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Sumner Welles Papers  
Box 165 Folder 14  
Europe  
Poland. 1942

~~MOST SECRET~~

The attitude of the Soviet Government towards  
the Polish national minorities.

The Soviet policy with regard to the Polish national minorities is entirely inconsistent.

As a result of the Polish-Soviet Agreement of 30th July, the authorities of the U.S.S.R. proceeded to release all the Polish citizens regardless of their nationality. Besides the Poles, therefore, almost all the Jews, a considerable number of Ukrainians and all of the White-Ruthenians were set free.

All the prominent politicians, among whom the Jews: Sommerstein, Ringl, Leser, and the Ukrainians: Celewicz, Lucki and Kuzmowicz, were retained either in prison or concentration camps.

At the same time, no objections were raised with regard to Polish citizens of foreign descent enrolling in the Polish Army. The first Jews who were released were even sent directly to the Polish military camps. Owing to insufficient selection there was among them a considerable number of unreliable individuals, such as smugglers, speculators etc.

The situation of the Jews in the Polish Army during the first period was the object of special interest to foreign Jewish correspondents and vigilance on the part of the N.K.W.D. It was also circulated that, owing to the "anti-Jewish feelings of the Poles", the Jews will not encounter a favourable atmosphere in the ranks of the Polish Army and will, therefore, be unable to perform their service. At the same time, the N.K.W.D. were spreading the opinion that the Jews are the worst element in the Army, that they are always dissatisfied and that, therefore, it would be most desirable for the Poles to get rid of them. Under these circumstances the

endeavours

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endeavours of the New-Zionist Organization to form separate units of the Jews with the view of sending them in the future to Palestine, were not without significance.

Nevertheless, the conditions of the Jews in Polish units were commendable and their conduct on the whole was loyal and disciplined. The very high proportion of Jews in the Polish Army at the outset, subsequently diminished owing to the exemption of a certain number on the grounds of physical unfitness. At present the number of Jews in the 5th Division in Tatishtchev is still considerable and in some units attains 50%. General Boruta, the G.O.C. 5th Division, raises no objections against them. In the 5th Division most of the Jews were detached and, in accordance with the request of the New-Zionists, they formed a separate battalion. The opponents of Zabotynski are at present protesting against this decision. Their protest will be considered in the nearest future. It is evident, however, that the anticipation of the Soviets with regard to internal discord in the Polish Forces met with complete disappointment. Their speculation concerning anti-Jewish feelings among the Poles proved immaterial.

The number of Ukrainians in the Polish Army was considerably reduced, owing to the fact that they were spreading nazi propaganda. As fifth-columnists they attempted to demoralize the troops, continually raising complaints, in a manner contrary to discipline, against various deficiencies which the Poles endured and continue to accept with complacency.

The attitude of the White-Ruthenians, on the other hand, is beyond reproach. They omit no occasion to display their loyalty to Poland. According to the opinion of General Anders, expressed during the conference of General Sikorski with Stalin at the

Kremlin

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Kremlin on the 4th December, the White-Ruthenian soldiers are entirely devoted to the Polish State.

During November and December 1941, the nationalist problem entered upon a totally different phase. Owing to the enlistment in the Soviet Army of several Jews who were Polish citizens in Alma Ata, the Polish Embassy protested in a note dated November 10th. On the 1st December the Narkomindel replied by refusal stating among others:

" In connection with the Ukase of the Supreme Council of the U.S.S.R. dated November 29th, 1939, all citizens of western Ukrainian and White-Ruthenian territories of the U.S.S.R. who on the 1st and the 2nd November, 1939, were finding themselves in the above named areas have acquired citizenship of the U.S.S.R. on the grounds of the decree of August 19th, 1939, "concerning citizenship of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics".  
" The readiness of the Soviet Government to recognize as Polish citizens those persons of Polish nationality who were inhabiting the above mentioned territory on the 1st and 2nd November, 1939, gives proof of goodwill and complacency on behalf of the Soviet Government. Under no condition whatever can the above provide grounds for the similar recognition as Polish citizens of persons of other nationality and particularly Ukrainians, White Ruthenians and Jews, owing to the circumstance that the question of boundaries between the U.S.S.R. and Poland has not been settled and will be subject to examination in the future.

