

Summer Welles Papers
Box 86 Folder DS
Office Correspondence
Wise, Stephen 1942

This was in file 81-1942
Confidential source

file in 4

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS



MEMORANDUM

January 1, 1943

U - Mr. Welles ✓

We were advised by the Embassy at London under date of November 21 that the memorandum embodying the British Government's views with respect to the War Crimes Commission, which we had previously approved, had been transmitted to the Soviet and Chinese Governments, the governments in exile and the Free French National Committee, with a request for their comments. We have heard nothing further as to the views of those governments (other than reports of the appointment by the Soviet Government of its own commission to investigate war crimes on a rather different basis) and we have not yet been advised as to when the Commission may be expected to be established. So far as I know there has been no discussion among any of the governments concerned of the appointment of a prominent Jew to the Commission in any capacity.

Ray Atherton

Dr. Wise 12-31-42 re War Crimes Commission

Eu:TCA:IED

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
THE UNDER SECRETARY

TCA
2

File

December 31, 1942
Memo to Mr. Welles
1-1-43
Eu:TCF:LD

Eu
Mr. Atherton:

Dr. Wise inquired this morning, with regard to the proposed War Crimes Commission, (a) as to when it was to be constituted, and (b) whether any plan had been agreed upon by the United Nations for the use of the services of some prominent Jew as consultant to the Commission. Will you let me know what the situation may be with regard to these two matters.

SW
U:SW DMK

December 31, 1942

PA/M
Mr. Murray:

Dr. Wise came to see me this morning and inquired whether there was anything this Government could do to persuade Turkey and other adjacent countries to accept Jewish refugees who are able to escape from the Balkan countries. Will you let me know what the situation with regard to this matter may be.

CONFIDENTIAL

U:SW:DMK

November 24, 1942

A-L
Mr. Long:

Please let me know what the status of the food parcels for Poland may be. Dr. Wise was talking with me this afternoon and informed me that the Treasury Department was willing to release the funds required, but didn't wish to appear to favor either the Joint Distribution Committee or the Jewish World Congress, in as much as both organizations had asked for the release of funds for this purpose--\$12,000 a month.

Dr. Wise stated that his organization would be entirely willing to join with the Joint Distribution Committee or to do it alone, and that what they were anxious about was to have the money released quickly without further delay. Will you be kind enough to take this up with Mr. Pehle of the Treasury Department and see what can be done to expedite a decision?

Dr. Wise re food parcels for Poland
11-24-42

U:SW:PRH

November 24, 1942

Eu - Mr. Atherton:

Please have drafted a telegram to Ambassador Hayes in Madrid asking him to do what he can to alleviate the condition of and to prevent the expulsion of Jewish refugees who have recently entered Spain from France and who are trying to get through to some country of refuge.

Dr. Wise (Tele to Madrid)
re Jews 11-24-42

U:SW:PHH

November 13, 1942

My dear Dr. Wise:

I should value the opportunity of seeing you the next time you pass through Washington in order to discuss with you certain information I have received from our Minister in Switzerland after his conversations with Mr. Lichtheim and Mr. Riegner. Will you be kind enough to let me know when I may expect to have the pleasure of seeing you?

With my kindest regards, believe me

Yours very sincerely,

Rabbi Stephen S. Wise,
American Jewish Congress,
330 West 42nd Street,
New York, New York.

Wise, Dr. S.S.

Letters from Leland Harril son,
Oct. 24 and 31, 1942

November 24, 1942

Eu - Mr. Atherton:

The World Jewish Congress, Dr. Wise tells me this afternoon, is anxious to send a representative to North Africa to assist in alleviating the condition of a very large number of refugee Jews who are stranded there. I told him I would have to consult with the Red Cross and with the War Department and that I would let him know what their decision might be. I shall appreciate it if you will take it up sympathetically, as it seems to me that Norman Davis might well agree to have representatives of Jews in this country go along for the purpose indicated.

Dr. S. S. Wise (Jews to go to N. Africa) 11-24-42

U:SW:PRH

November 13, 1942

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American Jewish Congress,
330 West 42nd Street,
New York, New York.

Wise, Dr. S.S.

