

Holocaust / Refugee Collection

Materials from the Adolf A. Beile Jr. Papers  
and Diary

July 23, 1942.

MEMORANDUM

U - Mr. Welles:

Mr. Murray has talked to me about the problem raised by the World Jewish Congress telegrams to South America, the Near East and the world generally, asking the mass meetings to protest against anti-Semitic atrocities and urging the formation of a Jewish army.

I share Mr. Murray's feeling that this is very much the wrong way to go about it, especially in the Near East in view of the prevailing sentiment.

I think there is only one way of handling this, namely, to call in Dr. Wise and tell him frankly what has happened and why, in the existing circumstances, we think it unwise.

After revolving this in my mind, I can think of no better way than a direct method.

A.A.B., Jr.

STATEMENT OF THE PRESIDENT OF  
THE UNITED STATES

The existence of a widespread campaign of barbarity in Axis-occupied countries has long been known to this Government. Recently the rule of uncontrolled and degenerate horror has intensified. There is no question of its existence; the perpetrators boast of it. Reports, accompanied by evidence, are reaching the United States, and the Governments of the United Nations, which require that appropriate action be taken.

These practices cannot be justified on any theory of war, nor excused on the ground that they serve a military objective. They are, in beastly fact, crimes which are repudiated by every rule of warfare, and which revolt every instinct of humanity.

They include murder for murder's sake; torture for torture's sake; massacre of hostages and revolting cruelties carried out for political ends, and inflicted in a spirit of total depravity.

The campaign of criminal barbarism has been carried on in many areas, and notably in the countries of Norway, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Occupied France, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Yugoslavia and Greece as well as in Japanese-occupied China, Burma, Malaysia, the Netherlands East Indies, the Philippines and various of the Western Pacific islands. This does not exhaust the list. Soviet Russia has already announced her own policy in dealing with outrages committed on Russian territory.

The participants in these crimes from the highest to the lowest will be held to a strict accounting.

The names of many of the men who have participated in these horrors are known to us and we have, and shall continue to have, means of knowing the identity of the individual Germans, Italians, Japanese, and others, whose acts demand that they be brought to the bar of stern justice.

When the time comes -- as come it will -- justice must be done, and civilized law must be vindicated.

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The appropriate services of this Government, in conjunction with like agencies of the other Governments, have been requested to cooperate in gathering such evidence. The Government of the United States has appointed \_\_\_\_\_ to collect, classify and preserve evidence connecting Axis individuals or agents of whatever status with the perpetration of crimes against humanity. He will work with like representatives or authorities of other Governments concerned.

Men guilty of crimes shall not be protected by any immunity of high rank, or by any obscurity of low degree. They will, as men, face the human record of their acts. They will be dealt with upon that record.

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

Washington, D. C.,  
August 1942.

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Recovery, R.D.  
1942  
BX 67

My dear Mr. President:

On August 1, 1942, the Department transmitted to you the collective representation of nine Governments-in-Exile whose occupied countries were suffering from German atrocities.

It occurs to me that these might be dealt with in connection with the letter of King Peter relating to the atrocities committed against Yugoslavia.

There is enclosed a proposed declaration which, in substance, suggests that an individual of standing be appointed with authority to collect the evidence in connection with these various atrocities, for use as and when it shall be possible to bring offenders to justice.

It has been suggested either that an existing high official of the United States Government, such as the Attorney General, be named, or, if you felt otherwise about it, that a special officer be designated --

possibly

The President,  
The White House.

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possibly General McCoy who has just concluded the proceedings against the captured saboteurs. Should this idea appeal to you, I should be glad to take up with the Governments involved, as also with the British Government, their willingness to acquiesce in this method of handling the situation. I believe that the mere existence of such machinery might offer some slight check to the invaders, and might lay the foundation for a method of swift justice which will be available as and when presently occupied territory is liberated.

Faithfully yours,

Enclosure:

Proposed declaration,  
as stated.

A-B AAB:ES:AA  
8-17-42

STATEMENT OF THE PRESIDENT OF  
THE UNITED STATES

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These practices cannot be justified on any theory of war, nor excused on the ground that they serve a military objective. They are, in beastly fact, crimes against civilization.

They include murder for murder's sake; torture for torture's sake; massacre of hostages and revolting cruelties inflicted for personal pleasure and for political ends.

