

The Isaiah Berlin Virtual Library

WHAT ABOUT DAPHNE?

Correspondence with H. G. Nicholas 1942–1945

The Isaiah Berlin Virtual Library aims to post, in the fullness of time, PDFs of all Berlin's uncollected and unpublished work, including lectures, interviews, broadcasts and letters, so that it is conveniently readable and searchable online. The present PDF is part of this series.

All enquiries, including those concerning rights, should be directed to the Isaiah Berlin Legacy Fellow at Wolfson College, berlin@wolfson.ox.ac.uk

What About Daphne?

Correspondence with H. G. Nicholas 1942–1945

[] = editorial intervention
[?] = uncertain reading
< > = MS additions to typed letters
{ } = authorial error

TO H. G. NICHOLAS

British Embassy, Washington

Typescript, 31 December 1942

Personal

Dear Herbert,

I enclose the O.W.I.¹ preliminary anti-British survey which you will find somewhat scrappy, I think. It claims to be no more.

According to our recent exchange of cables, we should have your equivalent survey by January 1st (tomorrow). I hope it does not arrive too late to dampen O.W.I.'s enthusiasm, which is at present fairly high.

O.W.I.'s foreign service, i.e. Sherwood,² is being routed heavily by Donovan.³ Whatever happens at the moment, Donovan is in my view bound to win, having altogether heavier guns. If this went through, P.W.E.⁴ would find itself face to face with the O.S.S.⁵ instead of O.W.I., and so would Kirke. Bowes-Lyon has invested most of his funds in O.W.I. He is perplexed and frightened by what is happening, and largely ignorant of it. (He complains that nobody tells him anything.)

Since J. Wheeler-Bennett has gone to California, morally and physically exhausted, B-L. is fluttering about very ineffectually and pathetically.

¹ US Office of War Information.

² R. E. Sherwood, playwright, Director of OWI's Overseas Operations.

³ General William J. Donovan, Director of the Office of Strategic Services (OWI), 1942–5.

⁴ Political Warfare Executive.

⁵ Office of Strategic Services.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH H. G. NICHOLAS 1942–1945

To return to business: as soon as your document arrives, we sit down with O.W.I. to concert measures for a systematic survey here (and so do you, presumably). Would you send me a cable suggesting the form the larger survey here is to take, in terms of summarised criticisms of the enclosed tentative survey. The comparative omissions are very glaring, of course (if omissions may be said to glare, as Prof. Price⁶ used to say), e.g. of the anti-British points which are not connected with military incompetence or India. Nevertheless, nothing is too obvious for us here, so do adjust your shafts to our simple outlooks.

Please show the survey both to Robin and to Daphne, and tell D. that I shall write, when I do write, at enormous length, rather than frequently and briefly.

If you have occasion to be in Oxford, do tell my devoted family that I am well.

Yours,

Isaiah Berlin

FROM H. G. NICHOLAS

Exeter College, Oxford

Manuscript, 31 December 1942

My Dear Shaiah,

I am so worried about that missing page in your letter that I feel I must come over and find it myself. Hence Robin's recent cable to Aubrey. Please don't conclude that I was merely beating the pistol over your proposed arrangement with Scott-Rankine in February. In a sense, I don't see why that shouldn't stand – I mean his coming back on leave, the visit cropped up to outward seeming as an 'exchange' with me. But Robin was rather loth to put forward my own visit in that disguise because

A. It might delay it – & from this end January is a particularly quiet month, when I can leave my desk with the least possible dislocation

⁶ H. H. Price, Wykeham Professor of Logic, Oxford.

B. He didn't think that from a purely operational point of view the exchange would mean much – i.e. he's no great hopes of S.-R. *doing* much while he's here.

C. A mere exchange with Washington would guarantee me so hostile a reception in N.Y. & be regarded by Aubrey as so gratuitous a concession to the avaricious maw of Wills et al. that it were better a P/A were hung about my neck & I were lost in Registry. Hence the cable to *Morgan* & the suggestion that I should make N.Y. my base. Which doesn't of course mean that I won't spend as much time in Washington as work, duty & the pleasure of your company recommend, but merely that no machinations of the Wills can operate on my delicate person direct. I hope you'll agree that that's the only feasible arrangement (especially if I'm to put in a little work for Hinton as well). Robin & F.O.D. argued over the disposition of my vile corpus for some time, F.O.D. urging that I should be sent to be at Butler's disposal, & proposing ingenious cables consisting almost entirely of 'You will no doubt wish ...' and 'It would seem to us helpful if ...' Robin won – but only by the cowardly device of cabling in Frank's absence.

We hear that Peace has come amongst you. (Aubrey's account of the 3.00 a.m. showdown was, between ourselves, as fine a piece of blow by blow reporting as ever came off Westbrook Pegler's typewriter.) No one believes here that this is any more than a Treaty of Amiens, though there is general gratification that it didn't turn out a Munich. Aubrey's gallant stand should go down to history. I look forward to having your ringside account when I arrive. Meanwhile I hope the *detente* makes life more tolerable for you.

If I come – at the moment of writing no reply has yet come to Robin's cable – where should I stay in N.Y.? Your advice on this – or on any other points would be appreciated.

If there's anything you want, or that I can do for you before departure, let me know.

I am looking forward to seeing my sinusitis case. I hope, in view of the loving mendacity I expended on him that Shaiah the Man who *Preferred* Hospital is not a wholly extinct personality: I always wanted to meet him. In any case, whether I come or not, look after yourself in 1943: my wells of deception are practically dry.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH H. G. NICHOLAS 1942–1945

In hopes of seeing you,
Ever,
Herbert.

FROM H. G. NICHOLAS

British Embassy, Washington

Manuscript, 14 May [1943?]

My Dear Isaiah,

On the 4th day out I have got me a nice cabin free from the neuroses of MacColl & the public address system of the troops[?], and can now commune in quiet with my poor tormented spirit and with you. This is the original Hell Ship, if ever there was one. Were she to be found deserted in mid-ocean, Marie Celeste like, no one need be surprised. Our cosy little band of 16,000 of the rag tag and bobtail of the U.S. Army fits into the Queen's belly as snug as a bug in a rug – & that's no metaphor neither. In our little cabin of 14 bunks & 14 men we enjoy all the luxuries of mattresses – straw – a bathroom (no shortage of sea water, except in the morning at bathing time, when it's usually cut off), ample supplies of twice-breathed air, & a continuous flow of increasingly masculine conversation. But, as an ex-Yale sergeant remarked to [me –] 'fraternising', on deck – 'conditions aren't bad, I've been able to sleep on the floor of a cabin every night & I've even had one bath'. So, one doesn't complain.

Or if one does, there is Graham Hutton ready to pounce on the theme, turn it over to the fans[?], orchestrate it richly (what a lover of tubas!), invert it, play it over the old Ego motif and give it back to you fortissimo, sforzando & utterly unrecognisable. Alternatively that well known jive artist, René MacColl, may go to town on it, with his oft-admired piccolo variations which lead dexterously to a musical switch of all the other hits of the season, some of which, unfortunately, one has heard before.

There are consular band-masters too. Holliday of L.A. – not bad, though he provokes inevitable reflections on Hollywood's *per ardua ad astra* – a certain Rundle, aptly named, from N.Y., half undergraduate, half public servant, pure Betjeman. Herbert Hodge[?], taxi-driver, plays a skilful bassoon, Shakespearean

Cockney, cheering amid the surrounding 'igh life. Thornton, of P.W.E., is heavy, silent and depressed – appropriately. Two Nigerian Colonial officials, returning for *9 months'* leave, contribute nothing except sun burn & implied disapproval. Two underwriters from Lloyds under-read continuously. Chancellor & Haley, of Reuters, an interesting contrast in shits – just straight, anti-social, why-pretend-to-like-the-canaille shits – fill up – & I mean *fill* up – the picture.

It was inevitable, of course, that Graham Hutton should find himself seated for meals next to a young lieutenant from – just fancy! – Chicago. Inevitable too that he & René should have to air all the affairs – and I mean *affairs*, not what Senators have – of the BIS in open cabin, as you might say. Fortunately, they got most of it wrong.

So if I am depressed, don't blame me. I am thinking of catching one of the bugs which must certainly infest this very unhygienic ship & taking a fortnight off as soon as I get in sight of a comfortable sick bed ashore. The thought of bearing down on the American Division with this comedy team, one on each arm – as if I shouldn't be unpopular enough anyhow, after so long an absence. No, the matter is surely one for F.O.D. to handle.

'Do you think there is any use trying to explain to London the *inwardness* of the American scene?' said Graham. 'No', I replied, erroneously supposing that he wanted an answer, 'not unless you are prepared to repeat yourself over & over again.'

Now it is time for lunch. Officially, we eat only twice a day – at 10.30 a.m. & 8.00 p.m. So one stuffs on tuck at mid-day – biscuits, chocolate and such like nausea-provoking edibles as the canteen provides. The boat, from stem to stern, is covered, inches deep, in the discarded wrappings. For sheer filth, I've seen nothing like it.

*

Lunch is over. So's the voyage, thank heaven. This now comes to you by courtesy of the G.W.R., in the Thames Valley, somewhere beyond Reading. It is very, very green – worth coming home for. Also it is raining. I got into London this morning, spent the day with handclasps & gossip and am now making off into Wales to catch up at home on a little of that overdue sleep. In any case it's impossible to get a hotel room in London.

I found Robin in poor shape. Trouble purely physical, I think – ‘flu in the offing. But King Harold is no alleviation. He is *very* corned, giving away baronies, pledging dukedoms, bragging of his dominions & the loyalty of his subjects – with no one to contradict. The Eminent believe, because they are determined to believe. Let BIS brace itself – there is no question about his not coming back. And thick with plaudits too. At the very moment, of course, when the lumberjacks of the Treasury are seeking to log[?] their area[?] to about 1/3 of the trees on his estate. There, I promised Robin not to tell. So keep it to yourself. But Aubrey & anyone else concerned make[?] it[?] well known that Robin’s misspelt namesake has by no means shot his bolt, that very serious cuts impend & that although grim resistance is being offered by all ranks, it is very conceivable that the Generalissimo himself may haul down the flag rather than face a fight à outrance.

Daphne is a welcoming bit of ultra-violet. A little peaked perhaps, but substantially well. Has had Whitney home for a spell, with promises of once every 4 months in future. You know by now, of course, that a graceful surrender has been made to your purposive advances & that, if Establishments agree, you are to have her back on loan in December. The poor girl has had rather hell while I was away, & actually had to do quite a bit of stought[*sic*?]-hearted fighting while our New Surveys were establishing themselves. Grass now grows over the graves of the defeated, & a high opinion is held of the reformed product. Yes, you were quite right – Daphne pleads guilty to the charge of having sold A.E. on R.J.C. – says he was immensely pleased with the results & has a glowing opinion of BIS.

Frank is in low spiritual waters, rather quarrelsome & very, very boring. More like the animated bronze of The Public Servant than I have ever seen him. He badly needs a holiday – in America too!

Hamish frets, but welcomes warmly. Tom[?] Juta[?] is even more the same away from home. Barbara Hayes alienates faster than her worst enemy could wish – told us this morning how much more help she’s had here than in N.Y.

You’d better know that a disaster impends – though I doubt if anything can be done about it. As you know London has turned flintily against the Marett appointment as Ben’s successor. Instead they propose one Maxwell of Home Division. Provenance apart – though Home Division is, of course, the latrines of M. of I. –

Maxwell is a disaster. Imagine the stock figure of Barrister About Town, dress appropriately & equip with the usual, mostly salacious, gags. Construct to larger than life measurements, & top with features of thyroidal youth who has too much pocket money & loves his tuck. Animate, not continuously, but often. And you have Maxwell. He is not without executive ability & is kind to animals. Has been doing most of Home Division's dirty work in dealing with U.S. troops – I lost out to his boss, you may remember, on that issue – though, believe it or not, I have no animosity to Mr. M. himself, who was as I say a purely animated waxwork in the whole affair. But in U.S.A a disaster & even in his relatively insulated post in BIS a mistake.

It may be that Ben, as a fellow-barrister, knew & liked [him?]. Better inquire first! Robin doesn't know him & wasn't consulted.

Your obs. on Titular Berlioz of Laodicea were much enjoyed, though the grim hand of Gordon seems rather to overlay your para. on the Coal Strike. Give us the dirt – Shyer? Your first visit to the house on R Street is eagerly awaited, as also your continuing – I hope – bulletins on Aubrey's power politics in H.B.'s absence. Of these, by the way, Robin knows virtually nix – such information as is has been going direct to the D.G. We rely on our Assistant Grand Vizier as always, to keep us informed of doings amid the Hanging Gardens of Mass. Ave.

It is very good to be back – & also very bad. Britain is quite hideously uncomfortable: it is not a good idea to devote 4 months to going out of training for austerity. Also one is rather conscious of being a long way off – off, that is, from the NY. Times, the local crisis, the latest scandal, 'the field', in fact. Or perhaps it's merely that I caught a cold in that hell ship. Talking of which, look after your migraine. I am grooming myself for another orgy of perjury with your parents. And now I've not left myself space to say properly what I very much wanted to let you know – my thanks for your hospitality – I don't mean merely the late nights at the Shoreham, but your continuous time & trouble over Washingtoniana. Without you, as you know, I'd have stayed much longer to much less purpose – not to say, of course, pleasure. Horrid going away. I'm going to miss our chats. Write. Love,

H.G.N.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH H. G. NICHOLAS 1942–1945

Sorry about the fist – G.W.R. roadbed seems little better than the Pennsylvania.

FROM H. G. NICHOLAS

Ministry of Information, London

Typescript, 21 May 1943

Dear Isaiah,

It will scarcely surprise you to know that not everyone here views the problem of publicity about Reverse Lend Lease with the same seriousness as ourselves. While we do not have to counter the extravagant complacency which exists in a certain interested quarter in Washington, there is nevertheless a certain disposition to underestimate the seriousness of the situation. To counteract this, Robin wants Daphne and me to get together a collection of evidence, consisting principally of statements in the press and of prominent Americans, which would demonstrate that the problem demanded the most serious attention. We have practically all the material we need, thanks to your own cables and leakages, and I don't think there is any point in your combing your files for supplementary details taken from recent history. All the same, if you are conscious of having passed up anything we ought to have, we'd be glad to get it; at the same time, in reporting future developments, perhaps you will keep your eyes open for particularly quotable titbits. I enclose a copy of the Minutes of the latest brouhaha on this subject. They will prove the exhilarating quality of our deliberations.

On comparing the latest of the 'surface' or 'bootleg' copies of your weekly Political Summary with the final cabled version, I discover that the whole of your Evatt gem has been judged too dazzling for the twilight denizens of Whitehall. Robin, however, agrees with me that such disclosures ought not to remain undisclosed; appropriate leaks are being arranged, and, if you will pardon the channel, it is possible that Mr. Graham Hutton will remember hearing something of the kind from well-informed Washington sources immediately before leaving for this country.

We are pretty bemused by the coal strike. Nobody knows what is behind J.L.'s request for re-absorption into the A.F. of L. Please

tell us everything. Gordon seems still to be labouring under H.E.'s ban; at least, the Ministry of Labour have heard nothing. Not, of course, that they are resentful at such imposed ignorance: they like it that way.

I have had to cable Rolo about the fact that the Summaries are rather wordy and late. I suspect you of having been on the midnight telephone again! I don't think the trouble is anything which Rolo can't easily correct, but if he gets into a flap, assure him that (a) we love his summaries (they really are good, and are much appreciated); (b) that we don't want them to be any less full, only less wordy; (c) that I have not turned into a heartless ogre, but can't always spread the butter thickly when I cable.

Look after yourself. I am going down to Oxford tonight, and I find perjury less easy than of old. I have a lot of other things to tell you, but they must wait.

Yours ever,
Herbert.

[Enclosure not transcribed: 'Draft Minutes of the Informal Inter-Departmental Committee on Reverse Lend-Lease and Combined Boards Publicity held at the Ministry of Information at 12 noon on Wednesday, May 19th, 1943.']

FROM H. G. NICHOLAS

Ministry of Information, London

Manuscript, 29 May 1943

My Dear Shyer,

Your gifts have been presented and your parents once again misinformed. Not a word passed my lips about *migraine*. No doubt a second Guy Wint will turn up in a week or two to prove me for a second time perjurer & censor. For the moment however your mother, though not wholly crediting – how should she? – at least wears her blinkers with gratitude. My report on the state of Isaiah was given a dramatic lift by the sudden entry of Albert Hourani, browned by Eastern suns and jaundice, who, fresh from the plane, delivered *his* report on health conditions amongst Berliners in Palestine & points East. Any audience – had there been one,

besides your good father & mother – would have been prettily foxed by this fusion of Messenger’s Speeches and a Recognition Scene. As it was, thanks to good timing & the fact that both actors are by now pretty expert in their roles, the total effect was rather impressive.

By this time Graham Spry, first holder of the Richard Law Travelling Fellowship, will have alit on your shores. As an old Frank O. Darvall beneficiary, I am naturally a little jealous & suspicious of rival foundations, but, even discounting my own prejudices I’m damned if I can make out what the hell Spry thinks he is up to. I had a pow-wow with him before he left: he gave a general impression of conceiving himself as a Dr. Livingstone of the F.O., setting out with innumerable letters of credence (though minus a compass) to discover the source of the American political Nile. The data, when obtained, are, apparently, to be brought back, card-indexed, cross-referenced, and used as footnotes to a continuing, ever-expanding philosophical study of What Makes America? This termite-hill of shifting information is, apparently, to be administered by Spry, Allan Dudley, 2 girls & a boy. Its basis in Establishments or Departmental Rulings is hard to discover. The terms of reference of the Law Committee were restricted to U.S.A.-Brit. Empire: it is hard to find out which, if any, high official has endorsed this Spinozan concept of the Spry-Dudley atom-breakers that you can’t know anything about America until you know everything else. However, the F.O.’s philanthropic heart has been touched by this bold venture – even to the extent, as you may have seen, of asking Robin to cable B.I.S. to give Spry every assistance – a mode of F.O. philanthropy we’ve met with before. The Am. Div. shares my scepticism – bar Frank, of course, who has a Ph.D. susceptibility to these projects. Robin & I are convinced that it will not be long before Dean Stanley Berlin will have to come to the aid of Dr. Livingstone Spry: under a palm in the Shoreham?

H.E., I see, is determined not to allow these outrageous defamings of Dr. Evatts to cross the ocean. Please don’t be deterred. A small but appreciative public follows from week to week the machinations of the designing Doctor & gives them discreet circulation (verbally, of course).

I think our bootleg system is working out pretty well. Do you approve my device of addressing press enquiries *en clair* to Berlin at

N.Y. when I want a little information or guidance? I tried it last week on the Coal Strike (though in fact my enquiry crossed with the 2 weeklies, which largely answered it) & it seemed to work. It is based on the presumption that the cable will go to Rolo & that he'll get telephonic guidance from you as to which press story is giving a reliable report. O.K?

Delayed action bombs dropped by the Battling Butler on his recent hit & run raids over Whitehall & Bloomsbury are now going off one by one without any kind of warning. If they all secure the effect intended you will soon have the approaches to your Minister's sanctum lined with Advisers and Liaison Officers from every London department. That blest pair of sirens, Puckle & Joyce, have sung to such purpose that an Indian adviser is almost certain to be appointed. Before we're through the Home Office will want an Adviser on Refugee Problems posted on your doorstep. And meanwhile, for all our delaying actions, there is every evidence that the Treasury 2-handed engine is ready to strike hard at all the parts of the BIS that actually *do* anything.

Much speculation here on what Aubrey's game in face of the Butler return may be. F.O.D. very bruised at the cool response to our generous offer of him as *locum tenens* in N.Y. while Ben was ill. He is a very pathetic, frustrated figure, permanent $\beta\eta\tau\alpha$ και $\pi\epsilon\upsilon\tau\alpha\theta\lambda\omicron\varsigma$ of the Division these days. A visit to U.S.A. would be a fine cure for his disease, if only BIS would & could stand it. After all, we're putting up with René MacColl, Graham Hutton & Barbara Hayes *simultaneously*. And, believe me, Maxwell will be worse.

Waves of almost BIS restlessness and 4th year cafard are sweeping across the Division. We are in for an orgy of re-grouping & re-grading almost like the complications you yourself observed last year. My good secretary wants more pay. Hamish wants more work. Phyllis Bentley wants to leave. Abbie Chisholm (now back) likes her Nickersonian niche no better than she thought she would. I find Oxford more desirable than ever – even Daphne wants a promotion! We shall survive & shake down, but you ought to know, as Frank would say that we have our troubles no less than B.I.S.!

2 riders, since I began this (in a Southern Railway carriage):- Spry was our D/G.'s idea, in large part, though he didn't give him his present vast & woolly terms of reference & in fact his first

CORRESPONDENCE WITH H. G. NICHOLAS 1942–1945

choice was Gervase Huxley (now Director of our Empire Division in such spare time as his duties as head of the Tea Cartel permit): second, we now jubilate at the news that the Cruikshank report has been put into the w.p.b., though how or by whom this was effected isn't at this moment known. Don't let Butler arrogate any credit.

I am momentarily living, in intense discomfort, in Sir Norman Angell's chambers at the Temple, surrounded by ruins and moth-balls. Barbara Hayes had it opened up, out of pity for a homeless revenant. London is worse than Washington – at any rate there are no Isaiahs in any Shoreham.

Christopher has gone a-touring the African jewels of the crown. Barber is slated for the Exeter Rectorship (the Balsdon ticket was a flop, & Cheshire refused the nomination), but probably no appointment will be made yet awhile. I've not had time to pick up any more Oxford gossip yet – in any case, it's drab by the side of BIS, OWI, D.C., U.S.A. et al.

Let me know what egg-&-milk-shake Pritchard has to say about Mr. Byrne's new OWM. Looks phoney from here.

Don't overwork in the heat. Just concentrate on sending us the smut.

Nostalgically,
Herbert.

FROM H. G. NICHOLAS

Ministry of Information, London

Typescript, 1 June 1943

Dear Isaiah

Iverach MacDonald's reflections on his trip.

Fluffy and rather thin, I think; but he has paid a certain amount of attention to his mentors. I suppose that was as much as we had a right to expect.

Yours ever,
Herbert.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH H. G. NICHOLAS 1942–1945

TO H. G. NICHOLAS FROM A. R. K. MACKENZIE

British Embassy, Washington

Carbon typescript, 14 June 1943

Dear Nick:

I thought you might like a personal account of the press situation at Hot Springs. The whole episode could probably only have occurred in America, and in a tragic-comic way highlights the peculiarities of the American press world and its relations with the government in power. Whether it illustrates the complications likely to arise at all international conferences on U.S. soil, I do not know. If it does, it is rather a disturbing prospect, and the one comfort is that British press relations came out of the mix up with greatly increased prestige.

I went down to Hot Springs a few days early because I was arranging for the hiring of some rooms for cypher-purposes in the house of a friend of mine who happens to have a country place adjacent to the Homestead. I was thus able to nose around, befriending the hotel people and the press boys who were gathering at that time. I then stayed on for a week to help mobilize these contacts and also to get the press surveys organised. (The latter, both British and American, seemed to be genuinely appreciated by Law and the others).

About fifty press and radio representatives turned up, including many of the well known Washington correspondents – Roscoe Drummond (C.S.M.), Pete Brandt (S.L.P.D.), Jack Beall (N.Y.H.T.), George Dixon (N.Y.D.N.), Walter Trohan (Chic. Trib.), Gould Lincoln (Wash. Star), Richard Wilson (D.M.R.),⁷ etc. Being excluded from the Conference hotel they were parked out in little cottages and boarding houses scattered across the valley – some three miles away to their disgust. (Before the Conference started I had managed to assemble an unofficial list of their addresses and this came in very handy at a later stage).

