

Lash Papers

Jews and Refugees, 1945

Box 65
Folder 12

FDR: No Tears



"What were you doing when FDR died?" was a bullsession question many years after that afternoon of April 12, 1945, when the hushed word came over the radio that the president was dead, of a massive cerebral hemorrhage, in Warm Springs, Georgia. Every kid of my generation seemed to have a story to go with it, always told in sad, quiet tones; for those of us born in the depths of the Depression it was the first shattering public event. We had been too young to grasp the full meaning of Pearl Harbor, and anyway there was a martial air about that one, an innocent optimism, that made December 7, 1941 far more exciting than apocalyptic.

President Roosevelt—we never called him anything else—was the only president we had ever known, and at least where I grew up, in Passaic, N.J., he was as close to Diety as could be imagined. We did not believe he would die, however sick and prematurely old he looked in that last campaign of 1944. Until I got to college I don't believe I had ever heard him criticized, except by one or two of our grade school teachers, whom our parents assured us were "like that" because they came from New England, and were, of course, Gentiles. All the other Gentiles I knew, kids and parents alike, were for FDR, but that was different—they were not from New England.

The first time I ever heard a tough word about him was in my sophomore year at the University of Pennsylvania. A bunch of us were throwing the bull around one night when somebody—was it me?—asked the old party game question, as above: "Where were you when Roosevelt died?" My roommate, Henry Pascarella, of New Haven, said he was playing baseball and when the news hit he dropped his bat and ran over to the newspaper to pick up what he figured would be a big extra edition of the Register.

"I was a delivery boy," Henry said, "and I knew my ship was in. Terrific. I said to myself, I'll clean up on this one. And I did! I grabbed two armloads of papers and sold 'em out at double the price in an hour at the Telephone Company. Then I got a new load and went all day. Made enough for a week."

We were shocked, all of us. This was sacrilege. Didn't he care about the President?

"Are you kiddin'?" Henry said, as if he had heard it for the first

time. "We were Republicans, who cared about him?"

I was at the pet store, picking up some birdseed, when the radio announced the death. I ran all the way home and breathlessly told my grandmother the news. She broke down. "My God," she said, "what's going to happen to the Jews."

She was speaking of the Jews of Europe, and more particularly of her own family, who she still hoped, beyond hope, were alive in Lithuania. All through the war she wrote to them, every week, and on Sundays we would go to New York to ship them clothing. There were no answers, obviously, but we kept shipping and my grandma kept praying. And every Saturday, in the synagogue, our great Old Testament rabbi would rage from the pulpit, in Yiddish, about the destruction of our people. At the close of each service he would offer a prayer for President Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

If there was one preminent article of faith shared by most of the Jews of America during World War II it was this: Franklin D. Roosevelt was a friend of the Jews. It was a full-blooded received opinion that translated at the polls into an 80-90 percent Jewish vote for FDR in every election from 1936 through 1944.

I never so much as thought to question it—didn't his enemies call him Rosenfeld?—until my first year at the Yale Law School in 1955, when a classmate gave me a copy of Ben Hecht's autobiography, "A Child of The Century."

Hecht, whom I knew only to be a Hollywood screenwriter, turned out to have co-chairmaned a group I had never heard of, "The Emergency Committee to Save the Jews of Europe," from 1943-1945. His long, detailed account of FDR's obstructionism in that effort pulverized me.

"The humanitarian who snubbed a massacre," Hecht said of Roosevelt, and at first I simply didn't believe it. But there was too much in it to ignore, too many hard facts. For the next couple of years I haunted libraries and haunted everybody I knew with questions, demands, attacks—as the evidence piled up and I kept buttonholing people I may have become the world's hugest bore. At least I couldn't convince a soul, surely no Jews, and even years later a Jewish woman who had worked in the New Deal slapped my face in a New York steak house for suggesting that Roosevelt did not lift a finger to save the Jews of Europe."

Today, thirty years after Roosevelt's death, Hecht's story has been borne out, in spades, by historians, who have documented it with government papers, diaries and accounts of the participants.

As more archives are opened, the case against Roosevelt becomes more devastating. It is clear now that most, if not all, of European Jewry could have been saved from the limekilns had Franklin Roosevelt moved in their behalf.

He chose not to help and for whatever good it does I choose not to mourn his ghost.

American Historians in an Iconoclastic Mood at Annual Meeting

By ALDEN WHITMAN
Special to The New York Times

BOSTON, April 19—Viewing contemporary events and evaluating the nation's past, historians of the United States are in a markedly iconoclastic mood. Their strong skepticism and a willingness to topple old gods were reflected in scores of papers read and discussed at the 68th annual meeting of the Organization of American Historians, which concluded here today.

These historians, many of them in their 30's and 40's and many of them women, milling in the corridors of the Statler-Hilton Hotel, expressed anxiety over job prospects in a declining market for their profession.

With only 30 posted openings for college and university positions and some 600 Ph.D.'s coming onto the labor market this year alone, Prof. Frank Reidel of Harvard, the incoming president of the group, pledged to devote his one year-term to finding jobs in industries and on public payrolls for these able, brilliant, trained young historians.

