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MS-4787: Abba Hillel Silver Papers, 1902-1989.

Series I: General Correspondence, 1914-1969, undated.

Sub-series A: Alphabetical, 1914-1965, undated.

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American Zionist Emergency Council, Roosevelt, Franklin D.,
1944.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt authorized Dr. Stephen S. Wise and Dr. Abba Hillel Silver, on March 9, 1944, to issue the following statement:

"The President authorized us to say that the American government has never given its approval to the White Paper of 1939.

"The President is happy that the doors of Palestine are today open to Jewish refugees and that when future decisions are reached, full justice will be done to those who seek a Jewish National Home, for which our government and the American people have always had the deepest sympathy and today more than ever, in view of the tragic plight of hundreds of thousands of homeless Jewish refugees."



Draft send to F. D. R. after meeting
March 9-1944

Confidential

The desperate plight of many millions of refugees of all nationalities and creeds has aroused the compassionate interest of the American people. (The War Refugee Board was created by me in order to secure the immediate rescue of as many refugees as can still be saved.)

The attention of the world has especially been directed to the terrible calamities which have overtaken the Jews of Europe. Hitler's program, designed to accomplish their complete extermination, has already resulted in the death, under conditions of incredible brutality, of millions of men, women and children.

Hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, of those who will survive will wish for the opportunity to rebuild their shattered lives among their own people in Palestine. Fortunately, that country has already demonstrated its capacity to absorb large numbers of Jews as the result of the remarkable pioneering effort of Jewish settlers during the last several decades, assisted by the generous material contributions of their fellow Jews throughout the world. This work of upbuilding, which has been a magnificent example of what can be achieved only by men dedicated to an ideal, has been of benefit not only to the Jewish but also to the Arab inhabitants of the country.

Our people and our Government have long had the deepest sympathy for the age-old aspiration of the Jewish people to reconstitute their National Home in Palestine. We can never forget that our Government was consulted and gave its full support and approval to the Balfour Declaration. This was later confirmed by the action of the Congress of the United States in a Joint Resolution unanimously adopted on June 24, 1922. The Mandate for Palestine, which was approved by the 51 member nations of the League of Nations, was also

confirmed by the British-American Convention of 1924. By this agreement our Government gave its assent to the designation of Great Britain as the Mandatory Power charged with the obligation to facilitate the immigration of Jews into Palestine and their close settlement on the land.

The new policy which was announced under the British White Paper of 1939 would prohibit in the near future all further Jewish immigration into Palestine and places drastic restrictions on Jewish land purchase and settlement and perpetuates a minority status for Jews in their own National Home. This policy has never been accepted by our Government. (It is my confident hope, shared, I believe, by Prime Minister Churchill, whose deep and sympathetic interest in the upbuilding of the Jewish National Home is a matter of record, that the doors of Palestine will be opened for the free entry of Jews into that country and that there shall be full opportunity for colonization and economic development so that they may continue the upbuilding of their National Home in accordance with the intent and purpose of the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate for Palestine.

The distinguished British and American statesmen who participated in the framing of these historic documents have made it indubitably clear what their intent and purpose were. President Wilson stated: "I am persuaded that the Allied Nations, with the fullest concurrence of our own Government and people, are agreed that in Palestine shall be laid the foundations of a Jewish Commonwealth." This remains the fixed purpose of the American people.

Message to the President of the United States.

The American Palestine Committee, founded by Senator Robert F. Wagner and the late Senator Charles L. McNary, and comprising senators, congressmen, state governors, educators, and other leaders of American public opinion to the number of more than 4,000, through its Executive Committee urges the Government of the United States to take action to avail itself of the opportunity which has arisen for the immediate rescue from persecution of many thousands of Hungarian Jews, men, women and children. In country after country of Nazi occupied Europe, the slaughter by the Nazis and their satellites of their Jewish inhabitants has been pursued with systematic and ruthless brutality. Today the fate which has befallen the Jews of Germany, of Poland, of Czechoslovakia and of the Baltic countries, also threatens the Jews of Hungary, the largest remaining Jewish community in Europe.