The campaign of criminal barbarism has been carried on in many areas, and notably in the countries of Norway, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Occupied France, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Yugoslavia and Greece as well as in Japanese-occupied China, Burma, Malaysia, the Netherlands East Indies, the Philippines and various of the Western Pacific islands. This does not exhaust the list. Soviet Russia has already announced her own policy in dealing with outrages committed on Russian territory. Many of these governments have requested the United States, through me, to take appropriate action.

The perpetrators of these crimes against civilization can not be considered merely as units of the guilt of the Axis Governments. Guilt is personal; and the men, as individuals, who have thus violated, and who continue to violate, the most elementary rules of civilization, must be held personally accountable.

The names of many of the men who are personally responsible for these horrors are known to us and we have, and shall continue to have, means of knowing the identity of the individual Germans, Italians, Japanese, and others, whose acts demand that they be brought to the bar of stern justice.

When the time comes -- as come it will -- justice must

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be done, and civilized law must be vindicated.

The Government of the United States has appointed \_\_\_\_\_ to collect, classify and preserve evidence connecting Axis individuals or agents of whatever status with the perpetration of crimes against civilization. The appropriate services of this Government, in conjunction with like agencies of the other Governments, have been requested to cooperate in gathering and turning over such evidence.

Men guilty of crimes against civilization shall not be protected by any immunity of high rank, or by any obscurity of low degree. They will, as men, face the human record of their acts. They will be dealt with upon that record.

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

Washington, D. C.,

August 1942.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ASSISTANT SECRETARY

August 18, 1942.

MEMORANDUM

A couple of days which were relatively easy by Department standards. I have been occupied with two things. One was working chiefly with the Secretary, Green Hackworth, Atherton and Dunn on a possible statement by the President involving a plan to gather and perpetuate the evidence against individuals in Europe and Asia guilty of atrocities. This is partly due to the desire of the Dutch Government to do something to head off the continued German massacre of hostages there. It is partly an elaboration of my own feeling that some such step might check some individuals in the Axis countries from carrying on their sheerly terroristic and sadistic activities. The proposal is to appoint some outstanding American to get and classify evidence and preserve it for future reference, accompanied by a statement that guilt is personal. Arthur Sweetser, among others, is impressed with the idea.

The second was an attempt to get forward with the economic organization of the United Nations and parallel economic organization of the states in Europe which emerge from the German occupation. I am attaching a copy of my memorandum on the proposed Raw Materials Administration;

likewise

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likewise a copy of the tentative proposal regarding arrangements with the East European Federation, which is serving as a kind of experimental guinea pig in the thinking.

Last night, at Sumner's suggestion, Mr. McDougall came to dinner and with him Paul Appleby. McDougall is advising Stanley Bruce of Australia who is now perhaps the most intelligent man in London. I went over step by step some of these ideas, telling him I thought a United Nations Bank was a probability; so also was a United Nations Transport Authority more or less clearly indicated; I thought we might have a Raw Materials Administration (we were committed to one) and that I thought there might also be a Food Administration.

We talked for two hours. Appleby agreed to try to work up a Food Administration project which McDougall thought should come first.

The Solomon Islands battle turns out to be a victory, but I fear quite expensive. The Navy has not as yet released the data on losses.

Meanwhile the further consultations regarding a second front have been going on in Moscow. I do not know what they are. I surmise, however, that they chiefly relate to informing the Russians what decisions have already been taken.

A.A.B., Jr.

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August 31, 1942.

MEMORANDUM

U - Mr. Welles:

The Committee for a Jewish Army has been besieging the White House. McIntyre eventually sent them to me. They were then thinking of a huge delegation to convince the British that the Jewish Army ought to go forward. They have finally got their suggestions to a point where they wish to send four people, namely:

Alfred A. Strelsin of New York;  
Kenneth Leslie of the "Protestant Digest";  
Andrew L. Somers, a Member of Congress, and  
Peter H. Bergson, a Palestinian expert,

on private passports to England to lay their cases before the British authorities. The chairman of the committee, Strelsin, has been talking at length to Field Marshal Sir John Dill, and this is the procedure finally recommended by him.

I see no reason why we should not grant passports with reasonable priority; but the understanding is that they are merely going to state the case as well as they can to the appropriate British authority and try to persuade the British to make up their minds. This Government does not assume any responsibility for them except as it permits their trip. Do you see any objection?

A.A.B., Jr.

Attachment - Letter from Mr. Strelsin  
dated 8-28-42 to Mr. Berle.

