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Roosevelt, Franklin Delano, 1944.

American Zionist Emergency Council

CONSTITUENT ORGANIZATIONS

Hadassah, Women's Zionist Organization of America
Mizrachi Organization of America
Poale Zion-Zeire Zion of America
Zionist Organization of America

342 MADISON AVENUE
NEW YORK 17, N. Y.
M U r r a y H i l l 2 - 1 1 6 0

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

January 17, 1944

Dr. Abba Hillel Silver
The Temple
Cleveland, Ohio

My dear Dr. Silver:

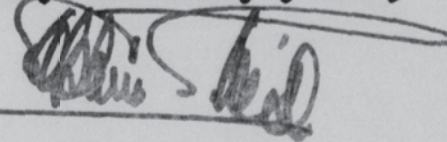
Replying to your letter of January 7th, which did not reach me until the 14th when I returned to New York, I beg to say that I understand about Mr. Welles, and his inability to act for us is regrettable.

I have spoken to Mr. Straus today, who will talk to FW.

I have written to FDR, as you see. He may not be able to see us. He may feel that he cannot at this time give us the necessary time.

I note what you say about the Revisionists, and I regret that we cannot reach a decision and act upon the possibility of agreement with them.

Very cordially yours,



Stephen S. Wise

SSW/RW
Enc.

Office of the Majority Leader
House of Representatives U. S.

Washington, D. C. 1st February, 1944

AHS File

Dr. Abba Hillel Silver,
American Zionist Emergency Council,
1720 16th Street, N.W.,
Washington, D. C.

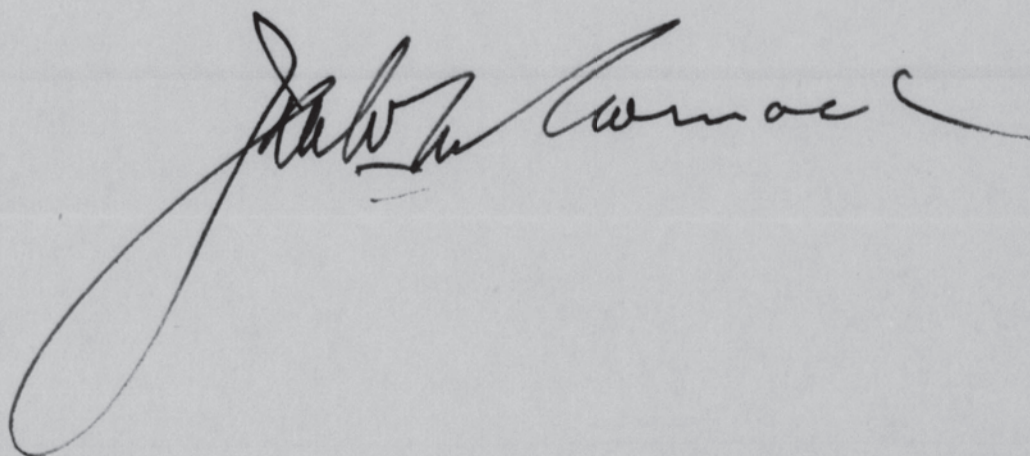
re: FDR

Dear Rabbi Silver:

I was at the White House on Monday morning, to see the President and I gave him the memorandum which you sent to me, telling him I was taking such action at your request. The President said: "Is that Rabbi Silver of Cleveland" and I said "Yes". He spoke very highly of you and I sort of gathered the impression that he was going to see you in the near future.

With kind personal regards, I am

Very sincerely yours,



AHS File

Interview with Mr. David Niles - Wednesday February 23, 1944

Present: Rabbi James G. Heller, Rabbi Leon I. Feuer, and Mr. Niles

Re: U.S.
Policy
FDR

We had a long and friendly conversation with Mr. Niles. We discussed with him the difficulties which we are encountering in connection with the resolutions due to the intervention of the War Department. We pointed out to Mr. Niles that sentiment in the Congress was overwhelmingly in favor of the passage of these resolutions, and that their deferment would result in a wave of indignation and disappointment among the Jews of America. We told him that the inevitable result would be a bad reaction against the Administration at whose door-step the blame will be laid. Mr. Niles suggested that it was possible that some of the maneuvering which resulted in the intervention of the War Department might be due to the unfriendliness of some people of the Congress who saw an opportunity to put themselves "right" with their constituents and at the same time have an opportunity of making political capital against the Administration. We replied that this was highly unlikely since among those who had endorsed and were working with us for the passage of the resolutions were men who were friends and spokesmen for the Administration.