As an operating room the press were given the Casino, about fifty yards across the hotel gardens. It was specially equipped for them with telephones, teleprinters and a broadcasting booth. From

⁷ *Des Moines Register*.

that point of view they were quite comfortable. They spent much of their time sun-bathing or watching the tennis courts. Despite all their violent protests, there were some who broke down and confessed in private that they hoped they would not be disturbed. Though *Life* magazine and several news stories insinuated that the Conference delegates were feeding from delicacies no longer available to the ‘much rationed American people’, it is worth noting that the correspondents themselves were feeding off the same menu, brought to them on trays straight from the hotel kitchen!

The hotel itself was surrounded by an armed guard of two hundred Military Police – very handsome, very polite, but very particular about passes and, of course, a constant irritation to the excluded newsmen. The first day the soldiers wore battle helmets. This raised such a howl from the press that they were hastily put out of sight.

It was possible for the pressmen to phone any delegate and they could question anyone walking in the grounds, but they could not enter the hotel. It was possible for the delegates to go and talk to the pressmen or to make arrangements with Mike McDermott of the State Department to hold a press conference in the hotel. There was thus no complete blanketing of news. Many of the delegations did hold official press conferences, including ourselves, though the press complained that the delegates of some of the smaller nations were so afraid of offending the Americans that they would barely give their names, far less a genuine interview.

It was clear at the start that the press were spoiling for a fight. The original protest against the exclusion order had come several weeks earlier from Roscoe Drummond from the *Christian Science Monitor* and had been based purely on the rights of the press, the principles of free speech, etc. By the time Hot Springs opened, however, the initiative on the press’ side had largely passed to people like Moe Koenigsberg of the Gannett papers and Dixon of the Patterson papers who turned the issue into a political campaign against the Roosevelt administration. This development was further evident in the escapades of Congressmen Bradley and Smith, both Republicans, who came up and tried to raise a scandal. (I was told off-the-record by one of the correspondents that Bradley – whose arrival in the middle of a thunder storm, which was raging concurrently with the state-wide blackout, almost

caused Mike McDermott apoplexy – that Bradley was driven up by a Hearst reporter).

We were one of the few delegations with press officers – Hinton and Campbell, with myself as an ‘honorary side-kick’. Our tactics were simply to stroll down to the Casino and talk informally with the boys. I suppose it was the easiest press relation job one is ever likely to be in on, for the pressmen had worked themselves up into such a state of hurt feelings that you could almost get a favourable story by saying hello to them.

We arranged a good number of informal personal talks with various personalities in the British delegation, and one or two highly successful full-dress press conferences. But it was the personal touches that counted most, and as a result many of the correspondents, sore at their exclusion which they blamed on the White House, wrote despatches declaring that the British delegation’s press relations were a model which every nation might usefully study. Charlie Campbell, being an old newsman himself, was singled out for special praise and well deserved it for his invaluable ‘leg-work’. Pete Brandt had a piece about ‘the alert young secretary from the British Embassy’ who was better informed about American press reactions to the Conference than the entire United States delegation, which made me blush a bit but was a further indication of the score we had made.

The one danger obviously was that we should be so much better and [more] careful with the press that we would arouse resentment amongst the Americans. But we were all aware of this danger and, I believe, successfully avoided going one step too far. The upshot was that after the Conference Pete Brandt recommended to the State Department that at future conferences they should model their press relations on the British example at Hot Springs.

The American press relations consisted of Mike McDermott of the State Department whose main job was to cool the press down. Chairman Marvin Jones talked regularly with the press but was a flop. Appleby fared better, but the rest of the American delegation made little effort to talk with the press and may have felt under a special restraint because of the White House’s line. It is perhaps suggestive of O.W.I.’s current status that it was not even represented at Hot Springs.

You will probably want to know my own views of the rights and wrongs of the situation. For what they are worth, here they are:

- i) There is no doubt that the affair was badly handled, probably from the White House; e.g. the two hundred soldiers with their battle helmets seemed an unnecessary aggravation.
- ii) The major gains were that the delegates were not pestered by news-hawks twenty-four hours a day. In view of the persistence of the average American newspaper man – shades of Cecil Brown and Singapore – that is quite a point.
- iii) It is clear, however, that exclusion of the press does not solve the problem. People like George Dixon are going to dig up dirt whether they get into the conference or not; and when left to their own imagination produce even more dirt than when they have access to the facts. The Conference almost certainly fared worse in the press because of the exclusion than if the press had been present, and public sympathy was dangerously alienated because the extravagant censorship made people suspicious that something dark and sinister was going on behind closed doors.
- iv) As for the future I personally would not have newspaper men stay in the same hotel as conferees, but I do not think that it is practical to exclude them bodily from the hotel.
- v) The responsible correspondents never suggested that they should be allowed to attend all conference sessions, but I think that some working arrangement would have to be made for the press to attend more than the first and last sessions, as was the case at Hot Springs.
- vi) Unless you can rely on the fair-mindedness, intelligence and sense of responsibility of each individual press-man, I see no fool-proof solution to the problems of a free press. We are a long way from that in America today and so the just have to suffer with the unjust. Maybe one way out would be to put on the press-men themselves the responsibility of choosing a group of representatives who would be given special privileges and would service all papers. But that, in the highly individualistic and competitive United States newspaper world, is not an easy solution.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH H. G. NICHOLAS 1942–1945

I should add that our press relations were also made easy by the high calibre of the British delegation. There is no question but that Law, Maud and Robbins were three of the leading figures of the Conference and their co-operativeness in press and radio matters was grand.

All in all then, Hot Springs was quite a scoop for us and confirms the conclusions I drew in a recent minute to Cruikshank saying that the stocks of the British Government's information services in the United States were higher than at any time since the war started. I don't think that we flatter ourselves if we claim that we are doing a good job. But neither are we blind to the fact that much of the current praise we get is simply a by-product of the deep discontent with America's own information policy.

If there are others in the American Division or in other sections of M.O.I. interested in this study of press relations in reverse, perhaps you will circulate this epistle on to them.

Yours sincerely,
[Archie]

TO H. G. NICHOLAS

British Embassy, Washington

Typescript, 21 June 1943

Private & Confidential

Dear Herbert:

I enclose a useful paper on American polls by Allardyce Nicoll. It is, perhaps, a little too hard on Cantril and his Princeton people, but still I think it is true and interesting.

O.W.I. seems to be falling fast and my sanguine views, with which you so rightly disagreed when you were here, seem to be unfounded. The most pessimistic prophecy is that Elmer Davis may resign even if the Senate restores funds for the domestic branch or the President vetoes the Bill, or both, since the thing is obviously aimed directly at him and the isolationists are baying like mad at his heels <(if, that is, the funds are in his view insufficient. He is no prima donna & will not resign out of pure pique)>. As a result the domestic branch, which has no guts in any case, will contract and retreat and appease and wither away. This will expose

the overseas branch in all its horrid nakedness with all its hundreds of aliens, some probably dubious. Again if they had civic courage they might pull through, but they have not. So they will fold up too or else, which is the same thing, be amalgamated into O.S.S. and a new Office of the Coordinator of Information, a hideously reactionary structure, will arise upon the ruins of the defeated Democrats. *Gegen Demokraten Helfen Nur Soldaten*, as the old song says and as North Africa illustrates. This is the most pessimistic view. But even at best O.W.I., at any rate domestically, will be intimidated into less and less and from our point of view will be more useless than before. Keith Kane and Co. resigned in time, it seems. I wonder what your O.W.I. in London are saying to you about this? It will be interesting to know. The whole thing was certainly precipitated by Davis' sudden attack on the press and by the singular reluctance on the part of O.W.I. officials to cultivate the press and Congress. Mr. Hoyt of the Portland Oregonian is arriving here today to take over command of the torpedoed ship. Mr. Cowles has gallantly offered to remain on the bridge until it sinks or limps into port only to sink slowly in the harbour. All this may be too gloomy but information is objectively lacking since the officials of O.W.I. are least informed of all and rush around like hens with their heads cut off, while the Senate is very broody and won't say except for Senator Nye who thought O.W.I. no loss. There will be a fight for O.P.A. funds and it may not be possible for the Government to fight equally vigorously for both. The causes of the debacle seem to be (1) hate of domestic O.W.I. as part of the President's political machine particularly for the Fourth Term. To attack it is a good way of wounding the President without incurring press censure. <'P.M.', which sees it as part of a G.O.P. conspiracy even if it hurts the war effort, is probably not far wrong.> (2) the South, although it will not secede from the Party, is undoubtedly upset about Negrophile tendencies and (3) the permanent irritation caused to the press by all information ministries. Bert Andrews in this morning's Herald Tribune is particularly bitter against Davis over his censorious attitude to the press for publicizing Washington rows and not advertising the work of the Administration better. Ed Murrow and Bert Trout both broadcast to the effect that in Britain, whatever the tribulations of M.O.I., Parliament would never dream of suddenly abolishing half of it. O.W.I., domestic as well as overseas, will, I

CORRESPONDENCE WITH H. G. NICHOLAS 1942-1945

think, survive awhile. My relations with it are virtually non-existent ever since the destruction of the Bureau of Intelligence. The surviving officials tend to call on us rather than vice versa, which is in a way satisfactory. If ever there was a case for not putting our eggs into the O.W.I. basket it has become infinitely stronger now. Ferdie Kuhn is wistful and unconvincingly hopeful about it all. Everyone knew that the domestic appropriations would be cut somewhat. This avalanche is a genuine surprise.

Hutton is full of the strangest tales about the future of Pangloss. Some people are anxious to send him to the high Bermudes but it is thought that he may see through that.

Yours,
Isaiah.

<I have met Boren. He is well named. He thinks you are almost as wonderful as Angus M.>

TO H. G. NICHOLAS

British Embassy, Washington

Typescript, 21 June 1943

Dear Herbert,

Thank you very much indeed for your two letters in manuscript and the official one. I hasten to satisfy your freshly stimulated appetite with as much sharp fare as I can find. For instance, I enclose a piece on Chandler which represents the limits of our present research.

Secondly, I must inform you that Byrnes' recent elevation, which certainly gives him genuinely strong powers, is regarded as a further knock for poor Wallace, as if he needed it. I cannot see why we should suppose that this will coordinate things more efficiently as it merely represents the re-shuffling of the old pack. However, the Republicans may be right in predicting that Byrnes will run as Vice President. The South will forget about his Catholic origin and Catholics are unlikely to raise a public hullabaloo.

As for lend-lease, I enclose more ammunition. I am indeed sorry to hear that this is not being taken seriously enough in London. The only person who could really remedy the situation

would be the Prime Minister himself, and he will not do it. Above all, it is important that the evidences of publicity for reverse lend-lease likely to be provided by interested parties here should be viewed as what they are, namely as being the sum total of what has appeared, or very nearly so, and not as samples of a vast supply.

Spry has promised me to tell Sir Stafford that he was struck most forcibly by the lack of realisation of these facts. Incidentally, the placid Mackenzie, the dervish Judson and the suspicious Rankine are deeply shaken by Spry's arrival, whom they regard as an enormous cuckoo in their nest, likely to usurp everything and drive them out of house and home. I have succeeded in calming these restless spirits, but clearly Spry's objectives are very obscure in his own mind. Sometimes he talks as if all he wished to produce was a report, a piece of deathless prose, the Spry memorandum to wit, the fount of wisdom for Cabinet Ministers for ever and ever. At other times a vast cooperative undertaking emerges from his talk requiring a Brookings-like beehive of research assistants adding endless chapters to the secret history of the political structure of American society. <You have since spoken out on this.> Can you throw any light? Can Robin? Can Daphne? Who are the army of allies in London building warehouses to receive the grains of truth which we, poor soil scratchers that we are, may with infinite labour furnish him? What, in short, is going on? Why have we (I add sternly) only been informed by a formal cable? What (I ask more plaintively) is to be your part, or Frank's or anybody's, in erecting this great memorial to our times? Light! Light! Light! That is what is required. Is there a more powerful diesel engine than Dudley moving this submarine? What racket is this of Crowther's? Where are we roaming? By this time our wonder will have been made clear. But pray do not advertise it widely or else Mr. Spry will hear of it and grow suspicious. I like him myself, for all his smoothness.

Mr. Hull, you will be interested to hear, is really furious with F.D.R. for not telling him the contents of his letter to Stalin, and the State Department are trying to find out from the Embassy in case the President dropped a hint on the subject to Churchill. Mr. American-Russian relations are managed by the President personally now to the deep chagrin of the Russian desk who are further incensed by the Joe Davis film, which, I must say, is enjoyable only in a very perverted sense. It is certainly effective

propaganda, hideously false to fact although a caricature in every particular, bowls rapidly and enjoyably along a Russophile, Americanophile, anti-Polish, anti-British path.

As for labour, the situation is very peculiar. The Lewis-A.F.L. business is not at all unexpected. The A.F.L. reactionaries – Tobin, Bates and especially Hutchison – have always wanted Lewis back, hoping, among other things, that this would re-establish the good old business no nonsense trade unionism of the Gompers era. Hutchison wants Lewis both as a battering ram against the C.I.O. and as a Republican ally against the President. Negotiations in this direction have been proceeding for over a year at the very least. If you remember there was a flurry about this very thing in the Spring of 1942 (reported in extenso by your humble servant), frustrated by Murray and the President. Clearly Lewis (a) feels the breath of the popular wind against him; (b) consequently is seeking alliances, and supposes that he will dominate the worn-out hacks of the A.F.L. and, possibly, even turn them into an anti-Administration weapon on the basis of rising prices and frozen wages; (c) he badly needs a diversion and can prosecute his blackmail more successfully with the A.F.L. behind him. On the other side Tobin is the fairly firm political adjunct of the Democratic Party, Green doesn't count, but Meany is apparently becoming moderately tough and has adopted a stiffer anti-Lewis attitude within the A.F.L. I have no doubt that the A.F.L. cannot reject such an ally and are convinced, poor fools, that they will hold him in leash. I am equally convinced that Lewis is determined to get into the A.F.L. and will inevitably succeed in cuckooing himself into its nest. The strike broke out afresh today and no man can tell the end, but it is likely to be settled somehow or another and Lewis will then try to swing the A.F.L. against the President in 1944 if only on the ground that the C.I.O. is for him. Unless Willkie is the Republican candidate his efforts will fail completely. In an election, say between Byrnes and Willkie (not so likely), Willkie would get the labour vote. There are others in the A.F.L. who think that by playing their cards shrewdly and frightening Lewis with the C.I.O., and the C.I.O. with Lewis, they might be able to capture both. This does not seem very probable. <All this is slightly out of date (owing to Mrs F.'s departure to Canada when I had assumed that this had been sent off. The present deadlock is really grave. The Pres. began by wishing to veto, then oscillated

away, & decided not to sign but not to veto (which would make the Bill law, but would save the P.'s face with labour particularly if he sent a critical message on it to Congress saying that the responsibility was theirs alone. The O.W.I. & O.P.A. offensives are a G.O.P. opening skirmish. I.B.> The total effect of Lewis' tactics thus far has been (a) genuine damage to the war effort – the miners have remediable grievances but Lewis rejects all the remedies, and (b) the strengthening of the anti-Labourites in Congress. He has not succeeded in getting anything appreciable for labour or in smearing the President effectively. In fact he is the nearest to Beaverbrook available here, with more power and more charm. Meanwhile, the Reciprocal Trade Pacts have passed by a largish majority in the Senate and the A.P. poll has been discredited completely. So much the better. I am against polls however spelt. Representative August Andresen today called for an investigation of Ben Cohen. The bad are very very bad. The good are not very very good. The President will be re-elected (pace Graham) with a Democratic majority. In 1946 the mixed-up peace will produce a Republican landslide. By this time we shall be talking over this in Oxford Common Rooms to the acute boredom and the resentment of our isolationist colleagues.

Nicoll's status has finally been settled. He is to be M.O.I. property body and soul, and his fortnightlies will I think be of genuine value. Although prepared to an F.O. recipe, they can be altered to suit your needs, so do tell us. I will report your paternal words to Rolo.

I enclose fugitive papers of possible interest.

Yours sincerely,

Isaiah.

FROM H. G. NICHOLAS

Ministry of Information, London

Typescript, 25 June 1943

Dear Isaiah,

Daphne has passed to me Edmondson's teletype on her telegram of 4th June about newspaper clippings. The object of the telegram was to strengthen your hand in whatever efforts you may

be making to secure a little extra staff. We know, of course, the difficulties that exist at Washington, and hope that if we put on record the loss we should sustain by a failure to provide us with a fairly consistent clipping service you might be in a better position to get a little extra assistance. Needless to say, if your efforts fail you will not have to endure any recriminations from us.

Edmondson's complaints are very wide of the mark. The reason that Miss Chisholm was moved to other work was that, while the importance of the service she rendered was recognised, the extent of it was not such as to justify the full time employment of a senior assistant specialist. In addition there was a certain amount of illogicality and over-lapping in the arrangement by which the supply of material of this kind was taken away from the Survey Department, whose function it properly should be. Accordingly, as you remember, the arrangement was made that these activities should be split up between the New York and Washington Survey Department, and that in particular the service of clippings should be taken over by Nicoll's assistant. If this is vacillation, let them make the most of it. I attach a teletype which you may, if you judge it advisable, send back to New York for me.

I suppose it's the heat.

With best wishes,

Yours ever,

Herbert.

[*attachment* (expanded teletype)]

26 June. Isaiah Berlin from h. g. nicholas. Suggest you point out to Daphne that Nicholas specifically put on record great value this and other Chisholm activities and only recommend transference to Survey Department because volume repeat volume of material didn't justify full-time employment of SAS.⁸ Am authorised by Chisholm deny this sore point with her and she agrees with me in thinking Daphne shouldn't be allowed to get away with such misinformation.

⁸ Senior Assistant Secretary?

TO H. G. NICHOLAS

British Embassy, Washington

Typescript, 29 June 1943

Dear Herbert:

Your report has reached me and has impressed me most deeply. I think that it is without exception the most remarkable document on American opinion that I have ever read, both because it is brilliantly written and is the richest in content. <I hastily add that this is first blast, to spare your vanity. Morning light may make me more pernickety.> I shall not write to you about it now but shall do so at slightly greater leisure next week. I think it is in places unfair and over-bitter but the pros easily outweigh the cons. If it ever got into the hands of a taxi driver I should fully understand his compatriots' reason for wishing to make a separate peace. I guard it with my life. I hope Aubrey and Scott Rankine will do the same. Nothing has ever churned me up quite so strongly on the subject of this country and I therefore intend to write you a long letter on the whole subject. <'This remains true.> In the meanwhile let me deal with your more ephemeral points.

1. Lippmann: Your Division seems easily given to ribaldry, since we said in our telegram that the book had been airmailed to you on June 9th, and since your letter was dated June 15th why should you be so surprised at its non-arrival? Six days are but an instant in the sight of B.O.A.C. and the bag room swear that it did go on June 9th. Presumably it has arrived by now. In any case Butler seems to have sent a dozen copies at about the same time to various person, including the Minister, Frank, Robin, etc. What happened to these? Of course if you still lack a copy (which seems inconceivable) some appalling mess must have occurred either at your end or at ours. Our hands, however, are clean, so address your fops <I said '*colleagues*'.> sternly and tell them they should have more faith.

2. As for advance copies in general, I fully appreciate your point about the Minister, etc. I have spoken to Fowler and although apparently capable of occasionally getting hold of advance copies he stubbornly declines to have nothing [sc. anything] to do with the dispatching of such books or any books, or indeed anything

other than the forwarding of publishers' lists to Professor Nicoll and the posting of selected prepublication copies to Washington for transmission to you. This looks at least as silly to me as it does to you and I hope to be able to arrange for New York to transmit them after all. But in any case we will do our best. Nicoll's present notion seems to be that what you most hanker for is books by Americans on America. I assume that you are only a little less interested in books by Americans on foreign issues and have instructed him in this sense. Consequently you will probably get Larry Lesueur's book on Russia sometime before publication, an event, according to Nicoll, against all precedent, and therefore to be encouraged. Ultimately your provision of books will have to depend on the (1) thoroughness and (2) judgment of Nicoll and Archie Mackenzie (I do not doubt (1). You will be able to judge (2) for yourself) plus Fowler's soft ways with publishers. I shall try to jog their elbows every week. But what seems quite certain is that no initiative with regard to books is going to occur in New York. You have only us to lean on. With this, alas, you must put up as best you can. We shall not fail you.

3. You say in your letter that you have enclosed a letter to Fowler. There was no enclosure, nor evidently would it have served its purpose since Fowler, a firm figure, flatly declared to have nothing to do with the selection of books.

Yours ever,
Isaiah.

FROM H. G. NICHOLAS

Ministry of Information, London

Typescript, 30 June 1943

Dear Isaiah,

Many thanks for your Bulletin of June 21st on the failing health of O.W.I. Since then the patient seems to have taken a further turn for the worse. We greatly enjoyed your dismal narrative; in fact it incited us to cable you for copies of the Appropriations Committee hearings. I am told by O.W.I. people here that they

make very juicy reading, and that many of our neighbours are pilloried in person.

There are one or two things which still seem a little puzzling:

1. Why did Elmer Davis fly off the handle and attack the Washington correspondents in his Boston speech? Surely he must have known that that was asking for trouble.

2. Is there any evidence that O.S.S. are actually sharpening their knives, and using the North African troubles as a further ground for assailing O.W.I.? From here it looks a little like that.

O.W.I. in London, so far as I can gather, because we do not see a great deal of them, take the view that the axe is not likely to fall on their neck directly, though they would certainly be harmed if the domestic side of the parent organisation were to be assassinated. But since they do relatively little apart from encouraging British editors to believe that the New Deal is still a going concern (e.g. they have stimulated the Stationery Office into publishing the N.R.P.B. Report, to which several dailies and weeklies have given up earnest columns of comment, without any awareness of the fact that it is as dead as last year's mutton) they do very little at all. I cannot think that they would seriously be missed, although it is always nice to have them around.

Thank you for meeting Boren. I should like to have been present at that conversation. I think it would bruise Angus Malcolm too much to be told that I rival him for first place in the Oklahomans' affections. I shall keep the compliment to myself.

Yours ever,
Herbert.

TO H. G. NICHOLAS

British Embassy, Washington

Typescript, 2 July 1943

Dear Herbert:

All is well. If a combination of persuasion and sternness is applied, you shall get your books as per arrangement attached, via Barnicott by Nicoll and Fowler.

I shall be writing separately about the Fortune Poll. I cling to my previous views: I disagree with you, as you know, about the

likelihood of old time isolationism; and nothing in any poll seems to me to shake the probability that business imperialism pushing prongs ubiquitously, modified by internal turmoil as a weakness and disorganizer of coherent policy, is the likelier prospect at present. Vide Lodge's last speech. <Willkie is now jubilant about the Democrats breaking up. All depends on the four months before election, I feel sure.>

Tout à vous,
Isaiah

<Two curious bits of dirt:

1. J. Trippe is trying to create a 'Pan-American' chain of banks, an owner of utilities etc. everywhere, with W. Wassermann (now in London for B.E.W.) as legman (he is a pure adventurer, knows Boothby etc.) & Francis Biddle as front.
2. Beaverbrook is trying to create an Anglo-Am. newspaper cartel with Roy Howard, now in England, a new but obvious idea, capable of pincer political movement on any issue. IB.>

[Not transcribed: Attachment – memo to Mr J. D. A. Barnicott from A. Nicoll, 1 July 1943.]

TO H. G. NICHOLAS

British Embassy, Washington

Typescript, 7 July 1943

Dear Herbert:

1. Herewith copy of Senate hearings on O.W.I., mutilated for air mail. Full volume containing B.E.W., etc., appropriations inquiry will reach you by sea. The House equivalent on O.W.I. is not easy to get and weighs 1,000 lbs. and will have to be sent by sea ultimately.
2. Clippings: Your letter received. I quite understand. Your teletype to Edmondson will probably not be forwarded as I am a reckless appeaser and bad blood stauncher. However, the following will be done. Nicoll's girl is fully occupied so that thrust back on our own devices we shall all mark like mad and cause the

results to be despatched to you once a week (more frequent sorting is at the moment impractical). Rolo promises to send you N.Y.T. and P.M., consequently there may be some duplication, which you should not mind – insight into our selective systems should be most instructive.