Old Attitudes Questioned

Despite the gloomy employment outlook, 2,400 college and university teachers, writers and researchers of American history crowded more than 50 panels and seminars that questioned hitherto generally accepted attitudes about such subjects as foreign policy and Presidential power, the role of women in the country's history and the impact of the American Revolution.

The notion that American policy in the Middle East was founded on a reasoned assessment of national interest was

challenged in separate panels. Both Prof. Selig Adler of the State University of New York at Buffalo and Prof. Mark Lytle of Bard College argued that the narrow commercial concerns of American oil companies dominated the formation of policy toward the Arab countries in the nineteen-thirties.

Professor Adler contended that the demands of the oil companies for favorable treatment of the Arabs also coincided with anti-Zionist prejudices in the State Department. One result, he said, was that the United States declined to put pressure on Britain to open Palestine to large-scale European Jewish immigration in the early years of World War II, "when it would have been possible to save thousands of Jews later killed in Nazi concentration camps."

Pressure on Iran Cited

During the war, according to Professor Lytle, the United States put pressure on Iran to grant oil concessions to American companies as part of a policy to wrest influence from British interests and to counter suspected Soviet interest in the rich Iranian oil fields. A result of this policy, Professor Lytle said, was to make United States opinion a factor in Iran's internal politics.

Developing the theme of the cold war as American misreading of Soviet intentions, Prof. John F. Zeunger of the Worcester Polytechnic Institute argued that Walter Bedell Smith, United States Ambassador to Moscow in the crucial opening years of Soviet-American confrontation, possessed a closed military mind. General Smith, he said, urged on Washington a stance of "an open hand and a closed fist" that the Soviet

Union interpreted as American intransigence.

Other historians, including Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. of the City University of New York, said the cold war mentality in American leaders, which saw the United States constantly menaced in the world by Soviet expansionism, provided an excuse for undesirable accretions of Presidential power at the expense of Congress.

"All the Presidents for the last 30 years lied to the public about threats to the national

security—from Truman to Eisenhower to Kennedy to Johnson to Nixon," Prof. Alfred Kelley of Wayne State University asserted.

In other challenges to orthodoxy, historians said that new evidence on the role of women in shaping American life would require a rewriting of traditional accounts of the 19th century. As rewritten, they said, the history of this era would show that women had given a basic impulse to a variety of reform movements from agitation for

abolition of slavery to changes in family relationships.

Although historians in general appeared eager to look behind official pronouncements and traditional political history there was little disposition to accept any so-called radical reinterpretation of the American past. A few professed ultra-leftist historians were present but apart from decrying what they said was an absence of "anti-bourgeois" historians on the program they offered no challenge.

January 2, 1975

Dr. Sol Slonim
1121 University Blvd. W.
Silver Springs, Md. 20902

Dear Dr. Slonim:

I found the Stephen Wise letter to which you refer in the papers of Eleanor Roosevelt at Hyde Park. It was attached to a letter that she sent to Dr. Wise, dated October 8, 1945. Dr. Wise had written Mrs. Roosevelt, October 5, saying that Judge Froskauer was quoting President Roosevelt as having deprecated to him what he had told Dr. Wise about a Jewish state. Dr. Wise hoped Mrs. Roosevelt might be able to clarify the situation and to bolster his account of what the President had said to him about his meeting with Ibn Saud sent her his letter to Weizmann at the time. It was a four and half page single-spaced, typewritten letter.

I should think you would be able to see the exchange at the Roosevelt Library at Hyde Park.

Sincerely,

Dr. Sol Slonim
1121 University Boulevard West
Silver Spring, Maryland 20902
December 23, 1974

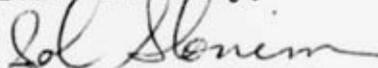
Mr. Joseph P. Lash
c/o W. W. Norton and Company, Inc.
55 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10003

Dear Mr. Lash:

I am writing to you in connection with your book Eleanor: The Years Alone. On pp. 104-105, you relate that Rabbi Wise met with FDR, and in a letter from Dr. Wise to Chaim Weizmann the former reported on the conversation as follows: "I have had a failure, etc." The footnote is numbered 13 and the citation reads: "Letter from Stephen S. Wise to Chaim Weizmann, March 21, 1945". The location of this letter is however not indicated. I would very much appreciate if you could give me further information about this letter, most particularly where I could see the original.

By way of introduction I would like to indicate that I am currently on sabbatical leave from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem doing research under a Ford Foundation grant on the topic of "The Entrance of the U. S. into the Middle East 1939-1949".

Yours sincerely,


Sol Slonim

October 8, 1945

Dear Rabbi Wise:

I am horrified at Mr. Rosenblatt's letter but I am not quite certain what you want me to do, since he asked you to keep his letter confidential.

Would you like me to write to Judge Proskauer that I have been hearing rumors of things which he has quoted my husband as saying and that I would like to make sure that he is not being misunderstood?

My daughter and I both know exactly what he said on his return from the Kulta trip and what has given Judge Proskauer an erroneous impression. We have heard him confide enough to be quite sure of what he meant to convey.