Letters from Ieland Harrison,
Oct. 24 and 31, 1942

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM

FROM: American Minister, Bern
TO: Secretary of State, Washington
DATED: October 6, 1942

There are indications that Jews are, without any doubt, being driven out systematically from the countries of Western Europe. Such indications are contained in numerous reports which have come to me from both Jewish and non-Jewish sources, supplemented by reports received from Consul Squire in Geneva, who has been in communication with Dr. Reigner. Jews are being moved, these reports indicate, to unknown destinations in German-occupied Russia and in Poland. It has been credibly reported to me, with regard to Polish Jews, that ghettos of Warsaw and other large cities are being cleared and the Jews sent eastward to a destiny unknown. My Polish colleague told me that he was able to confirm that former residents were being evacuated from the ghettos of Warsaw. I will make use of all available facilities in endeavoring to verify reports.

Representatives of the Jewish Congress in Geneva are being communicated with by me and I shall be very glad to help them in any way that I can.

AMERICAN JEWISH CONGRESS

330 WEST 42nd STREET NEW YORK CITY

STEPHEN S. WISE, PRESIDENT
CARL SHERMAN, CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
NATHAN D. PERLMAN } VICE-PRESIDENTS
LEO H. LOWITZ }
LOUIS LIPSKY, CHAIRMAN, GOVERNING COUNCIL
M. MALDWIN FERTIG, CHAIRMAN, ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE
JACOB LEICHTMAN, TREASURER

CABLE ADDRESS 'CONGRESS'
TELEPHONE LONGACRE 5-2600

Office of Dr. Wise
40 West 68 Street,
October 6, 1942.

Wise, Stephen S. 10-6-42

Acting Secretary Sumner Welles
State Department
Washington, D. C.

Dear Secretary Welles:

I have just had a message from the Czechoslovak Information Service, in which, quoting Jan Masaryk, it is said:

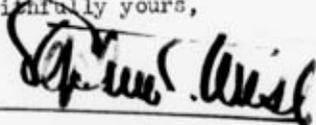
"Benes strongly advises no publicity until report fully investigated. Authenticity reasonably established. He urges closest consideration, that this may be Nazi propaganda method to provoke reaction, giving them excuse to extend outrages. Benes undertook to use his machinery to investigate thoroughly."

This message came not directly from Masaryk, who forwarded the message, but from our London representatives of the World Jewish Congress, Easterman and Barou.

I call your special attention to the statement of Benes, because his terms are almost identical with your own, in the course of which you asked for specific and factual information.

With heartfelt thanks for your sympathetic and friendly attitude touching the problem,

Faithfully yours,



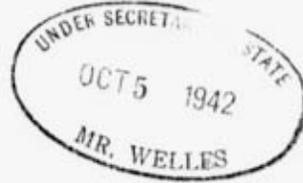
SSW:6

PRESIDENT

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

4 WU TR 66 NL

FROM



NewYork NY Oct 4 42

Secretary Sumner Welles

Washington D.C.

Geneva wires " Got strong new evidence confirming my earlier message through London. London wires all information lately confirms previous reports about extermination following deportation from various countries to Germany or Poland also following deportation within Poland. Only small minority used for labor service Ghettoes Warsaw Lodz excepting artisans working for army nearly emptied. Will be Washington Monday feel we should see you any time excepting three

Wise

349am 5

12:45

RECORDED



MEMORANDUM

*Done 9-3-42
SW*

September 3, 1942.

U - Mr. Welles

We suggest that in reply to Rabbi Wise you should inform him by telephone that the American Chargé d'Affaires in Vichy has been instructed to protest in most emphatic terms against this inhuman act of deporting from France refugees capable of performing labor in Germany. In the course of his remarks the American Chargé d'Affaires pointed out that those who had arrived since 1936 had in fact been granted asylum by the French Government which made the French present actions particularly inhuman. Much as we deplored the general situation, however, the American Chargé d'Affaires was instructed to press *on behalf of* those elements among the refugee population that have visas permitting them to go to foreign countries, as they should be in a category apart and their departure from France facilitated since a future was open to them and the French Government should give them every opportunity to make a new start in ~~the~~ *the* New World. You may state that two points which have been stressed in unofficial *reports* representations from Europe which have never been confirmed are: first, that any definite number of refugees from France had been determined upon and secondly, that once refugees from any area of Europe have reached Germany they are to be "exterminated"; rather it is our understanding that they are to be put to labor on behalf of the German machine as is the case with Polish and Soviet and other prisoners-of-war who are now working for their daily sustenance in Germany.