3. I enclose a document on Landon which confirms everything, Fortune or no Fortune <(it is still circulating here, so F.O. will get it much later. So kindly say nothing).>

4. The upset at O.W.I. about the holocaust of the M.O.I. Home Intelligence Survey is considerable as they regard it simply as a vote of no confidence in themselves and their discretion. We are trying to assuage, but even the accommodating Kuhn is bristling. Agar is to be filled with indignation by O.W.I. and in that form sent back to you to be discharged at all relevant parties in the Ministry. We have obviously not heard the last of this. Bud Wilson & Co. ask whether we simply mean not to cooperate with them in the future or not? Could you explain or cause to be conveyed that if matters are left where they are now rumours of what was in the document may leak out, if only through indignant members of O.W.I. who will have read it and feel insulted, which will cause its contents to be viewed as diabolical rather than the relatively mild document it really is. <If our present course is persisted in, Drew Pearson's etc. stories are only a matter of time.>

Yours ever,
[unsigned]

<P.S. your Midwestern friend Price having politely replied to your note about sending the Public Administration Clearing House Bulletin is suddenly clamlike. Not a copy has he sent, despite 1 reminder from me. I don't know if you wd like to write direct; I don't feel like rejogging. Meanwhile the C of Commerce bulletins should be useful to you. I.B. (I'll try & get the[? – to?] legislatures somehow).>

TO H. G. NICHOLAS

British Embassy, Washington

Typescript, 7 July 1943

Dear Herbert:

About the Fortune poll. We must remember that it was polled before the Japanese atrocity stories, that Cantril, who does it for him, is very much in with the White House at present, and in particular with Hopkins who does not encourage bad news, and is jealously anxious not to have the President worried, and finally that Cantril's surveys⁹ are smaller than that of any other pollsters. With all these provisos in mind, what is one to think? I think that on the basis of pure impressionism and without accurate polls one might safely conclude that the President has an excellent chance of being re-elected in 1944 because the South certainly has no other candidate and is not frantically displeased with the President himself; its worries are largely concerned with (1) questions of patronage and State independence over which compromises are possible; and (2) things like the racial issue, which is anti-Republican <as much as anti-Roosevelt> and over which they would not dare to elect a straight anti-Negro President; they dramatize themselves as just emerging from Reconstruction, and certainly do not propose to secede at this time. All talk of alternative Democratic candidates – Byrd, Gillette, etc. – is so much nonsense if Roosevelt is available. Whether the war is on [*sic*] even if drawing to a close, his chances are good and the poll does not seem to me to offer any data which disagree with the general impression in any startling fashion.

As for the people's faith in the President as opposed to Congress, this may have been true in February or March when the poll was taken, but it is certainly not true today. The country is bewildered, nobody has troubled to explain the issues between the President and Congress, and neither the House nor Congress are in particularly high repute. The Republicans have started a definite campaign of disruption and all this is grist to their mill <- Certainly the recent flurries in Congress, over appropriations, subsidies,

⁹ samples [HGN].

O.W.I., N.Y.A, etc. are straight Republican barracking. Tant pis tant mieux is the definite policy now. I enclose views by David Lawrence indicating what form Washington Republican smearing is taking at the moment. I.B.>

Farley is working hard to elect a Republican candidate since his only chance of recovering the Democratic Party is by breaking the New Deal, whatever the immediate consequences. He estimates that the Republicans will reap such a whirlwind of unpopularity over their certain muddling of post war issues that the reconstructed Farley Democrats will make a triumphant comeback as the progressive (poor man's) Party in 1948; hence virtually open negotiations with Mr. Spangler, etc. Everything really depends, as you might suppose, on who is elected President in 1944. If it is Roosevelt, then, even with a hostile Congress, we shall get something done, i.e. some sort of international structure may begin to be built on fairly genuine foundations, since governments can actually do quite a lot however strongly opposed by legislatures and special interests; and the President would certainly go all out and damn the political bosses in his last term of office, noting that the Wilson story cannot literally repeat itself because internationalist sentiment in America, however vague, is just strong enough not to be flouted openly again. <This is 100% optimism. But we may as well behave as if this is possible by Balfour's act of faith (or was it Bryce?).> If we get Dewey or Bricker, then we are just as certain to get a party of imperialist consolidation, i.e. business expansionism, uneasy relations with the U.S.S.R., uneasy cooperation with us punctuated by continual collisions and a Europe and America arching their backs at each other, with U.S. business tentaculating (good word don't you think?) everywhere. If Willkie is elected we shall get a colossal mess, but I should estimate that in order to get elected at all he would have to make such concessions to the Republican machine with regard to a good many Cabinet offices, and the bosses will be in power in Congress to such a degree, that the situation will not be much better than under Dewey, although native Fascism will be siphoned off much more successfully than under either Roosevelt or Dewey. All our hopes should, therefore, rest on Roosevelt, as usual. <Dynamite, I fear. And just what Willkie & Krock accuse us of. Krock has just attacked Willkie about something. He is determined to be on the worst possible terms with all Presidents of the U.S.>

What the Fortune poll does prove is that there is enough pro-Roosevelt international sentiment in the country in general for Republicans to have to pour lip-service in their talk. All these notions of Vandenberg and White, all this Spanglerism, all this relative cooing from Taft, is due to passionate desire to eliminate foreign policy as an election issue and fight the election out on precisely the principles on which the Congressional election of 1942 was fought, i.e. purely internal issues. <Clare Luce alone has been brazen enough to say so in so many words.>

While less pessimistic views are <held by most of our colleagues>, I do not see that there is much cause for taking heart from the Fortune poll. <(Marquis Childs told me that our Minister was *most* optimistic about F.D.R., our future collaboration etc. at the precise moment at which Roy Howard, in London, told Clapper that never had the President's public stock fallen so low etc. Both must be taken with vast amounts of salt, I suppose.)> That 56.2% should think that President Roosevelt had done a good job on home problems connected with the war, and that 30.8% should think it fair, that 44.8% should think that a good job had been done on rationing, and 42.7% on giving out war news, does not correspond to any other known set of facts. Otherwise Congress would not have dared to behave as it did. All the 1942 chickens are coming home to roost. Senator Van Nuys observes that there is a new spirit abroad in Congress and that it will assert itself more and more. What is there to be so pleased about? Anti-isolationism? Isolationism in the old sense of confinement to the forty-eight States is certainly dead in my opinion. We argued about that when you were here. As for internationalism, the sentiment is there just as it was there in 1918, the opposition is there also as it was there in 1918. <Roosevelt is a better tactician & less set in his views than Wilson. That is all.> The vote of thirty-three Senators for the Danaher amendment to the Reciprocal Trades Pacts Bill was, to me, most significant since this amendment, asking, as it did, only that notice be given, that the Congress might upset trade agreements entered into by the Administration within six months after the end of the war, represented not vested trade interests, not this or that piece of tariff log-rolling, not even the general attitude to free trade or economic planning, but sheer desire to record the caveat about Mr. Hull's <well known> unbridled New Deal political recklessness. The fact that thirty-three Senators could be

found to vote for this against the Administration is significant of the true temper of the Senate. Doubtless every effort will be made to conduct international policy by executive agreements and not by two-thirds majorities, but the Senate is keen on treaties and it is doubtful if the President will be able to slip this by. The latest resolution, the Vandenberg one, is so empty that it makes even the Fulbright resolution look bold and concrete. In a sense it is worse if the Senate, in deference to such public opinion as the Fortune poll reveals, passes an empty resolution of this sort and so stifles criticism awhile, than if a fight over the issue were to occur today. The country at large would certainly be horrified by an isolationist outcome of such debate. <And we should gain by ventilation.>

Distrustful since I am of polls and specious as I think the reasoning of Fortune to be, I am not, I confess, in the least impressed. It is all touch and go; if Mr. Roosevelt is re-elected, if somebody other than Mr. Hull be Secretary of State (say Sumner Welles), if the Senate is not impossible, if Britain and America do not have a real row in the meantime and things like civil aviation are not allowed to clutter up the issue, then the general temper of the people seems to me to be benevolent enough and malleable enough to expect and support the genuine efforts at international collaboration that the Administration may make. I think all these circumstances are perfectly possible, there is, therefore, no reason to despair.

I do not think that it matters very seriously, so long as there is a determined Administration in Washington, what the mountain States think, whether they are on the whole isolationist or whether, as the Fortune poll indicates, they are the very opposite (I do not believe that polls of this type have any real significance in rural areas of this sort, with the sampling extremely vague, and people always agreeing with any rosily coloured proposition provided it does not affect local issues or questions of livestock, etc.). You must remember that during the election of 1942 isolationism was regarded as so taboo that it could not be mentioned publicly <beyond the Alleghenies>, yet the electors produced some of the worst isolationists of Congress in spite of this. I do not believe that the opinion <of the 'backwoodsmen of Alabama' in the Weekly Tribune's quaint phrase, caught by Krock & pilloried,> matters because they have no strong sense of foreign affairs and unless led by a Borah will not actively oppose the Administration's policies

provided something is done to assuage their economic interests. It obviously matters far more what the Middle West thinks because it controls so many economic, political, and publicity stops of the organ. Our victories and defeats will come in Detroit, Cleveland, Columbus, Pittsburg[h], and possibly the Northwest and California. I do not believe in the possibility of the mountain and prairie Senators ganging up on the rest of the Senate and blocking everything. I may be wrong. Certainly for our propaganda we must assume that I am wrong and tremble nightly at the prospect of Wyoming and Idaho and Nebraska and Utah deep asleep and unaware of Fifty Facts about anything. But I believe that if <(per impossibile)> we have Washington and Detroit and the South we shall get as much of what we want as we are likely to get in the near future. From the point of view of long term propaganda, the situation is, of course, different and Nebraska, etc., acquire importance. In short what all this tortuous rambling comes to is that public opinion is amorphous and fluid and not an independent predictable factor. The Washington Administration can, if it chooses, even without O.W.I., take it for a ride on foreign policy in <almost> any direction it chooses. Nothing has jelled, and because nothing has jelled, everything depends on the Presidential elections to a far greater extent than any other factor. And the election itself depends on the accidents of the last four pre-election months. Until October 1944 nothing should be taken for granted, even if Congress passes the most rousing internationalist resolutions. Least of all should the Seventh Article of the Lend Lease Agreement be regarded as an Ark of the Covenant, as it seems to be for our people here and in London.

But the extraordinary thing is that no pronouncements should be made by us on foreign policy. In the present soft but favourable pro-internationalist mood of the country (the more the Republicans stir up the cauldron of internal affairs the quieter they are trying to keep the foreign issue on which general agreement is by them alleged to exist), voices from England are apt to be most influential. The most fatal thing of all is the notion that British policy cannot finally be determined until the direction of the American cat can be seen; the cat will never jump, at least not until the situation in Europe is much clearer than it is ever likely to be <(or we dangle a fish)>. We must make a set of alternative plans predicated on (a) full American co-operation, and (b) changed to

meet various degrees of lack of such co-operation and even existence of obstruction. Are we doing that? Do speak to the Cabinet. The only unforgivable fault is easy procrastination on our part because of our uncertainties about the future. In the matter of foreign policy we shall have a chance of pulling the Americans along with us now, i.e. by facing the State Department with specific proposals, and, if they dally, placing the onus on them, <publicly if necessary,> which is bound to have an effect sooner or later because things leak out, even if not through the press and the radio.

What really makes one despair is one's realisation that the front is principally economic, and that besides Opie and Noel Hall there is no one here to deal with it, that the Americans have an array of competent and tough, if ignorant, economic diplomats whereas we have Opie and Noel Hall. Public opinion for the moment is just sufficiently not anti-British to enable us to do something on the executive level. But I am sure we won't. This, and not the putative back-to-subnormalcy wave in the Middle West, is what brings tears to my eyes. Full isolationism is no more possible here today than not going to war was in England in 1939. But the period of phoney internationalism (like our own after the last war when, whatever anyone may say, collective security meant nothing to Mr. Bonar Law's or Mr. Baldwin's governments) is perfectly possible unless the President is re-elected and sacks Hull. If this happens I really think there is a chance of a workable Four Power system and sensible arrangements in Europe.

You know how I love to go out on a limb. I dare say I shall be forced to swallow all my words sooner than even I expect. But you asked for my convictions and you have them. You have only yourself to blame. <I shall write separately on your fierce travel notes.>

Yours ever,
Isaiah.

<I doubt if I have made myself clear on F.D.R. & foreign policy: what I mean is that (1) Foreign policy is his new & undying hobby & internal affairs will never absorb him again & (2) whatever promises he may have to make before the election, his general trend is clear, & if re-elected he will try & implement his views in any case. IB.

Your letter of the 30th June just arrived. The appropriations hearings are indeed juicy reading, & you shall have them all (O.W.I. is only in vol I of the House series). As for the answers to your perplexities, we are in the same boat:

(1) Elmer Davis blusters at Boston out of his own sweet will, & following the Pres' example. There are theories of course of deliberate New Deal showdowns as cf. Wallace-Jones, but all this is hideously unlikely. Davis is liable to bursts of temper & political stupidities. O.S.S. are certainly sharpening knives, but they are always ready to pounce & never know when the hour will come. Their attitude to the French is more anti-Gaullist than even the S.D.'s, for sheer black reaction, Russophobia, Gaullophobia, etc. no equals exist. The anti-Gaulle feeling in official circles here is frantic – there is talk of arresting De G. etc. of a loose kind, & columnist talk of need for 'drastic action' (Con. Brown & other stooges). I cannot say what even our moderates here, in the Embassy, think of our own policy in this. It is technically true that Overseas O.W.I. will be untouched. But get hold of Percy Winner, passing thro' London, on the lowdown. Elmer has swallowed all humiliations & remains on the bridge. The episode of the British-American survey is boiling merrily, as O.W.I. think we think or you in London think you can now afford to snub them. IB.>

FROM H. G. NICHOLAS

Ministry of Information, London

Manuscript, 7 July 1943

My Dear Isaiah,

Many thanks for your long report on OWI's failing health. Your death-watch will rank among the most faithful in history. It all makes very pathetic reading, especially in the context of all the other Washington reverses. We are watching one of the more dreary scenes in the pageant of American Reaction. Why don't your hired men just take a gun to Joe Starner[?]?

I almost regret that we haven't any prospect of a Congressional investigation into BIS. Ben has just arrived, ridiculously

mustachioed, with his ‘plan’. What a bad play it is, with the same situation recurring in *every* act, but with the actors one degree hamier every time. There is absolutely nothing about the new ‘plan’ which we haven’t had before. It simply takes us back to the old set-up – autonomy for New York, a little reorganising of departments inside the Morgan Co. Store – underwear to adjoin milinery, gents outfitting to be moved to the mezzanine etc. – no liaison with Washington, no shaping in terms of policy, just the production of some good selling lines and the working up of one or two new ‘notions’. If Washington could be abolished, it might work, but in fact our Minister can no more be ignored than he can be respected, and what will actually happen will be that decisions will continue to be taken by H.B. about which N.Y. will not be informed and that chaos will be worse confounded.

Certain characters in the drama seem to have undergone a strange reformation. To have Grant Mackenzie appear as a heart of oak, efficient, able, and *loyal* – oh! – is only less remarkable than to find Gumbo Greeley tricked out and caparisoned as the press officer sans pareil. What are we to believe?

It will probably go through. Everyone here is so sick & tired of the eternal roundabout that they’ll agree to anything. And Ben is pressing hard. Robin dislikes it, but I doubt if he feels prepared to fight it. Frank will minute endlessly and talk everyone to sleep, but that won’t get us anywhere. I hear that Aubrey is pressing to come over himself – that rounds out the pattern of Spring 1942, doesn’t it? The old salesman would scarcely be selling the Sibylline books – ‘a fine set, sir, getting rarer with every repetition – we shall never be able to repeat this line at such a cut-throat price’ – for anything approaching the same rate as 18 months ago. This time, I have no doubt, he would be content with nothing less than becoming *Minister*.

At the moment Mr. Butler’s staff are dropping about our ears as thick as platitudes from those Panglossian lips. Scarcely a plane arrives on these shores but one of your colleagues steps out, blithe and debonair, bearing one set of Butlerian orders directly contrary to anything we may have been told from the same source. The latest of these pantry boys are Campbell and McDougal: the Division found difficulty in putting on even the semblance of a welcome, save for kind-hearted Robin. If only your golden-voiced

self were to drop penny-wise from the Butlerian heaven our curses would turn to blessings. Why not?

In fact though it's ceasing to be funny – or even absorbing. It's just about as full of charm & interest as the love life of a slatternly fish-wife. The only things I look forward to with any pleasure nowadays are your weekly cables. And even they contain such double-dyed horrors as make the flesh creep to read them.

Incidentally, do you see Will's[?] USLONS (or shouldn't it be *uslonta*)?¹⁰ If not, you'll be interested in the flights of purely *political* speculation in his latest – that the reason FDR won't appoint a food czar is his fear of creating a political rival to himself. Don't suppose you can keep our David off the grass but he's certainly straying onto your pasture.

Your protests on the unannounced Spry were greatly appreciated. By now, I take it, my letter has made all plain. He will cause us trouble on return, I fear, by knowing everything and teaching us all our business. Not that he's a fool or ignorant, but his head is turned a little by the trappings of his mission. You must take him in hand and knock in a few Locke-ian *simple* ideas: it's our only hope.

Tales circulate that you are living with Mrs. Anne Freemantle. I congratulate you on your discrimination, but had thought you more celibate. Is it a Georgetown establishment in the approved style? And is it in protest that Mrs. F. has left all & gone to Canada? How distraught you must be I judge from your having *returned*, along with 'fugitive' papers of your own, my letter to you asking for more dope on Lend-Lease. However, since you seem to have acted on it, no one's the worse. It was too indiscreet for filing, anyway.

Lastly, what's this I hear about you hob-nobbing with Lord Beaverbrook? Item. Did see Lords Berlin & Beaverbrook conversing i' the Pantiles', as Robin's 18th cent. correspondent would say. Come clean.

The bag is due to leave. Will write you more when time serves,
Herbert

¹⁰ In Greek type in original.

TO H. G. NICHOLAS

British Embassy, Washington

Typescript, 14 July 1943

Dear Herbert:

Your gift touched and delighted me. I have a passion for Mr. Forster which I can hardly express in words. I only once met my hero and we discussed at length what kind of candle each of us likes best. It was the silliest and dullest conversation in which even I, who am indiscriminate about such things, have ever indulged.

I am about to commence my Quarterly Report spinning it all from nearly nothing. The Foreign Office axe has fallen and the Political Summaries are to be shorter still as Sir A. Cadogan apparently sends frantic messages every week about the appalling situation in the F.O. Cypher Room. If the Political Summaries become thinner than ever, you will know whether the blame lies. A little propaganda in favour of greater rotundity from London will be most welcome.

I have had an affable and interesting letter from Angus Malcolm and shall never deliver the slightest criticism of him again.

My letter of July 7th: I hasten to correct Mr. Cantril's name in lines two and six. The person responsible for the Fortune surveys is, of course, Elmo Roper. Otherwise the text stands. Cantril is a moderately honest man and fitted out with new funds now conducts surveys of his own for the White House, etc. Elmo Roper is much more illiterate and comes from Nebraska of which he is ashamed. Nevertheless his patriotism must have got the better of him on the subject of participationism (perhaps that is the best word after all – it comes from F.O.R.D. report) of the Mountain and Prairie States.

It is fearfully hot and like the Sybil I have lost all desire to continue. I am actually physically well. My parents continually inquire whether I still cough. Robin's view of their view of me as an expiring Mimi is obviously correct. Do tell them that I never coughed at all, even when at death's door. It was not that sort of pneumonia.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH H. G. NICHOLAS 1942–1945

I live in Georgetown, it might be in Brazzaville, and fall asleep nightly over the most thrilling passage in the Congressional hearings reports, which is all I read. This part of my life does really seem most unreal.

The worst thing here (I suddenly observe) is the French policy of U.S.G. which is swiftly and surely welding all French groups together on a common platform of anti-Anglo-Saxondom. Giraud and De Gaulle representatives are inseparable, nor will the arrival of Mr. Matthews of Vichy fame from the London Embassy help much.

The latest statement from O.W.I. is that Ray Roberts of the Kansas City Star, who presides over the editors [*sic*] advisory committee attached to Mr. Hoyt, announced that they would not sell anything, not even the war, only stimulate the flow of news. The unsold commodities of O.W.I., spiritual and material, find no buyers or even takers as free gifts. 'We shall fight if necessary alone.' The lend lease news is very cheering if it comes off. Presumably you know about it.

Goodbye.

Yours,

Isaiah

<Do give my parents my regards.>

FROM H. G. NICHOLAS

Ministry of Information, London

Typescript, 16 July 1943

Personal.

Dear Isaiah,

I think it was you who first of all suggested a visit by Miss Freya Stark in order to present some other viewpoint on the Palestinian question beside that of the Zionists.

Since then the thing seems to have got bogged down in the most extraordinary way, the Speakers Section for the last two months having failed to secure the necessary initial invitation. I suggested to them that they might consult with you when going

CORRESPONDENCE WITH H. G. NICHOLAS 1942–1945

about the job. I don't know whether they did, but I wonder if you could check with them and sprinkle them with a few ideas? It should not be too difficult, surely, to find some organisation that would invite the vivacious traveller to address it? Unless we get something soon we are liable to have an indignant Stark planted on us from Cairo, eating us out of house and home and complaining about the inefficiency of the B.I.S. Could you, combining *discretion* <N.B. I said *discretion!*> with valour, go to work on Miss Hayes?

Yours ever,
Herbert.

Postscript.

We have just heard that 'the matter is delicate and difficult. Hoping secure invitation Chicago Oriental Institute.'

FROM H. G. NICHOLAS

Ministry of Information, London

Typescript, 16 July 1943

SECRET AND Personal.

Dear Isaiah,

My convalescence is being greatly sweetened by pages and pages of green screed from the Information Office of the Embassy. Sweetened, but probably retarded; one cannot sup on such a diet of scandal as you provide without one's temperature soaring from time to time. I have been able to supplement your strictures on Mr. Wasserman from my own personal experience. You will remember I met the whole family (what a gang!) at the Donald Hall party where you were trying to pump him about Australian lend-lease. I have also seen him in operation over here, where he is usually thought to deserve well of the republic. But I agree he is a crook.

I have been thrilled by your news of the Beaver's attempt to do a deal with Roy Howard. It was certainly in the cards. Daphne will be telling you more about this subject, but it certainly helps to explain Roy Howard's visit. That, by the way, has been a hideous headache for everybody, since he has behaved like the most

tiresome form of spoilt child, cancelling engagements, wasting people's time, etc. He is like the hero of a horrible kind of inverted school story, in which the fat boy who gorges himself at the Tuck Shop, lets down his House, refuses to turn out for cricket practice, etc., ends up by becoming Captain of the school because of his father's influence with the headmaster – in fact, pure Narkover.

Incidentally, I ran into Tom Driberg the other night, morosely dining alone just after being sacked by Lord B. (I take it you have heard about the circumstances of this?) He was bleeding all over, although he will still draw six months' salary and professes to be well rid of a degrading employer. He also drew solace from the fact that such diverse champions as the TRIBUNE, the CHURCH TIMES, and Mr. Hannen Swaffer, had come to his rescue. More practically, he was speculating about the possibility of doing a kind of Westminster Newsletter, a weekly column on the British Parliament for some American newspaper syndicate. I am a bit sceptical about getting any American syndicate to carry a regular column on Parliament, but if anyone could hold American interest on the subject I am sure it would be Tom Driberg. Robin thinks the idea very well worthwhile, and proposes to help him in 'shopping around'. There is not of course anything we could do officially. You might bear it in mind when gossiping with your friends, the private secretaries of newspaper tycoons.