Very sincerely yours,

1941
1941
1941

The President felt that he had made a complete failure with Ibn Saud because he had not been able to persuade him to allow unlimited immigration into Palestine. He said that the old man insisted that as long as he lived he did not want a change in the Arab way of life, that he knew and liked the Jews who grew up in his part of the world, that both races were semitic and understood each other, but that he feared the Jews from the big cities like New York, London and Berlin would change the way of life of the area and he wanted none of it.

The President felt that the opposition was so firm that it would mean an uprising among the Arabs against the Jews if unlimited immigration were allowed, but he added that Ibn Saud was a very old man, had been wounded a number of times and probably would not live many years. He has somewhere around 42 sons and my husband felt that negotiations could begin again whenever he died. He also felt that there could be increased immigration and perhaps very much larger temporary quarters but like so many things, I think he took the long view that in the end one can accomplish one's objective even if for a short time it seemed difficult. He felt it could be done without Arab opposition employment of actual uprising.

If you want to use this you may do so.

Free Synagogue
NEW YORK

Synagogue House
40 WEST 68 STREET
NEW YORK 19, N. Y.

ORIGINAL RETAINED FOR PRESERVATION

October 5, 1945

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt
29 Washington Square West
New York, N. Y.

GSA, 1945
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NY 100-104500-100000
NY 100-104500-100000

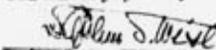
Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

I feel I owe it to you and to the memory of the President to send you this letter. It is such a base calumny of President Roosevelt. Throughout the San Francisco Conference Judge Frenkauer said to people - Christians as well as Jews - that he had seen President Roosevelt a few days after I did in April and that the President had said these things to him, which are here quoted; and that when Judge Frenkauer asked the President - "Why do you encourage Stephen Wise and talk about a Jewish State" -, the President's reply was - "I have got to say these things because I don't want to let a friend down". You will note what Mr. Rosenblatt writes in the last lines of the first page; that the President had changed his mind after Yalta. It seems to me such a base thing to do that I feel the time may come when you will have to deal with people like him and with the gentleman from the Near East, who falsely quoted the President and tried to make it appear that the President had made certain promises to Ibn Saud.

I am sorry to burden you with this wretched business. I cannot help feeling, however, that it might have been avoided if some of those near to President Roosevelt, like Judge Rosenman, had not insisted upon his seeing Frenkauer, when I knew the President had long held in utter detestation.

With most cordial greeting,

Faithfully yours,



Stephen S. Wise

SS:efe
Enc.

ORIGINAL RETIRED FOR PRESERVATION

Office of Dr. Wise
40 West 68th Street
New York 23, N.Y.

March 21, 1945

Dr. Wise
40 West 68th Street
New York 23, N.Y.

Dear Chairman:

Having just learned from Meyer that D. T. is about to leave for London, I hasten to send you a report of my recent conversation with the Chief.

When I saw him just before he left, and he told me that in connection with our hopes he was arranging to see Ibn Saud and Farouk and Selassie, I urged that he see you. He did not say he would not or could not, but I could feel that he felt it would not be fitting because of your nominal lack of majesty. I am sure that was in his mind.

I saw him again last Friday, March 16, when we had a very full talk together. I began by congratulating him upon a gloriously successful mission. Whereupon his mournful comment was, "I have had a failure. The one failure of my mission was with Ibn Saud. Everything went well, but not that, and I arranged the whole meeting with him for the sake of your cause." He told me very fully -- I cannot write it out at this time -- the substance of his four-hour conversation with Ibn Saud. The underlings in the State Department -- with or without the help of Hull, apparently with the final help of Sumner Welles and, it may be, with the help of your Prime Minister -- did a very good job in magnifying I.S. in the President's eyes. He said, "I tried to approach the Jewish question a number of times. Every time I mentioned the Jews he would shrink and give me some such answer as this -- 'I am too old to understand new ideas!' When, for example, the President began to tell him about what we have done for Palestine through irrigation and the planting of trees, Ibn Saud's answer was, 'My people don't like trees; they are desert dwellers. And we have water enough without irrigation!' The Chief added, 'I have never so completely failed to make an impact upon a man's mind as in his case.'" When the Chief began to speak well of Jews, I.S. replied, "Yes, the native Jews of Palestine are good, but the Jews of London, New York, Moscow....." He added that Churchill had spent the next day with I.S., and again made no impression. It may have been his own fault, because he got out to breakfast the old man for two hours, after which he changed his tack and was

Dr. Chaim Weizmann
March 21, 1945

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sweet as honey with him, but nothing availed.

We then settled down to a discussion of I.S., I insisting that he was exaggerating the place of I.S. in the Arab world, he insisting that all the others gave him their allegiance. I tried to explain to him why that was not true, and then he spoke of the army of I.S. -- 700,000 men. Sakhni, who is here, said there are not 300,000 men bearing his arms -- and what an army!