You may wish to point out that by supplying this refugee labor from France Laval defends his position that he is thereby preventing the exportation of French citizens since he has no alternative open to him by the Germans other than the surrender of a certain number of "mains d'Oeuvre". Mr. Long has suggested today that we should send a further protest *against this aid to the axis etc outside the Armistice terms.*

It is our belief that this should be limited if we want to be most effective to representations on behalf of those refugees that have visas that permit them to escape to countries outside of Axis control, especially since the representations Tuck has already made have been so forceful on behalf of the general situation as to exceed the instructions under which he was acting.

Fu:RA:EJD

Ray Atherton

RECEIVED
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
SEP 11 1942

AMERICAN JEWISH CONGRESS
330 WEST 42nd STREET NEW YORK CITY

STEPHEN S. WISE, PRESIDENT
NATHAN D. PERLMAN, VICE-PRESIDENT
LOUIS LIPSKY, CHAIRMAN, GOVERNING COUNCIL
CARL SHERMAN, CHAIRMAN, ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE
JACOB LEICHTMAN, TREASURER

CABLE ADDRESS 'CONGRESS'
TELEPHONE LONGACRE 5-2600

Office of Dr. Wise
40 West 68 Street,
June 19, 1942.

The Under Secretary of State
State Department
Washington, D. C.

Dear Secretary Welles:

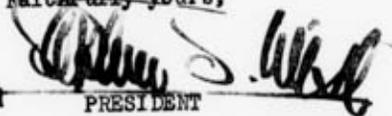
"It seems like stories from land of spirits" that Mr. Churchill should come to this country within a day after our discussion in your office. I have known the mind of Churchill long enough and well enough to feel that he might well be moved to join with our "Boss" in saying something now about the unspeakable but alas not unenforceable threat of Goebbels to have the Jews of Europe exterminated, if the bombing continues. It is a threat which the United Nations cannot afford to ignore. On the other hand, it is worse than a threat. It is the direst attack upon the whole Jewish people, as if they were responsible for the inevitable bombing of German cities and their military depots.

It would mean more than I can say if you could move both the President and the Prime Minister to see that, as devoted helpers of the United Nations, my people might have that spiritual sustainment which would come from a word fitly spoken by the two great leaders of the United Nations.

You are quite right. It would be far better to make any statement general, though inclusive of specific reference to this threat against the Jews, than to make it solely a statement in defense of Jews. Goldmann and I, as well as Jim, agree entirely with your position.

I am, dear Mr. Welles,

Faithfully yours,



PRESIDENT

SSW: S

MURRAY HILL 2-1160

Emergency Committee for Zionist Affairs

41 EAST 42nd STREET
ROOM 1121
NEW YORK CITY

Office of Dr. Wise
40 West 68 Street,
June 9, 1942.

Hon. Sumner Welles
State Department
Washington, D.C.

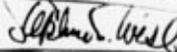
Dear Secretary Welles:

A number of my associates and myself, within and without the Zionist Movement, are disturbed about rumors which reach us with respect to a possible revision of the Atlantic Charter. We are perhaps especially disturbed, because we feel there have been occasions when there might well have been, indeed there ought to have been, some reference to the unique and uniquely unhappy position of the Jews of Central and Eastern Europe. I cannot help feeling that two or three of us ought to have an opportunity to discuss this problem with you in the near future.

11 A.M. | Would it be possible to see you Wednesday, June 17th, or Thursday, June 18th, and if either of these days be possible, the 17th being preferable, would you be good enough to name the time that would be least inconvenient to you?

I cannot close this letter without saying to you that your address upon a recent occasion was a most notable contribution to the documentation which is to precede and to make possible a great and just peace. Having been in Paris in January, 1919, and as a result of meetings at that time with President Wilson and his associates, I had long come to feel that no peace worth having could promptly be effected even after the most thorough-going victory. Peace-making must be a process rather than an incident, even as war-making was a long continuing process. I am glad of and grateful for your fine and inspiring word.

Faithfully yours,



STEPHEN S. WISE

SSW:S

Dear Eleanor:

I agree with you that there is much matter for thought in Rabbi Wise's letter.

Currently the British have terrible responsibilities in the Near East, but we must believe that they have delicately weighed all phases of the situation in that area and in the actual pursuance of our common war effort in this moment are temporizing in a local situation and the problem of satisfying the claims of both the Arabs and the Jews. I can only add that for the immediate moment a United Nations victory is the greatest aim we must all strive for.

I am returning Rabbi Wise's letter, a copy having been made for the Department's files.

