

Summer Welles Papers
Box 84 Folder 17
Office Correspondence 1920-1943
Taylor, Myron C June-Aug. 1942

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I am wondering if as a part of the world war record it would not now be in order for the United Nations to draft an indictment of the Nazis -- as a substitute for trial of the war makers. It seems to me a United Nations indictment would make a great popular appeal here and in Europe -- making it as specific as possible -- yet broad enough to take in everything.

M.C.T.

My dear Mr. Easterman:

I have received your letter of October 7, 1942 with which you enclosed a memorandum in regard to the grave situation of the Jews in German-occupied Europe.

The Government of the United States of America is fully aware of the desperate plight of these unhappy people and will continue its efforts to alleviate their condition wherever and whenever possible. As you know the United Nations have already issued formal statements expressing their abhorrence of the atrocities committed in occupied Europe and providing for the full punishment of the war criminals responsible for them. The necessary organization has been established in London for listing those criminals to be brought to trial. I believe that this step adequately meets your request for some explicit declaration on the part of the Allied Powers.

I assure you that the American Government will consider carefully every possible measure that may be taken to promote the welfare of these unfortunate persons. One of the main purposes for which this war is being fought is to ensure that all of the peoples of the world, regardless of race or creed, will not in the future be subject to mass persecutions of the type imposed by the Axis Nations.

Sincerely yours,

Mr. A. L. Easterman,
Political Secretary, World Jewish Congress,
British Section, 1 Harley Street,
Cavendish Square, W.1.,
London, England.

10-7-42

L For Myron Taylor's signature
from Mr. Easterman

October 20 1942

MEMORANDUM FOR
THE PRESIDENT
AND
THE SECRETARY OF STATE.

GERMAN ATROCITIES

Pursuant to suggestion, I arranged an appointment for this morning with Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, his son James Waterman Wise, and Dr. Nahum Goldmann.

I indicated to them briefly the situation as I viewed it as the result of conversation with those whom I met upon my recent trip. It is in substance as follows:

1. That the atrocities in France, Poland and Yugoslavia are confirmed as generally reported.

2. That among my papers which I left with the President are two documents which bear upon the subject.

3. That welfare agencies are not now permitted, and I doubt if they will be permitted, to do anything active within Poland until some change occurs in the war situation in Europe which affects the Nazi plan of extermination of many and the removal of others from given territories.

4. That I would urge upon the President and the Secretary of State that a further condemnation of Nazi inhumanity be made at an early date; that I recently urged upon the Pope and the Cardinal Secretary of State that the Pope do likewise, and that the United Nations' representatives at the Vatican had already made a similar demarche.

Boyle, Truman

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If the President should conclude to make such a statement, I think it would be desirable for me to send a wire in advance to Mr. Tittmann indicating that the President proposed to make such a condemnation, again urging His Holiness to do likewise.

It seems to me that this opens an opportunity to cover on a broad scale the whole question of atrocities such as the Japanese are said to have inflicted upon our fliers and upon civilians--the state of their attitude toward our soldiers in general; also the attitude of the Germans toward civilian populations in all the invaded countries.

You will have found in my papers a charge by the Yugoslavs of Italian cruelty toward numbers of the people who have been transported into northern Italy. I do not think we have the same cumulative evidence of Italian misuse of prisoners or of transported civilians that we have in the other two instances, and I am not sure that I would include Italy in such an indictment.

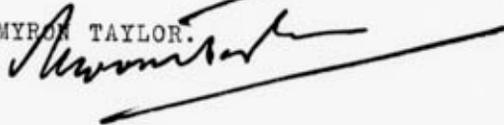
You will recall that as early as the winter of 1940 His Holiness the Pope condemned in no uncertain words the policies of the Axis and the conduct of its armies toward peoples of religious and political character. When Von Ribbentrop visited the Pope in April of that year His Holiness took him to task for the inhumanities that had been practiced and were then reaching their peak in Poland. Von Ribbentrop denied the

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charge, whereupon the Pope requested permission to send three unbiased investigators into Poland to conduct an investigation. Von Ribbentrop refused, stating that he would have to refer the matter to Berlin--and of course no further answer was ever received.

I hope at an early moment to discuss the whole matter further with you.

MYRON TAYLOR.



I am wondering if as a part of the world war record it would not now be in order for the United Nations to drop an indictment against the Nazis - as a present substitute for trial of the war maker - It seems to me a United Nations indictment would make a great popular appeal here and in Europe - making it as specific as possible - yet broad enough to take in everything -

M.T.

Mr. Miller
These are the
papers on the
copies of the
letter to the
President
on the 3 sheets
hereforth
with
file in U

- I. Personal letter of the Pope to the President.
- II. Personal response of the Pope to the memo submitted by MCT on the position of a united America in the war.
- III. Personal appeal by the Pope to the President to avoid unnecessary civilian bombing.
- IV. Clippings from London newspapers re bombing of a school in England as example of German ferocity and barbarity.
- V. Request by the Pope in two parts re continuation of information service re prisoners of war and civilians in enemy countries.

In reply to Jordana
at the time of the
10/19/42

(10/19/ 42)

LÉGATION ROYALE DE YOUGOSLAVIE
PRÈS LE SAINT SIÈGE

vatican, October the 25th, 1942

Your Excellency,

with reference to the conversation which I had the pleasure of having with you on the 23rd., I take the liberty of sending you the following memorandum about the tragic situation of the Yugoslav internees in Italy.

