

HAUT-COMMISSARIAT POUR LES RÉFUGIÉS  
(ISRAELITES ET AUTRES)  
PROVENANT D'ALLEMAGNE

OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER  
FOR REFUGEES (JEWISH AND OTHER)  
COMING FROM GERMANY

Telegram  
Cables ) HICOMMISSA, WESTCENT, LONDON.  
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RECEIVED

October 10, 1935

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Felix M. Warburg, Esq. 52 William Street,  
52 William Street  
New York, N. Y.

Dear Mr. Warburg:

I have just come from nearly two hours with Sigmund and Erich. Everything they had to say confirmed my own worst impressions and fears about the situation as it has been developing since the Nuremberg legislation.

The question in everybody's mind is what can be done. On only one point is there complete agreement: the need for immediate action is overwhelming.

There are those who think that something can be done on the outside to mitigate the rigor of policies and actions either already set on foot or about to be started in Germany. I doubt this. None the less, it might be worth trying. The only suggestion in this direction which seems to me at all feasible is that certain of the Governments, more particularly the British and our own, should be induced to make informal representations to the Reich authorities. Undoubtedly steps to induce such action from Whitehall will be taken here. You will know whether anything effective can be accomplished at Washington. I should doubt it, prior to the return of the President at any rate. But perhaps you will be good enough to talk over this suggestion with Governor Lehman and tell him that it is my opinion that he more than anyone else could convince the President of the emergency character of the present situation, and of the justification for informal representations through Dodd. (You may recall that a couple of months ago I sent you a copy of my letter which dealt with this general situation to Mrs. Roosevelt. She replied that she had passed it on to the President.)

On the assumption, which I am afraid we must make if we are not to be sorely disappointed, that the present tendency in the Reich will be carried through to its logical conclusion, the necessity for relief measures on a scale heretofore not undertaken and except in very few quarters envisaged, seems to me absolutely clear. The proposal in Otto Schiff's cable to New Court, which I am discussing with them tomorrow, is particularly timely in view of the emphasis it places on creating additional facilities for the transfer of Jewish capital. But as I had assumed you know, this whole question of transfer has been for the last six weeks the subject of an elaborate exchange of views between the responsible financial head of the Jewish community and Dr. Schacht. As I understand it the issue of these negotiations is still uncertain because there has not yet been achieved the necessary coordination among the different departments concerned in the Reich..

However, if and when this program in reference to transfers is formally approved, it will require for its successful operation a very large amount of foreign capital. Since this capital would be used for commercial purposes - at least in so far as it would directly help to expedite the transfer of Jewish capital from Germany - I assume that the job of raising a large amount would be easier than for pure philanthropic purposes. I should hope, therefore, that the corporation itself might take the lead in supplying the initial amounts necessary to set this projected machinery into motion; but of course about all of this

you will hear more authoritatively, either directly or indirectly, from him who has been conducting the negotiations with Dr. S.

No matter how successfully such a scheme for transferring the capital of Jewish business men worked, it will not meet the whole or perhaps not even the major problem, that is, of expediting the migration of 15,000 or 20,000 younger people a year, who must leave the Reich. I think it would be a great mistake to assume that the financing of this migration can be done on a commercial or even quasi-commercial basis. I do not think the assumption would be sound, nor do I think it would materially increase the chances of getting the necessary money. The Jewish communities, particularly in Great Britain and the United States must now at last realize the truth, bitter and terrible though it is, which you and I and some of the rest of us have tried to drive home to them for more than two years - there can be no future for Jews in Germany. Moreover, the legislation of Nuremberg, destroying by a single blow and that on the most brutal basis the principles of Jewish emancipation, is a challenge which Jews in no part of the world can ignore, except at their own peril.

Under these circumstances would it not now be possible to do what we have at various times talked about doing - that is, making an appeal on a basis so broad as to envisage the evacuation over a period of ten years of about 200,000 persons. Such a program would have a carrying power which nothing less could achieve.

Of course I know many, if not most, of the difficulties which will at once be urged:

1) That it is impossible to calculate accurately the cost. This is true. But estimates sufficient for the purpose could be worked out. This would require not only calculations as to the general regions to which most of the immigrants might be expected to go, but also some estimate as to the amount of capital which might be available from Germany to aid the migration. This latter point would be more difficult to get an idea of than would the other.

2) That places for such large numbers could not be found. I do not believe this. After all, 20,000 a year is a small number. If Palestine could continue to take 10,000 and the United States 5,000, surely the other 5,000 could easily be absorbed elsewhere. Even if the Palestine quota perforce has to be cut down, the few additional thousands which would have to be sent to other parts of the world, could surely be cared for.

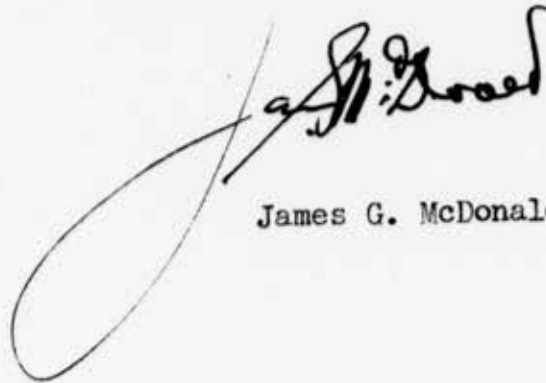
3) That it is impossible that world Jewry would agree to concentrate such a vast amount of money on the German Jewish problem. This seems to me the one objection which would be most difficult to overcome. I would be the last person to wish to hide from myself or from others the sore needs in Poland, Roumania and elsewhere. On the other hand, I have gotten the feeling from my talks with leaders of Eastern Jewry that they realize - indeed that they perhaps realized earlier than did the German Jews of the West - that the Nazi attack is an attack on all Jews, and that therefore to meet it the easterners would be prepared to make large sacrifices.

In addition to these larger schemes for financing transfers of capital and for a decade of migration, there are the immediate necessities, intensified by the recent developments. First the pressing need for replenishing the funds which have heretofore been available for maintaining abroad the German children in the English and other foreign schools. To require these children to return to Germany now, because there are no funds to set over against those which their parents make available in Germany, would be cruel and foolish. Second there are the needs of the Jewish community within Germany itself. As one reads of

the impoverishment of the business men and the denial by the Government of winter help and other official relief to the Jews, there is no escaping the conclusion that the day to day necessities of the philanthropic, not to speak of the religious and cultural Jewish institutions, will be greater than they have ever been before. I cannot believe ~~that~~ no matter what the necessities may be at home, that American Jewry will fail to recognize that their co-religionists in Germany must be helped now.

I hope you will forgive this long letter. I have had to write it to free myself of some of the painful impressions which have been accumulating inside me during recent months, and more particularly since my last two visits to Germany in August and in September.

Sincerely yours,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J.G. McDonald'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping loop on the left side.

James G. McDonald

P.S. I enclose another copy of the letter to Mrs. Roosevelt.

J.G.M.