A-B AAB:AA

COPY FOR DIARY FILE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

*Memorandum of Conversation*

DATE:

September 15, 1942.

SUBJECT: Desire of Rabbi Wise to have Argentine Government protest to Vichy against deportation of Jews to Germany.

PARTICIPANTS: Rabbi Stephen S. Wise;  
Mr. A. A. Berle, Jr.

COPIES TO: S, U, RA, Eu

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Dr. Wise came in to see me at his request. His principal idea was to see whether we could induce the Argentine Government to protest to Vichy against the deportation of Jews from France to Germany. He thought perhaps a similar protest might also be made from Chile.

I told Dr. Wise that I hardly thought we should care to make the Argentine Government our spokesman in Vichy and, indeed, I doubted whether this would be very effective. I thought it might be far more useful if he established contact with someone like Bishop D'Andrea who might be of assistance in popular protest. I told him that, as he no doubt knew, we had made the stiffest kind of representations to Vichy ourselves.

Dr. Wise asked whether I could put him in touch with Bishop D'Andrea which I said I would do.

A.A.B., Jr.

Note: I subsequently saw Bishop D'Andrea who agreed he would see Dr. Wise. However, the meeting did not come off since the only free time the Bishop had was on the Jewish holidays. But I gather that Dr. Wise may be in contact with the Bishop by correspondence or through intermediaries in Argentina.

A-B AAB:AA

IX 1 223

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

*Memorandum of Conversation*

DATE: September 25, 1942

SUBJECT: Request of Strelsin to go to London to urge the project of a Jewish army

PARTICIPANTS: The British Ambassador, Lord Halifax;  
Mr. A. A. Berle, Jr.

COPIES TO: S, U, EU, PD

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Lord Halifax came in to see me, at his request. He talked about Strelsin and his desire to go to London to urge the project of the Jewish army. He said that he thought that it might be useful to let Strelsin go to London, if nothing else could be done, but he would call him in and see whether by a little frank talk here the matter could not be worked out.

I told him that the Department had no particular feeling about this, but we were not anxious to have the Jewish army agitation become a great public issue, which might be embarrassing to all concerned. If a chat between Lord Halifax and Strelsin would settle the matter, this would relieve the tension and clear up the situation. If not, we could then see whether it was necessary to let these people go to London and discuss it with the London officials.

A.A.B., Jr.

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COPY FOR DIARY FILE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

*Memorandum of Conversation*

DATE:

October 28, 1942

SUBJECT: Approach made by Jewish Army  
Committee to Free French Delegation.

PARTICIPANTS: M. Tixier, Chief of Free French Delegation;  
Mr. A. A. Berle, Jr.

COPIES TO: S, U, Eu

M. Tixier came in to see me at his request.

He said that he had been approached by a Committee for a Jewish Army and asked to sign a manifesto in favor of the Jewish Army. He asked what position we were taking in the matter.

I said that the Committee for a Jewish Army had been talking to us too. We had taken no position. We had manifested sympathy with their plight; we understood the British Government was not favorable to the idea. We had suggested that they take the matter up with the War Department and I understood that the Jewish Army Committee was presently planning to see whether a battalion of stateless Jews might not be formed within the framework of the American Army. I could not undertake to say what position the War Department would take. In sum, the American Government had not yet taken a position and I therefore could not answer his question.

A.A.B., Jr.

A-B AAB:AA

IX 2 54

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ASSISTANT SECRETARY

November 23, 1942

Memorandum

A fairly quiet day yesterday, with some good music in the afternoon.

At Sir Girja Shankar Bajpai's party, I ran into the South African Minister, who is much worried about colored troops going through South Africa. I think something can be done about it.

This morning, an attempt to maul this Department into settling a single but fundamental issue, namely, whether we tackle the West European economy on the basis of a region, or whether we tackle it as a series of separate nationalities. If we don't settle something about it pretty soon, it will be settled for us.

A chat with Raymond Clapper, who wants to know the story on what Lehman is going to do about relief. Off the record, I told him about the international relief possibilities. The agreements are pretty well forward.

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IX 7 162

A string of things this afternoon, mostly of little importance. The people who want to do something about the Jewish army want to go forward with it; I am referring them to the War Department, as this is a military matter.