I can see from your (don't deny the authorship) 'Important' and 'Secret' and agonised Empax 560 about the anti-de Gaulle campaign that you are feeling about it every bit as acutely as we are here. There are times when I feel so humiliated that I think we might almost as well put up our shutters. Of course Marquis Childs is quite right in his stories of Mr. Eden's distress; in fact he might have added that there have been very bitter scenes between the Foreign Secretary and the P.M. The U.S. Embassy here are playing exactly the same game as the State Department, working on incoming Americans and dishing out the same style of anti-de Gaulle inventions. The disclosure by Ernest Lindley of the intemperate directive cuts away the last line of retreat open to our self-esteem. I can just imagine how humiliating this must be for you in Washington. At the moment of writing I still do not know who has been responsible for this leak, or whether it was even a leak at all. There is a disappointing lack of indignation in the British press. Wilmot Lewis' comments, which I enclose, are only

CORRESPONDENCE WITH H. G. NICHOLAS 1942–1945

really forceful to someone who knows the background other than through reading THE TIMES. The best philippic so far has come from Harold Nicolson in last week's SPECTATOR. I suppose you will be seeing this?

There is a general attitude in high quarters that to make a fuss about this kind of thing is rather silly and irrelevant. It is a subject of which people are tired, like the re-organisation of B.I.S. I agree about being tired, but I cannot think that either is unimportant or that the prospects on either front are anything but hideously dismal. I hope you agree. Besides the prospect of a weekend at Oxford, that is the only comfort in a gloomy world.

Yours ever,
Herbert.

[Not transcribed: Enclosure – article from *The Times*, 'Americans and Gen. de Gaulle: Division of Opinion', 'from our own correspondent, Washington, July 13', 14 July 1943.]

FROM H. G. NICHOLAS [Ministry of Information, London]

Carbon typescript, 16 July 1943

Dear Isaiah,

Frankly I have ceased to be able to keep pace with the labyrinthine developments which have flowed from my rash pair of letters to you and Fowler about advance copies. The last of your shattering broadsides on this subject finds me in bed recovering from a mild bout of influenza. In such a condition I am quite incompetent to pass upon the beauties of Nicoll's triangular arrangements for despatching these pre-natal volumes via Barnicott, Fowler, et al. I prefer to rest my simple faith on your first three words, 'All is well.' In full confidence in your bounty and wisdom we await advance copies of everything from O.W.I. on Lend Lease to Berlin on Beaverbrook.

But I must defend us against the charge of flippant ribaldry made in your letter of June 29th about the Lippmann book. It was not of course that it took long to come, but merely that it was so late starting. That a pre-publication copy should not have left until June 9th (i.e. about a week after the book was on sale) – that was

CORRESPONDENCE WITH H. G. NICHOLAS 1942-1945

what produced belly laughs among the lower orders. Not but that all is forgiven now, and copies are as thick as State Department canards. Mr. Butler's copies unfortunately are not yet to hand, since they were despatched by Sea Bag.

As to the kind of books we hanker after, the important thing is not whether they are about America or by Americans on foreign issues, but simply whether they are the kind of book which will create a rumpus or a great wave of curiosity. As you say, something like Henry Cassidy's book on Russia is just as important to us as a sensational tome on the State Department. But I need not burden you with this – I am sure you know what we want.

Many thanks for your efforts. I hope I have not wearied you with my importunity.

Yours ever,
[Herbert]

FROM H. G. NICHOLAS

Ministry of Information, London

Typescript, 20 July 1943

CONFIDENTIAL.

Dear Isaiah,

I enclose a copy of a letter I have had from Charles Rolo. As you know, he undertook to let us have, and was indeed engaged on the compilation of, a 'key' list of magazines, newspapers, commentators, etc. when I was in New York in April. He is now backing out of this particular obligation on the grounds that he has not got adequate staff. I have gathered from various other indications that his staff problems have become a good deal more acute, and I have consequently simply replied to his letter asking him to do the best he can and have refrained from pressing him on the subject. At the same time, I feel this is a matter of rather crucial importance.

If we are to use the morning and weekly summaries to best advantage; in a sense, indeed, if we are to use them intelligently at all, we must have as it were a key to them which will tell us what the various newspapers and individuals stand for. Of course, a

CORRESPONDENCE WITH H. G. NICHOLAS 1942–1945

great deal of this is common knowledge. A great deal of it we already have in our files; you may remember that the Survey Department (to be more precise, I think it was Daphne back in the halcyon days of 1941) did just such a survey about two years ago. But we have nothing that is both up to date, comprehensive and authoritative and we feel the lack of it rather badly.

In a letter to Daphne of July 1st, Archie Mackenzie suggested that we might draw up a kind of priority list. It's a little hard to do this, but I would suggest some such order as follows. Leave to the last the large east coast newspapers about which we all know, New York Times, Tribune, Washington Post etc. Start with the small out of town journals about which we know nothing. (Could not the consuls, by the way, be induced to turn in analyses of these?) Reverse the order insofar as broadcasters and columnists are concerned, because here our information is scanty and patchy even about the most important bodies. Beyond that, I find it a little hard to give you guidance. I think we can leave the magazines to Mary Cook. From what I have seen of her work on them, she is obviously filling in the gaps admirably.

Yours ever,
Herbert.

<P.S. We have, of course, the concentrates you prepared for Wright which are by no means despised. Also some 'impressions' of Bill Ormerod's, with which you might collate any findings of yours on broadcasters. H.G.N.>

[Enclosures not transcribed: copies of a letter to HGN from Charles J. Rolo, 29 June 1943, and of HGN's reply, 20 July 1943]

[Not transcribed: letter to HGN from Allardyce Nicoll, 26 July 1943, about HGN's letter to IB of 16 July about advance copies.]

CORRESPONDENCE WITH H. G. NICHOLAS 1942–1945

TO H. G. NICHOLAS

[British Embassy, Washington]

Carbon typescript, 27 July 1943

Dear Herbert,

I enclose an anonymous report sent by Chicago. It seems to me so dull that it is scarcely worth inquiring the source; but Graham Hutton is so anxious to have his wares circulated and we so fearful of withholding local colour from you (even when, as here it is hardly perceptible at any rate to the naked eye) that I forward it to you as an example of what not to read. I have kept no copy – it is yours wholly and irretrievably.

Yours,

[Isaiah]

CORRESPONDENCE WITH H. G. NICHOLAS 1942–1945

FROM H. G. NICHOLAS

Ministry of Information, London

Typescript, 29 July 1943

CONFIDENTIAL

Dear Isaiah,

I enclose clippings of a pair of articles in *Time* and *Tide*. As you will see, they have been written under a Washington date line; you may therefore be in a better position than we are here to identify the author. For my own part, I can only say that I agree with every word, though it seems to me that here and there he has soft-pedalled his opinions in the interests of American sensitiveness.

You may also be interested to know that *Time* and *Life* have been sufficiently excited by these items to make pressing enquiries of *Time* and *Tide* in the hope of uncovering the identity of the author. I am told that they have not been successful in this, but that they may nevertheless think them worth cabling home.

Should they appear, in whole or in part, in the American press, I should be naturally interested to hear about them.

Yours ever,
Herbert.

<Keep this under your hat, you old gossip!>

[Enclosures not transcribed: 'America Today and Tomorrow', *Time and Tide*, 3 July 1943, and 'America Today and Tomorrow – II', *ibid.*, 10 July 1943, both 'from a correspondent, Washington, June'.]

[Not transcribed: typed transcript of 'Changes in the Foreign Office', from *Time and Tide*, 6 March 1943; extracts from same with comments by IB and others.]

CORRESPONDENCE WITH H. G. NICHOLAS 1942–1945

FROM H. G. NICHOLAS

Ministry of Information, London

Typescript, 30 July 1943

Dear Isaiah,

The Air Bag has been a little slower than usual, and the last item I have from you is your letter of July 14th. I had already noticed, however, that something was eating into your Political Summaries; I had suspected the Foreign Office axe. [Comparing the original and cabled versions of your report on the Wallace ouster, I notice what a lot has]¹¹ been slashed. I have talked about this to Robin who, needless to say, agrees that we are the losers by this sad abbreviation. The difficulty is to find any way of helping [you]. As you know, we are merely courtesy customers, and the F.O. are not likely to accept any formal complaints coming from the M. of I. The best we can do is to remark, whenever anyone from the North American Department comes into view, on the surprising brevity of recent Summaries, perhaps caustically suggesting that F.O. appetites are easily satisfied. Robin suggests that perhaps something could be done by way of dividing your Summaries into a hot cabled and a cool airbagged section. I notice you are doing something of this sort already, but perhaps instead of making the division on the basis of the relative importance of the various items, it might be feasible to make the cable more of a headline summary or precis. That would give us the bare bones of everything while it was still hot; the flesh, blood, and make-up would not lose if it were sent by the slower method of the Bag. Do you think there is anything in this? It would certainly meet our needs better than any other system I can suggest; at the same time I can see that a headline cable, though meatier, would not necessarily attract the same audience of distinguished, if slightly jaded, Cabinet Ministers. Best of all, of course, get the F.O. to do something about their Cypher Room. It is outrageous that they should be cutting down on their American Intelligence at this stage of the war.

¹¹ Bracketed matter deleted in top copy, as is 'you' 2 lines below. The first deletion is marked 'IB.' in the margin.

About the Home Intelligence Survey and its holocaust. It all proceeded from a sudden rise in the blood pressure of B.B. on discovering the frankness, not to say brutality, of the comments on Wendell Willkie. From then on, he became impervious to reason and it has been quite impossible to induce him to make any modification of the sweeping order that all copies were to be destroyed and the whole report scrapped. It may be that the reverend Herbert Agar may be able to put on a little of his best ecclesiastical pressure and so save something from the wreckage. No one else is prepared to risk burning their fingers by going too near the flame. Incidentally, should I judge from your remarks that O.W.I. have in fact seen copies of the incriminating document? We had hoped that our countermanding cable would arrive in time to secure the recall of all copies – or at least all but the two intended for Elmer Davis and Kuhn. What happened?

Your old friend John S. Knight has been beating his wings around the capital. No one has yet disproved the truthfulness of Cane's allegation that he is here for purposes more sinister than censorship liaison. At the same time it cannot be pretended that he is doing a very effective job at anything else. He lives in the Savoy, has an office in the Prudential (which, incidentally, is merely *Postal* Censorship), is generally to be found in a morose melancholia around the various bars of the town, complaining that he hasn't quite enough to do. He is the most crashing bore, and is quickly acquiring a reputation of having been invited everywhere once. B.B., tenaciously holding to the opinions expressed in his savage rebuke to you, acclaims him a jolly fine fellow, but shows no desire to linger in his company. At the moment we are contemplating attaching him to the 'Go climb a Tree department', and allaying his cafarad by a weekend at Ditchley. Nobody really knows what he is here for, though everybody agrees that he is an impending power in the land, the Hearst of tomorrow. The Ambassador, when sounded by our spies on the subject, said he had never heard of him and did not know he was in the country. Mysteriuser and mysteriuser.

<Bank Holiday rush supervenes.

Will write more later.

Yours

Herbert.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH H. G. NICHOLAS 1942–1945

P.S. John S. Knight paid his 1st visit to M.o.I. yesterday. A Viscount was found for him in Censorship!>

FROM H. G. NICHOLAS

Ministry of Information, London

Typescript, 3 August 1943

CONFIDENTIAL

Dear Isaiah,

We have received from the B.I.S. the first two instalments of Mrs. Cook's surveys of magazines and periodicals. (You may remember that she was engaged on these when I was in New York, by way of supplementing the report which was produced in 1941 by Daphne.) We are very glad to have these and I would say that insofar as Mrs. Cook's abilities and knowledge carry her, the project is first-rate. The drawback is that these assessments contain no more than what an intelligent and hard-working person can obtain by a reading of the magazines alone. Whenever she attempts to get behind the scenes, assess the personalities in the editorial or the proprietor's offices, or the interests which control these journals, one is conscious that guesswork (and not very good guesswork, compare the observations on the Atlantic Monthly and the Reader's Digest) is being substituted for knowledge.

I haven't written to Charles Rolo about this because I think it needs slightly more delicate handling. Mrs. Cook has done her best and her product is useful but it needs supplementing by someone who has a much more intimate and authoritative knowledge than hers. Could you see what can be done to fill out the picture? It would be a pity if such a very useful project were to be robbed of half its value. We really do need authoritative estimates of what's what in the U.S. magazine world, both for the guidance of my own Section and also for the supplying of material which is undertaken by Phyllis Bentley and Roger Machell.

Do what you think best to help us out.

Yours ever,

Herbert.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH H. G. NICHOLAS 1942–1945

TO H. G. NICHOLAS

British Embassy, Washington

Typescript, 4 August 1943

Dear Herbert:

I enclose some self-explanatory documents in answer to your inquiry about Catholic publicity about the treatment of French and Belgian clergy as possible material for Parliamentary answers. This speaks eloquently for our somewhat weak Catholic intelligence. It is difficult to remedy this with present staff and present incumbent in New York, but as a result of the industry of Nicoll we are now fairly well informed about Catholic reactions in general although we have no facilities for research on specific points. Perhaps this, too, will be remedied with time and sufficient ingenuity on our part. There is a plot in progress. If it matures things will look up. If not, not.

I am still brooding on a reply to your report which I can assure you will reach you in due course.

The temperature is well over 100° and I am incapable of thoughts on any subject. As a titbit for you you may as well know that Mr. Hull said off the record to an acquaintance of mine this morning that the only true friend the U.S. had in Europe was the Italians. When asked why he added 'At any rate they do not have a paper called "The Times".'

Another titbit is the fact that the text of a telegram concocted by Messrs. Cot and <(French)> Senator Maroselli to congratulate De Gaulle and Giraud on l'embrassement général was turned down, by of all people, Kérillis and Fernand-Laurent on the ground that they were far too good Republicans to wish to congratulate any two generals on anything.

A major Jewish explosion is expected and I am lying enormously low and have said nothing to anybody for a month. A great trial of discretion and patience. You probably know all about it. I hope that it is wise but even more fervently hope that it is soon over. <But latest news is that it has been nipped. There – be intrigued.>

How about our cable on Scott Rankine and Daphne? It would be nice to have an answer soon. We have refrained from sending a

chaser in expectation of Ben Thomas' report. Personally I should much prefer Daphne to come in October at the latest rather than January as work of her nature is what we are particularly shorthanded about at present. Could you jog? <I should be *most* thankful: even if it means that she is to return to England earlier in 1944. And will you simulate *some* decent enthusiasm at the prospect of Scott-R? thank you, by the way, for your message via Seigneur Marett. What an admirable replacement for Alexander! it is thought that A. wd not have behaved as he did if he did not feel his permanent F.O. essence safe beneath the stream of B.I.S. appearances. Spry is touring the South. Sir R. Campbell is very displeased about Dudley & the Law Committee's terms of reference. There is a rumour (v. secret) that D. Hull is to be R. Law's secretary. There!>

I feel rather acutely our lack of contact with O.W.I., if only so far as pure gossip about their internal politics is concerned. A long letter giving an hour by hour account of the 'moronic little King' episode was sent by Bowes Lyon to P.W.E. It is difficult for us to be equally well informed as they are still bristling at us about the suppressed survey, and intensive questioning, depending on intimate relationship, is therefore not practicable, at least so far as I am concerned, and Alexander is useless and going anyhow, and there is really nobody to replace Kirke in that regard as Marett is likely to stay in New York and Grant McKenzie¹² is not useable for this. Some quite different technique will have to be devised. I shall likely pump someone like Adams I think. Meanwhile the facts seem to be that the Italian flurry was caused by Messrs. James Warburg and Barnes. Warburg is, of course, none other than the mysterious John Durfee, as you probably know. They acted entirely off their own bat while Sherwood was in the White House writing the President's last, very dull, speech. Sherwood and Rosenman now write them exclusively and very poor they seem to have become. Warburg is very hysterical about it all and decided to strike a blow for liberty, come what may. Krock seized on it before anyone else, muttering 'at last the Communists have rendered themselves into my hands' and not only persecuted them in the

¹² <He is really not a bad paper shifter & hack. So keen that he refuses to let Bathurst have *anything*. He is all you think, of course, but technically not impossible. So glad to have made this letter unfileable. IB.>

'Times' himself but got others to do so. Hull duly blew up and got the President to reprimand Sherwood who, in his turn, took it out on Barnes whom he blasted on the long distance telephone to New York. Barnes defended himself angrily telling Sherwood that he should listen to his own people <not the enemy> (i.e. that the broadcast was to England not Italy, contained quotations from the U.S. press not the official view of O.W.I., etc.). Nobody has resigned yet but they all feel very upset about it. <Sen.> Frank M[a]cDermot{t}, correspondent of the 'Sunday Times', called on Barnes in the middle of all this, found our Mr. Miall of P.W.E. there, and asked Barnes why this discrepancy between O.W.I. and B.B.C. Barnes defended his position (which so far as the 'moronic little King' is concerned is sympathetic enough, but in declaring that Mussolini's resignation was an event of virtually no significance seems ludicrous), supported apparently by Mr. Miall. M[a]cDermot{t} is said to be much shocked <by latter> and to have complained about this to London. A solemn meeting of O.W.I., State, War, Navy, and P.W.E. seems to have been held and at which everyone disowned poor Warburg who cried, and stormed, and protested that he would fight on. All his anti-Presidential stuff of 1936, when he wrote a pamphlet against F.D.R., has now been raked up. The details are not very important, but the upshot is the Overseas Branch of O.W.I. is now under steady fire. The Washington Post wants to turn it over to O.S.S., the State Department is waiting for it to fall into its lap; Sherwood has managed to get away for the moment by making a public apology, but it is really impossible to tell, certainly O.W.I. cannot, whether or how soon State Department control will be finally imposed upon them.

Meanwhile the State Department are confirmed in their belief, officially denied by us, that 'The Times' is the mouthpiece of the F.O., particularly on Russian domination of Eastern Europe, quoted (regularly by Daniell) by people like Shirel, that whatever our official line 'The Times' *is* the expression not only of unofficial but of the vast majority of official British opinion on foreign affairs, of all, that is, save the Prime Minister himself.

Vansittart's broadcast again infuriated Mr. Hull (it was enormously reproduced in the 'Baltimore Sun', beside that, only in 'P.M.' so far. The 'Baltimore Sun' (they are quite right about its significance) also quoted an 'eminent Englishman' (all this you will

have got in our surveys) on feelings of liberals and labour in England about appeasement in French and Italian affairs. We all think that this means Wilmot[t] Lewis, but that is not quite certain. I am almost entirely convinced that it is.

Meanwhile Mr. Deneen Watson refuses to come to any compromise with Spangler on the perfectly good calculation that the strength of his movement rests on the full Willkie programme and that it would be time enough to compromise at a much later stage when the elections really loom if Willkie can be sold as the Republican candidate with some concessions from both sides.

Meanwhile Wallace, whose speech shines by the side of the President's, is getting a steady stream of letters from readers asking how long they must keep silence about their betrayal by the President and Hopkins, and some even suggest a Willkie Wallace ticket. The last is absurd, but some serious New Dealers maintain that if Willkie were named President they could at least fight in the open and save the demoralisation of the entire liberal cause in the United States. If Wallace were a genius he could still rally the discontented liberals and 'little men' into something very Bryanite. He seems to me to lack the necessary qualities and will probably fizzle as usual. I still retain my belief (a) that the President may well be reelected and (b) if this happens a Republican Congress, even a predominantly Republican House, is not too likely. What we would be more likely to get would be an opportunist and unsatisfactory Fourth Term.

I do not deny for a second authorship of the French telegrams about which we all feel with equal and deep bitterness.

If you have any dirt on the four visiting Senators from Angus Malcolm do tell me.

If life becomes intolerable I shall take a holiday in late August-September. Please tell my parents, if you see them, that I am very well and frightfully busy and will write.

Yours

Isaiah

[Not transcribed: Typescript headed 'Mid-Western Sentiment on Foreign Policy as Represented by Congress'.]

FROM H. G. NICHOLAS

Ministry of Information, London

Manuscript, 5 August 1943

Dear Isaiah,

I find that my wallet still holds one tangible relic of my American visit, in the shape of a \$20 bill. Could you do me the favour of accepting it and spending it for me on one or two items of Americana which are unobtainable here? From time to time I notice books which I'd like not for M.o.I. but for my own library. If I told you of them could you buy them for me? They could be sent by the bag – the excess of weight and the violation of principle would alike be trifling, yes-no?

As the first of which, could you get me THE MIND AND FAITH of MR. JUSTICE HOLMES – Max Lerner, Little, Brown & Co. \$4.00.? Most grateful if you could. Needless to say there's no *hurry* about it.

If this is all a bore don't hesitate to say so. But keep the \$20.00!

So, Mephistopheles, you judge the time is up & relentlessly claim your Daphne Faustus? There are cries of *Lente lente currite* from one end of the Division to the other – all the way, in fact, from my room to Robin's. But we both realise that we sold ourselves by our rash promise of last December & now that Reckoning Day has come round we are not the men to fly our creditor. Your Daphne you shall have, if Establishments can be induced to play. She herself, noblesse obliging to an extravagant degree, refuses to have views or preferences & insists on being instructed, like a dutiful subaltern. In fact, of course, she'd love it – though only on a *visit*.

P.S.-R.,¹³ though – there's a rub. You aren't, I take it, offering him to us as a serious substitute for Daphne? α . he wouldn't do her work [Greek type *h^os*] too routine-ish and all that. β . we should find 6 months of him too-too ... But if your offer is a happy thought merely to hoodwink Estab^{ts}, that too will not do, I fear.

¹³ Paul Scott-Rankine.

He is, after all, a 2nd Secretary: she is, on paper, a mere J.A.S.¹⁴ They don't pair off.

But can't we do this?:- We do need – & *badly* – someone to take Daphne's place & do the hard, rather chore-ish job of 'organising' our material. It's difficult – indeed virtually impossible – to get anyone on this side who has the American knowledge & is at the same time 'junior' enough to do the hack work. Alas there are grave Establishment difficulties about getting anyone on a temporary basis, merely for 6 months. Couldn't you in return for our donation to your harem, send us, not your Grand Vizier, but one of your better Pashas? I mean, of course, Archie Mackenzie. He too would 'benefit by a visit to G.B.!' And he'd be 10 times as much use to us as P.S-R. I sympathise with your desire to have a brief release from Winston Churchill & his master & your reluctance to lose Archie – but, after all, we are giving you the fairest flower of the Am. Division!

[Of course, Con would make an excellent substitute for Daphne. But I don't suppose she could come?]¹⁵

If you want a holiday from P.S-R. couldn't a 'refresher' visit by him be arranged anyway? He is entitled to a trip home for a couple of months under the Frank O. Darvall Travelling Bursaries Scheme, I should think. If Clark of Chicago surely P.S-R. of Washington?

These at any rate are our thoughts. I say 'ours', because Robin agrees and Daphne is docile. There'll probably be an official reply along these lines after an appropriate delay. Incidentally, may I, *very* humbly, remind you that cyphers are seen by F.O. & that perhaps the less we let them see about Daphne & Surveys etc. the better? It's only a suggestion of mine but I wonder how readily they would jump at the chance of 'smearing' the equation of Daphne & P.S-R. etc. What do you think?

A curious telegram from D'Arcy asking who wrote the TIME & TIDE articles I sent you. I was puzzled. Surely he ought to ask you, since it's a 'Washington correspondent', not us. *T. & T.* of course won't let on. It did seem to me that here & there I could guess at the authorship, but then he didn't ask for a guess ...

¹⁴ Junior Assistant Secretary?