Two things are certain -- one, that he saw I.S. for our sake; and two, that he is under the lamentable misconception that all that I.S. has to do is to unite the armies of the Arab states, and he could destroy the Jewish people of Palestine! I told him that is not true; that two or three hundred thousand men in Palestine could take care of Palestine; that the Arabs dreaded lead and steel; and that "my young fellow Jews are ready to give their lives in order to keep and build up Palestine as their National Home!" Whereupon he expressed surprise that I, a religiousist, should talk in the terms of hundreds of thousands of men giving up their lives. I could only answer that "I am sure this would be their choice, and they have the right to choose not to come under an Arab-Hitler regime as a minority, instead at last of being a clear majority in their ancient and reborn land." I may come back to I.S. before this letter goes off.

My earliest questions elicited the following -- one, that there was no change as far as W.C. was concerned with regard to Zionist plans. And when I asked him whether he was not mistaken with regard to the rumor which he repeated to me before he left about Stalin being disaffected, he said I was mistaken, that there is nothing in that rumor; that Stalin is all right and he is with us.

In the course of the discussion of I.S. and Farouk, I could not help remarking how sad it was that these countries -- Iraq, which had been hostile; Egypt, which had been painfully neutral -- should be free to go to San Francisco and represent their people, whereas as far as I knew no plans had been made looking to the presentation of the Jewish case. The President listened carefully as I added, "Dr. Weizmann is pre-eminently the man to present the case of the Jewish people at San Francisco." He nodded assent, and then, curiously enough, he added, "Would it not be better to have a native Palestinian, a person who represents (and here he used the term, 'the Jewish Nation' - the 'Jewish State')?" I could not help asking,

Dr. Chaim Weizmann
March 21, 1946

WHA, BANG
Columbia University
New York, N.Y.

"Do you mean a man like David Ben Gurion, the Chairman of the Executive of the Jewish Agency for Palestine?" "Yes, I do!" I quickly added, "But of course Dr. Weizmann, though not a native Palestinian, does represent as no other living person does the Jewish people and their hope for the Jewish State." And I added that if a Palestinian must present the case in part, I presumed both Dr. Weizmann and a Palestinian could present our case. In order to clinch matters, I said to him, "I am happy about your agreement, and I take it for granted I may discuss this as soon as I can arrange a meeting with Ed." Meaning, of course, the Secretary of State. He authorized me to do that, and I may add a copy of a letter which I have this day addressed to Stettinius who, I must add, is very friendly, though he was very much irritated, and in some degree alienated, by the Silver tactics in Washington during December and January.

In the course of the conversation I told him of the pitiable case of these twelve hundred Jewish exiles who, after finally being released from Bergenbelsen, were permitted to remain for a little time in Switzerland; and when we heard that there was danger of their being shipped to Algiers, Goldmann Goldstein, Greenberg, Shulman, and I had a conference with Lord Halifax, and made clear to him the injustice and the wrong of sending these people to Algiers instead of to Palestine. "You, of course, know about this, and yet to Algiers they went instead of to Palestine." I added, "The doors of Palestine must be opened and kept open to Jewish immigration and resettlement!" Thereupon he said, "I have discussed the matter with U.C., and he says 'don't talk about the White Paper or regulations; but we will let the Jews come in.'" Thereupon I added, "It is very fine for U.C. to say that, but some underlings of the Colonial Office and of the Palestine Government will see to it that U.C.'s wish be contravened!"

Nothing

As a result of this moment of our talk, we here are preparing a memo for the President and for the State Department, dealing sternly with the whole question of immigration. I hope that by the end of the week it will be in readiness, and that we shall be able to send it to you through George B. I dare say you have seen U.C., but if you have not you ought to see him at once, and tell him how happy you and we are over his work to the President, that Jewish immigration to Palestine must be continued, and that the doors will be left open. Your and our Chiefs ought to be asked to make a joint statement on that, unless U.C. is prepared to take his own, with the cabinet.

Mr. Chaim Weizmann
March 21, 1945

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Mr. Weizmann
1000 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C.

or unspoken assent of the President.

Least and most important thing of all, after telling me again and again of his failure with I.S., and describing in detail the manner in which he had sought to impact upon the old man, of whom the President said rather hopefully "He is seventy-five years old, and has swollen ankles, so that perhaps we had better wait until he goes!" And when I instantly demurred, and said,—"We cannot wait; a decision must be taken, and the decision must be announced at the earliest possible moment!"—the President said this with a great deal of emphasis:—"I thought of another way of dealing with the problem. Since we cannot move I.S., and since the other Arab chiefs will go along with him, I have been thinking about the plan of our putting the case up to the first meeting of the Council of the United Nations, whenever it meets," — indicating that the meeting would be relatively soon, within a few months after San Francisco. I did not feel I had the right to say what I was strongly tempted to say — "That would mean putting things off, and the Jewish people cannot wait; and what is more, the Jews of Palestine will refuse to wait!" But my almost simultaneous thought was that there was involved here the necessity for making a decision which I had no right to make at that moment, but the decision could only be reached by the leaders of the Zionist movement, including particularly yourself and your associates of the Executive, and that there must be the greatest measure of heart-searching and exploration before we gave our reply to this proposal.

