

Summer Welles Papers
Box 166 Folder 7
Switzerland, 1941-1943

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

October 5, 1942

AMERICAN LEGATION,
BERN.

PERSONAL FOR THE MINISTER FROM THE ACTING SECRETARY.

The Jewish Congress leaders have been receiving in recent weeks reports from their representatives in Geneva and in London advising that many thousands of Jews in Poland and in those portions of Eastern Europe occupied by the Germans are being slaughtered in accordance with a policy of complete extermination now embarked upon by the Nazi Government.

I have so far been unable to obtain any confirmation of these reports although, as you probably are aware, Tittmann cabled that the Vatican might have information which would confirm at least a part of these stories. I am awaiting a further report from Myron Taylor or from Tittmann in this regard.

Rabbi Wise told me this morning that he believed factual evidence was available but that his representatives in Switzerland were probably afraid to send such reports

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in the open mail or through open cables. He is asking Dr. Riegner or Mr. Lichtheim, who represent the Congress in Geneva, to call upon you and give you such information as they may have. Please receive any reports they may make to you and telegraph me any factual evidence which they may make available to you.

Acting

U:SW:GES

September 23, 1942

AMEMBASSY

BERN (SWITZERLAND)

TRIPLE PRIORITY.

FOR AMBASSADOR TAYLOR FROM THE UNDER SECRETARY.

I have just been handed the following memorandum by Dr. Wise:

QUOTE The following information was received from the Geneva Office of the Jewish Agency for Palestine in a letter dated August 30, 1942. The report was given to that office by two reliable eye witnesses (Aryans), one of whom came from Poland on August 14.

1. The Warsaw ghetto is being liquidated. All Jews without any distinction as to age or sex are being taken out of the ghetto in groups and shot. Their corpses are used for the manufacture of fats and their bones for fertilizer. Corpses are even exhumed for these purposes.

2. These mass executions do not take place in Warsaw but in camps especially prepared for the purpose. One of these camps is said to be in Belzek.

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In Lemberg itself about 50,000 Jews have been executed on the spot in the last four weeks. In Warsaw, according to another report, 100,000 have been massacred. In the entire district east of Poland, including occupied Russia there is not one Jew left. In this connection, it was also reported that the whole non-Jewish population of Sebastopol was murdered. The butchering of the Jewish population in Poland was not done at one time in order not to attract the attention of foreign countries.

3. While the Aryans deported to the east from Holland and France are genuinely used for work, the Jews deported from Germany, Belgium, Holland, France and Slovakia are sent to be butchered.

4. Since such butcherings would attract great attention in the west, they must first of all deport them to the east, where outsiders have less opportunity of knowing what is happening. A large part of the Jewish population deported to Lithuania and Lublin has already been executed during the last few weeks. That is probably the reason why the deportees were not permitted to correspond with anyone. A great number of the German refugees were taken to Theresienstadt. This place is,

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however, only an interim station and the people there await the same fate.

5. As soon as space is made by executions, new deportations are arranged. One often sees large caravans of such deportees being transported in cattle cars. In each cattle car there are about 40 people. It is especially significant to note that Lithuanian non-Jews are entrusted with fetching the candidates from the death-ghetto in Warsaw.

6. It is a tragedy that the Polish population is being incited by the Germans against the Jews and the relationship between the Poles and the Jews has been aggravated to the last degree. This is particularly true in Lemberg. UNQUOTE.

Please ascertain whether the Vatican has any information which would tend to confirm the reports contained in this memorandum. In the event that any confirmation has been received, please discuss the issues involved with the Pope at your next audience and find out whether he has any suggestions as to any practical manner in which the forces of civilized public opinion could be utilized in order to prevent a continuation

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of these barbarities. Please telegraph a brief statement when it is possible for you to do so by way of Switzerland or Portugal referring to this telegram and indicating whether any confirmation of these reports has been received by the Holy See.

September 22, 1942

The following information was received from the Geneva Office of the Jewish Agency for Palestine in a letter dated August 30, 1942. The report was given to that office by two reliable eye-witnesses (Aryans), one of whom came from Poland on August 14.

1. The Warsaw ghetto is being liquidated. All Jews without any distinction as to age or sex are being taken out of the ghetto in groups and shot. Their corpses are used for the manufacture of fats and their bones for fertilizer. Corpses are even exhumed for these purposes.
2. These mass executions do not take place in Warsaw but in camps especially prepared for the purpose. One of these camps is said to be in Belzek. In Lemberg itself about 50,000 Jews have been executed on the spot in the last few weeks. In Warsaw, according to another report, 100,000 have been massacred. In the entire district east of Poland, including occupied Russia there is not one Jew left. In this connection, it was also reported, that the whole non-Jewish population of Sebastopol was murdered. The butchering of the Jewish population in Poland was not done at one time in order not to attract the attention of foreign countries.
3. While the Aryans deported to the east from Holland and France are genuinely used for work, the Jews deported from Germany, Belgium, Holland, France and Slovakia are sent to be butchered.
4. Since such butcherings would attract great attention in the west, they must first of all deport them to the east, where outsiders have less opportunity of knowing what is happening. A large part of the Jewish population deported to Lithuania and Lublin has already been executed during the last few weeks. That is probably the reason why the deportees were not permitted to correspond with anyone. A great number of the German refugees were taken to Theresienstadt. This place is, however, only an interim station and the people there await the same fate.

5. As soon as space is made by executions, new deportations are arranged. One often sees large caravans of such deportees being transported in cattle cars. In each cattle car there are about 40 people. It is especially significant to note that Lithuanian non-Jews are entrusted with fetching the candidates from the death-ghetto in Warsaw.

6. It is a tragedy that the Polish population is being incited by the Germans against the Jews and the relationship between the Poles and the Jews has been aggravated to the last degree. This is particularly true in Lemberg.

① In Warsaw no Pole ever sees a Jew.

7. Unoccupied France has promised to furnish 10,000 Jews to Germany.