

In closing let me say that I have never been so deeply moved as I was by the Governor Lehman meeting and I am only sorry that you could not be there to see its effect and to get its inspiration.

With best wishes for the Passover, I am

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jonah B. Wise". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned to the right of the typed name.

Jonah B. Wise.

JEW:LG

CONFIDENTIAL

ADDRESS OF GOVERNOR HERBERT H. LEHMAN
AT EMERGENCY CONFERENCE OF THE
UNITED JEWISH APPEAL AT THE HARMONIE CLUB,
NEW YORK CITY, APRIL 2, 1939

I am grateful that so many men and women have set aside this day to join with us in the consideration of the very grave and important problems that confront us. I thank you for your interest and for your attendance. We are gathered here today on what may well prove to be an historic occasion, the launching of the United Jewish Appeal for Refugees and Overseas Needs. I have called this meeting gladly because I have conceived it to be a duty and at the same time a privilege to take my part in this great effort and to invite your generous collaboration.

It was a source of sincere regret that it did not prove possible to welcome you at my home as I had planned. The response to the call, especially on the part of national leadership, went so far beyond anything I dared to anticipate, that my home turned out to be completely inadequate for a gathering of this size. My regret, however, must be tempered by a sense of deep gratification over the wholehearted readiness of busy men and women to leave everything and come together in this hour of crisis. These are dark days, indeed -- one can search in vain in one's own personal life or one's memory for any parallel -- but we can take genuine reassurance from the fact that men and women are not only willing to meet and to take counsel together -- and to talk and to be talked at -- but are willing to do more. They are willing to meet together to act, willing to come together prepared to assume responsibilities in terms of leadership and in terms of their own individual generosity.

The United Jewish Appeal proposes to raise this year at least \$20,000,000. to be allotted to and administered by three organizations of great standing and responsibility: First, the Joint Distribution Committee, with which I have been more intimately identified perhaps than with any other Jewish body; the United Palestine Appeal, which collects funds for the enlarged Jewish Agency of which I was for some years a member; and the National Coordinating Committee Fund, Inc., which deals on a nationwide scale with the sensitive problems of adjustment and rehabilitation of the new immigrants in this country.

The meeting this afternoon will fall into three sections: First, we will have a broad and detailed presentation of the refugee problems that face us today, and what programs are proposed by the participating agencies in the United Jewish Appeal to meet these needs; second, following this presentation the leaders present here will be asked to give individual expression of their desires to be helpful in a material way in this situation; third, following the fund-raising part of the meeting, there will be an opportunity in the evening session for discussion of the specific parts of the problems involved in the refugee situation with experts in the various fields, some of whom have just returned from Europe.

We are met today at a time when world affairs are in a more critical state than at any time within our memory. European civilization is teetering on the brink of a conflagration whose possibilities of destruction of all the things we hold dear, are infinitely grave. We are met here as Americans, grateful for the blessings of freedom and opportunity in the land we serve and love, and at the same time as Jews whose hearts are wrung with compassion for our suffering co-religionists in other countries as well as for all other victims of oppression.

The generous tradition of our country to lend aid even in distant lands, and the basic Jewish spiritual principle, which is at the same time the foundation of all religion, to provide for the destitute and the unfortunate, are blended harmoniously in this effort today. Time and again our government has indicated its concern over the fate of down-trodden, persecuted peoples. From these shores generous grants have been sent abroad, whether to the victims of natural disaster or of man-made sufferings. Conscious of our responsibility to live up to our civic, philanthropic and communal obligations in this country, we need have no reluctance, no fear, to give additional aid to our co-religionists, and to other victims of racial hatreds and brutal, unworthy attack.

Within the borders of our country we have nurtured neither hatreds nor exclusions. As a free people we may well share some of the blessings of that freedom with those less fortunate.

I have spoken of the American ideal of mercy and generosity to the oppressed. How splendidly do the three agencies in this United Jewish Appeal exemplify these noble ideals of extending hope to the hopeless, help to the helpless, and shelter and refuge for those who are driven from their ancestral homes.