A chat with Paul Guerin, who has been doing the economic representation in North Africa. Now he wants to get at it again; but like all Frenchmen, he is left more or less like a fish out of water, there being no government in North Africa and a Quisling government in France. But this brings up the entire question of whether we ought to be providing a government in North Africa. At the moment, we are not, and I think rightly, because I see nothing on which to found any real action. So I suppose it will come eventually to a military government.

Dakar apparently capitulated this afternoon--and did so apparently of its own free will, since we have no forces anywhere near there capable of touching the place, militarily. This gives us control of the entire African coastline, with the exception of the strip running from Bizerte to Benghazi. The French troops in

Tunis

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Tunis have apparently joined up almost wholly, so that there are perhaps 12,000 Axis troops, German and Italian, in the cities of Tunis and Bizerte,--a small strip on the coast. I assume that we shall be driving in there almost any time now, and if we have any luck, that leg of the journey will be over.

The War Department has got out its announcement of an Austrian Legion, followed at once by the Hapsburgs, who are welcoming it and propose to get up to organize the army. Thus the scheme of Felix Frankfurter has worked more or less, and a violent controversy is beginning right away. I imagine it will be blamed on the State Department, though the Lord knows the State Department opposed this tooth and nail, right from the beginning.

A.A.B., Jr.

IX 2 164

COPY FOR DIARY FILE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

*Memorandum of Conversation*

DATE:

December 7, 1942.

SUBJECT: Position of Jews in Denmark.

PARTICIPANTS: The Danish Minister, Mr. Henrik de Kauffmann;  
Mr. A. A. Berle, Jr.

COPIES TO: S, U, PA/D, E:

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The Danish Minister came in to see me at his request.

He discussed a little the position of Jews in Denmark. Once more the Germans had renewed their request for enforcement of anti-Jewish laws. Danish Jews had themselves requested the Danish Government to intern them -- no doubt feeling their fate would be better if they were interned kindly by the Danes than if they were seized by the Germans. The problem was whether they should yield to this. There was always the possibility that even if the Danes did pass laws interning Jews, the Germans would seize the Jews anyway.

The Minister said he had discussed this with Felix Frankfurter who had given no advice but had recommended that he take the advice of Chaim Weizmann.

I said this was a very difficult situation. If Denmark yielded to the anti-Jewish laws she would be accused of having gone far down the Nazi path. Yet failure to accept them might actually be the death of many Jews. I did not feel we could advise in the matter. I said that, speaking personally, I should feel that the final consideration had to be the safety and identity of the Danish state; and it was a very open question whether the Danish internment of Jews would protect them very long. But there were many who were far more competent than I to advise on the point.

A-3 AAB:AA

A.A.B., Jr.

*IX 2 330*

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
*Memorandum of Conversation*

DIARY FILE

DATE: January 5, 1943

SUBJECT:

PARTICIPANTS: The Finnish Chargé d'Affaires, Mr. T. O. Vahervuori;  
Mr. A. A. Berle, Jr.

COPIES TO: S<sub>F</sub>-U<sub>F</sub>-NH<sub>F</sub>-PA/D (No distribution)

The Finnish Chargé came in to see me, at my request.

I said that we had heard reports that Jews in Finland were being expelled into Germany; and that somewhat the same policy was being followed with regard to other exiles. As the Chargé knew, this was equivalent to condemning them to a terrible death; and I wanted to inquire as to the truth of the reports.

The Finnish Chargé said that he would look into the matter.

The Chargé then said he hoped that the various explanations regarding the President of Finland's attending the Japanese Legation party to celebrate the anniversary of Pearl Harbor had covered the situation. I said that I knew nothing that could be added to what the Chargé knew was our view of the matter. Pearl Harbor was an evil date in our history. We had satisfied ourselves of the facts. McClintock had filed his protest, and that was that.

The Chargé then inquired whether this Government really  
objected

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objected to the continuance of Witting as Minister of Foreign Affairs. I said that I did not consider that we had any mandate to advise on the membership of the government of a foreign country. I might add, frankly, that I did not see any chance for betterment in Finnish-American relations so long as that kind of leadership continued.

(s. l.)  
A.A.B., Jr.

A-B: AAB:ES  
6/7/43

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ASSISTANT SECRETARY

MEMORANDUM

January 13, 1943

I began the day with the Secretary and Atherton. Schoenfeld, our Minister in Helsinki, is back and has been talking with the Secretary. As a result of this, and some other problems, the Secretary believes we should get closer to the Russians in all matters of governments-in-exile. The problem is how to establish closer contact. Atherton and I then adjourned to get up a memorandum. As I see it, this may be the opening towards a closer relationship with Russia, which I think is all to the good.