We expressed our puzzlement to Mr. Niles at our difficulty in getting an audience for Zionist leaders with the President. He did not seem to want to discuss this question but we pressed it. He said he could not understand why we were so concerned. He knew the President's mind on this subject and the President was completely with us. He had been given to understand in London that the Prime Minister had indicated that he has remained and would continue to remain a supporter of the Zionist cause. He said that this also represents the view of the President and at the appropriate time the matter of Palestine would be settled, in a way which would be "highly satisfactory to us".

We continued to emphasize the fact that we were in a very embarrassing position. We had proposed the introduction of the resolutions in good faith. We had been led to believe there would be no opposition on the part of the State Department. We pointed out to him that the resolutions had been shown to the Secretary of State by Dr. Silver, and he had voiced no objection to it or hinted in any way that there would be any opposition to it on the part of the Executive Departments of the Government. We mentioned that fact that Senator Taft, one of the co-authors of the resolutions, had addressed two inquiries to the State Department on the subject, one in the form of a letter to Secretary Hull and the other in the form of a verbal query addressed to his brother, Mr. Charles Taft, a member of the State Department. Neither of these inquiries had elicited an unfavorable reaction. It was on this basis that Senator Taft had consented to become one of the co-authors of the resolutions. Administration leaders in both Houses had issued public statements of endorsement. We felt that we had been made the victims of a neat piece of double dealing. Mr. Niles seemed to indicate that he was in agreement that some kind of backstage maneuvering had taken place by which the War Department had gone to the front for the State Department.

We then pointed out that there was a way out of this dilemma and that was that the President make his mind known to Zionist leaders, through an interview with them or through some kind of message which he would send to them either formally or informally. Mr. Niles agreed that some effort ought to be made to do this. He said that he would make it his business, first of all to try to ascertain exactly what was behind the Department's opposition to the resolutions and secondly, to see the President and present the problem to him to see if some way out could not be found. Mr. Niles asked us to continue to keep in touch with him.

Interview with Mr. Isadore Lubin

Thursday, February 24th, 1944

Present: Rabbi Leon I. Feuer, Mr. Lubin

Rabbi Feuer went to see Mr. Lubin in the latter's office in the White House. In the first part of the interview Rabbi Feuer outlined the situation as it obtained in the present moment in pretty much the same way as it had been outlined to Mr. Niles. Mr. Lubin was very sympathetic and felt that some way ought to be found to resolve the difficulty and that he thought it would be found. He called Mr. Niles on the telephone while Rabbi Feuer was in his office and discussed the situation with him. Mr. Niles reasserted his promise of the day before that he would try to ascertain the exact facts about the War Department's opposition and that he would speak to the President with regard to the possibilities of the President either conferring with Zionist Leaders or sending them some word of assurance of his attitude. Mr. Lubin urged that we keep in touch with Mr. Niles who, he informed us, is quite close with the President and to whose advice upon Jewish matters the President is attentive. He suggested that we lay low for the next two or three weeks and see what comes of the conversation between the President and Mr. Niles.

LIF:hh

Washington, D. C.
March 9th, 1944.

The following statement by Dr. Abba Hillel Silver and Dr. Stephen S. Wise, co-chairmen of the American Zionist Emergency Council, was reported by the United Press this afternoon:

"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."

March 13, 1944.

The President
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. President:

We need hardly say how grateful we were for the opportunity of full discussion with you of the problem of Palestine. We rejoiced again to note your understanding and abiding sympathy with the ideal and purpose of the Jewish people.

In accordance with your suggestion, we have set down in the enclosed draft what we believe to be your own thought in relation to the statement which you indicated it is your purpose to issue in the near future. We should be grateful for the opportunity, in accordance with your suggestion, to see your statement before it is issued.

We are happy to think that Under-Secretary Stettinius is to have your advice that while in London he consult with the President of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, Dr. Chaim Weizmann. This we regard as of utmost importance in view of your high regard for Dr. Weizmann, who has already had the opportunity for full discussion of the problem with Mr. Churchill.

Faithfully yours,

Abba Hillel Silver

Stephen S. Wise

Co-Chairmen
American Zionist Emergency Council

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.