

Sumner Welles Papers
Box 72 Folder 11
Office Correspondence
Roosevelt, Eleanor 1942

May 26, 1941.

PERSONAL

Dear Eleanor:

With reference to our telephone conversation of a few days ago regarding young Jewish Frenchmen under forty years of age, I telegraphed at once to Admiral Leahy for his opinion in accordance with our understanding.

I have today received from Admiral Leahy a reply to my inquiry, of which I am enclosing a paraphrase for your information. I fear, from the statement of Admiral Leahy, that there is not very much that can be done in this matter and that whatever is done should be handled with the utmost caution by the friends in the United States of the people in question.

Believe me

Yours very sincerely,

Enc.

Mrs. Roosevelt,
The White House.

U:SW:GES

ROOSEVELT, MRS. F. D.
re: Jewish Frenchmen under 40
(sent tel. 598 from Vichy,
May 24).

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM

FROM: American Embassy, Paris
TO: Secretary of State, Washington
DATED: May 24, 1941

Frenchmen between 17 and 40 years may not be granted exit visas under regulations adopted recently by the French Government, reportedly under German pressure, unless they are: (a) going abroad on official Government business; or (B) were before the war regularly domiciled abroad and are returning after their demobilization to their homes.

In my opinion, any concerted move by a given age and/or racial group to obtain exit visas would not only meet with refusal but further restrictions might result.

I believe that the same result would be met by any request for special treatment of young French Jews.

May 17, 1941

Dear Eleanor:

In reply to the inquiry contained in your letter of May 14 with regard to Karl Reiner Litten, I enclose for your convenient reference a copy of my letter to you of April 9 in which I informed you that Mr. Litten received a quota visa at the Consulate General in Zurich on February 27, 1941, and that through a cable from the American Consul General at Zurich dated April 1, I was informed that that office had no record of Mr. Litten having called there subsequently.

Consequently, it would seem to be clear that any trouble that Mr. Litten might subsequently have had has arisen from difficulties he has encountered in obtaining transit visas from the countries through which he would have to pass on his way to Lisbon in order to sail for the United States.

While I know you realize that we cannot officially undertake to ask foreign governments to give transit visas to individuals who are not American citizens, I have nevertheless sent a cable today to our Consul General in Zurich asking him to cable us and let us know if he can find out what the difficulties in the Litten case may be. When we receive this report, if I feel there is anything we can do to be of help, I will have it done. I do, however, want to make it clear that the Litten boy was given an American visa on February 27, and that he has not subsequently appealed to any of our officials for assistance, nor has he informed any of our officials of any difficulties that he has had.

Believe me

Yours very sincerely,

Enc.

Sumner Welles

Mrs. Roosevelt,
The White House.

U:SW:IJ

May 15, 1941

Dear Eleanor:

Thank you for your letter of May 7, enclosing the letter sent to you by John Gunther, under date of April 24, with regard to the continued imprisonment of Jay Allen.

The State Department has done, I think, all it possibly could up to now, through the Embassy in Vichy and through the Embassy in Berlin, to expedite the release of Mr. Allen. As you know, however, the measures of undoubted retaliation undertaken by the German Government in recent weeks have been many, including the arrest and imprisonment in Berlin of a United Press correspondent, Mr. Hottelet, and the refusal to grant exit permits to several other American newspaper correspondents in Germany. Mere diplomatic communications with regard to these cases are not, I am afraid, going to have any useful result.

We are considering now the possibility of offering to exchange two German newspaper correspondents now imprisoned in the United States for violation of our statutes

Mrs. Roosevelt,

The White House.

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for these American correspondents held by the Germans. The matter is under discussion in the Department of Justice and I believe that a final decision will be had in the next few days. I am of the impression that it is only through a deal of this kind that we can get the release of these Americans.

Please be assured that I am personally interested in the case of Jay Allen and that I shall do everything I feel I appropriately can to secure his release.

Believe me

Yours very sincerely,

Enc.
From John Gunther,
April 24, 1941.

U:SW:DMK

REPRODUCED FROM HOLDINGS AT THE FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT LIBRARY

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

May 7, 1941

Dear Sumner:

I realize that the State Department is doing what it can to get Jay Allen out of his difficulties, but I am sending you the enclosed letter I have received from John Gunther just to emphasize the perils Mr. Allen is in. His record makes his position serious and perhaps something has been left undone which might help him.

Very sincerely yours,

Chas. Roosevelt

JOHN GUNTHER
FORTY EAST FORTY-NINTH STREET
NEW YORK CITY

April 24, 1941

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

Forgive me for writing to you on a personal matter which has to do with our friend Jay Allen. I'm not sure that you will remember me, but we had luncheon with Morris Ernst last September, and my departure for South America prevented me unavoidably from accepting your invitation to a picnic at Hyde Park. I returned recently from my South American trip, and I had the great pleasure of a long talk with the President two weeks ago.