It is a tribute to the intelligent and statesmanlike qualities of the officers of the Joint Distribution Committee, the United Palestine Appeal and the National Coordinating Committee Fund, Inc., that they have reached the significant agreement of 1939, whereby they pool their strength and fund-raising possibilities, unify their efforts and give to the communities of the United States an inspiring example of harmonious and cooperative effort.

While a part of the proposed \$20,000,000. fund, by agreement among these agencies, has been ear-marked for the requirements of the early part of the year, the great bulk of this fund will be subject to careful and prudent allotment by five distinguished Americans, who have close at heart the needs of the refugees and of the overseas organizations: Mr. Albert D. Lasker, Mr. Henry Ittleson, Rabbi Solomon Goldman, Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver, with a fifth man to be selected by these four. Provision will thus be made against the uncertainties of the future so that appropriations can be made in that field of need, and for those obligations, among the refugees and overseas, that loom up as most emergent and most necessary during the course of the year.

The Joint Distribution Committee has since 1914 carried on the major and difficult task of bringing constructive assistance and emergency relief to hundreds of thousands of oppressed peoples in Eastern and Central Europe. It has built up notable and splendid projects of rehabilitation in many parts of the world. It has met every catastrophe with sympathetic understanding and with efficient intelligence. It has promoted and stimulated wide-range activities in

economic service, in credit aid, in child care, in trade training, in medical and health work. It has never given up its solicitude for those great masses of Jews in Poland, Roumania and other countries who require aid in the lands in which they live. In addition, it has taken on the new and staggering burdens of helping the desperately oppressed Jews of Germany, Austria and other countries within the widening Nazi orbit of intolerance, to train and prepare themselves for emigration. The Joint Distribution Committee has cooperated with Catholic and Protestant Committees; it works closely with the Quakers, with the High Commissioner for Refugees, with the Intergovernmental Refugee Committee. It is in daily touch with important Jewish and non-Jewish bodies. Its painstaking, careful, thorough and comprehensive program and the variety of its service cover a greater range and extent of territory and of individuals than is recorded by any other philanthropic body of modern times. I may say, with the knowledge of twenty-four years of close association with its work, that it embodies the highest idealism, the most thorough and businesslike efficiency of operation, the highest standards of responsibility and trusteeship.

The United Palestine Appeal bespeaks support of the far-reaching programs of the Jewish Agency for Palestine. I am intensely interested in helping Palestine to be built up as a spiritual center, as a place of asylum for the homeless and the refugees, as a homeland for those who so desire. The people of Palestine, with restraint and dignity, have consistently proven themselves of the hardiest stock of pioneers. They have overcome one obstacle after another. They have built up the Holy Land for the benefit of all its inhabitants, Christian and Moslem, as well as Jew. They have shown themselves worthy, animated by the keenest desire to build up a self-supporting, self-dependent life. They have taken to their hearts thousands of hapless refugees from Germany and emigrants from other countries. The 450,000 Jews in Palestine deserve our cordial support in their problems. Already a land that has released the energies of thousands and thousands of exiles into useful and ennobling channels, it is our fervent hope that Palestine may be enabled to open its doors wider to the hopeless victims of European intolerance.

The National Coordinating Committee Fund, Inc., is a relative newcomer in these far-flung humanitarian and constructive activities. It has grown as the problem of the refugees has grown. With rare generosity, the President of the United States last year let it be known that this country, without altering its immigration laws in the least degree, would admit the full quota of immigrants from Germany, over 27,000 of them annually. Under the relentless pressure of the terror and the hatred that crushes them, they come here and will continue to come so long as the laws of this country permit, and so long as we deal effectively, tactfully and intelligently with these strangers in our midst. As human material the quality of these people is high. But they must be helped -- adjusted to their new home, encouraged to contribute effectively to our common welfare. The question of employment must be resolved in such a way as not to prejudice our American labor. The immigrants must not be permitted to stay in congested groups in the large cities on the Atlantic seaboard. They must be resettled, trained, educated. Under no circumstances can we permit it to be said or intimated that any of these to whom this country has thrown open its portals are pensioners on the public purse. These are the delicate, sensitive, difficult problems for which the National Coordinating Committee needs and deserves substantial support. We shall be judged by the results which that committee can achieve.