The Government of Hungary, in response to an aroused world opinion including that of our own people and Government, has shown itself ready despite Nazi pressure, to permit the departure of all Jews in possession of immigration certificates for Palestine, and of all children up to the age of ten with visas for unoccupied Europe and overseas. But even these concessions will be useless unless immediate action is taken to give effect to the prospects of rescue thus opened up. We therefore respectfully urge that the following steps be taken without delay.

1. That the Government of the United States assume the initiative in formulating forthwith an effective rescue program which will facilitate the removal of Jews from Hungary, also if possible from other Hitler dominated lands, by all available means.

2. That the Government of the United States use its good offices to secure the immediate grant by Great Britain, irrespective of previous policies, of immigration certificates into Palestine for all Hungarian Jews who can be rescued. Pending their permanent settlement in Palestine rescue camps should be established for them there, and we urge further that our Government be empowered to finance the transportation of such refugee immigration and to provide all facilities as may be in its power to offer.

The oppressed Jews of Europe look to you, Mr. President, for salvation; they look also to non-Jewish Americans like ourselves for such aid as we may give them in their distress. We are confident that under your leadership a rescue program can be carried out which will provide this tortured people with new life and hope.



August 18, 1944

Hon. Franklin Delano Roosevelt
White House
Washington, D. C.

The American Palestine Committee, founded by Senator Robert F. Wagner and the late Senator Charles L. McNary, and comprising numerous senators, congressmen, governors, educators and other leaders of American public opinion, to the number of more than 4,000, through its executive council urges the Government of the United States to take action to avail itself of the opportunity which has arisen for the immediate rescue from persecution of many thousands of Hungarian Jews - men, women and children. In country after country of Nazi occupied Europe the slaughter by the Nazis and their satellites of their Jewish inhabitants has been pursued with systematic and ruthless brutality. Today the fate which has befallen the Jews of Germany, of Poland, of Czechoslovakia and of the Baltic countries also threatens the Jews of Hungary, the largest remaining Jewish community in Europe.

The Government of Hungary, in response to an aroused world opinion including that of our own people and Government, has shown itself ready despite Nazi pressure to permit the departure of all Jews in possession of immigration certificates for Palestine, and of all children up to the age of ten with visas for unoccupied Europe and overseas. But even these concessions will be useless unless immediate action is taken to give effect to the prospects of rescue thus opened up. We therefore respectfully urge that the following steps be taken without delay:

1. That the Government of the United States assume the initiative in formulating forthwith an effective rescue program which will facilitate the removal of Jews from Hungary; also if possible from other Hitler dominated lands, by all available means.
2. That the Government of the United States use its good offices to secure the immediate grant by Great Britain, irrespective of previous policies, of immigration certificates into Palestine for all Jews who can be rescued from Hungary and other Nazi dominated countries.

And we urge further that our Government assist in financing the transportation of such refugee emigration and provide all facilities as may be in its power to offer.

The oppressed Jews of Europe look to you, Mr. President, for salvation; they look also to non-Jewish Americans like ourselves for such aid as we may give them in their distress. We are confident that under your leadership a rescue program can be carried out which will provide this tortured people with new life and hope.

AMERICAN PALESTINE COMMITTEE

41 East 42nd Street

New York City

By its Executive Council.

Dr. Daniel L. Marsh, Chairman

Dr. Howard M. LeSourd, Executive Director

Prof. William F. Albright, Baltimore, Md.

Dr. Henry A. Atkinson, New York City

J. M. Blalock, Columbia, S. C.

Dr. Carl J. Friedrich, Cambridge, Mass.

William Green, Washington, D. C.

Miss Daphne Robert, Atlanta, Ga.

Dr. Carl Hermann Voss, New York City

Dr. Mary E. Woolley, Westport, N. Y.

COPY

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Washington

In reply refer to
WRB

September 16, 1944

American Palestine Committee,
41 East Forty-second Street,
New York, New York.