I hope I am not being a nuisance to you, but I know your friendly interest in Jay Allen, and his case has become a matter of the most vital urgency.

As you doubtless know, Mr. Allen was arrested crossing from occupied to unoccupied France, about six weeks ago. He had previously gone from Vichy to Paris -- unfortunately without papers -- and he was arrested by the German military on the way out. You know how Jay is -- bold, generous, adventurous, full of mind and heart. It is important to emphasize that he was acting purely as a journalist. He was a regularly accredited correspondent of the North American Newspaper Alliance, and he had just had remarkable interviews with Petain and Weygand. He did no more than any other enterprising newspaper man might have done. In fact, he went to Paris with a colleague -- also without proper papers, I believe -- but the colleague was not caught.

The status of the case is roughly this. Jay is being held by the German military in a French prison at Chalons. So far as I know he is being well treated, but no one seems to be able to determine what precisely the Germans intend to do with him. The favorite theory seems to be that he will be held for seventy days, which is the usual sentence imposed on people who cross the frontier without permission. Also I believe the Germans have given assurance that they do not intend to make a martyr of him and that they will deposit him safely in unoccupied France when they decide to release him. But I am not sure that this assurance is official.

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I have been in constant touch with the State Department on the whole affair and also with other friends like Archie MacLeish. The State Department has behaved admirably, so far, it seems to me. It has done all it could in making known to the Germans in Paris that we regard Jay Allen as an important person and that we expect them to live up to their implied promise of good treatment. Even so -- up to date -- the Department has never succeeded in having anyone from our Embassy actually visit Jay. One American newspaper man has been permitted to see him -- and also possibly representatives of the Quakers and the Red Cross -- but no one else.

My point in this letter is to urge that something more be done. I don't want to go around corners improperly, but I do think that it is time that more forceful pressure is applied. Perhaps the State Department is helpless in the matter. I don't know.

My feeling is that Mr. Allen should not be punished unduly for what is, after all, a peccadillo. Undoubtedly it was foolish of him to tempt fate in this fashion, but I hate to think that he might be very seriously mistreated for having committed what is after all only a small technical offense. Other folk who cross the frontier and are caught are as a rule released much more quickly.

All of us -- the Department, Mr. MacLeish, Mrs. Allen and myself (as well as other folk vitally interested, like Hamilton Fish Armstrong, Raymond Gram Swing and Dorothy Thompson) -- have done our best to avoid any publicity. We have been very careful to be tactful in the extreme. We feel that the more that is said publicly about the case, the worse it will be for Jay.

I must confess I am gravely worried about it all. You know Jay's anti-Fascist history. The German military may hold him indefinitely as a hostage against someone whom we might arrest in the future. The United States may some day enter the war officially against Germany, in which case Jay would be held for the duration of the war. Also -- my haunting fear -- the German military, if they do release him, may turn him over to the Gestapo. In turn the Gestapo might give him to General Franco. That would be the end.

I really think there are certain minimum things that should be done, if I may be so bold as to say so. One is

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that the Department should demand that someone from our Embassy be allowed to see Jay. The other is that pressure should be put on Berlin as well as Paris. It makes me feel sick to say this, but I do think that unless something is done fairly soon the matter may become tragic, perhaps one of life or death.

If there is anything you can do or any suggestions you would care to make, I can't tell you how deeply all of us would appreciate it. We should, indeed, be infinitely grateful. If you should care to see me for a talk about it, I could come to Washington at almost any time.

With deepest consideration,

Yours most faithfully,

JOHN GUNTHER

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

P.S. I want again to point out that so far as I know Jay has done nothing improper except for the technical offense of crossing the frontier. Any story that he was occupied in anything beyond journalist is nonsense, I am sure.

J.G.

July 15, 1941.

My dear General Watson:

Dr. Chaim Weizmann has been in this country during the past six months and is now planning to return to London on July 23. He has asked me to request the President to receive him before he leaves the United States. This request has likewise been made by Rabbi Wise and various other leaders of the Zionist movement. I think it would be helpful if the President could receive him for ten or fifteen minutes. Will you let me know what the President's desires may be?

Believe me

Yours very sincerely,

Major General Edwin M. Watson,
Secretary to the President,
The White House.

Telegram from Chaim Weizmann, St. Regis Hotel, NYC
asking for appointment with President
cc-Gen Watson
-Rabbi Wise

April 16, 1941

Dear Eleanor:

You have written me several times during recent months with regard to the visa case of Mr. Peter Kainer, and a few days ago I received a letter from Mrs. Louise Farge Brown of Vassar College who has been corresponding with you concerning the case.

Mrs. Brown, unfortunately, is under the impression that action in this case is being delayed by routine requirements of the Department of State regarding public charge and formal documentary evidence.

