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MEMORANDUM FOR COLONEL DONOVAN:

The attached memorandum has been prepared in the Foreign Nationalities Branch by Mr. Moses W. Beckelman, formerly of the J. D. C. and an authority on Jewish questions. It is forwarded for whatever interest it may present.



Copies: Major Bruce ✓  
Col. Goodfellow.

JOHN C. WILEY

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WORLD JEWRY IN RELATION TO A  
PROGRAM OF PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE

Two basic factors suggest themselves when one considers the position of Jews throughout the world in relation to a program of psychological warfare. The first is that the circumstances of the present war make it possible to assume that practically all Jews, wherever they may be and whatever their Jewish political cultural or religious ideology, feel that they have an active stake in the victory of the United Nations. The second is that a mutual concern and continuing contact exists between the Jews of the various countries and finds practical expression in a variety of ways on many levels. Each of these concepts is subject to certain limitations and presents certain advantages and drawbacks which must be taken into account in considering specific projects of psychological warfare which involve the Jews.

The very fact that Jews everywhere wish an American victory is a limiting factor on their utility for certain phases of a psychological warfare program. In axis and axis dominated countries in Europe (estimated Jewish population of these areas, including France, Vichy French possessions, and German occupied Russia, was, on September 1, 1939, 7,600,000) Jews are specifically persecuted and every effort is made to set them apart

from the rest of the population. The extent to which this succeeds depends in some measure on the previous relationships which had existed between the Jews and the rest of the population.

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Where they were primarily nationals of the country and Jews essentially in a religious or cultural sense, (e.g. Holland, Denmark, Norway, Czecho-Slovakia, Russia) their contacts with the general population are, if anything, closer than before and they constitute a valuable potential source of information and might serve as useful propaganda agents.

Where the Jews have traditionally been viewed as a foreign nation or people (e.g. Poland, Hungary, Rumania, the Baltic States) the German tactic has been more successful and the utility of the Jewish group for obtaining access to the rest of the population is more limited. In the Far East (Japan, China, Phillipines, Burma, East Indies) where there are about 75,000 Jews, there have as yet been no indications of any special unfavorable treatment by the Japanese, other than the general limitations imposed upon the white population. Once communications have been established, this group would be a valuable

source of information and intercommunication in the Japanese dominated area. In the neutral world (Switzerland, Sweden, Turkey, Spain, Portugal, Irish Free State, India, Egypt, Latin America, etc.) with an estimated Jewish population of about 750,000, the Jewish group would seem to offer especial utility as a source of information and communication, especially with axis-dominated countries. As active propaganda agents, however, their potentialities are limited by the very fact of their known identification with the cause of the United Nations.

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In considering how best to make use of the second general factor above referred to - the dispersion of the Jews throughout the world - it is of the greatest importance to bear in mind that for practical purposes there is no such thing as a or one Jewish race, nation, people or even religion. Apart from their common identification by the outside world as Jews, the Jews of Morocco, for example, have no relationship to or means of communication with Jews of Poland. Their language, customs, behavior, thought patterns and methods of worship are different and ununderstandable one to the other. The Jews of the Yemen are equally foreign to the Jews of Morocco. And the Jews of Greece

and those of, for example, Syria, though both belong to the Sephardic branch of Jewry (and are thus more nearly related to each other than, say, Portugese and Polish Jews) nevertheless speak different languages and when they communicate with each other are likely to do so in French.

A detailed analysis of the religious, political and cultural divisions and groups of world Jewry would carry us too far afield but roughly one may identify three general groups:

1. East European Jews whose language of communication among themselves is, by and large, Yiddish.
2. Central European Jews whose language of communication among themselves is, by and large, German. (To this group should be added those Jews of the Scandinavian peninsula and Western Europe whose immigration to those countries is of sufficient recency for them to maintain contact with Central European Jews)

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Jews by means of the German language.)

3. Sephardic Jews who, at the time of their expulsion from the Iberian Peninsula at the end of the fifteenth century, spoke a mixture of Hebrew and Spanish known as Ladino. The descendants of these people today live in the countries of the

Near East and speak the languages of those countries, but retain enough of the original Ladino speech to make communication possible. Only in the countries of relatively recent Jewish immigration - the British Empire, the United States and Latin America - have the distinctions between these groups begun to breakdown as native born descendants of the original immigrants have become merged in these various countries. This process has gone furthest in the United States and, to a lesser extent, in Great Britain. In Latin America, Nazi propaganda and the persecution which has forced the immigration of more than one hundred thousand Jews in the last seven years have done something to break down the difference between Eastern European and German Jews but, by and large, Sephardic Jews in these countries still remain a world apart.

These factors should be borne in mind in selecting persons to make contact with various groups of Jews throughout the world. Sephardic Jews in the United States, for example, though their families may have been in this country since the Revolution, would find it easier to arrive at a basis of understanding with Jews in Smyrna than would the American descendants of Polish Jews even though their families had left Europe for the United

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States as recently as the beginning of the present century.

If, in the technical organization of a program of psychological warfare the foregoing and related considerations are borne in mind, the dispersion of the Jews throughout the world constitutes an asset in that it offers a ramified network of sources for collecting and distributing information. The average East European Jew speaks three or four languages from childhood and learns new languages with facility. Centuries of persecution have developed his capacity to adjust to suppression and circumvent control and censorship. His opportunities for obtaining and communicating information are therefore likely to be greater than those of his neighbors.

Contact between the Jews of the world (especially among East European Jews) may be said to be maintained on two general levels. The first of these is that of the family. Practically every Jew in the United States and other "overseas" countries whose parents, or who himself, immigrated after 1900 has maintained contact with his relatives in Eastern Europe or Germany. It is not uncommon to find today contemporary branches of one family in Brazil, Canada, South Africa and the United States with parents, uncles and cousins in Lithuania, Poland or Shanghai.

The second level of communication may be called the organizational. A wide variety of agencies, some American, some British, some French, Palestinian, or Swiss, maintain contact with Jews throughout the world for purposes, broadly speaking,

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of religious, cultural, educational, philanthropic, economic or political activities. There are also some American organizations, like trade unions, which are predominantly Jewish in their membership, which might be useful because they are composed of relatively recent immigrants from Europe and maintain closer contacts with the trade unions of their countries of origin than are possible through the official channels of the A.F. of L. or the C.I.O. There are too, European Jewish organizations some of whose leaders have found asylum in this country, and maintain communications with their representatives in Europe. There are Jews and Jewish organizations connected with the "free governments" - for example, the Polish-Jewish labor organization "Bund", which still maintains an underground anti-Nazi activity in Poland.

Detailed discussion of these agencies, and of specific methods of employing individuals and groups lies outside the scope of these observations and it would be premature to seek to develop them in advance of concrete projects for a program of psychological warfare. But enough has been said to indicate that if due regard is had to the special circumstances of each case and to the general limitations above indicated, world Jewry can be a useful instrument in such a campaign.