The Polish Ambassador reacted against such a way of putting the problem by a very firm note in which he stated that Polish legislation does not distinguish citizens according to racial or national identity, that the question of Polish citizenship can only be decided by Polish law and, therefore, a decree concerning the citizenship of the U.S.S.R. cannot be applied to Polish citizens. It would be contrary to the stipulations of the IV Hague Convention of 1907.

The Soviet attitude expressed in the note of the 1st December, 1941, was indicated again on the occasion of issuing passports to persons of Jewish descent. Permission for exit to Palestine was refused to a well known paper merchant from Cracow Aleksandrowicz

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his family, on the grounds that they were Soviet citizens. The Polish passports of A. Stern, the author, and his wife were disregarded under the pretext that: "They had accepted Soviet citizenship in connection with the decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the U.S.S.R. dated November 29th, 1939, and therefore being persons of non-Polish nationality they retained their citizenship...." It is necessary to point out that the Stern family took a Soviet passport in Lwow in the same way as a considerable part of the Polish population was obliged to do, in order to retain the possibility of employment. On the other hand, the Aleksandrowicz family did not accept Soviet passports, never ceased to emphasize their Polish nationality and refused to be entered as Jews.

From conversations held with officials, it follows that at the present moment the Soviet authorities decline to issue to any Jew a visa of exit on a Polish passport. Under these circumstances, endeavours of their families to go to Palestine or elsewhere would be obsolete.

In this matter of cardinal importance the Polish authorities find it impossible to agree to any half-measures, especially as it is looked upon by the other party as a precedent for the determination of the future boundaries. The Polish Ambassador was very firm on this subject during his conversation with Commissar Wyszynski, who showed much embarrassment. The latter recognized that it would create numerous complications and also acknowledged that the Soviet plebiscites on Polish territory could not furnish any grounds for the solution of the problem.

The British Embassy in Kuibishev interprets the Soviet point of view to the effect that Russia is already decided to assure for herself the settlement of boundaries. Since the settlement of the

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Polish-Russian frontiers entails the necessity to come to terms with the Polish Government, the Soviets desire, until that time, to treat the Polish eastern territories which they had occupied in 1939 as neutral and prevent them from being considered as areas to which Russia can lay no claim. They are endeavouring to ensure this "neutrality" by recognizing the Polish citizenship of the Polish population and the non-Polish population as Soviet citizens.

The Polish attitude with regard to these questions is known to the supreme Soviet authorities. During his stay in Russia, General Sikorski emphasized more than once in the presence of Wyszynski and other Soviet representatives the great importance to the Polish State of the eastern territories and the population inhabiting them. In spite of several attempts in this direction on the part of Stalin, General Sikorski refrained from any discussion concerning the Polish-Russian frontiers.

The Soviet point of view is also apparent in the instruction of the Soviet Staff issued to the liaison officers attached to the Polish Forces, in connection with the recruitment to the new divisions. It was unofficially communicated to the Polish High Command. Among others the instruction states that "it is permitted to recruit Poles for the new divisions from all parts of Poland including western Ukraine and western White Ruthenia; other nationalities are not to be embraced by the recruitment".

The news of the recognition by the Soviet authorities of all the Jews who inhabited territories occupied by Russians as citizens of the U.S.S.R. have already spread among them and evoked dismay and depression. Undeniably some of them did take up a hostile attitude towards the Poles during the Russian occupation and manifested their collaboration with the Soviet authorities from the moment when the Red Armies entered upon Polish territory. But

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the sense of injustice and degradation which they have since suffered is at present so intense among the Jews that it has produced dislike, contempt and even hatred of Russia. Their attitude towards the U.S.S.R. is today even more severe and stubborn than that of the Poles of Polish origin who, when they found themselves under Soviet occupation, had no illusions with regard to the hostile attitude of the invaders. The Polish-Soviet Agreement and the recognition of the Polish State produced among the Jews the loudest transports of satisfaction and enthusiasm. They have been expressing and continue to demonstrate their attachment to Poland and the earnest desire of returning at all costs to their homes in the eastern provinces belonging to the Polish State.