¹⁵ HGN's square brackets.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH H. G. NICHOLAS 1942–1945

Your parents are well – talked to telephonically, though not seen recently. Look after yourself in Brazzaville.

Ever,
Herbert.

P.S. Since we're talking of visits & exchanges, why not one from you – this autumn, or in New Year? Once the Primaries begin you'll be a prisoner of the elections right on to November. It would do us good to have a month or 2 of our Isaiah 'fresh' – good as Isaiah 'canned' continues to be. HGN.

P.P.S. You were too kind about my report. If, after sleeping extensively on it, you've any murmurs, let's have them. HGN.

FROM H. G. NICHOLAS

Ministry of Information, London

Typescript, 6 August 1943

Dear Isaiah,

I should be very glad if you could send this on to Senator Maloney. It is a desperate attempt to keep him on the Party lines.

Yours ever,
Herbert.

[Not transcribed: Letter to I.B. from Leonard Miall, British Political Warfare Division, New York, 9 August 1943, enclosing the following 3 items; 'The O.W.I. and "The Fascist King" – No. 2', 29 July 1943, signed by Leonard Miall; ditto. No. 3, 30 July 1943; typescript headed 'Private and Confidential/B.B.C. North American Service/Intelligence Memorandum/Weekly Survey of United States Opinion/Date: 19th-26th July' (at foot: 'Enquiries on this subject to Professor Brogan, North American Intelligence').]

FROM H. G. NICHOLAS

Ministry of Information, London

Typescript, Not dated

My Dear Isaiah,

Your parents remark acidly that you may still be writing but that for their part they would prefer a minor opus which they received to a magnum which was continually in process of composition. I do no more than pass on such an observation without comment since for my own part no such sad alternative exists; indeed I am sometimes conscious that I may be purchasing my own rich flow of Isaiah prophecies at the price of a certain neglect of the home front. I should be ungrateful indeed if I protested at such a system of priorities, however improper.

I haven't in fact seen your parents in some weeks, my Oxford weekends having become horribly fewer. But I spoke to your father on the phone the day before yesterday. He seemed well and assured me that your mother was in good shape.

Here, in Heartbreak House, we persevere on the treadmill. A little less spontaneity perhaps, certainly not much confident morning about us at the moment. To be frank, I think the ways of thinking of BIS and the American Division are drifting apart again. Recent visitors, Ben and Hinton for example, to say nothing of the egregious Clarke and the remittance-man Cambell [*sic*], have proved abundantly what has long been a haunting suspicion, that on a host of points of policy, as well as in general approach to the problems of Anglo-American relations, we and BIS are in fact talking different languages. Often communication is just not effected. It became most glaringly evident in discussion on the subject of Hinton's successor as head of Speakers and Exhibitions. We contended that the post should be filled by someone of a certain stature who would mean something to Americans as well as being an efficient paper shifter inside the office. Faute de mieux we suggested Bonamy Dobree. Ben, on the other hand, wanted some ex-assistant master at Caterham, now managing director of Morleys, a second-rate advertising firm, name of Packard. But the whole Ben plan reeks of the same thing, envisaging BIS purely in

terms of its own internal mechanism, an efficient department store which delivers your purchases, gift-wrapped, in almost less time than it takes you to order them, and relatively unconcerned about the quality of its personnel and the impact that they, as individuals, make on Americans. If this goes on we shall have in New York a slick service station, winning golden opinions from all its satisfied customers, but practically worthless as an instrument for implementing any policy – if we had a policy, which we clearly haven't. More and more, it seems to me, the weaknesses of palace government, with 'loyalty' the only test of virtue, and Aubrey's 'activism' the substitute for independence and integrity on the part of the rest of the staff, are beginning to make themselves felt.

Do I talk nonsense? Or are these merely the gloomy exaggerations of someone who is beginning to have his doubts about the beauties of propaganda in general?

Many thanks for your further reports on the war against OWI. Clearly nothing but unconditional surrender will satisfy the State Department on this front at least. Elmer Davis was in extraordinarily good spirits while here, confident, never a care for past or future, and sure that his prospects in European political warfare would more than make up for his losses on the home front. His colleagues in the London Office are certainly laying their plans for expansion; the Times has carried a want ad for the past five mornings, 'Wanted, Boy with bicycle, for messenger work. Apply OWI.' What will Representative Ditter make of that? Incidentally what are OSS up to stimulating Anglo-American labour contacts? They have here a charming man, George Pratt, sometime radical lawyer in Kansas City, who is busily bringing over unobtrusive representatives of the Railroad Brotherhoods, Metal Workers etc., and throwing them at the heads of their English opposite numbers. The results appear harmless, at any rate so far, but scarcely anyone seems to know of this, and I am puzzled to think of a Strategic Service under which such activities could be listed. Who in OSS at Washington fathers this? And is it merely a little errant liberalism in a sea of Donovanism?

Miss Evangeline Bell is learning German. The General as Reichsfuhrer?

Your Baltimore Sun clippings have just arrived. Statler Service. We find it very hard to believe that the Sun would fabricate such a poor journalistic device as playing up Wilmott Lewis as front page

news and dubbing him ‘prominent Briton’. Robin suspects H.E. himself, especially in view of the last paragraph’s allusions to Lord Halifax’s 6 months’ efforts to keep Italy out of the war. ?

Incidentally, keep an eye on Paul Patterson when he gets back. As you know, he was always rather a silly old man. This time he has somehow or other heard a lot more than he should and is very likely to go around spilling State secrets.

The congressmen, thank God, didn’t stay long. They mostly hob-nobbed with the U.S. Army, a fact which betrayed itself only too obviously in their broadcast, with its picture of a tireless and invincible Army Air Force, breaking all records in its day and night totals of bomb loads on Germany, with the RAF operating, retriever-like, a commendable Sea Rescue Service, which picked up such rare Fortress crews as had to make forced landings in the German Ocean. They were unimpressed with everything British except Mr. Churchill.

The Division was treated last week to a wonderful double-feature programme, when the Reverend Herbert Agar and that eminent lay preacher, Bill Weymack (Latest recipient of the Harold Butler Travelling Fellowships) gave us a fine antiphonal discourse on the essential soundness of the corn belt. In Washington, admittedly, confusion and partisan wrangling. But on the farmsteads, in the small towns, brows still sweating from overtime in the hayfields were wrinkled with honest endeavour to mend past sins and find the narrow path to ONE WORLD. Here isolationism was as dead as last year’s weeds. In its place a new hope was blooming, a new resolve – though not, apparently, a new deal. The war was not far away, they were not incurious about Britain, much less hostile, and they had signed the pledge never to sin no more. Seldom have we been treated to such a fine pair of inspirational addresses. Coming as they did after a long series of Cassandras and Jeremiahs, from Ed Murrow to Robert Lynd, they fell upon grateful ears and the meeting broke up in a state of quiet exaltation. I felt like the old agnostic in the back row of the revivalist meeting, unable to join in the ringing Hallelujahs, but not prepared to affirm the total eclipse of Providence.

Your father tells me that you are thinking of taking a holiday in Seattle. I wouldn’t lend colour to such a report for one moment were it not that I recall that the district has a particular interest at this moment as the native stomping-ground of Mr. Johnstone. Can

it be that you are going to pursue your researches in the field? You've chosen a good field. Have a good time. Visit Roseburg, which when I was last there had all its citizens wearing forage caps inscribed, 'Roseburg clicks in '36'. Only you'll never get there. <I dare swear you'll never cross the Alleghanies.>

Look after yourself in the heats. Even if you don't go to Seattle, get yourself a vacation somewhere. We ought to have one Scott-Rankine Political cable a year, if only to remind us to count our other fifty-one blessings.

Ever,
Herbert.

<INFORMATION PLEASE

1. Why has N.Y. Times gone to war with State Dept*?
2. Who is Joseph M. Jones, Hull-baiter of *Fortune*?
3. What truth in Marquis Child's story that Hull has asked FDR to remove Welles?

No reaction yet from you on my proposed exchange of Archy for Daphne. Are you cooking up some swindle, you Embassy horse-trader? HGN.>

[Not transcribed: 2 articles by Frank MacDermot, Special Correspondent, from the *Sunday Times* – 'American Critics of Gen. Eisenhower' (1 August 1943) and 'Germany's Black Week, and the Moral' (8 August 1943).]

TO ISAIAH BERLIN

Ministry of Information, London

Manuscript, 14 August 1943

Dear Isaiah,

Why have you betrayed me? I dictate you an indiscreet, feverish, off-the-record series of reflections on your latest Fowler-Barnicott-Nicoll 'Books Across the Sea' scheme – and you hand it to the Professor! Who now of course writes me a frightful crown-of-thorns, more-in-sorrow-than-in-anger communication, singeing my ribaldry with coals of fire and saying that to me 'belongs my

CORRESPONDENCE WITH H. G. NICHOLAS 1942–1945

credit for the “beauties” (or uglinesses [- touché]) of the scheme’ etc, etc. I can’t reply to it – or else I shall become too Paul Kingdomish to live. For heaven’s sake atone for your indiscretion by telling Nicoll that you gather I’m deeply sorry – meant no harm – much appreciate – fully understand, etc., etc. And then let’s call it a day!

Yours Ever,
Herbert.

P.S. Don’t hand this to Nicoll!

TO H. G. NICHOLAS

British Embassy, Washington

Typescript, 16 August 1943

*CONFIDENTIAL*¹⁶

Dear Herbert,

On the subject of Mrs. Cook’s magazine surveys, I quite understand, I quite agree. I promise to do my best to supply you with something more genuine than the spinning of internal evidence.

At the moment Rolo and Judson are supposed to be producing a magnum opus on commentators, editors, and newspaper trends generally. Each keeps throwing the buck to the other, but by daily bullying something is getting done and you should have it soon. Judson seems riddled with all sorts of diseases which reduce his working capacity to about half of what at best it used to be. Rolo has had much time deflected from the survey to the writing of magazine articles, etc.¹⁷ We therefore jog along on slightly less manpower than when even you were here and what with Spry’s imperious demands (you realize how enormous and unfulfillable his menu is) we are having rather a time.

¹⁶ Circulated by HGN to ‘1. Mr. CRUIKSHANK 2. Mr. DARVALL 3. Lady DAPHNE STRAIGHT’ with the comment: ‘Yes, the attached *is* worth the trouble! I.B. should take to writing Italian opera plots as exercises in simplification! HGN.’]

¹⁷ HGN annotates: ‘A nuisance this. He makes a lot of money.’

As for the political summaries, you can imagine my chagrin when Neville Butler wrote that the short cables he was now getting were ideal except one which even he thought too short which I tried out as an experiment to see how much it would be minded. I do not know what I can do from this end. I agree with you that intercession by the Ministry is not likely to do much good (although it may do some good and the thought of it is not entirely to be abandoned). It would, of course, be better if some irrelevant Jack-in-Office (there's a word Robin ought to use more often) were to complain of excessive condensation, say Morrison.¹⁸ But I suppose this is not possible. I do not think that the division of cabled headlines and details in savingrams will work – the whole point of these summaries is to give some sort of inside dope and interpretation. Sheer news should reach you, after all, in the immensely long New York press summaries.

You will see something of the sort has occurred with regard to India this week. I enclose a letter I am about to send to Angus Malcolm. It tells a lurid tale. Please do not have received it or read it as it is precisely the sort of thing which the F.O. treats as a jealous monopoly. It is a strange story.

Yours ever,

Isaiah

<1. The State Dept. have hinted that they suspect the 'British Press Service' of having spilt beans. I have cross examined Jack W. & it looks as if the S.D. are the spillers & are doing a really shameful cover up. Acc. to Jack it goes on all the time. IB. A really thorough search reveals that chief leakers are in time order: (1) Col. Hoskins – to Senators (2) F.D.R. to Wise (Mid July) (3) Swope to Pearson and orbi et urbi. Mr. Wright says S.D. know perfectly well we had nothing to do with it & are just trying on & are to be disregarded & the thing not to be pursued further. I hear & obey but boil with indignation for our impugned honour. IB.

2. Accept also draft of our first quarterly. It will *not* have reached F.O. yet (but will with the usual interesting Chancery modifications, one day) so mum's the word. Don't circulate. News

¹⁸ HGN annotates: 'R.J.C. I am writing I.B. to tell him what we are doing to aid. You talked to Neville Butler? HGN'.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH H. G. NICHOLAS 1942–1945

on the ticker of B.B.'s arrival. Not a word to H.B. or A.N.M., but a cable to Bowes-L. Humiliation. All in the day's fun. I.B.

TO H. G. NICHOLAS

British Embassy, Washington

Typescript, 16 August 1943

Confidential

Dear Herbert,

With regard to Daphne, etc., the position is approximately this: We need her and need her badly against the season when the election begins throwing its great shadow, but even more to do the kind of work which she and Con used to do as a team before and which has with the departure of Daphne ceased in effect altogether. It was work partly hack and partly real which depended upon the demand being geographically in the same place with the supply – information was asked for by Aubrey or by me and provided more or less on the spot. Con has had to be switched on to the home front (for the Weekly) not because it is more important than what she was doing before but because she is in New York and not in Washington, because neither Daphne nor anyone else in New York can help her with that sort of thing. What I should like to recreate, if only for six months, is the old Daphne-Con combination, only this time between Daphne and Archie (or not so good Daphne-Judson, but he is physically in a bad way and this cannot be relied upon).

I follow your arguments and observe the malicious glint behind your spectacles as you so firmly hand my vizier back to me, despite the handsome bow with which I offer that distinguished figure. But I really cannot see how Archie can be spared: he and he alone is the real mainstay, as you know well, upon which I rely – he and he alone does drafts when and as required for me, for Chancery, for New York, for you, while Judson observes Congress and Scott Rankine deals with O.W.I. and performs immense labours on consular reports and, lately, upon the great dictionary of personalities of which about two-fifths is nearing completion. Archie does all the day to day drafting which I do not do myself. I dare say a visit to London would do him good, but whereas Paul is

panting to go with every fibre of his being, Archie shows no such desperate desire. Although private desires of Government officials are no criterion for action, it is surely not necessary to ignore them altogether. Moreover, you would have some trouble in getting him off immediate conscription – I cannot imagine how he has eluded the draft here, as he [is] about twenty-six, I think. Your reasons for wanting him are amply clear, but while I daresay he could be spared with no more than ordinary inconvenience for a month or two, his absence for half a year would remove the linchpin from the only M.O.I. corner of the Embassy which seems to me to be doing anything at all. I should feel very near despair if there were a risk of that really happening. You know how much I should like to get Daphne here as early as possible; but if this were attainable only through the loss of Archie, I do not see how I could do otherwise than turn my thoughts severely away from all personal considerations with Darvalian inflexibility towards the path of grim duty. I do not see how I could avoid that.

But the choice does not, I take it, really arise and the dilemma is not a real one. We could send you Judson but you would not I assume know what to do with him when you got him. Rolo is, I suppose, as unsendable as Archie and for the same reason. Gustafson and Co., you will presumably not hear of. Con plainly cannot suddenly leave Aubrey, at least I am sure neither she nor Aubrey would consider it. We return to P.S.R. He certainly has a claim under the Frank Darval travelling fellowship and that ought to be arranged in any case (I gather from Grant McKenzie that the Treasury would object to anyone from here to London at any rate this year. Is this true?) Apart from that he would, in fact, such is his zeal to return, meekly accept any labours that may be given him for the chance of being in London (I feel exactly that way myself).

Could you not write and tell me in fair detail what exactly it is that Daphne does (nobody here, including Ben, knows) in order that we might make a desperate effort to secure you a possible substitute for her (but it seems hopeless if you want no truck with the bull dog)? I am not, I say fiercely, trying to get rid of P.S.R. because we have lived opposite to each other for too long. He is producing very respectable work on consular reports and the great dictionary, and I have not the faintest desire to see him go although, I admit, the wrench would not be excessively painful.

Ben, whom I have not yet seen, tells me there is no serious obstacle to Daphne's coming and that it is a known fact that she is probably to come. Is it really so difficult to secure a temporary substitute in London? And if, as I imagine, it really is, could you possibly do with someone not from the Survey Section in New York, e.g. someone from the Information Division? Come now! You have Miss Chisholm and no substitute for her was ever demanded by us. D'Arcy's skirmishes were his own you will admit. Why then should you demand your pound of flesh so grimly in the case of Daphne? If Establishments only understand an eye for an eye, and operate by the lowest rules of retributive justice, would Miss Ratcliffe, our incomparable Doyenne of the Survey Department, do as your obedient slave while Daphne is here? I have not, of course, asked Miss Ratcliffe or considered how much she would enjoy rejoining S.K. in England, but I can assure you (you smile sceptically) that she is an admirable worker, knows the clippings of the last three years virtually by heart, and is an industrious observer of the local scene. Please let me know before your formal telegram arrives.

Aubrey takes the line that Daphne was, in any case, a windfall from your point of view. Her return, if only on a visit, does not constitute a serious robbery in terms of sheer personnel, and is egging me on to take what is called a firm line. I cannot quite see myself behaving in this, for me you will agree, somewhat artificial version. If you do not want P.S.R. at any price other than as an official visitor (of course you could have Nicoll if you wanted; or do I see you swoon altogether?), he had better go in January and we had better consider the Daphne problem quite independently of him.

The work which will be required to do here (in Washington) will consist mostly in pure day to day political intelligence gleanings, the following up of newspaper clues, and the putting together of bits of jigsaw, which at present only Archie is doing but has not very much time for. I cannot say how badly that needs doing – my sense of haziness and spinning out of what is often very flimsy stuff oppresses me more and more, and I need succour urgently.

I note your point about the F.O. and asymmetry between Daphne and P.S.R., and agree; but they are not the men I take them for if they have eyes sharp enough to notice and energy

enough to make an issue out of that. I can quite understand that Daphne does not herself want to say either way – it must be acutely embarrassing to her to be regarded as an independent factor in the situation. To her, I take it, her job is war work, and as such the stricter the instructions and the less consultation the better. About her actual wishes and hopes I have not the slightest real doubt, and I am sure she would rather stay in London under orders than be frustrated and come feeling that she had wangled her voyage. All the more reason for her to come, I say. The ultimate authority is in your hands and you must dispose. I do think that you underestimate both the usefulness and the collaborativeness of P.S.R. – however on that point I do not have to convince you.

I shall send you a wide selection of books, starting with Mr. Lerner on Holmes (nothing else of real interest seems to have appeared lately).

Alas, I am in no mood again. The Army has seized Pritchard. I am about to move into a house where the stains of murder are still fresh upon the floor (literally).

Gladwin Jebb is here. He shows no signs of wishing to absorb Pangloss into his bosom (as so rashly predicted by Graham Hutton).

The Republicans have possession of the Prime Minister's written reasons, handed to Mr. Howard, for the necessity of the Fourth Term for Mr. Roosevelt (result: obstacles in the Ambassador's path in the Far West stimulated by the Willkieites).

The weather is intolerable. No birds sing, but you must come through about Daphne or else I shall have to go and fetch her in person. I should like to do that very much.

You are inclined to suggest that I might materialize again, but what do you expect me to do? I cannot again make the appalling fuss I made when I practically forced myself upon Robin a year ago after Butler had twice refused to let me go. *Of course I should come if asked for.* Just *try* and see what *happens*. <Like a shot. And never leave you again, la! (like Alexander who is now London's body & s. [if any])>

Incidentally, one titbit about the Food Conference: All the U.S. officials I have spoken to who attended agree that our delegation was extremely good, had far the clearest and best plans of any, radiated immense quantities of charm; so much so that the

Americans, who at first thoughts were pleased, at second thoughts were more doubtful and on third thoughts recoiled strongly against thus being rolled over and over by the British who they thought came all out to win, do not begin to understand the political circumstances of the United States, condemn the American plans on theoretical grounds and, in short, behaved with such smartness and despatch that, according to both Appleby and Acheson speaking in the most confidential possibly manner, the next Anglo-American conference will be held in an atmosphere of much great suspicion of the British than if the triumph of the Food Conference had never occurred. A ‘follow-up’ of Mr. Law’s proposals in our propaganda here is, therefore, far less feasible than may quite naturally have been the impression conveyed by the returning delegation flushed with triumph and with no realization that what we must do is not show how right we are or how clever we are or how well organized we are but how receptive, easy to get on with, and worthy of trust we are. Curiously enough only Law himself and Twentyman seem to have conveyed that impression. Robbins is now viewed as precisely the kind of European expert, confident, clever, and dogmatic, of whom simple Americans must beware. Do not tell this too widely, but Robin might as well know. The chief proponent of this view is Appleby himself, who is certainly confused and had a row with his own delegation at the Conference. He is the chief American delegate to the Intermediate Food Commission, is liked by the President, was unsuccessfully prosecuted by the State Department twice, and being shrewd and alive at the same time is probably there to stay. He liked Maud in England but thought his charm too synthetic here.¹⁹ A man with natural charm need not put on all that extra varnish which leaves an oily flavour in people’s mouths. Appleby is genuinely Anglophile and said that the behaviour of our delegation embarrassed him as would excessive exuberance on the part of his own wife and children on a railroad platform if he were watching them from inside the train. You may take all that with a pinch of salt but I can quite well see what he means and it really is worth bearing in mind. Actually there are no special ways of behaving for British delegations here. If they avoid concerted tactics and do not

¹⁹ HGN annotates: ‘*Very true?*’.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH H. G. NICHOLAS 1942–1945

listen to the nostrums administered by you or by us and behave as normal human beings they will do fine.

Yours ever,
Isaiah.

[Not transcribed: Letter to HGN from D. W. Brogan, BBC, 25 August 1943, enclosing the following item; copy of a letter to Nevile Butler from D. W. Brogan, 25 August 1943.]

TO H. G. NICHOLAS

British Embassy, Washington

Typescript, 25 August 1943

Dear Herbert:

I enclose the following documents, which may be of interest:

(1) A bit of P.W.E. stuff on Barnes, Winner, etc., which may give you the general atmosphere. As P.W.E. are notoriously jealous of their reports, could you keep this to yourself, or better, destroy it after showing it to Frank, Daphne, Robin, etc., for their entertainment?

(2) A report of the Detroit Committee on Foreign Relations sent by Cane, of which a copy has gone to the Foreign Office already. Quite interesting and confirms most of one's beliefs but obviously represents only the cream of the jug which underneath the surface contains more whey than milk.

(3) An opus by Mr. Judson. I hope that the magical evocativeness of the names used with almost Macauleyish power will convince you of the microscopic nature of our inquiries. It was thought best not to send it

to Chancery and the Foreign Office as so much fact may befuddle them.

<(4) Something for your Russian section. Not v. secret, but comes from private U.S.G. sources, & is not supposed to be in our possession at all. So again, the less publicity ... IB.

(5) A brief note by Judson, done on clips from N.Y., indicating relative lack of interest in²⁰>

Yours
Isaiah.

[Not transcribed: Typescript headed 'Report of the Detroit Committee for 1943', signed by H. M. Robins, Detroit Committee on Foreign Relations, 28 May 1943.]

TO H. G. NICHOLAS

British Embassy, Washington

Typescript, 25 August 1943

Personal.

Dear Herbert:

I have written my parents a letter. This marks a milestone in my life. I hope they make it last as long as possible. You might tell them, like a good friend, that I write to them in inverse ratio to my letters to Daphne and yourself, as I cannot write more than so much. This may placate them. An extremely boring man called Stanley Smith, apparently our chief representative in Chungking, appeared with greetings from them. I think I begin to understand our relations or absence of relations with that very superior people.