Sir Ronald Campbell came in; then a meeting of the Foreign Nationalities group.

Lunch with Schoenfeld. He gives a fascinating account of the Finnish position. He thinks the Finns may back out of the war, but not immediately. They claim, of course, not to have taken an active part in the summer campaign, but they have nevertheless tied up twenty-two Russian divisions which were badly needed elsewhere. He raised with me, too, the question of closer

relations

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relations with Russia, thinking that mere contact and continuity would help, as a starter. I think he is right.

Hook and a man named Burke came in, on a scheme to give a monopoly of the weighing of Cuban sugar we are buying to Burke's company. Nothing doing, so far as I am concerned.

Leslie Craven came in, to plead the cause of Yerex; I pointed out that he was really raising the entire problem of a change in air policy.

I asked Jacob Landau, of the Jewish Overseas News Agency, to come down and talk to me. I gave him a thumbnail sketch of my own ideas about the necessary course of political warfare in Europe, namely, that we should have to work with what we found, quite irrespective of whether they were the kind of people we liked, or not.

Landau went over the situation and he said that he was firmly in accord with the general line we had laid out. I told him that when we were doing what ought to be done we ought to be immune from the kind of personal attack which had prevailed during the North African business. He said he thought so, too, and would see that so far as his outfit was concerned this was maintained.

He

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He emphasized the chagrin of the Czechs at not being treated, as they thought, as well as the Poles and others. Specifically, they wanted their Legation raised to the status of Embassy.

Then Bergson came in, to discuss the horrible fate of the Jews -- and it is horrible, indeed. Our own reports show some hundreds of thousands massacred in Kaunas; with even the Gestapo executioner finally going mad, as a result.

A.A.B., Jr.

A-B:AAB:ES

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COPY FOR DIARY FILE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

*Memorandum of Conversation*

DATE:

January 18, 1943

SUBJECT: Finland's Jewish Policy

PARTICIPANTS: The Finnish Chargé d'Affaires a.i., Mr. Vahervuori;  
Mr. A. A. Berle, Jr.

COPIES TO: S, U, PA/D, Eu

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The Finnish Chargé came in to see me at his request.

In a previous conversation with him I inquired as to Finnish policy with regard to expulsion of Jews from Finland, a point on which there had been press comment here, and a point also made by the Poles. At that time the Chargé said he would give me a memorandum covering this subject.

He called today to present the attached memorandum. I said we were glad to have a statement of Finnish policy in this regard which reaffirms Finnish insistence on the right of asylum to Jews as well as to other refugees.

A.A.B., Jr.

Note:-

I am not sure that the memorandum is sufficiently definite to be satisfactory; but we did have the hope that our interest in the subject might tend to prevent the Finns from deporting refugees into Axis hands.

A.A.B., Jr.

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A-3 aa

LEGATION OF FINLAND  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

M E M O R A N D U M

On January 5th, 1943 Mr. Adolf Berle, Assistant Secretary of State, suggested to the Chargé d'Affaires a.i. of Finland that the latter may furnish him with certain information about the position of Jews in Finland.

Mr. Vahervuori had the occasion to present to Mr. Berle on January 18th the following facts:

Certain newspapers and other publications in the United States as well as abroad have lately contained allegations that the Jews in Finland were in danger of deportation to Germany or to German-occupied countries at the request of the German Government, that Jewish refugees in Finland were being held in prisons or in concentration camps, etc., etc.

These rumors and allegations are altogether false and without any foundation in fact. They can in most cases be outright characterized as deliberate hostile propaganda undertaken with the ultimate purpose of doing damage to Finland. However, it is to be noted that this propaganda as far as could be ascertained did not originate from the Finnish Jews nor from any other recognized Jewish community.

As far as the Jewish citizens of Finland are concerned, they enjoy all the rights and privileges guaranteed by the Constitution to every citizen of Finland regardless of race or creed, and, consequently, they cannot be deported to any foreign country. No change in the status of Jews has taken place nor been contemplated since the adoption of the present Constitution in 1919. A so-called "Jewish problem" does not even exist in Finland where the Jews, some 2,000 persons in all, are loyally taking part in the common defense of the country as well as in the discharge of other duties of citizenship.

