

Sumner Welles Papers
Box 61 Folder 7
Office Corresp.
Lazarus, Morris 1948

Morris S. Lazaron
1914 Madison Avenue
Baltimore, Maryland

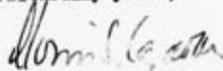
April 28, 1940

Dear Mr. Welles:

I am enclosing copy of letter which speaks for itself. I shall be glad to have your comment on it.

I wonder if you ever knew Hugh Birckhead. He was Rector of Emmanuel Protestant Episcopal Church here and one of my most intimate friends. You may have known him when he lived in New York where, for a few years, he was Rector at St. George's. Most people considered that he had an imperturbable and most cold front which he never let down. You have that reputation too! But I felt with you yesterday as I always felt about Hugh Birckhead: the warmth, the sincerity, the profound feeling underneath it all and so well controlled. I want to thank you for giving me that much, not only of your friendly regard but of an insight into the real man.

Faithfully yours,



The Honorable Sumner H. Welles,
Under Secretary of State,
Washington, D. C.

April 16, 1940

Mr. James N. Rosenberg
165 Broadway
New York City

Dear Jim:

I understand that you are interested in a proposal to bring together here representative Jews from Latin America. I understand further that the purpose of such a meeting would be to stimulate more interest among our fellow Jews in Latin America; awaken within them a sense of their responsibility to the needs abroad and evoke from them a more substantial measure of financial support in our relief, immigration and reconstruction program. That certainly seems to be a step in the right direction. I take it, of course, that Paul Baerwald and our Joint Distribution Committee group are discussing the proposal. Meanwhile I should like to offer an emphasis which I trust you will deem important enough to bear in mind.

- I. Anything that can be done to effect the above purposes and broaden the base from which we can gather funds for relief should be done.
- II. I suggest, however, that you consider the wisdom of calling together only Jewish representatives. The relief and refugee problem is a general problem.
- III. Would it not be well to have such a conference include Christian groups as well? This will:
 1. make a greater appeal and have a greater chance of success in Latin America;
 2. stimulate more interest among Christian groups here;
 3. is better statesmanship;
 4. bring to bear more powerful influences in Latin America for a more generous immigration policy than if Jews do it alone;
 5. take the winds out of the sails of those who are looking for anti-Semitic ammunition and the very fact that Jew and Christian are working together on a common project will dissipate to some extent the anti-Semitic movements in Latin America.
- IV. It is probable that such a conference could be summoned by the President under the auspices of the existing President's

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Committee on Refugees as a subsidiary group involving only the Americas. Such sponsorship would give it more standing than if called by us alone.

V. If called by Jews alone, J.D.C. should bear in mind:

1. Nahum Goldmann recently made a swing around South America. He seems to have been fairly successful. However, the amounts gathered are to be divided, according to published reports, one-half to the Zionist Organization of America and one-half to the World Jewish Congress.
2. Can you be sure that in such a conference J.D.C. would not be a tail to the nationalist kite?
3. Remember in having any dealings with the Jewish nationalists you are negotiating with people who will not hesitate to adopt any subterfuge or front in order, directly or indirectly, to promote their aims.
4. A specifically Jewish conference may have deleterious effects on Latin American opinion and make the work of finding homes not easier but harder.

VI. A tie-up with the Congress group or an exclusive Jewish gathering, in the very nature of things, could not be sponsored by the President's Committee.

I recognize that at present and perhaps for a considerable time we Jews have to and shall make intensive collections to meet Jewish need. I recognize too that there are more Jews than others who will be forced to emigrate. This does not alter the fact that the problem is a human problem; that we must make every effort to remove the impression that anything can be done at will to Jews and that Jews will help themselves. I see no reason by the canons of justice why Jews should be dealt with as a specific minority, why more of them should be forced to move from the lands where they have lived for centuries than all other people. I want to drive that home to the consciousness of the world. Naturally, we must do all we can because of the realities of the situation, but we may not lose any opportunity to bring the larger ~~issue~~ to the attention of the peoples.

Finally, I believe a joint conference sponsored by the governments involved and called under the auspices of the President's Committee will fit in with the Administration's program of deepening the consciousness of identity of interests among the peoples of this hemisphere.

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I have hesitated to write one who has been so signally successful as you in the carrying through of the Santo Domingo project, one who knows so much more about it and is so much wiser than I. And yet I believe that the points made in this letter are not only important but deserve the most earnest consideration of our group.

As always, with affectionate regard,

Faithfully yours,

Morris S. Lazarus.