2. With regard to your second point, I say, trying to make myself a systematic answerer of letters, point by point, I really, of course, agree with you. It would be a monstrous betrayal of our entire past, and I hope future, if I did not. The conflict is between the smooth organisation dishing stuff out like a mail order house, if you like (and I must here add that all the old critics of the B.I.S. – the Press Club loafers (who are now half the O.W.I.), who were the bitterest critics of Childs and then Sir G. Campbell – are impressed and silenced by the present functioning of the B.I.S., New York. There is no doubt, frightful as it is, that what they missed about the previous setups was not what you or I would have pointed to, but the absence of that slick efficiency which now

²⁰ Apparently left incomplete.

prevails), and a humane institution. I must put on record that Aubrey, from time to time, complains that while the machine seems fairly efficient there are few, if any, originators of ideas at the top; what he needs is an effective brain trust, each member selected in accordance with one of the two or three most major of our problems. I dare say it is that, and not dignified and representative figures, that are most wanted, and perhaps Aubrey had best go to London sometime next year to recruit them himself, if the notion is approved, as he will probably balk at any gift horses sent to him unseen. I do not think the staff of B.I.S. particularly lack integrity, that is, I do not think that particular quality has ever come to the test since they are not as a rule made to sell their souls even in minor ways. I do think they lack independence but, perhaps with regrettable pessimism about human nature, I tremble to think of what they would do and say if they possessed such independence – Webster had plenty of it, so did Dudley, and yet their passing, whatever its cause, drew few sighs from any Americans that mattered. The sort of person who really goes down with, e.g., the Middle West and even in New York are people like Miss McGeachy, Barbara Ward, and Rev. Cockburn, not Miss Hamilton or Miss Fry or Sir W. Beveridge. I think that if you are asking for integrity and independence you are certainly casting doubt at the whole notion behind propaganda, which except in cases of the most burning revolutionary feeling needs either people who are fanatically intent upon their end and to that extent insensitive, tactless and boring, or else persons who take pleasure in their own effectiveness, who like to see the plants rise and bloom under their constant care, and are not overscrupulous (but not stupid) about the technique of their wooing. Neither you nor I belong to either of these categories and neither of us are natural propagandists. I am certainly glad to have had to do none professionally since early 1942 – my one year of it was fun, but occasionally embarrassing to me; and one had the blitz and American neutrality to spur one along and a wholly unfamiliar and exotic field of activity to stimulate one. Otherwise, unless one is a natural salesman or burning with unquenchable lifelong fires (we should be expelled from our profession if we were either) one should not do it. That is my homily, and I am thoroughly ashamed of it.

3. I start again on a new sheet which, I dare say, you may wish to show to other people.

[*new sheet*]²¹

3. To pass to the more agreeable subject of O.W.I., the immediate attacks have ceased somewhat. The immediate flurries are the poll of Poles which they have been conducting on behalf of O.S.S., which has been unduly anxious to secure the views on all subjects of all minorities in the U.S. (rather obviously hoping to collect evidence in favour of what might be called conservative policies). A specimen question is: 'would you prefer Poland to be represented at the peace conference by a Pole born in Poland, a Pole born in the U.S., or a non-Polish American born in the U.S.?' This O.W.I. did on behalf of another agency; nevertheless the State Department, press, etc., are seething slightly and O.W.I. is likely to get the kicks. Also they are accused of wasting valuable paper. Also they are accused of messing up arrangements for U.S. correspondents at Quebec. A more important row is one about to be started by James Warburg of the psychological warfare front, who has grown ambitious and wishes to extend his powers at the expense of the Regional Directors. Kuhn is not much affected, as he deals with an ally and anyhow is much too prehensile ever to leave unless brutally degummed. But Markham, originally of the Christian Science Monitor, who deals with the Balkans (he knows about Bulgars and Hungars), and the other European Directors are said to be fermenting and meditating resignation. Kuhn denied all this to me, rightly, I dare say, from his point of view. It is happening nevertheless. If the thing blows up, Mr. Hull will certainly be angry again and the Overseas Section of O.W.I. may find itself slipping farther down the slippery slope. <The atmosphere inside it is very electric & disagreeable but Elmer D. is a non conductive substance, & feels nothing at all.>

4. As for the O.S.S. labour service, it emanates from a secret character called Arthur Goldberg, well known to me here, who

²¹ Items 3–6 were marked '*CONFIDENTIAL*' by HGN and circulated to RJC and Daphne with the comment: 'Some interesting – and *confidential* – items from I.B. H.G.N. See (for action) the last page!' He adds a comment addressed to RJC: 'The abstracted pages were purely personal – & by personal I don't of course mean about you! Nick.'

was in London fairly recently. He promised to tell me all about it in a day or two when I shall write you a separate note. I did not, I own, realise that this underground traffic was going on and I do not think Gordon knows much about it either.²² I am very glad you asked. Do go on asking questions continually, nothing stimulates answers so much (how much less trite this is than it sounds).

5. You will doubtless wish to know about Mr. Hull and Mr. Welles. Well, it has all more or less broken open now. The general jealousy, fear, and lack of sympathy between them was a constant factor. Bullitt, as you know, tried to whip something up with stories about Welles' private life, Pullman porters, etc., but that produced no political effect. Thereupon he decided that the only way to really work up Mr. Hull was to put something in the press. Hull is well known to be acutely sensitive to anything said in the press (he told Ed Murrow, as you probably know, that all his broadcasts were stimulated by 'emissaries of the Foreign Office', or so we were told here, and only desisted when Murrow told him where in Tennessee he was born). Bullitt, in conspiracy with Krock (they had cooperated on Chandler's Pacific First speech already), then got a story published attacking the State Department for inefficiency (Crider's article in the N.Y.T. you will remember). This did upset Hull a good deal. The next move in the game was for Krock to write a piece saying that Welles was more or less responsible, and cry for all power for Hull. Hull waited until his political position became powerful enough to strike, and, egged on busily by Jimmy Dunn (that smooth and reactionary figure who played a far larger part in upsetting Welles, of whom he is a bitter hater, than anyone else in the Department), sent Connally and Byrnes to see the President. They told him that unless he got rid of Welles, Cordell would go, and painted a gloomy picture of the political consequences. The President was less reluctant to part with Welles than you might suppose, mainly because he has grown to be very autocratic, if not megalomaniac, in his foreign policy (all power corrupts, and absolute power ...) and Welles, although liked

²² <(Gordon knows very little of it, says Ministry of Labour know in London, that goodwill contacts is probably cover, & that the real purpose of the railroad engineers etc. is *very* strategic & secret indeed. He looks uncomfortable when talked to on that. But more later. Meanwhile, mum's apparently the word).>

and admired by him, was the only person who ever stood up to him at all. Hull, beyond dim thoughts on tariffs, has, as you know, no ideas about foreign policy, only vague feelings about collaboration. Welles was, apparently, offered either (a) the job of all relations with the U.S.S.R., or (b) roving Ambassadorship to Latin America. Wallace urged him to accept the first on the ground that Welles was the only person in the State Department who had the faintest desire to do anything at all in order to get on with Russia (this is quite true. The rest are fanatical Russophobes). Welles²³ went off to Bar Harbour where is he sulking now. No one knows who his successor is likely to be, but there is talk of Breckinridge Long, a decrepit old reactionary <(only 52 actually)>, disagreeable to us, a roaring Southern snob from Kentucky, an enthusiastic Ambassador to Rome and admirer of the regime of those days, a man no one has a word of praise for, who would run the office in a gloomy, bitter, routine way <(His great friend is the filthy Helen Essary[?] of the Times Herald – you recollect the isolationist poison pot)>. This would suit the President better than may seem, as it gives him a free run of foreign policy with no obstacles at all. Hull does not like Berle, less than Welles if possible. And Berle may well be the next to go. In that case we get a really shocking collection of ineffectives and defeated old men, worse than the worst nightmare of the Foreign Office. If you study Alexander I of Russia,²⁴ you may find close analogies with F.D.R. The Arakcheyev period is fast approaching. The loss from our point of view (that is if Welles refuses all the second rate baits with which he is being tempted; <but he told Marq. Childs that he wd do *anything* F.D.R. asked him, & nary a word against Hull> is very grave. An extraordinary situation will result in which the only person of any consequence with views at all opposed to a reactionary ‘no policy policy’ will be Mr. Winant. The extent of his powers is doubtless better known to you than to me. Otherwise, everything will be decided on a purely personal Winston-F.D.R. basis, even more than at present. There really is something extraordinary about the fact that idealistic and liberal rulers should

²³ ‘flatly refused and’ deleted.

²⁴ <The Liberal Monarch, darling of the starry eyed – the liberator of Europe – the martinet & mystic consumed in a private monomania. We shall see.>

so inevitably drift into Holy Alliances. I cannot believe that Welles is really played out; but the dismissal of both him and Wallace means that the President's old seesaw of right and left hand in dialectical interplay cannot continue and will have to be replaced by a liberal President (if, indeed, he still is that) operating through a right wing Department as cover.

6. You ask specific questions:

(1) New York Times and the S.D.: That simply means Krock v. Welles, with Bullitt attempting to shake the structure in general by forcing the revelation of Wayne Coy's old report on the inefficiency of the Department as a kind of preliminary general barrage clearing the way for himself. Apart from Breck Long (I say he is old, he is only 52, but he is a very old 52), the names mentioned are Armour (his White Russian princess wife will doubtless be raised, if so) although it is not clear how well viewed his niceness to the Argentines is; Ambassador Grew, who is deaf, impeccably gentlemanly, and fairly null and void; and finally a wild attempt by Tommy Corcoran to plant Leo Crowley there as a simultaneous bid for more power for Hull and Catholics at once. I do not suppose the President has decided. You may take it in general that the N.Y.T. has *not* gone to war with the State Department but takes its cue from Hull. <The F.O.R.D. booklet which speaks of N.Y.T. as opposing S.D. is talking nonsense.>

(2) Joseph M. Jones of 'Fortune' is a great friend of Guy Wint and Alexander, nevertheless rather nice. He is a rather pimply young man who used to be employed in Pasvolsky's Post War Department in the S.D., was much irked by the mustiness and oppression of the place, is a sincere if simple Democrat who believed that the S.D. should appeal to the people and the people make their wishes known more directly, is a kind of New Dealer with very sympathetic views on most things who had a row with his Department and went over the [sc. to] 'Fortune' as one of its foreign relations experts. The article is the first of a systematic onslaught. I had a long talk with Paul Appleby about it who disagreed with it and said that America was not a Swiss democracy, direct machinery for making public opinion control foreign policy was not practicable, the Foreign Office must be allowed to execute, and execute in the dark, but provision existed for

Congressional repudiation of anything too repugnant to public opinion. In other words he does not quarrel with machinery, what he objected to was the personnel of the Department about which he spoke very bitterly for about half an hour along familiar liberal lines. <Mr. Jones, to return to him, is not himself important, but useful in Life-Fortune's present attacks on U.S. diplomacy as a mixture of feeble Victorianism & cowboy improvisation.>

(3) Marquis Childs on Hull and F.D.R. was only repeating what we had all heard.

[*new sheet*]

I start a new sheet!

What about Daphne? We really cannot spare Archie, but what about Daphne? Have anyone else you like, but not Archie (and I imagine Rolo can be ill spared by Aubrey on account of his journalistic exercises).

B. Bracken is coming here on Monday nobody seems much stirred. Am I to ask Aubrey to speak to him about the lady? I swiftly withdraw my empty threat. But what about Daphne? If no answer reasonably soon I shall send a weekly cable with this same question.

Truly I should like to go to London if Robin would only ask for me, and collect Daphne on the way back. Do what you can. <Could Daphne come in November & stay till early April? wd you accept Miss Ratcliffe, whose status is sufficiently analogous? I do not doubt for a moment (nor does anyone else: we have heard Ben Thomas on it: that you have it all in your personal control).>

Yours

Isaiah.

<I have pacified the Prof: Nicoll doesn't seem to mind in the least. He merely complains that N.Y. is inefficient, teletypes get lost, they dislike the job very much, &tc. but he will persist in his Darvallian fashion. I think those two wd hate each other, mirrored in certain respects. IB.>

TO H. G. NICHOLAS

British Embassy, Washington

Typescript, 6 September 1943

Dear Herbert:

1. Enclosed please find two copies of the final O.W.I. survey of American attitudes towards the British. You will notice the softening touch of Nevins (whom I do not know but imagine to be a man of one hundred percent goodwill) throughout. This, alas, is their courteous reply to our suppressed equivalent. I do not think that it is excessively rosy although obviously touched up here and there. The proposition that in every large section of American opinion more than half is on the whole inclined towards Anglophile sentiments is, I think, true although, alas, it is the determined minority and not the benevolent majority that sets the pace. But our heightened prestige is a thing to marvel at. The widespread view that we are powerful, cunning, dangerous is far more profitable in the long run, however unsatisfactory in itself, than the pathetic little island which did such yeoman service for us in 1940-41. The fact that Dewey and Kelland both say they want military alliances with us speaks for itself (when Taft heard Dewey's speech he remarked 'What a damn fool thing to say'). <(The P.M., by the way, thinks his Harvard speech of to-day the best he has ever delivered, & eagerly gobbles all surveys thereof. Hence our cable to you re London reactions.)>

2. With regard to your letter of the 21st August and the request for information on the effect of films and churches. I really do not know how we are to estimate the actual effect on public opinion of either of these media. Films I really know nothing about and should like to ask O.W.I., Richard Ford, etc. As for churches, I think I could do an impressionist sketch of what the churches are thinking and saying and ask Nicoll for documents, but any estimate of how deep its influence is would necessarily have to be a personal guess. Even a bogus approximation to objectivity would be ludicrous. We shall, of course, go through the usual routine of circularising Consuls. I cannot convey to you the jejuneness of the results.

3. My quarterly and Archie Mackenzie's much amended opus based on MidWestern Consular reports about post war settlement should have reached you or will reach you shortly.

4. In October I propose to go to Portland, San Francisco, and New Orleans. Your preaching has, as you see, had its due effect. When I think of this as a journey of six thousand miles I am a little appalled. But I shall survive.

5. What about Daphne? The Minister has been asking about that.²⁵ He did not entirely enjoy the Prime Minister's public remarks about his good work with the Boy Scouts.

6. At his first luncheon the Prime Minister uttered a magnificent series of statements (it was operatic to a degree – the greatest singer of the century performing the favourite arias of the audience). About France – we must let bygones be bygones, exact punishment for atrocities but do no witch hunting, and cooperate in the great future of a great country. Then on de Gaulle – however maniac and difficult, his stand was historically decisive. Then on Russia – terrific encomium and the observation that <we were not entirely at one since there> was no Vansittartism in Russia and about their mode of psychological warfare (Free German Committee, etc.), but so what. And so on and so on, to the wild enthusiasm of the assembled journalists. The passion for him is still burning bright. They would certainly elect him President tomorrow.

7. Archie is suitably enough at Mackinac{k}. So you will get something on that soon.

8. What about Daphne?

Yours,
Shaya

²⁵ RJC comments here, the letter having been circulated to him by HGN 'For your inf. & fun': 'That fine old Parliamentary hand, Viscount Berlin of Chancery, has lost none of his manipulative skill. Lobbying, again, heh? I see you! R.J.C.'

CORRESPONDENCE WITH H. G. NICHOLAS 1942–1945

FROM H. G. NICHOLAS

Ministry of Information, London

Typescript, 14 September 1943

Dear Isaiah,

The Foreign Office tell us that copies of the great P.S.R. Dictionary have arrived, or at any rate instalments of them. The Foreign Office feel that such documents, by their very secret character, cannot fairly be released from their own locks and keys, though they generously will allow us to have access to the information therein embalmed, if there is some particular individual whom we have reason to be curious about.

I am glad to hear the project is going forward so smoothly. When are we to receive a little more direct benefit from it? <You *know* what I mean! HGN.>²⁶

Yours ever,
Herbert.

FROM H. G. NICHOLAS

Ministry of Information, London

Typescript, 14 September 1943

Dear Isaiah,

We have given a great deal of thought to your Empax 612 of July 23rd and the subsequent correspondence between us on the subject of arranging an exchange visit for Lady Daphne Straight. The difficulty that principally stands in the way of the proposal you made in your cable, namely an exchange with Scott Rankine, is the disparity in their respective grades. As you know, Lady Daphne is a J.A.S. and Scott Rankine is a second secretary.

Robin Cruikshank and Frank Darvall, with whom I have discussed this very exhaustively, have pointed out that it will not be possible, especially at a time when the Morrison 7½ per cent cut is falling on the Ministry, for us to secure additional

²⁶ IB comments: 'Yes.'

CORRESPONDENCE WITH H. G. NICHOLAS 1942–1945

establishment for a substitute for Lady Daphne Straight. That being so, there is no alternative but to arrange some exchange with B.I.S., and for this purpose we naturally want someone who is as nearly capable as possible of doing Lady Daphne's work.

You make the suggestion that, in order to provide us with someone more nearly of her status, and competent to do her work, Miss Ratcliffe of your Press Clippings Section at the B.I.S. might be exchanged for a period of six months. That would certainly go some way to filling the gap which would be created by Lady Daphne's absence. If you feel that Lady Daphne's visit is so desirable from your point of view that you would wish it to go forward, even at the price of providing us with a substitute from your survey staff, we would be prepared to accept Miss Ratcliffe and to put the wheels in motion for the exchange without delay.

Yours ever,
Herbert.

FROM H. G. NICHOLAS

Ministry of Information, London

Manuscript, 14 September 1943

Dear Isaiah,

I have just dictated to you a coldly official, Darvallian letter about Daphne. It embodies the painful results of a long series of conclaves. Of *course* you shall have your care-charmer[?]. We promised her to you, & in any case I have too much sympathy with your needs & plight to refuse the medicine bottle, whose tonic properties have benefited us – & me in particular – for so long. But you do realise, don't you, that it's impossible to get a replacement here – Establishments wouldn't sanction it even if the article could be found. So you must give us an exchange. Well, so be it, we're a weak, spineless, acquiescing bunch & if you *must* have Archie we bow to your blackmail. Mr. Bracken, I'm sure, will soon be back among us to instruct us that if the BIS want the moon we must get it off by the next air bag. But someone we must have – otherwise, we disintegrate. So I take you at your word & ask for Miss Ratcliffe. But, Robin says, the responsibility is yours! *We* didn't suggest her. *You* must fight it out with Ben & Aubrey.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH H. G. NICHOLAS 1942–1945

Secondly, this is, of course, only a temporary exchange – you know that, of course. 6 months. Daphne will only go on condition that a time limit is imposed, & I imagine that Miss R., similarly, can't be away for ever.

So there. Don't say we hold out on you. And try no more blackmail. We are *impervious*. Also it's no use writing to Daphne on the subject – she only shows the letters to me. And I get mad to find myself called MR. NICHOLAS in them.

I shall write you more when I can get a – reasonably – confidential typist again. I have a lot to tell you, but I've just lost my Miss Macmillan[?] & am wholly at sea. You might have some *pity*, you old Bluebeard.

Ever

Herbert

TO H. G. NICHOLAS

British Embassy, Washington

Typescript, 18 September 1943

Dear Herbert:

This is simply to allay your fears.

1. The report on the political tendencies of newspapers and periodicals should be completed in New York before the middle of next month and will then be forwarded to you.
2. On your inquiries about the effects of churches and films, I shall send you a sketch about churches within the next few days, and Archie will produce an opus on films sometime next month – they are both very ticklish and elusive topics, they must be given a little time.
3. The volume of publicity on merchant shipping, etc., in the U.S. and Britain, should yield forth a special survey sometime towards the end of next week. The number of clippings is very large; information in the files of the British War Transport Mission, literally zero. There is to be a special meeting here to consider the problem of publicity on this subject next week to which it is hoped to attract some of the hundreds of distinguished visitors by whom we are at present flooded.

4. Most wonderful of all, I propose to leave on the 26th of this month for Chicago and points West: Portland, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and then some curious path back to Washington. I propose to be back on November 2nd. You will agree that the fact that I have not done this before is scandalous. I am truly ashamed and propose to educate myself intensively. Doubtless I shall produce the usual rosy report on the red hot internationalism of Kansas City on my return. In my absence, Scott Rankine, who is at present in New York (to free Rolo for the tasks of commercial composition) will deputise. <So please address cables etc. to him.>

5. Do you know what Mr. T. R. Horabin is doing here? He came to see me and said some very extraordinary things. The S.D. think him deeply subversive.

6.²⁷ Would you be at all interested in a girl (since you say that you are short of staff) called Miss de Crespigny, who has worked in the Cypher Room here for some two years and is anxious to return to England? She says she can type and can learn shorthand, and would like to be a journalist one day after the war. I do not know her at all well, she seems to me rather dull, mildly good looking, once a dashing debutante but now reduced by hard necessities of life. I do not quite know what she would be good for but if an assistant is required somewhere in the American Division she might be suitable. She would be touchingly grateful for anything which would restore her to England and keep her alive there. The F.O. originally sent her out here so they might know about her too.

Yours ever,
Isaiah.

<What about Daphne, I say? you can have Scott Rankine *any* time.>

²⁷ 'What about Daphne?' deleted here.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH H. G. NICHOLAS 1942–1945

TO H. G. NICHOLAS

[British Embassy, Washington]

Carbon typescript, 23 September 1943

Dear Herbert,

Here is a copy of the report you referred to on September 14th, which appears to be slipping from my hands by accident. This is materially the same as the one previously sent to London with the exception of purely proof corrections.

Yours ever,
[Isaiah]

TO H. G. NICHOLAS

British Embassy, Washington

Typescript, 23 September 1943

Dear Herbert:

A brief scribble before I leave for my great odyssey.

1. You shall, of course, get whatever papers anyone else gets in London, but caution must be preserved. Considering that the great dictionary was written by Scott Rankine and me with a little assistance from John Foster, it is really comical that locks and keys should be imposed.

2. On the subject of censorship intercept regarding the Baltimore Sun Vansittart articles (forgive me for putting all this together from the point of view of filing, etc., but I am sorely pressed), the most exhaustive inquiries have led to nothing better than a narrowing down of the list of Wilmott Lewis, Denys Smith, and Frank M[a]cDermot{t} (correspondent for the Sunday Times) who is in my opinion a silly man and actually most likely to have been responsible. I am almost sure that no official person is involved, and Winocour thinks it is Denys Smith, who had then most recently arrived from England. The S.D. was certainly most annoyed. Mr. Dorsey was personally questioned but, of course, refused to reveal, and I have the impression that M[a]cDermot{t}

said something very like this to me himself. The Minister thinks highly of him, so there!

3. Re Lady Daphne. Your two letters gratefully received. The formal one will get a formal answer after I have gently spoken to Miss Ratcliffe, Rolo, etc. in New York. Certainly the six months contract will be scrupulously adhered to by me – I make no promises for others. Meanwhile arrangements ought to be made for Scott Rankine and Archie Mackenzie to visit London for, say, six weeks each, sometime early next year. Would you sound out privately? And let me know?

4. The Fulbright Resolution fills me with gloom. It is greatly watered and anything Fish can vote for is, as he himself says, pretty worthless, and it will become an alibi for doing nothing further.

5. The visiting delegation seems pretty depressed about (a) not getting very far, (b) the obvious and at times confused inability of the opposite numbers they talk to to deliver the goods anyhow. A Treasury official as good as said to Keynes that he (K.) would have to nobble a lot of people in New York and Chicago himself to get results.

6. I hope you have received the immense Churchilliana which the P.M. ordered when here. Quite interesting in places.

7. Nicoll may be visiting you in connection with an educational expedition from here.

8. The State Department has decided to establish a public opinion probing section, obviously upset by a violent attack on them, evidently really unexpected. Hull is said to be much upset. The Head of the new section is a Mr. Savage about whom I will inform you as soon as information comes in.

9. Doom of dooms, Mrs. Fraser is leaving me for a wider life. You will realise what this means in time.

Yours ever,
Isaiah.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH H. G. NICHOLAS 1942–1945

FROM H. G. NICHOLAS

Ministry of Information, London

Typescript, 28 September 1943

*Personal AND CONFIDENTIAL*²⁸

Dear Isaiah,

You could not have chosen a worse moment to go cow-punching on the West Coast. Your attention will be badly needed on the East, when your protegee, Miss Freya Stark, starts making America safe for the Arabs. Your Foreign Office cable back in 1942, suggesting a visit by Bertram Thomas or Freya has at last brought forth its fruit. With infinite difficulty she has been brought back from the Middle East, and with even greater difficulty is being got across the Atlantic. Rome, they say, was not wrecked in a day, so I suppose it will take quite a bit of time before she provokes revolutions in the States. I can guarantee, however, that unless you take her firmly in hand her progress will be littered with the broken hearts of Zionists and the broken windows of British Consulates.