I believe the President is dead in earnest about this, and that if we were to agree with him, he would feel that he and Churchill must put it up to their associates and urge the imposition of a Jewish State on I.S. and his associates by the Council of the United Nations. But I see difficulties. The possibility is of a very real postponement, and that such plan might easily play into the hands of the Arab chiefs and of our enemies in American Jewish life, in Anglo-Jewish life, etc. The question is one that ought to be decided without delay, for the President will expect to have our reaction to his proposal. We may send him a tentative reply within the next few days indicating that no decision by me or by any one of us should be reached, save after fullest consultation with you and your associates.

4/12/45

Dr. Chaim Weizmann
March 21 1945

Summing it all up, the President remains our friend as much as ever. I had in my pocket the statement which I submitted to the President, and which he initialed. He assented to the proposition of the Jewish case. He was fairly satisfactory on immigration, provided H.C. meant what he said to the President. And finally, he has an alternative ~~plan~~, though not too likely, plan in connection with the Council of the United Nations, for our sake and for our benefit.

I may add a postscript to this, giving you some further details of the conversation. I need hardly say to you that after H.C. the bearer of this note, and you have read it, it ought to be destroyed and not left in the records nor shared with anyone.

With deepest affection, dear Chaim,

Very truly yours,
Benjamin Franklin

Ever yours,

BNW:ch

March 16, 1945

Dear Mr. Litner:

Mr. Litner
Foreign Office Library
London, England

You seem in no way to understand the difficulties about Palestine. Palestine is not a land cut off from the rest of the world. It is a land surrounded on all sides by lands owned by the Arabs. The President is entirely sympathetic to the Jewish people's desire for a homeland. He is also very understanding of the fact that while many of the Jewish people, when the war is over, will want to return to the countries from which they have been driven if it is safe to do so, there will be some Jewish people who will need to resettle in some other lands.

Palestine is their homeland and because of its history, it has a religious meaning to them, but unfortunately it also has a religious meaning to the Arabs.

With all the good will in the world, if the Arabs are not at least friendly to an increase in the Jewish population in Palestine beyond the normal increase coming to the people already there, then it means that other nations of the world have to by military force guarantee the protection of Palestine. The question is not one which Palestine, nor the United States nor Great Britain alone can settle. It has to be taken up by the United Nations.

100

There is apparently no difficulty about the present population in Palestine. There is, however, some difficulty about bringing in a great many more refugees. These questions are not as easily solved as you seem to think.

There are some Jewish people who have said that they would not need other nations to fight for them because they would fight for their own homeland, but the force of numbers against them might mean a massacre of everyone now in Palestine if anything is done which is contrary to the Arabs' desires.

This is a question probably for slow agreement, for negotiation, perhaps for finding other parts of the world for some of the people who now think they want to go to Palestine, but it is not a question which can be settled off-hand by a few individuals.

Sincerely yours, WSA, HANS
FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT LIBRARY,
HOLLYWOOD, CALIF.

Mrs. J. Litner (Erwin)
455 North Soto Street
Los Angeles, 33, California

H.

ER 70 1945 refugees

2/8 memo to MCT "Mr. Pickett called to say that there was trouble in the camp at Oswego and he hopes that Mrs. R can see the administrator Mr. Joseph Smart and Mrs. Marjorie Schauffler some time on Friday."

in Morgenthau folder ltr from Wolf at camp saying the refugees yearned for freedom - and HMjr.'s reply that conditions under which Congress permitted the 1000 to be brot from Italy was that they wd stay in the camp and then after the war be returned to their homelands..

a "Mrs. Herman De Wetter of Bklyn wrote as one whose ancestors helped found this country and who although "not of their race" felt a profound sympathy for the refugees at Oswego "They are bowed down by a sense of captivity...The question is, how to bring about a change of heart in Congress, who 'magnanimously' permitted these thousand, half-starved Jews to be saved from slow death...They have signed a document promising not to seek admission as citizens to this country of ours...I wd think that some method cd be found to release these people as temporary guests, without violating the laws..."

2/19 Confidential "We are trying to find what can be done without asking Congress. Little can be done with Congress, I fear."

ER - Jews- DPS - Helen Waren - 2

Night ltr fro Helen Waren Aug. 18, 1947 - you are aware that 3 Brit. ships with some 4500 Jewish immigrants who had been deported from Palestine after ~~landing there~~ reaching there o EXODUS are still lying off Port de Bouc in French southern coast...French govt has agreed to receive them, but will not force them to land and refugees determined not to return to European charnel house - 35 babies have been born aboard these ships - badly fed by Brit. - refugees determined to uphold their rt to a life in a land of their own - she shld raise her voice WR wrote on this but check with columns - "I think they could stay in France & wld do better to land at once."

ER 100 1945 Jews

3/14 Helen Mahagan asked her to see Peter H. Bergson, Chairman of the Hebrew Cttee of Nat'l Liberation. "Mr. Bergson wants to talk to you about the failure to include persecution of the Hebrews as a war crime."

MCT told her ER saw Bergson on 3/17 at 12 for half an hour.

she saw P. Ole Stenberg of Fredrick Leysen & sent material to FDR 4/12/45 - for a Jewish settlement in Austria

a batch of material from Dr. I. N. Steinberg who had seen her a few days earlier on behalf of the Freeland League. He wrote in his ltr sending the material "I was particularly glad to find that you also see no conflict between our aims for a non-political settlement in Australia and the building of a Jewish national Home in Palestine."
she sent this down with memo "This man came to see me."