In many years of philanthropic and welfare activities I have not found so ideal an amalgam of three great causes which supplement each other so well in every respect as are embodied in this United Jewish Appeal.

The aid we extend to the suffering and the oppressed is evidence that we are not insensitive to the basic humanity so sorely needed in this distracted world. It is part of our keeping alive the worth and value of what we possess. It is a gesture of sharing which says to the rest of the world, "Taste a little of our good fortune. Share with us in a blessing that is not merely of the bread but of the spirit. Take this aid which we give in token of a way of life by which a nation of free men live on the American continent. Be encouraged and have hope in these dark days. Human freedom and mercy and tolerance yet live on American soil." By the token of this hand of friendship and of mercy which we extend, we shall not allow that freedom to perish. We shall defend and cherish it and with God's help we will share some of its blessings with the millions who hunger for it across the seas.

While we talk, the need grows greater, the sufferings increase. The United Jewish Appeal, with all its plans and hopes to achieve, challenges us, our Jewish spiritual heritage, our American tradition of humanity. If in the past we have dealt mercifully and justly by those who sought our help, let me say that this united and high-visioned cause, dealing with suffering and persecution on the largest scale in modern history, challenges us to render the utmost in service, to give in infinitely larger measure, to pledge ourselves, by helping our brethren, to live worthily to the high privilege of being free men and Americans.

ON APRIL 2, 1939 IN NEW YORK CITY

CALLED BY GOVERNOR HERBERT H. LEHMAN.

Friends, we meet today to consecrate ourselves again to the cause of our afflicted brothers and it has been deemed meet and proper that before entering upon our deliberations, we should pause for a moment to ask for divine guidance in our task. In all of our literature, there is no more poignant or dramatic episode than the story of Joseph making himself known unto his brothers. Coming from a land devastated and desolate with famine and pestilence, these brothers came down into the land of plenty, to Egypt, in search of food for their suffering peoples.

They were brought before the great Prime Minister, Joseph. They did not recognize him. This great man had so grown and changed since his youth that even his own brothers knew him not. But he knew them. Humbly and suppliantly they asked for food. They feared that they would be turned away, but Joseph lifted them from their knees and exclaimed, "I am Joseph, thy brother, and the Lord has sent me before thee to show thee the way."

My dear friends, that high privilege that was accorded to Joseph in those days of old is ours today. Blessed beyond all possible hopes, we in this great country have enjoyed the blessings which our Father, our Heavenly Father, vouchsafed to us through our fathers whom he brought forth from the turmoil and the oppression of Central Europe not so very long ago.

Today we are privileged as was Joseph of old, to serve our brothers, and in the same spirit and almost in the same words we say to those who come as well as to those who are forced to remain, "We are Joseph, thy brother, and the Lord has sent us before thee to show thee the way."

Let us, then, rise, and with bowed heads devote ourselves for a moment to silent prayer for guidance from our Heavenly Father in our deliberations. We cannot fail; we dare not fail; we must not fail!

HERBERT H. LEHMAN
ALBANY-NEW YORK

File

February 10, 1939

Honorable Henry Morgenthau, Jr.,
Treasury Department,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Henry

I am very anxious to have you join me on Sunday, March 5th, at 3:00 o'clock in the afternoon, at my home, 820 Park Avenue, New York City. Since the recent happenings in Europe, there are matters of great importance which we have before us. I should like the opportunity of discussing these with you and a few other leaders of the country as a whole, at a private meeting. In this emergency your counsel will be of great help.

Will you please advise my secretary, Miss Carolin A. Flexner, at 1 William Street, New York City, whether I may count on your presence.

Looking forward to the pleasure of seeing you, I remain

Sincerely yours,

Herbert H. Lehman