There are tens of thousands of people, including women and small children scattered throughout Italy and their number constantly increases as a result of new mass deportations. In one single camp there are more than 5,000 persons and in another, when it is full, there will be room for 20,000 persons.

The fate of this unfortunate people is far worse than that of the internees of other nations, because Italy, against all the principles of international law and without waiting for the end of war, has annexed large tracts of Yugoslavia. For this reason Italy regards these unfortunate people as Italian subjects and does not allow the Yugoslav Red Cross to have any dealings with them or to help them in any way. So these unhappy people have no one to protect them but are left at the mercy of Italy, i.e. of an enemy who is responsible for the death of many of their relations and the destruction of many of their homes.

His Excellency

The Hon. Myron Taylor

Personal Representative of the President
of the U.S.A. to his holiness the Pope

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Temporary Home For Polish Refugees From the Soviet Union

Since early this year the question of finding a temporary home for Polish refugees from the Soviet Union has been under discussion with the Poles, British, and Iranians.

In the early spring arrangements were completed for the evacuation of three Polish Divisions from the Soviet Union to the Middle East together with approximately 10,000 civilian refugees, the families of the Polish troops making up these Divisions. These refugees have been cared for for the past few months in refugee camps set up in Iran by the British and Polish authorities and have been assisted by the American Red Cross as regards food, clothing, and medical supplies. At the present time, it appears from the latest information available, that the plan for this entire group of Polish refugees to be evacuated from Iran via India (Karachi) to the British colonies in East Africa is under way.

In a note dated May 19, 1942 the Polish Embassy indicated that the Polish Government desired to effect the evacuation from the Soviet Union of 50,000 Polish children including their mothers and guardians and requested that consideration be given to granting asylum to 10,000 of these Polish children in the United States. After consideration by the Department the Polish Embassy was informed that because of the acute transportation problem which would arise in connection with bringing such a large number of persons to the United States and because of the rigid American immigration laws it would not be possible to give asylum to these children in this country. It was suggested, however, that the children might be evacuated to South Africa.

In an effort to assist the Polish Government in this matter the Department approached the South African Government to ascertain whether it could accommodate the 10,000 Polish refugee children. In connection with this request the South African Government was advised that if they would consent to give asylum to these refugees the American Red Cross, provided sufficient shipping space could be obtained, was prepared to send from the United States medical, food, and clothing supplies up to the value of \$1,000,000 for the purpose of caring for the refugees in South Africa.

On

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On July 21, 1942 the South African Government stated that it regretted that it was compelled to decline the reception in South Africa of these Polish refugees. The reason given by the South African Government was that it had so far committed itself to the admission of a large number of other evacuees in addition to those already in the country, intimating that already a large oriental refugee problem from India was on their hands which would be another reason for not welcoming the large number of Polish-Jewish refugees in this group.

In view of the inability of the South African Government to receive these 50,000 or more refugees the British Embassy asked whether they might not be received in the United States. The British Embassy, as in the case of the Polish request, was informed that because of the transportation problem and the strict American immigration policy the refugees could not be given asylum in this country.

In view of the impossibility, for the moment, of finding a haven for the refugee children this question has been held in abeyance.

While the question of finding a haven for the refugee Polish children was being discussed, the Polish Government in conjunction with the British Government made representation to the Soviet authorities to permit the release of three additional Divisions of Polish troops organized in the Soviet Union in order that they might proceed to the Middle East to supplement the military forces of the United Nations in that area. The Soviet authorities consented to the release of these three Divisions as well as 30,000 civilian refugees made up of the families of the troops in question.

According to the latest information available the troops as well as the 30,000 civilian refugees traveling with them have already arrived in Iran. Because of the somewhat acute food situation in that area and because of the fact that it is a zone of military operation the British authorities are endeavoring to make arrangements to send the majority of these newly arrived civilian Polish refugees to other areas.

The British Ambassador on August 31 informed the Department that his Government had consulted with four South American Governments to ascertain whether a haven might not be found there for at least a part of the refugees now in Iran and he again asked whether it would be possible for the United States Government to relax its immigration laws and permit the entrance of from 10,000 to 15,000 of these refugees into this country. The Ambassador was again advised that it would be impossible to bring them to the United States. After discussing the problem further with the Ambassador it was agreed that it would be advisable to canvass the situation again with the South African Government and to ascertain whether some modus vivendi could not be found by which at least part of these refugees could be accommodated in that country.

Although

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Although definite information is not now at hand it appears from the latest reports from Tehran that the British authorities have found havens in Indian or East Africa for all but 15,000 of the Polish refugees who have actually arrived in Iran. This figure, of course, does not include any of the 50,000 children and their mothers referred to above, who are still in the Soviet Union and as yet have no permission to leave. As the matter now stands, the American Red Cross is making a careful study to ascertain what concrete assistance it can offer to the South African Government in the event that part of the refugees can be given a haven there.

In connection with any further representations which the Government of the United States may make to the Government of South Africa in this matter it would appear to be advisable to have the British Government make representations of its own to the South African Dominion in the hope that a solution can be found to this problem.

Since it has been indicated that there are about 15,000 Polish refugees actually in Iran for whom a haven outside of that country has not as yet been found, it would appear that before again taking up the question of the 50,000 children, the more immediate problem of the refugees actually in Iran should be solved.

In connection with the Polish refugee problem in the Middle East, it should be pointed out that the American Red Cross with the concurrence of the Department has held and continues to hold that the care and evacuation of these refugees from Iran is primarily a British problem since they are in control in this area, and, while the Red Cross and the American Government will assist the British authorities in such practical ways as may be possible, the responsibility must remain with the British.