April 27, 1940

My dear Dr. Lazaron:

My very cordial thanks to you for your letter of April 26. I deeply appreciate it. I knew Hugh Birchhead from the time when I was a small boy at school where he served for one year as an assistant chaplain before going to Baltimore.

I read with a great deal of interest the copy of your letter to Mr. Rosenberg. I think the points made in your letter are exceedingly well founded and should, of course, be taken into full consideration by those who are considering taking the initiative in the proposed meeting.

With the hope that I may see you soon again, believe me

Yours very sincerely,

Dr. Morris S. Lazaron,
1914 Madison Avenue,
Baltimore, Maryland.

Lazaron, Dr. Morris S.

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MESSAGE TELEPHONED BY DR. LAZARON FOR
MR. WELLES' INFORMATION, May 2,
1940.

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"You will make no mistake in appointing Dr. F_____.
Dr. F_____ 's activities are primarily those of a scholar
rather than a leader. His constituency is therefore limited.
In that capacity, however, he is highly regarded. He is
deeply religious. He will have the unenthusiastic coopera-
tion of all groups. At the same time, the appointment will
be recognized by non-Jews as well as Jews as a compromise ap-
pointment, with a corresponding minimization of this appoint-
ment. He has not the parallel standing of Buttrick, to say
nothing of the Catholic appointment. I had hoped, if an ap-
pointment must be made, for a truly representative American
Jew, a man like Dr. Goldenson of Temple Emanuel, New York City,
with no aura of the old world attaching to him - one who could
stand up in an assembly and be recognized by his fellows as
thoroughly American, with no sense of distance. The appoint-
ment of Goldenson would strengthen those influences in American
Jewish life which are attempting to mitigate the factors that
still bind many American Jews sentimentally to European ties,
those influences which are working for complete integration
into American life. On the other hand, I assure you I am

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cognizant of the pressures and urgencies which from the point of view of the Administration must be taken into consideration.

"Again, let me say, you will make no mistake in appointing Dr. F _____; but the appointment will do nothing to enhance the importance of the President's plan in the eyes of either the Jewish or the general community.

"Naturally, this statement is intimate and confidential."

A. L. C.

Morris S. Lazaron
1914 Madison Avenue
Baltimore, Maryland

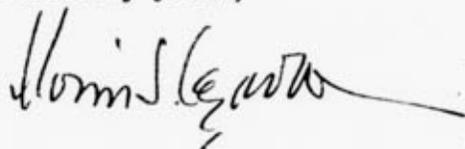
May 7, 1940

Dear Mr. Welles:

You may be interested in this address which I gave last Saturday night at the concluding session of the Conference on International Relations at the Hopkins University. It was well received.

With kind regards,

Cordially yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Morris Lazaron". The signature is written in dark ink and has a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the name.

The Hon. Sumner H. Welles,
Under Secretary of State,
Washington, D. C.

THE KIND OF WORLD WE WANT

Address of Rabbi Morris S. Lazaron concluding the
Conference on International Relations
held at Johns Hopkins University, Saturday, May 4th, 1940

For the last twenty-four hours you have been listening to learned and authoritative discussions of "The World We Have". I have been asked and I deeply appreciate the compliment, in the circumstances, to address myself to the theme, "The World We Want". There would surely seem to have been some lapse on the part of those who arranged the program. Even the most egregious egoist cannot have completely isolated himself intellectually or emotionally from things as they are, though it is abundantly helpful even to the well-informed to listen to the brilliant analyses of specialists in history and international relations. However, consider what I am asked to do. I must describe the world we want. That means I must speak not only for Mr. Chamberlain and M. Reynaud, but for Hitler, Stalin and Mussolini as well; indeed, I must speak for Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Dewey; and, with more local application, for Mr. Radcliffe and Mr. Bruce; for the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, the Holy See and the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Considering the fact that my authority is questioned in my own group - albeit, I am convinced, most unwisely! How then can I be expected to give adequate description of the world we want which shall at the same time satisfy all parties concerned. Even though I were endowed with the wisdom of Melancthon, the grace of Chesterfield, the intuition of Bergson, the sophistication of Casanova, the tongue of Demosthenes and the power of a Diesel engine, I know I shall fall far short of satisfying either you or myself. And so I shall attempt not to satisfy but rather to face up to the challenge you have given me.

This much I would venture to suggest: until we see through the mists of propoganda to what is really at stake, until we are prepared to think straight and talk frankly, until we appraise objectively and feel keenly the results of that appraisal, there is little likelihood that we shall know what sort of world we want and less likelihood that we shall get it.

