

October 17th, 1945

Honorable Robert P. Patterson
Secretary of War
War Department
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I write to you on behalf of the World Jewish Congress, which represents affiliated Jewish communities and organizations in more than thirty countries, to request that facilities be granted to two of our representatives, at present in London, to proceed to Nuremberg in order to attend the trial of Nazi war criminals as expert observers on our behalf. Our two representatives are Dr. Jacob Robinson and Mr. Alexander Easterman.

Dr. Robinson is the Director of the Institute of Jewish Affairs in New York, which is the Research Department of the World and American Jewish Congresses. He is a distinguished international lawyer who is recognized as one of the greatest living authorities on minority problems and similar questions, and I feel certain I can say that his work is favorably known to legal experts in the State Department. He has been of the greatest assistance in assembling the material for that part of the indictment of the war criminals which deals with the conspiracy to annihilate the Jews of Europe, and I feel sure that Mr. Justice Robert H. Jackson would agree that his work in this regard has been of the greatest value and importance.

Mr. Alexander Easterman, who is an authoritative student of European affairs is the Political Secretary of our European Division and one of the officers of our British Section. He was formerly Foreign Editor of the London Daily Express and subsequently of the London Daily Herald.

I ought to mention that Mr. Easterman has been attending the trial at Nuremberg as an official observer on our behalf, facilities having very generously been granted for this purpose by the British War Office.

There are two reasons, which I venture to submit, why our special, and indeed painful, interest in these trials should be recognized. The first is that the great majority of the Jewish victims were members of communities and organizations affiliated to us and we have an inescapable moral obligation to see that the views and interests for which they can no longer speak themselves are always and adequately represented. It was to us that they addressed their last appeals for justice, and there is no other Jewish organization in the world which bears quite the same moral responsibility as their spokesman.

Secondly, we have taken a more active part during the past three years in the discussions which have led to these trials than any other Jewish body, and it was to us that the late President Roosevelt in the course of these discussions addressed his first public assurance that the criminals would be held to strict accountability. Since then we have cooperated closely with the appropriate authorities in the formulation of the indictment and in the assembly of evidence on the anti-Jewish policy of the Nazi regime.

In these circumstances I feel justified in expressing the hope that you will find it possible to grant this request, and I need not assure you that both our experts would place themselves unreservedly at the disposal of Justice Jackson's office. It would be deeply appreciated by Jewish communities throughout the world and not least in this country, if our own War Department were on this occasion to grant us the same facilities as the British War Office gave us in the case of Luenberg. I feel confident that in a matter of this kind, which touches us so closely, the Jewish people and the American Jewish community can rely on the understanding of the War Department.

I have only to add that Rabbi Maurice L. Perlman, the Head of our Political Department in New York, will gladly place himself at the disposal of any of your officers, and will be prepared to go to Washington, should any further information be required.

Sincerely yours,

Stephen S. Wise, President

SSW:ck