Nearly 300 Central European Jewish refugees came to Finland some years ago, of which a considerable number emigrated in 1940 and 1941, chiefly to the United States,

and

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and the rest, about 150, remained in Finland. Most of them are living by themselves in different parts of the country. Only 29 able-bodied men without special occupations are for the duration of the war in accordance with the general law of conscription of labor of June 15th, 1939, employed by the Finnish authorities, as are Finnish citizens in the same position.

No considerations of race or religion have ever influenced the treatment accorded to the refugees or to any other people in Finland. The right of asylum of Jewish as well as of other refugees has always been and is being respected by the Finnish authorities provided the refugees themselves have not forfeited this right by criminal activity and have been legally convicted of such activity by competent tribunals. There have been only four such cases among the Jewish refugees in Finland.

January 18th, 1943.

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
ASSISTANT SECRETARY

January 20, 1943

MEMORANDUM

Mr. I. F. Stone came in to see me. He said he had picked up a story that, being anti-Semitic, I had opposed the sending of a Jew to North Africa. I told him there was nothing in it. I had pointed out that there was a Jewish problem there and if they were sending a Jew, it would be wise to send one who had a high degree of savoir-faire, and preferably someone who had had experience in navigating in troubled international waters. Stone said he accepted this, and would not publish the story.

He then said, however, that this and similar stories were coming out from certain responsible quarters in the Government and he thought I ought to do something about it. I told him I couldn't do very much unless somebody gave me some charges and specifications to work on. He advised a letter to Forrest Davis to find out something about this.

A.A.B., Jr.

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April 20th  
1943

MEMORANDUM

S - Mr. Secretary:  
A-1 - Mr. Long: (Copy direct)

There has been considerable discussion of possible measures to check the German massacre of Jews, and to salvage some of the Jews who may escape to Spain or Turkey.

The principal suggestions advanced are these:

(1) A threat by the United Nations, (or by Britain and the United States) that in respect of each massacre reported, they will select a German town, irrespective of military value, and completely destroy it.

Comment: This is dramatic, but apparently impractical. Air Corps officers with whom I have talked say they are using the maximum strength now on military objectives; that to divert any of it to mere reprisal destruction would simply slow up the work of winning the war. In addition, it puts us on a moral plane with the Germans themselves, which I think we should not wish to do.

(2) That the United Nations make a solemn declaration that they will take each and every one of these massacres into account in determining the period of occupation of Germany, when defeated, and in determining the terms of such occupation.

A variant of this is an indication that the populations which have been badly used will be permitted to have control in areas of Germany chiefly guilty of the massacres.

Comment: While there are objections to the above, the possibility of such a declaration

seems

seems to me worth considering. We have stated that we proposed to punish the guilty. This is merely an extension of that statement. It does indicate, however, that we shall hold the German people responsible in some measure for the barbarity of their government, I presume on the theory that they have tolerated and accepted the continuance of that government. There seems to be no real objection to this, since a mass protest by the German people to massacres of this kind could, in my judgment, force stoppage of the massacres.

If such a declaration were determined upon, it should mention not only the Jews but also the Poles, Czechs and Yugoslavs.

I should favor careful consideration of such a declaration.

(3) The prompt salvage of such Jews and other refugees as have been able to escape. These are chiefly comprised in groups which can trickle out of the Balkans into Turkey, and who may escape through the Pyrenees into Spain.

Comment: As to this project:

(a) It is probable that, if a declaration such as that suggested above, were made, some intimation could be included that more lenient treatment would be given to Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria if they protected these populations and facilitated their escape.

(b) The United States and Britain would have to provide transport to take these people from Spain or Turkey to a place of refuge. Such transport is extremely difficult to get. In this connection, if the Army contemplates action in the Eastern Mediterranean, the result would probably be to make transport even less available than it is now.

But so far as Turkey is concerned, I think arrangements could be made for transport

across

across Turkey to Syria or Lebanon over land, either by the railroad which runs from Istanbul to Aleppo, or in some other appropriate fashion. Conceivably, even Army trucks could be used.

The possibilities of over-land transport ought to be carefully explored.

(c) Consideration should be given to the possibility of a haven of refuge. The Jews in this country invariably push the cause of Palestine. The dangers in this of course are too well known to need discussing.