From the day when man began to think critically, he has given himself to a

consideration of how to change things as they are and fashion them to fit his dream of how they should be. Isaiah and Jesus, as they trod the ancient Palestinian hills centuries ago, kindled fires of aspiration for a just and humane social order which have never been quenched. From Plato to More, Bellamy, Streit, Wells and Bingham, the age-old quest has lifted human spirits to deathless hope in the possibilities of human existence on this earth. We are in that tradition, the tradition of all that is noblest in our civilization. Men have died for it; men are dying for it tonight. We are the last links in that tradition. It shall not die with us.

The world is facing a strange, corrupting and terrible force. In a remarkable book, "The War Against the West", by Aurel Kolnai, published in 1938, the author presents the backgrounds and philosophy and program of Totalitarianism. In the introduction to the volume, Wickham Steed describes totalitarianism as "a conscious and deliberate revolt of Germanism against the freedom of the human personality alike in its religious, social and political forms." Carlton J. H. Hayes, distinguished historian at Columbia, summarizes the contemporary challenge in a paper given last November before the American Philosophical Society - "The Novelty of Totalitarianism in the History of Western Civilization": "It is a revolt against the moderation and proportion of classical Greece, against the order and legality of ancient Rome, against the righteousness and justice of the Jewish prophets, against the charity and mercy and peace of Christ... against the enlightenment, the reason and the humanitarianism of the eighteenth century, against the liberal democracy of the nineteenth century. It repudiates all these major constituents of our historic civilization and wars to the death on any group that retains affectionate memory of them. In Russia, Christians and, in Germany, Jews are first gotten rid of. Presently it will be the turn of Christians in Germany and Jews in Russia, for if you are to erase the most constant memory of the Western mind you have to destroy Judaeo-Christianity both in its roots and in its flowers. Backward to primitive barbarism or onward to conscienceless utopia, that seems to be the choice of goals of the great contemporary revolt." If anyone is led to question these appraisals, it might

be well to note that Rauschning's recent volume, "The Voice of Destruction", is not only history but prophecy and fulfillment.

Last year a popular song caught the public fancy, "Wishing Will Make It So". The haunting, sinuous melody of the piece seemed to anaesthetize the rational faculty and lift it to that realm of fantasy where Lotus eaters dwell. When I was a lad I was taught that "if wishes were horses then beggars would ride". We seem to be attacked today by troops of cavalry riding their wish-steed of isolation. Britain rode these steeds of Araby in 1951 to Manchukuo. She rode them to Burgos. She rode them to Munich. They have led to Oslo and Trondjheim today. Tomorrow the path may lead to Suez and Gibraltar.

This does not mean that I urge our entrance into war. It does mean a searching inquiry into the effects of isolation. It does mean facing the question: can we remain untouched by this titanic struggle? It does mean accepting the possibility of German victory. It means particularly for us a moratorium on cheap tricks for political advantage in an election year. Would a totalitarian victory bring us the world we want?

I do not believe this is just a war between two imperialisms. I believe they who say so are blandly naive. They are the unwitting or conscious agents of those to whose advantage it is that we should live in a fool's paradise. For myself, I cannot view with complacency the reduction to impotence of the British and French peoples. The quality of life they represent is my way of life.

Those great peoples and empires would be the first to declare that they have failed to realize all the professions of their high principles. But I agree with Lord Halifax who said in an address two months ago: "The broad record of the British race stands to be judged on facts that are incontestable. It is the fact that during the nineteenth century when the power of Britain was unchallenged, there was no nation in Europe that felt for that reason insecure or that did not recognize our power to be an instrument of peace.. The future of humanity must not be left in the hands of those who would imprison and enslave it."

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Though I respect their convictions and would defend their right to voice them, I am not a pacifist. When evil invokes force to achieve its aims, it is only by force that it can be overcome. Every experience of the last ten years testifies to that truth. To fail to use such powers as we possess in such a struggle is to doom to destruction the most cherished ideals of our civilization.

If there is a community of interest among the dictators, certainly there is a community of interest among the democracies. Perhaps the time has come for us to state not vaguely but clearly, unmistakably as some on the other side have stated it: We here in America may be ~~uncommitted~~ ^{non-belligerent} but we are not neutral. We are resolved not to go to war unless we are forced by our vital interests to do so. But we give fair warning that we view the defeat of the democracies and their way of life, which is our way of life, with the deepest concern. We shall meanwhile give them every aid short of war and this phrase is to be taken in its literal and direct meaning.