Believe me,

Yours very sincerely,

Enclosure:

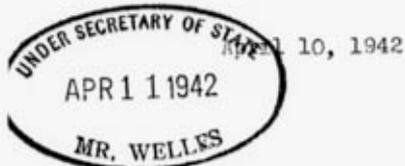
From Rabbi Wise,
April 1, 1942.

Mrs. Roosevelt,
The White House.

Eu:RA:EJD 4/16

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
THE UNDER SECRETARY
April 13, 1942



April 10, 1942

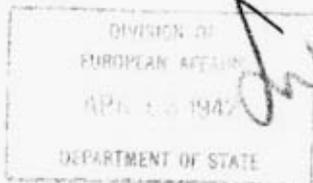
Eu - Mr. Atherton:

Please have someone
draft a letter for me to
send to Mrs. Roosevelt in
reply to the letter attached.

Dear Sumner:

I think much in this letter
gives food for thought. Should the
English think it over too?

E.R.



U:SW:GES

Mrs. Roosevelt

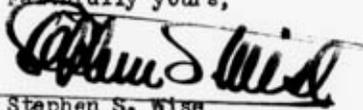
April 1, 1942

rebellion in Iraq, the presence of the Mufti in Berlin and Rome, the failure of Egypt to live up to her treaty of alliance (thousands of Palestine Jews, but not Arab-Egyptian soldiers, have been defending Egyptian soil against invasion) indicate that this policy has failed in the Near East as it has failed everywhere else.

I cannot help saying to you, dear Mrs. Roosevelt, that the Palestine government's policy in regard to these refugees is as shortsighted as it is cruel. It does damage to the cause of free men everywhere, and it accords ill with those great ends of justice which the United Nations have set themselves.

With most cordial greeting, believe me to be

Faithfully yours,



Stephen S. Wise

SSW:FB

EMERGENCY COMMITTEE FOR ZIONIST AFFAIRS
41 East 42nd Street
Room 1121
NEW YORK CITY

*Let. to Mrs. Roosevelt
Ew: EAM: RMR*

4/15/42

Office of Dr. Wise
40 West 68th St.
New York City.

April 1, 1942

Mrs. Roosevelt,
The White House,
Washington, D.C.

My dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

Justine felt that, in as much as she had spoken to you upon my suggestion with respect to the Struma disaster, I might continue the correspondence, which included the two items that you were good enough to send her, -- both of which I herewith return. It is very good of you to have intervened in this way with Mr. Welles, and I am grateful to you for permitting Justine and her father to see the letters, which Mr. Welles had written.

May I offer a few words of comment upon Mr. Welles' letter? If Palestine is to be ruled out, the situation of the unhappy refugees indeed becomes hopeless. Assuming that Mr. Welles is right in saying that refuge cannot be found for these people in South American countries nor in Africa, is not the obvious answer that they should be admitted to the one country which they can call home, to which they could go - in the words of Mr. Churchill - "not on sufferance, but of right"? I need not remind you that Palestine has been recognized as the Jewish Homeland not only by Britain and fifty-two other nations of the world, but by unanimous resolution of the United States Congress.

As for the fear that German agents might have been included in the passenger list of that ship, that fear is hardly convincing. The Nazis have no need for such precarious method of transportation as was the Struma, in order to introduce into Turkey additional Nazi agents; and through

Turkey

-2-

Turkey across the land borders into Syria and Palestine the way is not really hard. Moreover I beg to remind you that it would have been possible for the Palestine government, having permitted the refugees to land, to intern them until their bona fides could be established with our help. This has been done in other cases, and today, instead of building roads as slave laborers for Hitler, hundreds of these former internees are fighting soldiers in the armies of the United Nations; or they are busy on the land or in the factories of Palestine producing for our war effort and their own. On grounds of sheer expediency no less than on moral grounds, the attitude of the British administration in Palestine seems inexcusable.

A word about the repercussions that Britain fears among the Arabs. Is it too much to say that the sacrifice of friends in the interest of appeasing the unfriendly has repeatedly been proven to be vain? The rebellion in Iraq, the presence of the Mufti in Berlin and Rome, the failure of Egypt to live up to her treaty of alliance (thousands of Palestine Jews, but no Arab-Egyptian soldiers, have been defending Egyptian soil against invasion) indicate that this policy has failed in the Near East as it has failed everywhere else.

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April 1, 1942.

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