The suggestion has been made that Cirenaica (the hump of Libya next to Egypt) could be used for that purpose. A survey of that territory has been made by Colonel Hoskins, leading to the conclusion that something could be done. The bulk of the Italian population have been evacuated; the native population is not great; the area and possibilities are probably ample for the number of refugees which could be evacuated. The principal difficulty is that such an operation would probably be expensive; and that shipping would have to be provided from Syria to one of the ports in Cirenaica, presumably Bengasi. The condition of the port of Bengasi is bad, though probably good enough to take care of the limited traffic occasioned by refugees.

It would be possible, under the circumstances, to work out an arrangement with the British, setting aside specified parts of Cirenaica as military zones of refuge. This could be done probably by a simple Army order. A certain amount of supplies could be made available through the Middle East Supply Center. It is probable that a maximum of 100 thousand people might be taken care of in this fashion -- provided shipping were available to carry them, or land transport around the Mediterranean could be made available.

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The Conference at Bermuda might be instructed to set up a study group with power to examine this project in all its phases, and endeavor to work it out.

Care should be taken not to unduly excite hopes.

A.A.B., Jr.

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

DIARY COPY

DATE: June 22, 1943

SUBJECT: 1. Commission to try crimes against civilians;  
2. Palestine question

PARTICIPANTS: Dr. Nahum Goldman,  
Mr. A. A. Berle, Jr.

COPIES TO: S, U, EU, NE

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Dr. Goldman came in to see me, to raise two points.

First, he wanted to know whether the State Department could not now take the lead in getting the appointment and an announcement of the commission to try crimes against civilians -- with special reference to Germans who had committed atrocities in connection with the Jewish massacres.

I said that this matter was before the President and that I did not see that there was anything further the State Department could do.

Second, he said that they had been canvassing the matter of Palestine, in London. They were now convinced, from interviews with British officials, that Britain was prepared to abandon the doctrine of the White Paper -- which in any case closed Palestine to immigration beginning April next. He said that there was general agreement that if the United States would take joint responsibility this would ease matters greatly. He wondered whether we could not initiate a move to that effect.

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I said that I had always dealt with extreme frankness in this entire Jewish matter, and I wished to continue to do so. There were many elements to be considered in connection with any move by the United States to assume joint responsibility for Palestine -- a responsibility she had declined to assume in the days of President Wilson. But one of the most potent reasons was the simple fact that this Department had no right to assume responsibilities in Palestine -- or for that matter, elsewhere overseas -- until it was assured that the public opinion of the country and the Congress of the United States was prepared to go through with the obligations accepted. Assumption of joint responsibility meant pledging the United States to use men and money, and perhaps force, in that region. Only the Congress of the United States could give us the authority to make good on any responsibility assumed. Until this preliminary question was settled, it did not seem to me that we were in any shape to initiate such move.

I said I thought it better to speak very bluntly and give him exactly the position, rather than to leave him under any misconception. Quite irrespective of the personal feelings of any of us, the assumption of overseas responsibilities by the United States was a historic decision of such importance that it had to be most carefully considered, and done in the knowledge of full support by the country.

A.A.B., Jr.

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Copy for Diary

*Memorandum of Conversation*

DATE:

July 29, 1943

**SUBJECT:** Swiss Minister's observations on his recent trip to Switzerland; Position of Allies towards Switzerland.

**PARTICIPANTS:** The Swiss Minister, Mr. Charles Brugmann; Mr. A. A. Berle, Jr.

**COPIES TO:** S, U, A-A, PA/D, Ka

The Swiss Minister came in to see me at his request. He merely wished to establish contact after his trip to Switzerland. He chatted generally about conditions in Germany, saying that there was obviously a growing unhappiness on the part of the German people, but no immediate signs of revolt. The Swiss considered that they were nearer to war than ever, since if the fighting centered in the north of Italy, Swiss routes would become important.

He said great damage had resulted from Allied bombing in Germany, but this was offset somewhat by the fact that German coal deliveries from the Ruhr came in pretty regularly and that the transportation system seemed to be running about on schedule.

He was a little bitter about what he called the dual position of the Allies towards Switzerland. He said the political people seemed to recognize that Switzerland was doing well and making brave headway against Hitler. But the economic people treated them as though they were Allies of Hitler.

He mentioned the German trade negotiations as having been extremely difficult. The German negotiators kept

steadily

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steadily alluding to the fact that Hitler had a special hatred for Switzerland due, in part, to the fact that the Swiss had sheltered Jews, and brought this up by way of threat at many points in the negotiations.

A.A.B., Jr.

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