It may be asserted that if previously there were individuals amongst the Polish Jews who endeavoured to convince, particularly Anglo-Saxon opinion, that the eastern provinces should not belong to Poland but to Russia, at present there is no doubt that even among the Jewish communists there would be hardly anyone who would defend the claims of Russia to those territories. On the contrary, the Polish Jews in the U.S.S.R. are at present the most ardent advocates of the eastern provinces of the Polish Commonwealth.

The Soviet authorities have fully realised this manifestly unfriendly atmosphere which is the main reason for their unwillingness to permit the Jews to go abroad or to recognise them as Polish citizens. This circumstance provokes still greater indignation amongst the Jews, considering that in 1939 the same Soviet authorities prevented the inhabitants of the occupied territory from establishing their Polish citizenship and obliged them by threats, and when necessary even by force, to assert their Jewish nationality. This method was adopted in spite of the fact that in the U.S.S.R.

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the Jews almost without exception assert their Russian nationality and the Soviet regulations strictly forbid the adoption of nationality on any other grounds than the private sense of nationality of the individual.

As regards the Ukrainians, it follows from the utterances of the Soviet official circles that Russia desires to assemble within her limits the whole of the Ukrainian element and do away with the Ukrainian "Piedmont" in Poland. The Soviets would like to exterminate the Ukrainians and in the future get rid of a factor which in their opinion is their only danger of internal disintegration. During his conversation with General Sikorski, Stalin expressed this view when he proposed to give his assistance to Poland towards "crushing" the Ukrainians once and for all, provided understanding was reached with regard to the frontiers. He offered to transfer 2 - 3 million Ukrainians to Russia. General Sikorski, however, avoided conversation on the subject.

The Lithuanian problem is very different. Russia boasts that she has obtained the consent of Great Britain for the incorporation of Lithuania together with Latvia and Estonia in the U.S.S.R. This would deprive the Lithuanians of all hope of regaining their independence. Furthermore, it is most likely that if Russia is victorious she will endeavour to form a barrier of purely Russian element on the territories of these States. This would be equivalent to the evacuation of millions of the inhabitants of the border lands to the depths of the U.S.S.R. This trail has already been indicated by the wholesale transports of Ukrainians and Germans to Middle and Northern Siberia.

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March 30, 1942

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Mr. Atherton:

When our new ambassador is ready to leave for Madrid, please be kind enough to be sure that this question contained in the memorandum left with me by General Sikorski this morning is placed before him with instructions to do what he can upon his arrival in Madrid to persuade the Spanish authorities to let these people out. I am satisfied that these officers will be of real value to the Polish forces in the near future if they could be released from Spain.

U:SW:DMK

Poland - Concentration camp of Miranda del Ebro, Spain

MEMORANDUM

on the necessity of immediate action to stop German outrages in Poland.

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- I - The Polish Government has been receiving lately numerous trustworthy reports from Poland relating to a recrudescence and intensification of the number of terrorist acts and crimes committed against the Polish and Jewish population by the German authorities of occupation. These acts are of a nature unprecedented as regards cruelty and bestiality. The reports describe acts of mass executions carried out after infliction of indescribable mutilation and torture with a refinement of brutality and sadism which can only be qualified as inhuman in the fullest sense of the word.
- II - The Polish Nation which has, for two years and a half, been suffering from ever increasing ruthless treatment at the hands of its oppressors, calls upon its Government to appeal to the United Nations for immediate action in view of stopping this inhuman extermination of the Polish people.
- III - The Polish people express the conviction that this could be brought about only by immediate measures

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of retaliation applied to German nationals wherever this is possible and their publication in a way which will bring it to the knowledge of the German nation.

IV - On January 13th, 1942, an Inter-Allied Declaration relating to retribution for war crimes was signed in London by the Representatives of countries occupied by Germany. This solemn Act took place under the Chairmanship of General Sikorski, Prime Minister of Poland, in the presence of the Representatives of the U. S. A., Great Britain and the British Dominions, Soviet Russia and China. By this Declaration the signatories wished: (1) to make certain (according to the Declaration made on September 25, 1941, by President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill) that the responsibilities of the individual war criminals would not be evaded in the future, (2) to establish as from now a record of the various cases, and publicly to denounce the crimes, which had come to their knowledge, thus endeavoring to produce a preventive effect on the morale of the occupants.