We have impressed upon her here the importance of avoiding any direct expression of opinion on the Arab-Jewish controversy, and of confining herself to merely descriptive statements of the modern Arab world, its excellence and importance. She is, however, a passionate romantic Arabophile, and I shall be very surprised if she stays within these limits. She knows nothing at all about the States, and regards it rather in the vein of the hero of Kafka's AMERICA, as a place in which anything can happen and in which nothing really matters. Unless she has it very firmly impressed upon her that the gravest consequences may flow from her lightest utterance, I think she is capable of doing us a great deal of harm.

For obvious reasons, and also in order to provide yourself with a not unamusing experience, I think you ought to see her as soon as you possibly can and, in your best finger-of-doom manner, paint the dangers of American opinion, press, etc.

²⁸ Marked by IB: 'Mr M. Wright or Mr W. Hayter. (for action) please.'

CORRESPONDENCE WITH H. G. NICHOLAS 1942–1945

And to think that you started all this! Even over her travel arrangements we have aged years in the space of weeks. Now it is your turn. Ha! ha!

Yours ever,
Herbert.

Postscript:

She carries introductions to Wendell Willkie, Mrs. F.D.R., and Mrs. Harriman. She has been invited while in New York to make her home with Mrs. Otto Kahn. She claims as her warm friends Colonel Hoskins, Mr. Pinkerton ('One fine day ...'), and a mysterious pair of characters called Theodore and Archie Roosevelt. That exhausts her existing American connections. Mr. Kirk in Egypt did not warm to her approaches.

You ought to know that she was with difficulty dissuaded from calling one of her Chicago lectures 'An Apology for Propaganda'.

FROM H. G. NICHOLAS

[Ministry of Information, London]

Carbon typescript, 30 September 1943

Personal AND CONFIDENTIAL

Dear Isaiah,

I am sorry to hear that you are disbanding the Survey Department. An extraordinary interchange of cables between ourselves and Butler has just been concluded with the final salvo from Washington to the effect that Allardyce Nicoll is being put on a bomber at the end of the week, in order apparently to keep the Embassy informed of the proceedings of this Inter Allied Education Conference in London. (The Embassy, I take it, does not trust the Foreign Office to keep its overseas posts honestly informed of deliberations taking place in London.)

This, taken along with the seconding of Charles Rolo to write epics on the Wingate Boys, an arrangement which we have just heard of from Rene MacColl, plus your own, admittedly overdue, excursion to Puget Sound, has driven us to the sad conclusion that you are going into voluntary liquidation. Otherwise, how could we

explain the fact that a month ago you were in such dire need of additional staff that you had to have Daphne without delay?

Or do you have some subtler plot? We have racked our brains for an explanation and can find none. The Nicoll business is really too outrageous; if the F.O. want to use him for their own Ec. and Rec. purposes, then they ought to take him over completely and provide your Survey Department with a vacancy which can be filled by someone who will really do work for which he is paid. Otherwise loud complaints will soon be heard from London that we are not getting the quantity and quality of information to which you have accustomed us.

There must be some explanation for all this, and I don't want to seem merely bullying. Can you find time in the intervals of your travels to send us a word about it? We are puzzled.

Yours ever,
[Herbert]

[Not transcribed: Letter to HGN from Archie Mackenzie, 18 October 1943, enclosing following item; report to IB by Mackenzie, 22 September 1943.]

FROM H. G. NICHOLAS

Ministry of Information, London

Typescript, 23 October 1943

Personal AND CONFIDENTIAL

Dear Isaiah,

Miss Craig McGeachy, who alleges that she is a representative of yours, has asked this Ministry's assistance to enable her to visit Sweden. She explains that a tripartite conference, sitting in continual session at Washington, and consisting of yourself, Mr. John Wheeler-Bennett and Miss McGeachy, is seeking to devise methods and techniques of combatting a prevalent American misconception, namely that a soft peace with Germany is practicable and desirable. The particular technique which I understand you are contemplating at this moment is a diversion of American attention from Germany itself to German-occupied

territories, thus bringing home to the American student of foreign affairs the nature and severity of the methods of German rule. Miss McGeachy states that a visit by her to Sweden would promote this purpose which you have in mind, though since Sweden is not an occupied territory, and your emissary has brought no credentials testifying to this project, we have found some slight difficulty in believing that it has your full and authoritative support.

Our doubt is somewhat enhanced by the fact that, as you may not be aware, Miss McGeachy is not a member of this Ministry but of the Ministry of Economic Warfare, and that the more normal mechanism for a visit such as she contemplates would be through her own Ministry rather than through ours. Mr. Darvall, who discussed this project in all its details and at some length with Miss McGeachy, enquired of her how it was that this Ministry's assistance had been solicited by Washington in this matter. Miss McGeachy replied that the degree of intimacy which existed between all branches of the Chancery was such that it was the normal custom for everyone to inform everyone else of everyone's movements.

We should be grateful for any light which you can throw on these developments, either by way of confirmation, expansion, or refutation.

Yours ever,
Herbert.

<Robin said I was to make a formal demarche and & smoke you out of your latent & most sinister secret covenant. By the time you receive I don't doubt that Miss McG. will have added to the gaiety of neutrals, so you needn't bother to do any more with this elaborate joke than – for God's sake – to destroy it.>

CORRESPONDENCE WITH H. G. NICHOLAS 1942–1945

TO PAUL SCOTT RANKINE

Arizona

*Extract from (manuscript?) letter*²⁹

Could you please pass on the enclosed to Michael Wright and explain that (a) it is informal and obviously not meant to be circulated to anyone, but as I shan't be in Washington to see Miss F.S., and he (Wright) knows her, and (I expect) is a friend of hers, whereas I only instigated her coming, perhaps he could cope, warn her, etc., or perhaps William Hayter, who is very au fait, could; (b) that Nicholas is in charge of M. of I. speakers. I shall not regret my action even if she does go haywire (the Zionists would certainly tear me limb from limb if they knew my complicity) since the present onesidedness of information about Arabs is doing great harm – I had evidence of it for the wild Jewish Army talk in Hollywood and pro-Arabs are wanted to redress.

[Not transcribed: Memo to Michael Wright from Paul Scott Rankine, 26 October 1943, enclosing HGN's letter to IB of 28 September 1943, quoting from a covering letter written from Arizona to PSR by IB (see previous item), and annotated by MW for PSR/IB on return.]

FROM H. G. NICHOLAS

Ministry of Information, London

Typescript, 29 October 1943

Personal AND CONFIDENTIAL

Dear Isaiah,

I assume that you are now back from your great transcontinental trek, seated at your desk piled mountains high, and prepared to receive the persistent enquiries of your Ministry customers. Here are a few:

²⁹ Quoted in memo from PSR to Michael Wright of 26 October 1943.

1. What was the meaning of the ‘appeasement’ Prodrôme cable announcing that everything was nice and beautiful since Mr. Churchill’s statement on the Five Senators? It looked the more obviously a put-up job because we received almost simultaneously a report from the impeccable boys of New York to say that very little coverage had been given Churchill’s statement beyond that which appeared in the London datelines of the following day. These, as you may have seen, almost all played it up along the lines of ‘Churchill refuses to answer Senators’ charges’. Since this was exactly the reverse of the impression which the statement was intended to convey, it seemed to us here that it could hardly be regarded as a very satisfactory coup de grace in this particular contest. Who was the appeaser, absente Berlin?

2. The Political cables in your absence have not been as bad as we expected, but I feel they have gone slightly astray on this same path of optimistic appeasement or appeasing optimism in their general assessment of the effects of the Five Senators. I thought the casting up of debits and credits in P.S.R.’s last ledger showed us much less in the red than in fact we are. Please let us have your own full and quotable assessment of this. We may need it in order to convince higher quarters that the dangers are not yet past.

3. B.I.S.’s attitude over this whole business has been very extraordinary. Can you believe it that no one at any time has asked us for a report on the reactions of the British press to this whole brouhaha? I should have thought that for any considered campaign, especially bearing in mind the extravagant charges of British mis-representation that were made, the first essential was an accurate picture of what in fact the British press and radio were saying. Do the B.I.S. regard this whole Senatorial onslaught as being something irrelevant to their day to day work of handouts and travelling exhibitions?

4. About Daphne. We have had no reply to the letter I sent you before you went away suggesting, in what I know were extraordinarily official and cold-blooded terms, that Miss Ratcliffe should be sent across as a locum tenens while Daphne ministered to your wants on Massachusetts Avenue. Needless to say, I am not pressing in the *slightest* degree for her despatch, since it can only mean inconvenience and change (and I dislike change as much as

you do), but at the same time she is particularly anxious to have the matter settled one way or the other for various personal reasons – renewal of lease on house, etc. etc. – and I imagine that you would like to know where you stand as well. Can you therefore let us know what you think and what Thomas approves within the limits of the suggestions which were contained in my letter?

5. The great black dictionary on the Ninety Six was enormously appreciated by everyone who has read it. It is being kept under constant lock and key, and innocent enquiries are being made of the Foreign Office from time to time to prevent their getting on to the scent. It is all very enjoyable and first rate. Congratulations to all concerned.

We shall of course expect a long, detailed and colourful description of your rural rides, couched in deathless prose and telling us exactly what Kalamazoo is going to do in '44.

Yours ever,

H.G.N (dictated by Mr. Nicholas but signed in his absence)

Postscript.

I have cabled today asking New York to resume Lendlease Specials. As you may well imagine, the object we have in view is to counteract continuing complacency in various quarters here. If you care to tip the wink to your minions in New York to drape their cables in black it might be a good thing. I know you will say, Are we never to be rid of this dreary jiggery-pokery?

TO H. G. NICHOLAS

British Embassy, Washington

Typescript, 4 November 1943

Private and Personal

My Dear Herbert,

Your gibes and taunts of the 30th September move me deeply. Are we disbanding the Survey Department? Because Nicoll has visited London? Because Rolo was permitted to switch to half-

time survey work for 4 weeks, eked out by the faithful Scott Rankine? Because, after the complete Rolo was restored to us, I whisked off to the Far West and the Deep South? Nay, nay, there must be some deeper import in your insinuation, else I am a Dutchman. The American Division racks its brains to find a subtle explanation. This will never do. Such suspense must be removed, equilibrium must be restored, and even metabolism induced; in short, everything must be done to preserve your sanity. I accept the task. I shall pour light, and you will see that you have been seeing ghosts.

In order. Let us begin with Nicoll. I fear that it must have been made insufficiently clear (as they say in cables) that Nicoll's status is a somewhat peculiar one. He is not our exclusive property. His department, that of post-war information, represents the sole official link between us and Chancery in that he operates under an official condominium whereby his masters are Butler and the Chancery presiding together (like the President of France and the Bishop of Urgel over the Andorra, equally cold, arid and small, you will observe) which in fact means the official combination of Gore Booth and myself. <I thought I had expounded this to you when you were here, but perhaps not. Anyhow there is a formal Butler-Campbell agreement, not thought worthy of ratification by either M.O.I. or F.O., on Macmillan-Murphy lines.> Nicoll's salary is paid by Butler, that of his staff, his expenses, his books and documents by the Chancery (the two sums are approximately equal - I think we may pay some \$25 more p.m.). The alternative, of course, would have been two departments with separate despatches from the Chancery and a ban on political post-war reports (like that, e.g., on Catholics) on our or Nicoll's part. His educational activities are inspired by Butler himself, who professes to take a very active interest in this admittedly fairly crucial field. What actually happened was that the State Department requested the Embassy to allow Nicoll to accompany their Mr. Turner to London for the conference. It would have been difficult to refuse their request, even had Nicoll been our exclusive property. As it is, he works and lives in our bosom, but technically he is half at the beck and call of Chancery, and it can never have occurred either to Butler or to Sir R. Campbell, who sponsored Nicoll's voyage, even to consult with anyone else. At least I suspect this must have happened, for I was in San Francisco when I heard of this, to me,

unknown move. Were we to proceed along the lines of your forceful suggestion, Chancery would certainly absorb Nicoll with comparative avidity, since nobody else has ever appeared with one-tenth of his capacity for absorbing and digesting so much revoltingly tedious published matter, his incredible industry, his passionate earnestness and his dreary lucidity (I testify to all of these qualifications, particularly the latter, and particularly to their scarcity). In that case, we should have found ourselves not merely with the necessity for duplicating work (we could bootleg our own but scarcely other people's material to you), but subject to censorship of material which you know enough about by now. Although, therefore, I was in fact away when the crime was committed, and was not formally consulted at any stage by either Butler or the Chancery, I am prepared to defend both the condominium and Nicoll's journey. I think on the whole that the arrangement works well and that we are heavily the gainers, inasmuch as nothing emerges from his department, and nothing therefore reaches the F.O., on a vital topic, without being vetted and, in fact, edited exclusively by us. I need not labour the advantage of this.

Having disposed of this, let me deal with the more complex Rolo issue. As you know, Rolo is quite temperamentally far more a popular Broadway journalist than a balanced surveyor of opinion or, indeed, a person deeply interested in 'trends'. However, as you know also, he works very competently. Some weeks ago Aubrey Morgan very pressingly requested that he be released from part of his labours for the space of one month in order to do a specific job of work whose value to us was represented as being very considerable. This was not easy to meet, particularly as Mr. Churchill made a sudden appearance and brought a large extra burden on us of which you have had the fruits and of which the acknowledgment from 10 Downing Street is a proud feather in the Survey's by now gaudy cap. The result was that we all worked with real fury and did a job, how well you alone are in a position to judge. Rolo continued to spend half his time in the Survey Department and assured me that so well greased was the machine, after the great Reformation by Fr. Nicholas, such were the cries of satisfaction that poured into New York from London, that he found it possible, for a season at least, to use only one hand to drive his coach while writing deathless prose for 'Readers Digest'

with the other. Any how, that was all over before I left for the West Coast and did not in all take more than some four weeks. Again I see no cause for passionate perplexity. Some leeway for internal adjustments within the B.I.S. must surely be allowed for by you all.

You are mistaken in supposing that it is 'dire need of additional staff' that prompts us to press for Daphne so often and so warmly. There is no acute shortage of staff in Washington to which she is to come, nor has it ever been represented that there is. Our reason for wanting her is that there is a specific job of political importance to be done, at a particular season, namely the next six months, for which there is no one so obviously competent here. If per impossibile it were to prove impossible for her to come, a portion of that particular job would simply not get done, but we would not ask for a substitute for London. Otherwise we should not have made the offer of Scott Rankine which was so hideously *mal vu* by you all. It seems to me somehow that neither you nor Frank perhaps fully appreciate the extraordinary capacity which she displayed, while here, for that particular sort of work, and the remarkable fruits of the Morgan-Straight combination. It is possible that her gifts are not equally suited to the work which she does in London, however competently she performs that. She is wanted as a specialist, not as an extra hand to the plow.

As of [sc. for?] my own journey I will not altogether apologise for that. Who pressed me more warmly than you, my disciple and master, to leave the distorting mirrors of this place and go West? My first ten days was spent in a coma on the Morgan farm in the State of Washington after a succession of ills which I will not drearily rehearse to you, and after that I raced through my 7500 miles obtaining an impression similar to yours, both with regard to the unpopularity of the war, the passionate hatred of Washington and the immense and overwhelming importance of B.I.S. leg-work, as against desk work, which I will incorporate in a document which I think will support you in all particulars. It must be admitted that Nicoll's absence coincided on [sc. with?] my own, and yet, I cannot somehow think that a grave enough coincidence to move your thoughts to seek for plots, stratagems, conspiracies ...

Surely now that so much light has been cast on the situation nothing more remains to be said, but if you do not agree, if dark

doubts and suspense assail you, if you still feel that you want the whole of Nicoll and nothing but Nicoll all to yourself with not a morsel to spare for Ec. and Rec., let us know formally, and we will most reluctantly break the alliance with Chancery and immediately apply to you for an appropriation for a staff and expenses for a New Nicoll and a new department. Such is the situation. It is in your hands. We are but slaves.

To embark on a brighter theme, we have now arranged to produce regular surveys of the religious press, the Negro press, an educational survey and something better on films and radio. (We haven't quite understood Robin's suggestion about best-sellers as conveyed in a shocked tone by Nicoll but propose to send you clippings of reviews of such.) The most distressing of all these things is radio in my opinion. Rennie's people are to do it now, but so far there is a noticeable emphasis of interest in them on what is said about Yugoslavia, but complete lack of attention to the affairs of the U.S.A., doubtless due to the early training of Rennie's motley Central European crew. I am really concerned about the poverty and thinness of our radio survey. It is, of course, a lot more difficult to cover than the press, but also in certain respects more important. I shall do my best to restore the crumbling structure; indeed, I think it more important to do that than anything else that we are doing at present. The monitoring is doubtless a maddening occupation, but the present slipshod performance seems to me virtually useless.

Rolo is a trifle disturbed at present by the imminence of his induction in the army. God knows what we will do if that eventuates. Let's not talk about it before it happens.

Perhaps I have not made the situation entirely clear yet. If so, I beg you to report this, and I will try, try, try again. Communication is a despair inducing thing.

Yours,
Isaiah.

<Since writing the above I have peered more closely and dark facts emerge: Mr Manson, a junior surveyor, is leaving for a more lucrative post. Rolo, Gustafson & Stephens are both threatened by the Army; and Rennie's people have made a worse hash of the Radio Survey than you can conceive. We may save Rolo, & possibly Gustafson & Stephens, & find a substitute for Manson,

CORRESPONDENCE WITH H. G. NICHOLAS 1942–1945

although Thomas is being difficult about remuneration of this last, which at present (200 bucks) is apparently beyond the budget, but if any or all of these disasters break, you may expect fitful gaps in our service. Do not be too demanding: the situation is precarious enough.>

TO H. G. NICHOLAS

[British Embassy, Washington]

Carbon typescript, 10 November 1943

Dear Herbert:

I enclose a useful report by Professor Allardyce Nicoll on the failure of the recent Federal Aid Bill of Education. As Robin expressed some interest on the subject to Professor Nicoll recently, he might care to see.

A copy will have been sent to the Foreign Office but nothing, unless by them, to the Board of Education or anywhere else. The facts seem to be interesting in themselves.

Yours ever,
[Isaiah]

TO H. G. NICHOLAS

British Embassy, Washington

Manuscript, 10 November 1943

Dear Herbert

(No typists. UNNRA & White Paper have swallowed all. Conditions primitive. I enclose a magnum opus Judsonianum on the Five Senators. There is this to be added: (1) Lodge has made know *everywhere* that he & Brewster were mercilessly twitted by their Democratic colleagues for being singled out by our Minister for 3 hours of solid propaganda over dinner, & that he & Brewster thereon swore that they wd prove what effect that had had when they returned. (2) The Lend-Lease 'investigations' have been revived with a vengeance by Brewster, & the Truman Committee has already held several closed sessions on this, adding Nye &

Tydings (& you know what that means) as from the Appropriations Committee. Sen. McKellar, acting chairman of the Appro. Com. has appointed a subcommittee consisting of Nye, Mead & Tydings to draw up a resolution calling for an investigation of Lend/Lease expenditures. So much for ‘pooling’ and our attitude towards it all. The L/L administration is weeding out our friends under the tough banker Mr Crowley, & Stalin’s statement, as reported by Nelson, about Russian intentions for full repayment of their obligations, & ‘no token payments’ is a disagreeable curtain raiser for our White Paper. Brewster asked Sir S. Campbell why we kept no accounting: U.S. officials certainly assessed both their L/L aid and our reciprocal aid in dollar & cent terms: if we didn’t do so ourselves we should simply be faced with their figures & have no reply of our own beyond generalities about high heaven & less & more. Which won’t wash at all. I just don’t believe in mutual aid as a cancellation of L/L thoughts & believe in strictly national propaganda, & am getting into a Morganlike frame about UNIO & suchlike waffle (it *is* shocking waffle. And Mumford a charlatan). Dear me. I am getting off the subject. The F.O. will have had the summary (which please don’t see before they do) enclosed, the full product, we privately think, may prove too much. John Foster tells us in a letter that the N. Amer. Dep. is ‘starved’ for news. This is mere hypochondria when they have your presumably unceasing digestive apparatus so close at hand. You might enquire into their needs without official stimulus for us by asking solicitously if they hear enough of what is going on. Vale.

I.B.

[HGN annotates: ‘*Mr. CRUIKSHANK*: Judge Judson sums up, & finds the Talking Five guilty on most counts. Not for *immediate* circulation. HGN. 21/XI.’ RJC replies: ‘*Mr Nicholas*: Please let me know when this is released for publication. R.J.C. 22.11’.]

TO H. G. NICHOLAS

British Embassy, Washington

Typescript, [9/10/11] November 1943³⁰

Personal and Confidential

My Dear Herbert:

So Miss McGeachy has been at it again! Dear me, dear me, I suppose the minx will never cease from fulfilling her peculiar nature. I must regret that your interesting communication about her conversations with Mr. Darvall, and the very vivid picture which that conjured up, was the first that I ever heard of her Swedish ambitions. Upon my pressing Butler, he admitted that he had sent some telegram on the subject, and Chancery nodded weak telephonic approval too. Now that Noel Hall is done for and M.E.W. is gathering itself into a smaller and smaller compass, our bare-faced equestrienne needs fresh fields over which to gallop, and I suppose the Swedish scheme is the result of that. I was not consulted; nobody tells me things any more; nobody wants to know what I think or where I am; It is all very sad and despiriting after the old inner-circle days, the marches and counter-marches and the glorious revolutions in which one was so deeply implicated – and now it is one long perpetual Valley Forge with nothing in sight but a cup of tea with Mr. Gilliatt. But perhaps a little background may not be altogether amiss. Among the many interdepartmental committees burgeoning and sprouting and dying in this Embassy is one enormous one (provoked by the universal indignation at your Special Issues Paper on the publicity Line on Germany), dedicated to reports on ‘soft peace’ tendencies in this country, for your enlightenment but also designed to provoke the F.O. into a line of specific guidance. It was invented by Butler and is presided over by Sir R. Campbell and consists of, to the best of my recollection, Mr. Butler, Sir R.C., Mr. Bowes Lyon, Mr. Noel Hall (or his deputy), Mr. Donald Hall (or his successor), Mr. Wheeler Bennett, Mr. Morgan, Colonel Bebb (of M.E.W. Intelligence), Mr. Wright (Head of Chancery), Miss McGeachy and probably Sir G. Sansom, etc. etc. etc. The drafting committee

³⁰ For dating see letter of 19 January 1944, item 4.

consists of Mr. Wheeler Bennett, Colonel Bebb, Miss McGeachy, Mr. Berlin and Prof. Nicoll. Nothing had gone off before I left; something may have done so during my absence. I shall investigate. Between that and our beautiful trapeze artist's story, there is evidently a wide gap which you can fill in as well as I. The Committee is under the aegis of the Chancery, and has only met twice. What its future is no man can tell. The rest is opaque, but quite frankly I do not understand how even Miss McGeachy could assault the American Division with her plans. Is M.E.W. grown so impotent then? Has the F.O. no heart or gallantry? Strange indeed is an age when even a *femme fatale* can no longer weave our diplomats around her little finger. But Butler owns to sponsoring her. I do not. And talking of dangerous women, Miss Stark is said to be in bed with appendicitis in Halifax, N.S., and Mr. Wright, who has asked her to stay with him, says that she is a very gentle inoffensive little Victorian mouse, so the blood be on our own heads. I doubt if my most solemn manner will do much to modify so lost a soul; I shall duly go through my hoops and doubtless in the end be torn limb from limb by furious Zionists when my complicity is discovered.