^{sent}
E R Cms. Box 11 - Home + FDR m
by hand

ER - Jews-DPs-Palestine - Helen Waren

9/29/45 ltr from Helen Waren who described herself as a successful actress who a yr earlie had lef the B'wat hit "The Searching Wind" to go overseas to do shows at hospitals, ft areas, etc. her "frimmost journey was through the 3rd Army sector in Germany after V-Day." "I have been secretly aiding the Jews who are fleeing for the second time in WWII (I confess this to you because I feel that their miserab~~e~~ plight should be known and immediately aided..." wants to see ER and tell her

on ltr that she shld come in for half and hour - and then on back "I can do little to help tho I will gladly see you. Here on Sat at 5:30 - But write it out & I'll get it to Pres. Truman."

10/14/45 Helen Waren - she had not been able to resume an old way of life "the tones I tred talked to me of horror, I ooked into eyes for a fleeting momenet that haunted me night after night, the smell of flesh in ~~stink~~ rotting clothes I remember~~d~~ suddenly in a fragratn valley..." explained she had not gotten ER's wife giving her 1/2 an hour "and I blithely imposed on you for I am shamed to think how long..."

10/22/45 WI was so deeply interested in all that u had to say that I completely forgot the time./ I have talked to severa; pf the young men who have just come back from Germany and they all feel that if u wd write a complete report, if u have the time to do this, it wd be very help ful./I u have the time to do this and u will send it to me, I shall see that it gets to the proper hands."

sent her report Nov. 6 "Sent the President, copy to Henry M. Gen. Marshall" also gave it to Mrs. Levy.

she played the leading role i overseas production of TEN LITTLE INDIANS reprd emoralization of troops now that they had nothing to do - many sentenced for rape on simple accusation of German girls "as well as witnesses who were very often later idntried as SS men." "The purpose of most of the men seemed to be getting liquor, staying drunk as per manently as possible and fraternizing with the German women."

"During the entire time I found the most appalling and deplorable conditions among the displaced Jews in our Amer. Zone/ So intolerable were the camp conditions that I came across many Jews wankering aimlessly and hopelessly in the treet. In fact, I found WWIIa, a war in which

Jews were fighting desperately for the last vestiges of life left to them, and a war in which I was forced by my conscience to the extent of (1) aiding Jews in getting across the border to Italy where they could contact the Palestinian troops for succor and possible passage to Palestine, (2) fighting to secure food for them from every available source. (3) exhorting Amer. Jewish army officers into lending whatever aid they could, legal or otherwise."

"Jews who were fleeing systematic mass murders of Jews now taking place in Poland, Rumania, Ukraina.. many who had been collaborationists and were afraid the Jews would turn them in to the Russians gave case histories -

"The most shattering thing about the camps (in which the Jewish boys now found themselves) are not so much their physical discomforts, but the type of inmate with whom the Jew is forced to live. Many former SS men, Gestapo, Nazi party members, Polish voluntary labor..." camp overseers often these same "fascist rats." "All over Europe I found the same heartrending plea. 'We want to go to Palestine — we want to be among Jews...'"

German girls secretaries employed by army - harassed the Jews there seemed to be a well-organized Nazi underground - with a propaganda line designed to split the Allies - play on anti-semitic feelings "We cannot understand why you fought a war for the Jews...Of course our men in their terribly demoralized and restless position are very easy prey for the German girls and their propaganda...What is lacking in Germany today is an enforced, educational and orientation program for our soldiers as well as a hard-headed, cold, logical and reasonable plan for German re-education and rehabilitation."

5/31/47 to Dear Mr. Lovett: Miss Helen Warren was with one of the USO units in Germany a short while ago. She became so worried over the displaced people, particularly the Jewish people drifting back from Poland into Germany, that last year she went back and went to Palestine//Miss W. tells me there are some people from Pal. here now and she is most anxious that they have a chance to tell their story to some one fairly high up in the State Dept. I wonder if you would be willing to see them & listen to them. I have no idea whether what they have to say would shed any light on the situation or not, but I have always felt that people should be heard."

1945 -

EB - 1. dgs meet after lunch on FDR's final program -

Wise letters to key men for reorg FDR - journal at the end of each week
Said - re final budget - FDR on Churchill's attitude -
journal White House - the said, any -

Wise - contacted pretty it got a 11 can be

sum up Wise's attitude -

Just Truman's new FDR letter - future term a letter &
first idea of budget = that he would not move.

3-16-45 - EB on FDR's attitude & his own - + then later on.

3-19-45 TWL letter to EB re D. I. Stenberg & Friedel Hegu.