For your own personal and confidential information, I feel it necessary to let you know that while the Inter-departmental Committee on Political Refugees had originally approved this case, this approval was subsequently withdrawn on the basis of a secret report from the Federal Bureau of Investigation stating that Peter Kainer is definitely suspected of being in the pay of German intelligence in Spain. Until this definite suspicion is cleared

Mrs. Roosevelt,
The White House.

Roosevelt, Mrs.

Interest of Mrs. Louise Farge Brown
in Peter Kainer

-2-

up one way or the other, it is manifestly impossible for us to approve the granting of this visa.

Naturally, I cannot tell Mrs. Brown the reason for the delay, but I want you to know the facts so that you will realize that there is more behind the delay in this case than merely the requirements of routine.

Believe me

Yours very sincerely,

U:SW:IJ

April 8, 1941.

EU - Mr. Atherton:

Are you satisfied that there is nothing further that can be done in this case? It seems to me to be a case which really deserves every consideration on our part.

U:SW:GES

U:SW:GES

U:SW:GES

March 24, 1941

Dear Eleanor:

With further reference to your letter to me of March 19 concerning the arrest of Jay Allen, I am attaching for your information a paraphrase of a telegram I received from Admiral Leahy in reply to the personal telegram I sent him expressing my interest in the case and mentioning the fact that you personally were interested.

Believe me

Yours very sincerely,

Enc.

Tel. March 22, Vichy

Mrs. Roosevelt,
The White House.

U:SW:DMK

MR. ROOSEVELT
Re: JAY ALLEN

March 19, 1941.

Dear Eleanor:

I have received this evening your letter of March 19 with regard to Jay Allen.

I have been talking to Archie MacLeish and Barnet Nover about the case this afternoon and I have explained the circumstances fully to them.

For your information, I am enclosing the paraphrases of two telegrams we have received from our Embassy at Vichy concerning the matter. I am sending a personal message to Admiral Leahy tonight asking him to do everything he can to secure the release of Mr. Allen, but from the reports contained in the telegrams I am enclosing I am afraid an immediate release looks doubtful.

You can be quite sure that I will continue to do everything that I possibly can to expedite a satisfactory result.

Believe me

Yours very sincerely,

Encs.

Mrs. Roosevelt,
The White House.

U:SW:GES

Mrs. Roosevelt

Re: Jay Allen

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON



March 19, 1941

Dear Sumner:

I hear that Jay Allen is in prison in Paris. I am sending this note to say that I hope everything possible will be done to get him out.

Cordially yours,

Thomas Roosevelt

November 18, 1941

Eu
Mr. Atherton:

Please draft a personal air
mail letter for me to send to
Ambassador Leahy informing him
of Mrs. Roosevelt's interest in
this case and requesting him to
do what he can. Please also draft
a letter for me to send to Mrs.
Roosevelt telling her that I have
done this.

U:SW:DMK

Re: Ethel Jungmann

TELETYPE UNIT

November 18, 1941

VD
Mr. Warren:

Mrs. Roosevelt's letter which I attach is self-explanatory.

I am getting increasingly concerned about cases of this kind.

It is, of course, obvious that as a matter of proper procedure visas cannot be issued in regions where there are no American consuls to issue them. On the other hand, in order to take care of thoroughly deserving, bonafide cases where we can obtain all of the evidence that is absolutely necessary to assure us that the applicants are desirable, is it not possible to conceive of some exception to the general rule so as to make it possible for these people to get exit permits? I wish you would give your early consideration to this possibility since the postscript to Mrs. Roosevelt's letter is undoubtedly indicative of what a great many important people in this country are now thinking.

U:SW:DMK

1000000000
Mrs. Roosevelt, 11-17-41
Attaching letter, undated, from
Mrs. Marjorie Shuler Charles
Re: Mr. and Mrs. Oscar von Halle and son, Gerd

no. 24

November 10, 1941

Dear Eleanor:

I received today your memorandum of November 10 enclosing Dr. Loeb's letter to you of November 7 in which he urged that this Government take such action as might be possible in order to prevent the extradition to Spain of Francisco Largo Caballero and Federica Montseny.

This matter was first brought to my attention four days ago. A telegram was immediately sent to Ambassador Leahy in Vichy asking him to do everything that might be possible to prevent these extraditions. I have not yet had a reply from him but as soon as I do get a reply I shall be glad to let you know.

Believe me

Yours very sincerely,

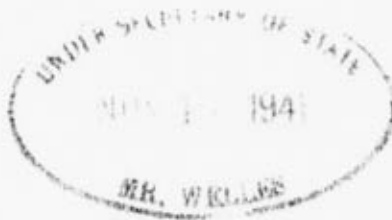
Mrs. Roosevelt,
The White House.