V - Notwithstanding this Declaration, German outrages in Poland are on the increase and call for energetic and immediate action.

Washington, March 24th, 1942.

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

*Memorandum of Conversation*

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DATE:  
December 4, 1942

SUBJECT: Germany

PARTICIPANTS: Prime Minister of Poland, General Sikorski;  
Ambassador of Poland, Mr. Jan Ciechanowski;  
Under Secretary, Mr. Welles

COPIES TO: S only

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The Prime Minister of Poland, accompanied by the Polish Ambassador, called to see me this afternoon.

General Sikorski handed me a document, attached herewith, containing the views of the Polish Government, and the Prime Minister specifically emphasized that this document likewise had received the formal approval of all of the other governments in exile in London, with regard to steps which should be taken by the victorious United Nations in and concerning Germany.

Declassified  
E.O. 12958-2  
State Department

By PK NARA, Date 11/9/95

U:SW:GES

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MEASURES TO BE APPLIED TO GERMANY  
IMMEDIATELY AFTER CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES.

It is essential unconditionally to constrain Germany to accept the following most important demands and resolutions of the Allies. These demands concern:

- a) the immediate reparation of all territories occupied by Germany and the disarmament of the German military potential (disarmament of armies and of war industries);
- b) the reparation of all prisoners of war held in Germany as well as of all civilian population deported to Germany;
- c) the occupation of Germany and movements of populations;
- d) punishment for war crimes;
- e) reparation and compensation of losses sustained by the Allies and in the first instance by the Continental European States conquered and occupied by the Germans.

I. Demilitarization and Security.

- 1) The disarmament should apply to the total German armed forces, police force and all existing paramilitary bodies. The members of front forces should be treated, after their complete disarmament, as prisoners of war, applying to them the same methods as applied by Germany to our prisoners of war; the rest (the rear forces) might be demobilized by the Allied military authorities as soon as it will appear possible without prejudice to the interest of general security. The members of the National Socialist Party should in every case be detained and isolated. The German armed forces, including police force and all existing paramilitary organizations in the occupied territories should be treated as front forces.

- 2) The Allied prisoners of war, workers, civil internees etc. to be set free immediately.
- 3) War materials in the largest sense should be handed over to the Allies without any exception, their production immediately stopped, the relevant workshops removed or destroyed. The transition to a strictly peaceful production should be admitted under Allied supervision only; the production of machines and chemical articles should be allowed only as far as will be established beforehand by the Allied Authorities. The metallurgical production and the output of electric power should be similarly reduced.
- 4) All kinds of maps, plans, documents and archives of importance for warfare or military production should be handed over to the Allies.
- 5) Warships and merchant vessels should be handed over to the Allies for immediate distribution between their respective navies.
- 6) All existing military and paramilitary organizations, societies, associations etc. as well as the National-Socialist Party and its organizations should be immediately dissolved and a resumption of their activities strictly forbidden.
- 7) The execution of the above regulations should be enforced by enacting, independently of a general responsibility, of individual responsibility to the Allied Authorities of all persons concerned.
- 8) All members of the German administration in the largest sense (including e.g. the so-called "trustees" - "Treuha#nder" - for industrial and other economic enterprises/ should be put under the obligation of rendering account of their activities to the local authorities of the Allied States concerned, and of transferring in perfect order to the same authorities, on demand, of all administered real and personal property, documents etc.

## II. Occupation.

- 9) The occupation of the pre-Munich territory of the German State should be organized under two different systems, called here briefly: "the general occupation" viz. "the strict occupation".

- 10) General occupation in Germany proper which will be carried out in principle by British and U. S. Forces should include all centers of strategic and political importance. The aim of this occupation is the supervision of general political developments in Germany in accordance with principles of democracy as well as the supervision of the execution by Germany of all conditions applied to Germany as a consequence of the cessation of hostilities. The internal situation in Germany at the end of the war may necessitate the taking over of the entire administration of the country by the Allies for a certain period of time.

Apart from the above mentioned general occupation "strict occupation" is foreseen for territories of Germany in her frontier zones. This term is used to define territories the incorporation of which into other States is foreseen, or such the occupation of which is indispensable from the military viewpoint to exact by force the strict execution of imposed conditions.