We know the sort of world a totalitarian victory would bring. We know that it is not the kind of world we want. We should not be free in such a world. Our economy would be undermined in its contest with autocratic systems; every citizen would feel the effect of markets shut against our goods; our standards of living would be lowered; we should have to fight for our very existence, a marching militarism that would force us to spend more and more for defense, exhausting our natural resources. Meanwhile we should be fighting the enemies outside and inside who would sow seeds of dissension among us, divide us against each other to betray and destroy us. These are not ~~the~~ hallucinations. We have seen these things with our eyes and in these days. We know what a Nazi-Fascist- Communist peace would be and what kind of a world it offers.

Contrast this with the kind of peace we seek and the world we want. We want a peace and a world which respects the sanctity of individual and nation and which creates instrumentalities to maintain that respect. We want the kind of a world which offers to the individual: civil and political rights without regard to race, creed or color;

economic security - that is, the removal of the threat of unemployment, an increasing measure of leisure and education and opportunity for its enjoyment; freedom of conscience and religion. We want that world not for ourselves alone but for the German and Italian and the Russian peoples too. We want that kind of a world which offers to the nation: integrity of its boundaries; its political, economic and cultural independence - these to be guaranteed by acknowledgment of international law, recognized and accepted in the political and economic fields and implemented by a league of free peoples. We want this kind of a world not for ourselves and the democracies alone, but for the German, Italian and Russian peoples as well. We want the only kind of a world in which peace will endure, a world which accepts justice and compassion as spiritual values that lie at the heart of life, because we believe that "the work of righteousness is peace and the effect of righteousness, quiet and confidence forever."

But we shall have to work for that world and sacrifice for it. It will not come to us as a gift.

From a grave somewhere in stricken Scandinavia there comes a voice long since dead. It is the voice of Henrik Ibsen. The burden of his philosophy in a dozen plays was: we are all of us guilty of complicity in the sins of society. Perhaps you will remember Sigger's words in Richard Wright's gripping novel, "The Native Son": "I didn't know I was really alive in this world until I felt things hard enough to kill for them." This poor negro murderer was the victim of pressures which an environment that did not understand visited upon him. Society, with its bans, taboos, discriminations had dulled him and made him less than a man. He was a driven animal. He is but the symbol of millions of the poor, the disinherited in our country and in all the nations of earth.

Let us in our America beware. Man's inhumanity to man does more than make countless thousands mourn. It creates wars and revolutions. Shall we, in fear of

the resentment of the underprivileged, seek to put down their dreams of freedom by force? Shall we turn to totalitarianism? Is that the world we want?

Can we not hear what the masses of Germany and Russia and Italy are trying to say to us? Behind the rhythmic tread of the legions of brutality is the longing of men for freedom, to stretch their arms against the sky. Let one clear, authentic voice be lifted in the world today, a far keen call to lead men and nations to that destiny of which they have dreamed.

Then not through death and war shall men come to know that they really live but as they build the good society.

Morris S. Lazaron
1914 Madison Avenue
Baltimore, Maryland



July 1, 1940

My dear friend:

I forgot to enclose this letter from James Rosenberg. When you have glanced at it, I shall be grateful if you will return it.

Faithfully,

Morris S. Lazaron

The Hon. Sumner H. Welles
Under Secretary of State
Washington, D. C.

JAMES N. ROSENBERG
165 BROADWAY
NEW YORK

June 27, 1940

Rabbi Morris S. Lazaron
1914 Madison Avenue
Baltimore, Maryland

Dear Morris:

Thanks for yours of the 25th.

The Pan-American Jewish Conference idea strikes me as terrible, and I am writing the American Jewish Committee, asking them what they are going to do about it.

As to the Venezuela matter, I agree with you -- let's let it ride.

Yours sincerely,

JIM

July 2, 1940.

My dear Dr. Lazon:

Thank you for your kindness in sending me with your letter of July 1 the letter sent to you on June 27 by Mr. James Rosenberg. I am returning it to you herewith as you requested.

You may be interested to know that a few days ago I had a letter from Rabbi Wise asking my "frank opinion" with regard to the desirability of postponing the proposed Pan American Jewish Conference. I replied immediately saying that in my opinion it would be highly expedient to postpone the proposed conference for an indefinite period.

With my kindest regards, believe me

Yours very sincerely,

Dr. Morris S. Lazon,
1914 Madison Avenue,
Baltimore, Maryland.

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Lazaron, Morris S.