U:SW:GES

Roosevelt, Mrs. F.D.

Letter from Dr. James Loeb re extradition
of Francisco Largo Caballero and
Federica Montseny

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON



November 10, 1941

Dear Sumner:

Can you do anything?

E.R.

UNION FOR DEMOCRATIC ACTION
202 WEST 40 STREET, NEW YORK, N. Y., LACKAWANNA 4-1887

Chairman:
REINHOLD NIEBUHR

Vice-Chairmen:
ROBERT BENDINER
JOHN L. CHILDS
FRANZ DANIEL

Treasurer:
FREDA KIRCHWEY
Secretary:
MURRAY GROSS
Research Director:
LEWIS COREY
Executive Secretary:
JAMES LOEB, JR.

November 7, 1941

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

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

The arrest of Francisco Largo Caballero and Federica Montseny by Vichy France at the behest of General Franco is shocking evidence of Vichy's subservience to Hitler's agent. I am personally acquainted with both Spanish Republican leaders and can vouch for their devotion to the struggle for democracy against Hitlerism in which this country is now engaged. Knowing your profound interest in the democratic cause I would urge you on behalf of the Union for Democratic Action to do whatever possible to urge our Government to secure the release of these two democratic leaders.

Cordially yours,

James Loeb, Jr.
JL

Dr. James Loeb, Jr.
Executive Secretary

JL:ack

"A two-front fight for democracy—at home and abroad."

13

October 30, 1941.

no. 13

Personal and
Confidential

Dear Eleanor:

I am sending you a copy of a somewhat peculiar letter I have received which will be of interest to you. If I had not known the writer of the letter from childhood (she is a first cousin of Bradish and Aymar Johnson), I would have taken it for granted that the letter was inspired by that kind of prejudice that seems, tragically enough, to be increasing in this country.

From the impressions I have obtained in my own State and local community I have seen absolutely no sign of the kind of obstacles to which Mrs. Waring refers. I shall be most grateful if you could give me some advice as to what, in your judgment, would constitute a helpful reply for me to send.

Believe me

Yours very sincerely,

Enclosure

Mrs. Roosevelt,
The White House.

U:SW:PRH

L to Mrs. Roosevelt re L from Mrs. Waring 10-30-41

C O P Y

L W J

Dear Sumner-

Having been appointed by Governor Maybank as one of three women to organize the Women's National Council for Civilian Defense in Charleston County, we have found, ever since starting this work, that blocking seems to come from two sources: the Jews, who are gradually taking civic matters into their own hands here, and from the Roman Catholics, whose Priests tell them to have nothing to do with and to take no part in the Defense Council.

As we have been much puzzled by these situations and find them very difficult to deal with, I thought I would write and ask you whether they are general conditions throughout the country or if they are local. It would be easier to deal with them if we knew what is back of them.

May I ask that you treat this letter confidentially?

Hoping that you will surely let us know if you ever come to Charleston, I am,

Sincerely yours

LOUISA JOHNSON WARING

Church Street,
October twenty-fourth.

October 24, 1941

VD
Mr. Warren:

Please draft for my signature
some reply to the attached letter
from Mrs. Roosevelt making it fair-
ly ample and pointing out that the
policy to which she refers is not in
practice being carried out in any
all-inclusive sense. I think it would
be helpful to give also the figures
as to the number of Czech refugees
that have received visas during the
last three or four months.

U:SW:DMK

REPRODUCED FROM HOLDINGS AT THE FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT LIBRARY

October 15, 1941

Dear Eleanor:

In my letter to you of May 24 I acknowledged the receipt of Miss Thompson's letter of May 19 with which she enclosed, at your request, two letters which Princess Redziwill had sent to Miss Pauline Emmet on behalf of Prince Czartszyski, who is believed to be a prisoner in the Soviet Union.

At the same time I wrote to our Ambassador in Moscow to ask him to do whatever was possible to obtain information with regard to the Prince or to be of assistance to him should he be located.

I have only today received a telegram from Ambassador Steinhardt in Moscow saying that the Polish Ambassador in Moscow has informed Mr. Steinhardt that notwithstanding repeated efforts, he has not yet been able to locate Prince Czartszyski. Mr. Steinhardt adds that the Polish Ambassador is continuing his efforts and that he himself will do everything he can to be of assistance.

Believe me

Yours very sincerely,

Mrs. Roosevelt,

The White House.

U:SW:DMK

FRANCIS LEONIDAS CZARTSZYSKI

August 20, 1941.

VD
Mr. Warren:

Please draft some letter for me to send Mrs. Roosevelt in reply to the memorandum attached herewith. If there is any way in which this matter can be arranged, please try to do so.

U:SW:KMK

Memo dated August 19, 1941 from Mrs. Roosevelt re the case of Peter Beer, an Austrian, who is applying for a visa.