- 11) Such strict occupation includes the following areas:
- a) in the East: a line following the left bank of the river G<sup>o</sup>rlitzer-Neisse and the left bank of the Oder, including the necessary bridgeheads; the estuary of the Oder, including Stettin, the islands of this estuary and the Isle of R<sup>u</sup>gen. The occupying power should be Poland and in the southern area bordering Czechoslovakia - Poland and Czechoslovakia;
  - b) in the South - at least Austria;
  - c) in the West: the area on the left bank of the Rhine, including the necessary bridgeheads, and the area on the left bank of the river Emden;
  - d) in the North: - at least the German islands on the North and Baltic Seas, as well as the Channel of Kiel and its bordering zones. The occupying powers in the areas of the North Sea and the Channel of Kiel should be Great Britain and America; in the area of the Baltic islands Great Britain and Poland.

### III. War Crimes.

- 12) Germany should be put under obligation to give up (extradite) to the Allies all persons accused of having committed war crimes, upon a simple demand of the competent legal authorities, without right to oppose exceptions of any kind whatsoever, and to provide all information, documents etc. which could be useful for the purpose of judicial prosecution.
- 13) The extradition should apply also to persons who infringe the duties imposed on them according to regulation No. 8 (above).
- 14) Personal responsibility should be established for all persons hindering the prosecution of war criminals.

### IV. Movement of Populations.

- 15) Germany to admit into the area of general occupation:
  - a) all persons of German extraction, expelled by Allied Authorities;
  - b) all persons of whatever nationality or extraction, expelled because of their collaboration during the war with the German authorities;
  - c) all persons of German extraction, who will voluntarily leave the territories under Allied control.
- 16) Germany must allow free departure from the area of general occupation of all persons, indicated by the Allied Authorities.

### V. Reparations.

- 17) Germany to accept in a general way a commitment to restore and repair all losses and damages of a material as well as of a moral kind; the deliveries carried out in accordance with the regulations established below (Nos. 18-23) should be considered as part payments on account.

- 18) Cultural objects of any kind whatsoever, removed or destroyed, should be identified and restored to the authorities of the respective Allied States; in case of loss - these authorities should have the right to take over other goods at their own choice as pledges for fulfilment of the obligation under No. 17 (above).
- 19) In order to safeguard reparation by Germany of all losses and damages in the field of culture (science, art, education etc.) the authorities of the Allied States concerned should take over, as pledges, certain German collections.
- 20) Germany should deliver all kind of installations, books etc. needed for the immediate reopening in the occupied countries of high, medium and primary schools; the missing articles should be manufactured by Germany on the principle of priority and at her own expense.
- 21) Economic goods of any kind whatsoever removed during the war should be restored; all articles lost or depreciated - replaced by others at the free choice of authorities of the Allied States concerned.
- 22) Germany should deliver objects of every kind, indispensable for the purpose of relief in the distressed areas of the Allied States and for putting immediately in action the economic life in these areas. The missing objects should be manufactured by Germany on the principle of priority and at her own expense.

Notice: the standard of supply of Germany during the transition period in articles of consumption, raw materials and manufactured goods should in no case be higher than that of the countries which were occupied by her during the war.

- 23) In order to secure the fulfilment of the obligations by Germany under this chapter, the Allies should take over:
  - a) German property abroad;
  - b) incomes from customs and other duties, applied to German exports and imports; the Allied Authorities should accordingly exercise a

supervision

supervision of the legislation, concerning these duties, and of their administration;

- c) control of the Reichsbank and possibly of the big private banks.

#### VI. Final Regulations.

- 23) A Chief Interallied Commission should be organized, which would be exclusively entitled to the:
  - a) interpretation of the provisions of this settlement;
  - b) issuance of all executive regulations and orders;
  - c) exercise of the different activities of supervision and control under this settlement.

A German delegation should be attached to the Chief Interallied Commission in order to carry out its instructions and to submit to its decision Germany's pleas. The Chief Interallied Commission should be entitled to impose, if necessary, sanctions of a general or local character, according to its decision.

- 24) The Allied Authorities should apply, in the areas of general occupation, to all Germans personally responsible for the execution of all Allied demands arising out of the application of the above stated measures, the provisions of the laws and regulations applied in Germany during this war in respect to the same acts or omissions against the German State, its citizens and public or private property.