Sirs:

I have received by reference from the White House your communication of August 18, 1944 addressed to the President urging that this Government formulate a rescue program for the removal of Jews from Hungary and from other Hitler dominated lands and use its offices to secure a grant by Great Britain of immigration certificates into Palestine for all Jews who can be rescued from Hungary or other Nazi dominated countries.

There is attached for your information a copy of the joint declaration of the Governments of the United Kingdom and the United States dated August 17, 1944 accepting the offer of the Government of Hungary for the release of Jews. All possible arrangements for the care of such Jews have been made pending definite information from the Government of Hungary as to the numbers whose departure is to be permitted.

For your information substantial numbers of Palestine certificates have been issued to Hungarian Jews but unfortunately no evidence is yet available to this Government that the holders of these certificates or the children under ten years of age included in the Hungarian offer are actually to be permitted to depart. I can assure you that the Department and the War Refugee Board will continue their efforts to rescue these victims of Nazi oppression and to do everything within their power to care for those who may succeed in leaving Hungary.

Very truly yours,

Enclosure:

Press release
August 17, 1944.

(Signed) George L. Warren

George L. Warren
Adviser on Refugees and
Displaced Persons

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

FOR THE PRESS

AUGUST 17, 1944

CONFIDENTIAL RELEASE FOR PUBLICATION IN THE MORNING NEWSPAPERS
OF FRIDAY, AUGUST 18, 1944, WHICH DO NOT APPEAR ON
THE STREETS BEFORE 7:00 P.M., E.W.T., THURSDAY,
AUGUST 17, 1944. NOT TO BE PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED,
QUOTED FROM OR USED IN ANY WAY.

The International Committee of the Red Cross has communicated to the Governments of the United Kingdom and the United States an offer of the Hungarian Government regarding the emigration and treatment of Jews. Because of the desperate plight of the Jews in Hungary and the overwhelming humanitarian considerations involved the two governments are informing the Government of Hungary through the International Committee of the Red Cross that, despite the heavy difficulties and responsibilities involved, they have accepted the offer of the Hungarian Government for the release of Jews and will make arrangements for the care of such Jews leaving Hungary who reach neutral or United Nations territory, and also that they will find temporary havens of refuge where such people may live in safety. Notification of these assurances is being given to the governments of neutral countries who are being requested to permit the entry of Jews who reach their frontiers from Hungary. The Governments of the United Kingdom and the United States emphasize that, in accepting the offer which has been made, they do not in any way condone the action of the Hungarian Government in forcing the emigration of Jews as an alternative to persecution and death.

* * * * *

November 14, 1944

The President
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. President:

In pursuance of a resolution adopted by acclamation at a recent meeting of the American Zionist Emergency Council, representing the organized Zionist movement in America, we desire respectfully to convey to you the very warm good wishes of the Zionists of this country on the occasion of your re-election.

We know that under your great leadership the grave problems which confront humanity will be faced with wisdom and courage. In common with our fellow Americans we offer to you the expression of our wholehearted loyalty and devotion in the tasks that lie ahead.

Yours sincerely,

Stephen S. Wise

Abba Hillel Silver

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

CLASS OF SERVICE

This is a full-rate Telegram or Cablegram unless its deferred character is indicated by a suitable symbol above or preceding the address.

WESTERN UNION

1220

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R. B. WHITE
PRESIDENT

NEWCOMB CARLTON
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

J. C. WILLEVER
FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT

SYMBOLS

DL = Day Letter

NT = Overnight Telegram

LC = Deferred Cable

NLT = Cable Night Letter

Ship Radiogram

The filing time shown in the date line on telegrams and day letters is STANDARD TIME at point of origin. Time of receipt is STANDARD TIME at point of destination

NH71 123 GOVT-THE WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON DC 13 1200P
HONORABLE ROBERT F WAGNER-
-530 EAST 86 ST-

DEAR BOB:

KNOWING THAT YOUR ARE TO ATTEND THE FORTY-SEVENTH ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE ZIONIST ORGANIZATION OF AMERICA, I ASK YOU TO CONVEY TO THE DELEGATES ASSEMBLED MY CORDIAL GREETINGS.