3-30-45 - the red London's talk on Snowden - not for of Betty H. Platt

the new Bible Study, Friedel Hegu - not attend FDR 4/1/45 E

light of FDR's plan - & Tule - Carl / no effort with just that time -
Platt

TWL to WAF. 5-22-45 My Gray & Dickson

When Warren report on conditions in dgs Camp - Paris,

Archie & Jim (cc) / Jim agreed at publication of FDR's
conclusion with the said. largely 11/12/45

February 21, 1945

100
GSA, 1945
Franklin D. Roosevelt Library
Washington, D.C.

Dear Adele:

Someone in Walter Reed Hospital
asked me what had happened to the
refugees in Santo Domingo.

I wonder if you could send me
the latest information on them and I
will send it to the young men.

Affectionately,

0

Mrs. David Levy
300 Park Ave. NYC

V A. [unclear]

Mrs. DAVID M. LEVY
205 PARK AVENUE
New York 22, N.Y.

March 6, 1945.

My dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

Upon my return from New Orleans, I found this report of the project at Santo Domingo, which has been prepared by Dr. Maurice Hexter. Dr. Hexter was sent there by the Agro-Joint to make a study of the situation. As you may remember, Dr. Levy and I were to go with him, but I got ill on the plane and never did get further than Miami.

I think I am correct in stating that at the time he visited Santo Domingo, he felt that although it was far from ideal and would never make an outstandingly good colonization project, it had certain values even beyond the primary one of providing a haven for persecuted peoples. He felt that Santo Domingo might be a good training ground -- a sort of way station where refugees could come on their way to other colonies.

If there is any other information you wish, I will be glad to get it for you.

Fondly,

Adel

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

AMERICAN JEWISH
JOINT AGRICULTURAL CORPORATION
(AGRO-JOINT)

270 MADISON AVENUE, NEW YORK 14, N. Y.

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JAMES N. ROSENBERG, *Executive Director*
EVELYN M. MOHRITZ, *Treasurer*
HARRY D. HIEFL, *Secretary*

February 26th, 1945

Mrs. David M. Levy,
300 Park Avenue,
New York City.

Dear Mrs. Levy,

In response to the telephone message I received for information about the Dominican project, I am glad to tell you that the project has, I think, been going forward in the last fifteen months since I was there. As you know, upon my return I made some recommendations for serious change in administration, in administrative procedure, and in program. The Joint Distribution Committee acted favorably on all my recommendations, and only last week I had two conferences with two men who have just come from the Dominican Republic -- one of them I had borrowed from Palestine where he acquired a great deal of knowledge and experience in colonization, and the other gentleman has been with us for many years in the Dominican Republic and prior thereto with the J.D.C. in Europe.

The agricultural settlers have let their roots sink more deeply into the Dominican soil in these past fifteen months, and we are now at the last stages of consolidating their holdings. Much remained to be done when I was in the Dominican Republic, and we are now in the process of giving them the balance which their holding requires. The difficulties have been unusually severe by reason of the shortages occasioned by the war and the difficulties of transportation. We have enjoyed the warm and hospitable support of the Embassy in the Dominican Republic and of our own State Department in Washington. Without that support we could not have gotten as far as we have. In addition, while the Generalissimo and some of his close advisers are rather disappointed that we have not brought more settlers into the Republic, they have been very cooperative. The settlers are producing the finest butter in the Dominican Republic, and as a matter of fact could dispose of much more than they put on the market. Difficulties have been immense by reason of the distances which the colony is located from the metropolis, and the fact that many of them are still without their wives, children and friends.

You will recollect that one of the recommendations I made upon my return was the separation of the administration of those men and women who could not be settled out as colonists. I am delighted to tell you that in that area we have made immense strides, and from a feeling of dependency which all of them had when I was absent, I gather from the reports -- and I think these reports are reliable -- that there is now a desire for independence which has been instilled into them by the men I picked to do that work.

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EVELYN M. MORRISSEY, *Treasurer*
MARRY D. BIELE, *Secretary*

Mrs. David M. Levy

February 26th, 1945

page #2

I think that we have done about as well as the situation permits us to do during these trying times of war. The men and women and children there have had a lovely haven from their persecutions. I would not wish you, however, to think that I am satisfied with the situation. As you know, the sex ratio was unfortunate from the very beginning, and that has created many problems for us. We have tried to redress that imbalance, but again we are faced with the difficulties of travel during war.

I hope to get to the Dominican Republic some time before the summer or in the early summer. My invitation to you and David still stands.

If Mrs. Roosevelt should want further information, if she will drop you a line, I will be glad to amplify this statement in any way she requests.

Sincerely yours,



Maurice B. Hexter
President

The only group that I have some hope that Congress will special consider - in the situation that is being engaged at the present time.

Everyone in the Italian internment camps brought over here know that these conditions were. Of course, they may have hoped they would be moderated and they may not have realized they would be here so long, not how painful it would be surrounded by freedom, to be kept in captivity but, nevertheless, I am afraid there is very little we can do to change the situation because Congress didn't really refuse to do anything for any other refugees and we do not know when we may need to ask them for help in some other situation.

Because of our immigration laws, the President had to issue orders in his message asking that these refugees be allowed to enter this country, and they would be kept in camp together and that they would be returned as soon as possible to the lands of their origin. Congress would consider it as an act of bad faith on the President's part if he were now to make any request changing those original conditions.