PLEASE EXPRESS MY SATISFACTION THAT, IN ACCORD WITH THE TRADITIONAL AMERICAN POLICY AND IN KEEPING WITH THE SPIRIT OF THE FOUR FREEDOMS, THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY AT ITS JULY CONVENTION THIS YEAR INCLUDED THE FOLLOWING PLANK IN ITS PLATFORM:

"WE FAVOR THE OPENING OF PALESTINE TO UNRESTRICTED JEWISH IMMIGRATION AND COLONIZATION, AND SUCH A POLICY AS TO RESULT IN THE ESTABLISHMENT THERE OF A FREE AND DEMOCRATIC JEWISH COMMONWEALTH."

EFFORTS WILL BE MADE TO FIND APPROPRIATE WAYS AND MEANS OF EFFECTUATING THIS POLICY AS SOON AS PRACTICABLE.

I KNOW HOW LONG AND ARDENTLY THE JEWISH PEOPLE HAVE WORKED AND PRAYED FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PALESTINE AS A FREE AND DEMOCRATIC JEWISH COMMONWEALTH. I AM CONVINCED THAT THE AMERICAN PEOPLE GIVE THEIR SUPPORT TO THIS AIM AND IF REELECTED I SHALL HELP TO BRING ABOUT ITS REALIZATION.

WITH CORDIAL REGARDS AND BEST WISHES-
FRANKLIN D ROOSEVELT.

ISSUED BY THE AMERICAN JEWISH TRADE UNION COMMITTEE FOR PALESTINE

245 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y.

Since the publication of "America and Palestine," two notable statements on Palestine by the Democratic and Republican candidates for the Presidency of the United States have been issued.

Statement by President Roosevelt

In a Letter to Senator Robert F. Wagner

"Knowing that you are to attend the forty-seventh annual Convention of the Zionist Organization of America, I ask you to convey to the Delegates assembled my cordial greetings.

"Please express my satisfaction that, in accord with the traditional American policy and in keeping with the spirit of the Four Freedoms, the Democratic Party at its July Convention this year included the following plank in its platform:

'We favor the opening of Palestine to unrestricted Jewish immigration and colonization, and such a policy as to result in the establishment there of of a free and democratic Jewish commonwealth.'

"Efforts will be made to find appropriate ways and means of effectuating this policy as soon as practicable. I know how long and ardently the Jewish people have worked and prayed for the establishment of Palestine as a free and democratic Jewish commonwealth. I am convinced that the American people give their support to this aim and if re-elected I shall help to bring about its realization."

October 15, 1944

Statement by Governor Thomas E. Dewey

"I heartily indorse the Palestine plank in the Republican Party platform. Again I repeat what I previously stated to the great leader of the American Zionist movement and distinguished American Dr. Abba Hillel Silver, that I am for the reconstitution of Palestine as a free and democratic Jewish commonwealth in accordance with the Balfour Declaration of 1917 and the resolution of the Republican Congress in 1922. I have also stated to Dr. Silver that in order to give refuge to millions of distressed Jews driven from their homes by tyranny I favor the opening of Palestine to their unlimited immigration and land ownership.

"The American people have time and again declared themselves in favor of these principles. The Republican Party has at all times been the traditional friend of the movement.

"As President I would use my best offices to have our government working together with Great Britain to achieve this great objective for a people that have suffered so much and deserve so much at the hands of mankind."

October 12, 1944

ERRATA IN "AMERICA AND PALESTINE"

As a result of necessary last-minute changes in chapters 15 and 16, names listed in the Index as appearing on pages 413-427, will be found on pages one or two lower in number than the Index references.

Page 43 line 15 should read 1922 instead of 1944.

STATEMENT BY PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT
TO
SENATOR ROBERT F. WAGNER
October 15, 1944

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