The situation at camps is sad, but unfortunately there is really not very much that can be done about it except to urge people who are the good people in camps and the neighborhood, to make life as pleasant as it can be made for the refugees.

Dear Mr. Godfrey:
I am writing you in the hope that you will be able to help me in some way.

February 21, 1945.

201

-2-

The whole thing seems perfectly
silly to me but we have to realize that
people in war time are not logical and
Congress acts in the way that they think
people at home want them to act.

Very sincerely yours,

Wm. H. Hall
Franklin D. Roosevelt
Hyattsville, Md.

ORIGINAL RETIRED FOR PRESERVATION

Wm. H. Hall
Franklin D. Roosevelt
Hyattsville, Md.

March 12, 1945.

Dear Dr. Ernst:

I realize your position and I understand how you feel. Before you were permitted to come to this country the President, in order to get Congress to pass the Act, had to agree that the people brought in under special arrangements, should stay in one place and then return to their own countries. You were all informed of this before you came.

Congress alone can make a change. Some of us hope that Congress may be induced to do so and we are glad that a number of people are coming to realize how hard it is for you and what difficulties you are under. We would like very much to see you allowed to take part in the life of our country but what Congress can be induced to do, I do not know. The President can not ask Congress to change because it might prevent his being able to induce Congress to let other people in on a similar agreement and might mean there would be no chance to save the lives of other refugees. I think you will have to have patience and hope that present conditions may be improved.

I am writing this to you in confidence and not for publication because too much agitation might hurt rather than help.

Very sincerely yours,

Dr. Arthur Ernst
Emergency Refugee Shelter
East Ontario
Genoa, New York.

* David Dubinsky,
Treasurer
Jewish Labor Committee
175 E Broadway, N.Y.

March 26, 1945

100

Dear Mr. Held:

GEA. 1488
Franklin D. Roosevelt Library
Hyde Park, N. Y.

I am very much interested to hear of the exhibition which the Jewish Labor Committee is planning for April 19.

The unspeakable atrocities perpetrated by the Nazis against the Jews and their suffering has horrified the whole civilized world. Their courage, under terror and enslavement has won the admiration of the world, and all civilized people will lend every effort in the future to prevent any recurrence of such evil.

There is hope now with victory in sight for those who have suffered and those who still suffer. These unfortunate victims of Nazi cruelty will need help and I feel sure every decent human being will do his utmost.

Sincerely yours,

Mr. Adolph Held

Chairman

* Jewish Labor Committee
175 East Broadway
New York, N. Y.

O/h

ORIGINAL RETIRED FOR PRESERVATION

March 30, 1945

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GRS, 1945
Franklin D. Roosevelt Library
Hyde Park, N. Y.

My dear Dr. Lenkin:

Betty
X Mrs. Hight gave me the copy
of your book and I want to thank you
so much for it. It is most interesting
and I am glad to have a copy.

Very sincerely yours,

Dr. Rafael Lenkin
Hotel Harrington
Washington, D.C.

ORIGINAL RETIRED FOR PRESERVATION

DD

1739 Eye St., N.W.
Washington 6, D.C.
March 14, 1945

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt —

I thought you might possibly be interested in the accompanying tome. I've had extensive discussions with the author and apparently numerous people have become interested in his genocide theory — Josephus Daniels — Frank Graham — Eugene Myer, among others.

GA, 1945
Franklin D. Roosevelt Library
Hyde Park, N. Y.

I've attempted to sort out the parts of the book in which you might be most interested. Chapter II on Genocide is an excellent start — I think in general public reception of figures on atrocities and German mass murder has dulled — 50,000 or 500,000 people done to death no longer really registers on the individual mind — that is why I found the flat statements — the regulations establishing the genocide policy, so interesting.

The laws & decrees incorporated in this volume make incredible reading — take a look at p. 504 on Danish & Norwegian mothers; p. 601 on sheltering Jews; p. 441 on changing names.

As far as I know Mr. Lemkin's is the first collection & compilation of these statutes & I think you'll enjoy skimming the book even if you haven't the time to go through it thoroughly.

The attached biographical sketch on the author I got from a friend here and I'm enclosing several reviews of the book which are highly laudatory. Mr. Lemkin has been writing a series of articles

for the "Nation" the past several weeks.

I wanted to thank you for sending on word from Charles Parsell that he was shipping John some candy and cigarettes. I've written him to thank him.

My wonderful Jonathan won himself 10,000 francs in a poker game. I'm very proud of him even though he couldn't beat you at pin. That still rankles - he'd never been beaten at cards by a woman before - I always let him win! - except occasionally.

Incidentally, John wrote that the boys got a bang out of the President's talk after Yalta. It was short - waved to France and apparently made a hit with the boys. It was a damn good speech. The French families in John's area were somewhat upset - they are perpetually upset these days over the slightest imagined rebuff to France, John writes. He says they are in worse shape mentally than the Germans - touchy as hell.

Affectionately,
Betty Hight

Dr. Rafael Lemkin
1710 Hamilton
Wash. D.C.

~~Dear~~

Wrote Dr. Lemkin and Charles for his trip

made in testing. - All of them
to give some of being very good
wrote on 10 27th at 7:15