Incidentally, the unattractive but I suppose very useful Mr. (Rev.?) H. A. Goodman, the Jewish expert employed by Martin in the Religions Division, has written to me privately asking my view as to the advisability of his touring this country. The Zionists are so bitterly clamorous at the moment that perhaps he may do some limited good <- as he belongs to the other lot-> so unless there is strong reason against it I shall probably answer in reply to him and say that I see nothing against his plan (he says that the Chief Rabbi can send him and not the Ministry), although I must confess I don't think it will make the slightest real difference, and must be classified as a mild racket<, but a harmless one. The slowest ship, the lowest priority.>

Dear me, dear me, that Miss McGeachy! What a woman! I still cannot recover. I must say I hand it to her. You must remember that I have hardly yet recovered from a hellish summer, and mix the oil and vinegar in more appropriate proportions in your letters<; the last lot contains so much of the latter that I could not but attribute it to some mysterious local infection unknown to me. Incidentally Miss Ratcliffe is *so* reluctant to go, that I do not wish to press her. Mrs Cook on the other hand is panting, but I cannot

CORRESPONDENCE WITH H. G. NICHOLAS 1942-1945

see how, if the N.Y. Survey Dept is to lose Messrs. Manson, Meeker, Miss Hanna, & possibly Gustafson, not to speak of Rolo & Stephens, all very suddenly, Mrs Cook, who is a backbone, can be let go. Possibly you'd like Miss N. Butler? or 3 months of Archie & then 3 m. of Mrs Cook? N.Y. is in a frightful spin again. The whole problem of a stable N.Y. staff seems insoluble so long as the draft & lucrative offers from 'Life' etc. systematically decimate us. I.B.>

Yours,
Isaiah.

FROM H. G. NICHOLAS

Ministry of Information, London

Typescript, 11 November 1943

Dear Isaiah,

You have probably seen the item by Bernstein in 'P.M.' in which he refers to the 'Englishman of liberal beliefs' who has explained to him how Mr. Churchill and Mr. Eden were at loggerheads over Moscow and the hide-bound Tories were only reluctantly induced to accept the meeting with Stalin. I believe that 'P.M.', the following day, carried a letter from Hutchinson, the B.U.P. Correspondent, attacking this.

Bernstein's piece has caused a good deal of indignation in high quarters, even, I believe, in very high quarters, here. That it is nonsense is, of course, obvious. At the same time it is generally supposed that the 'Englishman of liberal beliefs' is probably a real character and not an editorial fiction. We are not anxious to flog this dead horse alive again by raising a great fuss and burning up the cable wires. At the same time, it seemed to us that it would be useful if you could, for our private information, discover who the 'Englishman of liberal beliefs' was, and also if someone in the B.I.S., perhaps Major Ormerod, could let 'P.M.' know that we take a rather poor view of their irresponsibility, and also that their authority is talking mischievous nonsense. This is merely a suggestion, which perhaps for various reasons it may not be practicable to put into effect. Perhaps you will do what you think best and let us know the outcome.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH H. G. NICHOLAS 1942-1945

Yours ever,
Herbert.

FROM H. G. NICHOLAS

Ministry of Information, London

Typescript 17 November 1943

CONFIDENTIAL

Dear Isaiah,

The Survey Department have been rendering heroic service in the matter of press coverage of Lend-Lease and the White Paper. They have obviously extended themselves to the full, sparing neither blood, sweat, tears or toil. We are most grateful for having so much from so few.

At the same time, I would like to draw your attention to one respect in which I think their assessments are a little misleading. There is a certain tendency to judge results merely by the play or space which a story has received, without very much attention to the exact style in which the item was treated, e.g., the first reports of the agency messages on the Thursday when the White Paper appeared. These were described as 'favourable beyond expectation', which indeed, in terms of their prominence and length, might well be true. At the same time the stories themselves stressed strongly that very feature which our propaganda, from this end at least, is most concerned to play down, i.e. the 'balancing' of accounts between Britain and the U.S.A. Repeated references were made to Reverse Lend-Lease as 'a repayment' or a 'token payment', both of which are the exact reverse of the impression which the White Paper was concerned to give.

I know I do not need to labour this point. Needless to say, your customers in this office are not inconvenienced by such misreadings of our policy line. The trouble begins outside. These Lend-Lease specials are now coming to have a very wide and influential circulation. That in itself is welcome to us, in our great battle to stimulate interest in the problem of publicity for mutual aid. For that very reason it is particularly important that New York should not misrepresent the nature and degree of success which

CORRESPONDENCE WITH H. G. NICHOLAS 1942-1945

our story is getting in the U.S.A. I know, of course, that their misrepresentation proceeds merely from ignorance; it is the old problem of the boys in the back room not seeing the cypher cables. At the same time, the consequences, for the reasons I have mentioned, can be a little serious. Can you, amidst all your other worries, find a moment or two to set this right?

Yours ever,
Herbert.

FROM H. G. NICHOLAS

Ministry of Information, London

Typescript 19 November 1943

CONFIDENTIAL

Dear Isaiah,

I enclose a copy of a note which I sent to Charles Rolo in reply to a letter of his on the New York surveys. I have resisted his efforts, very disingenuous, to get us to carry the odium of amputating the Chicago cables. This is partly timidity, because Senator Hutton has threatened me with far more dire penalties than ever fell on the heads of your innocent subordinates, but far more the plain fact that we are even worse placed to undertake this job of editing and compressing than are your staff in New York. I do not think the arrangement would work at all.

What I have told Charles about the surveys in general will, I know, be no news to you. I have expressed it to him rather strongly because I feel that it could be remedied if perhaps he was able to give a little more direction and guidance to the boys on the cable desks. Such tautness as I was able to induce during my short-lived tour of retrenchment and reform seems to have relaxed, and we are now reverting to the old cabled photograph of the New York press, rather than what we have all along been trying to establish, an intelligent and economical selection of significant items.

This all proceeds, I strongly suspect, from the changes in your personnel at New York. From here, there is nothing that we can

do to help you in coping with the terrors of the draught³¹ and your competitors in the newspaper offices. At the same time, to judge from what various visitants have told us, that is not the whole story. The B.I.S. itself seems to have been amongst the most unscrupulous body-snatchers. Did not Miss Hanna leave the Survey for the Information Division?

I am not trying for one moment to run your Department by remote control, but I do wonder whether the B.I.S. properly recognises the extent to which not only the M.O.I. but also a number of other Government Departments, such as the Treasury, and fairly influential individuals, both in the Government and outside it, have come to rely on their morning dose of survey cables from New York. We really do have a very wide and influential audience. It would be a thousand pities if we lost the influence which we at present exercise in this way, simply because the Survey Department was always being used as a reservoir from which the B.I.S. recruited its task forces. Is there anything that we can do to help you in your uphill battle for staff and talent? Do you think that cables from Robin to Aubrey would be of any avail? I leave the matter entirely in your hands but I do hope that you will feel free to call on us for any help we can render.

On getting your letter of the 4th November, I felt very contrite. My jibes and taunt of September 30th were, as I hope you have charitably realised, the result of a sudden burst of puzzled annoyance over the unannounced descent of Nicoll, and the sudden disclosure of Charles Rolo's flirtations with the Wingate boys. All is now clear, and all is understood. Needless to say, not for one moment did we demur at your own trip, which I am sure will be as beneficial to us as I hope it has been to you. The signs of your return are already manifest on every hand, in the thick fluttering of green sheaves, as well as in the sharper edge on the political cables. We are working overtime to keep pace with your magnificent flow of material: it is well worth while knocking an extra hour off our sleep.

I am going to write you more about Daphne and, as and when I have anything constructive to suggest, about the surveys in general. Meanwhile, be kind enough to forget my asperity and not allow the difficulties of communication to come between us.

³¹ <stet!>

Yours ever,
Herbert.

[Not transcribed: Carbon copy of letter to Charles Rolo from HGN, 19 November 1943.]

TO H. G. NICHOLAS

British Embassy, Washington

Carbon typescript, 22 November 1943

My Dear Herbert:

Your letter of the 11th November about Bernstein's article in 'PM' on the 'Englishman of Liberal Belief' (I know there is an earlier letter of yours to answer; you shall duly have your report on that). The Englishman was, of course, none other than Horabin, the Liberal M.P., who has been travelling around the country expressing precisely such sentiments as attributed to him in 'PM'. He called on me with a letter of introduction from an amiable, but I had previously thought unpolitic, Russian penseur in London, called Mr. Rach, a nice man if slightly silly. Horabin told me that his exit permit had been cancelled by Sir A. Cadogan three days before his projected journey, but on the next day Herbert Morrison had written him a personal apology for this act, which Horabin said he regretted as he would have loved a scrap in the House of Commons on the subject. Ostensibly he came on some sort of private commercial business, but with secret introductions from both Mr. Winant and Mr. Agar (which he was to use discreetly and preferably not forward anything of theirs in writing, but use the telephone). I asked him what his real intention was, and he said that it was his main purpose to 'contact the Left', i.e. Wallace, the C.I.O., etc. This he did with a vengeance. He told me that he called on the Prime Minister about once in six weeks, that Mr. Eden was his *bête noire* in British politics, he attributed to Mr. Eden all kinds of unspeakable attributes and regarded him as jointly responsible with the Prime Minister for not opening the second front last year which would have led to British Talenberg but would have ended the war that year with a Russian victory in the East – precisely what Mr. Churchill most wished to prevent.

He boasted of his intimate contacts with the Soviet Embassy in London, etc. To me, who had never met him before, he seemed a fairly typical, rather silly but quite sincere old-fashioned 19th-century English radical, slightly dotty, incapable of holding any political office, quite irresponsible, against every possible government, an anarchist, a lunatic, but the sort of gad-fly that English political life can afford to carry, but clearly fatal in the United States. I next came across his traces in Los Angeles, where the Consul said that³² enquiries as to whether the Liberal Party in England was identical with the Communists, that one or two of the local business men and bankers said that Horabin had arrived with very powerful letters of introduction from British industrialists and bankers, had addressed a number of Lions, Rotaries, etc., and had everywhere taken a very violent Communist Party line on all topics. This had excited the audience, as he did not look like a Communist, but had hardly done us any good. At a certain point, our security people began to wonder if they could ship him back, but clearly there was no possible official case against him. The statement in 'PM' closely corresponds to what he must have said to a very large number of individuals and organisations, but clearly we cannot get Ormerod to talk to 'PM' about their irresponsibility, considering that Horabin is a fairly well-known English Liberal M.P. and from 'PM's' point of view, an ideal source. Anything we say will merely confirm them in their belief in the opposite. After the interview, we did make a great deal of fuss and tried to stir the Ambassador into some sort of action. He, characteristically, said that he could not possibly speak to Horabin or ask him to leave as that would provoke a political storm in London but that as Mr. H. had applied for an air priority, he could very well put him high on the list. This was done and Mr. H. is presumably now happily gambolling amongst you. He asked me for introductions for various persons, and I dimly mentioned Frankfurter, but on second thoughts decided to forget the request, did not reply to Mr. Horabin's last letter to me and never saw him again.

All in all, the damage he did, despite all appearances, is not great, and what he says is believed by the readers of 'PM' in any case, and the others are not affected. He has done not a tithe, not

³² 'he had had' omitted?

one-hundredth part of damage done by e.g. Mr. Brooks (see our cables on him of this morning), who appears to have been given travel facilities by the Ministry including a letter from your chief censor, Rear Admiral Thomson, to Grant McKenzie and who, I imagine, from what the local British correspondents say about him, is a pretty shady, if not disreputable, character and has done us real damage. The dozen or so Senators who have commented on his statement in the World's Press News as cabled here by Noderar have given the thing wide publicity, and coupled with Willkie's pronouncements on the subject, Roy Howard's private whispering campaign, etc., has created an atmosphere in which all British officials will necessarily function under greatly increased suspicion. How did you come to sponsor this figure? Although I dare say he is, on paper, respectable enough and the real blame rests on the World's Press News, which ought to be told that it has made an easy record for damage done to Anglo-American relations in 1943. We are all genuinely disturbed and depressed by this event. Anything you may tell us about the history of this event will be appreciated as enquiries are bound to be made. While here, he apparently gave out that he had some hush-hush business to perform for those sort of people in London.

Yours ever,
[Isaiah]

TO H. G. NICHOLAS

British Embassy, Washington

Typescript, 22 November 1943

Personal and Confidential

Dear Herbert:

I am really being driven out of my wit by the Daphne problem. Let me put the situation before you:-

1. As Thomas says that we must not add to our establishment, and because you genuinely need a replacement, it is clearly advisable for us to send you *someone* in exchange for Daphne. But ...
2. <*New York is untouchable at the moment.*> We cannot rock the boat in the New York Survey. The situation there is pretty grim: Rolo,

Gustafson, Stevens, are under threat of being drafted. Manson has left us and has been replaced by a raw female recruit. They are operating on a shoe string and to rob them of anyone at this moment would cause real chaos. Assuming that we shall be able to beg off Rolo, the same neither can or should be done in the case of Stevens or Gustafson, whom we cannot decently make a fuss over; the precariousness of life in that department makes for general weakness and the further fact that the moral centre of gravity is obviously now in Washington, and that they have been reduced to pure press and radio surveying, does not lift their morale. That this is inevitable does not help. I propose to visit them once a week and talk to them in the evenings about current problems, etc. But these W.E.A. exercises are a palliative for a difficult situation. Mrs. Cook is most anxious to go but she is the backbone of that place and to withdraw her during the present crisis would be grossly irresponsible. So I have asked her not to think about it for the moment. Anyhow, if we remove someone from New York we must replace them there. Since Daphne ought to come to Washington, if she is to do primaries against our local background of gossip, the replacement in New York will have to be made from here. How can we send Scott Rankine, or Archie, or Judson, who are the equals of Rolo, to replace a junior press surveyor? Pinch-hitting is all very well, but not for six months. After you have promoted people, you cannot suddenly demote them to that extent. That solution will not work.

3. Miss Ratcliffe staunchly refuses to go, so far as I can see because of distaste for S.K. One cannot drive unwilling people to England, particularly considering how many people want to go (will Mrs. Cook's American citizenship exclude her from ever working in the Division, by the way?). She is very tearful about it. So that is out.

4. Since Daphne comes to Washington, the logical thing would be to replace her from here. You want Archie for obvious reasons, but to lose him for six months at a time when the primaries increase the amount of work to be done, but the rest of the work has not been diminished, seems to me wrong. He is far the best person in my little establishment, and things would be difficult, if not impossible, without him, i.e. we could go on, but we would have to decrease the amount of work done to an extent which would be felt equally by Chancery, yourselves, and the F.O. He

himself is not very willing to go for a period of more than three months as he feels, reasonably, that if he were to come here in the late autumn, he would be excessively out of touch with all the long-term hares which he is so ably pursuing. My idea was to have Daphne here for six months and return her to London in, say, July or August, so that she might be with you through the elections, which with her by that time detailed knowledge of events leading up to then, she would be in an exceptional position to assess. She and Con did the primaries of 1940 and their comparison with their notes and memories of that period ought to produce something very useful. If, for whatever reason, she does not come, this job will be very much less well done, but all this you know already. An additional complication about Archie has entered with the stout and firm refusal by Butler to let him go. He uses him for all kinds of odd memoranda for himself, and while you may have what views you will about the precise degree of utility of such work, we are not officially permitted to doubt its value. Chancery will also kick up a row if he goes – you will say what right have they, etc., and why don't they take him and pay for him if so. So they would, and I shall have a vacancy and bitterly regret it. But if you really think *that* a good idea, I can easily, as things are now, sell almost any of my young men to Chancery lock, stock and b. Perhaps colonisation is not such a bad principle. Tell me what you think. I am against it myself. <So, I gather, is Aubrey.>

5. Casting about madly for a solution, I thought perhaps we might send Archie for three months and Judson for three further months. Judson has no clear desire to go and will have to be prodded, and I am not at all sure how far you would find him a possible substitute for Daphne. I still think that Paul Scott Rankine would be far the best solution, despite the disparity of status – he swears that he will do exactly what Daphne is now said to be doing – coming in at 8 a.m. and do all your dirtiest work, etc. What I feel is that if you take away our stalwarts, the principal sufferers will noticeably be the American Division itself, since the quality of what comes from here will deteriorate. Please think it over and let me know your mature conclusion. It is quite clear to me now that if any substitute for Daphne is to come and if that substitute must be a surveyor (could you not, by the way, employ Mrs. R. Post, the widow of the late N.Y. Times correspondent now in London, or is

that a laughable suggestion? She was thought intelligent in New York, I believe. But Daphne would know.), New York must not be touched and only Washington drawn upon. Presumably you do not want Nicoll. Judson and Mackenzie now have an assistant called Miss Hyde who is half researcher, half stenographer. That presumably would not suffice? I hope I have made it clear that the problem derives from the fact that the New York Survey totters because of the precariousness of life of its members, whom either the Army or higher pay removes, while Washington, having grown not by design but by accidental means, is composed of people who cannot be returned to New York or easily shuffled. If the alternatives are either Archie in London for six months or no Daphne, then I cannot persuade myself that it would be right to choose the former. How distressing that would be I need not emphasise. As a desperate remedy, I shall still try to send Judson for three months and Archie for three more if you think that the expense and trouble in the four voyages involved is justified. Please talk to all concerned and tell me what is, in your opinion, the equitable solution. The only firm possibility for the moment is Archie for three months. Can you eke out the rest without further assistance from us? And is Scott Rankine utterly out of the question? As I very well realise that both you and Daphne want a quick solution because of Daphne's lease and her genuine desire to end this absurd suspense, please cable if that is possible.

Yours ever,
Isaiah.

P.S. Enclosed fragment of a work done at the request of you know who, also a curio about Sir G. especially for Robin's benefit. I am sending one Nicoll to Frank.

[Attached to carbon but not transcribed: Paragraphs 2–7 of the 'fragment' (on Hoover) referred to in the PS above.]

CORRESPONDENCE WITH H. G. NICHOLAS 1942–1945

TO H. G. NICHOLAS

[British Embassy, Washington]

Carbon typescript, 25 November 1943

Dear Herbert

The enclosed was used by Krock in articles but otherwise circulated privately. Events have made it to some degree obsolete as an analysis of Soviet policy, but as evidence of what conservative German ‘soft peacers’ here would like it is still useful. Possibly F.O.R.D. may like a copy? <latest Gallup poll produces 23% in favour of soft peace.>³³

Yours ever,
[Isaiah]

TO H. G. NICHOLAS

British Embassy, Washington

Typescript, 2 December 1943

My Dear Herbert:

I have just got round to replying to your letter of 29th October. Before proceeding to do this (together with general gossip around the plant) I feel I must return to the subject of Daphne about which I feel considerable guilt. The position, as I told you in the last letter, has boiled down to a few very simple facts. New York (including apparently Miss Ratcliffe) cannot, according to Rolo, Aubrey and, I suppose, reluctantly myself, be touched at all during the present storm and stress. In Washington you reject Nicoll, Paul, and, I suppose, me. Judson has definitely been certified by his doctor as suffering from diabetes and sacroiliac trouble (he does not wish this to be talked about) and, therefore, untravelworthy. This leaves Archie, whom we are prepared to send for three months but scarcely for six, as Primaries, if to be put as a model exercise, are an added burden to existing labours and not a

³³ Insertion (by secretary?) on carbon, presumably as a record of insertion by IB on top copy.

substitute for something else. Aubrey has various ideas which he will put before you in person when he leaves next week. He has promised to try and solve the situation himself. I have expounded it to him fully and hope for a swift and bloodless solution, peaceful change as the late Mr. Cruttwell used to call it. You do see the position, don't you? You could have a quite able young woman who used to work under Miss Ratcliffe, certified by Con as capable, a British matron willing to return for six months, but that would mean adding to our establishment and that I imagine is not permitted. If that could be got over, it would solve all the difficulties, but Thomas and Aubrey are grim on this subject. Aubrey maintains, quite rightly, that with two Archies I could dispense both with Paul and Judson. I entirely agree. But where is the second Archie, let alone humanity<, & long years of hacking service?>

To turn to solidier topics:-

1. You enquire about the 'appeasement' Prodrone cable about the Five Senators. I entirely agree with you and can only assume that in my absence our appeasers were allowed to get away with it without a fight. I cannot conceive what it meant since the results of the Five Senators, in the form of Congressional investigations, will be very much with us soon and suspicion of our slickness has increased even while the Five Senators are not taken too seriously by the average newspaper man or reader. It would have been far better if Mr. Churchill had replied. It is always, I feel convinced, better when specific replies are given and evasion and silence are not practiced. However, I am allowed to say this only to you, if you see what I mean. <(Immediate results: Truman's last report, oil, communication[?], air & all other topics.)>

2. I entirely agree that the assessment was too optimistic, but that was not P.S.R.'s fault at all, if, again, you see what I mean. I do not at all believe in the thesis that hostile interest in American investment abroad is nevertheless better than indifference, i.e. isolationism. I do not believe in the real danger of old-fashioned economic isolationism – interest, e.g. in Arabian oil and a large fleet in the Pacific with all its implications guarantees a certain continuing American part in those regions but what is far more likely is a general messing about by Americans, half in and half out of, e.g. the Middle East. The region between, say, Tripoli and

Rangoon is viewed with a certain horror by Americans as a morass which they will continue to stir without really helping to mop up, so that the alleged world awareness of the Five Senators must not be quoted as a plus. The net result, so far as I can see, is a by now unshakable conviction that we will try and outsmart 'them' in every sphere, which is most widely felt in the business and financial community, who refuse to reflect about the real causes for this or that desperate economic policy on our part, on the ground that we are very clever people and will doubtless emerge top-dog as usual. Hinton, who has been travelling around with a set of questions partly supplied by me, reports (he will doubtless produce a formal account sometime) that in answer to such questions as 'What do you think is the proper economic policy for Britain to pursue with regard to exports, etc.?', the bankers and business men tend to reply 'the British are far too astute not to do what pays them best, we do not need to worry about Britain's economic position, the British will take care of that far better than we will take care of ours.'

3. I shall send you a report of my journey in a few days' time, but in the meanwhile the relevant point is that there is no interest in the war anywhere at all outside professional circles, there is very great interest in the immediate post-war predicament on the part of individuals and organisations, there is real worry about the necessity for dismantling plants and the consequent unemployment due both to industrial demobilisation and to the expected sudden drop in investment, and consequently there is acute consciousness of possible economic advantages being seized by others – others always means us – while America is looking away – it is always looking away and we are always seizing, so to speak. The general pattern of this will be familiar enough to you, but the report of the Five Senators has certainly left more firmly planted than before the proposition that they would be suckers if they made concessions to us – that we are so busily looking after our own interest that the least they can do is to look as competently after theirs, and then, perhaps, all will be well – there is no real anticipation of an economic war between us, no desire (except among individual groups, e.g. Pan-American, etc.) specifically to outsmart us or do us down. If they hold their own and prevent us from getting away with too much, that would be

satisfactory enough. As for the alleged indignation with the Senators, mentioned I think in our political despatches, you may discount that of course; at worst the Senators were thought to be making typical Senatorial politics, and why not, it is thought. If they exaggerated, it was in the right direction after all. The New Deal had done a good job on running the war but criticism of its economic ineptitude and lack of bargaining capacity is always welcome. More should be talked about horse trading, not less. As for oil and Brewster's remarks on this, there is a good deal behind it. Ickes, the Navy Department, and even the State Department have long cast yearning looks at Anglo-Iranian and Iraq petroleum companies. It is a complicated pattern, and I will enclose a special story on that <as soon as Chancery lets me see its oil file (see Ickes in current American Magazine, p. 26. Archie is airmailing).>

4. You asked who was the appeaser? Answer: the most obvious person you can think of under that label in these parts. I need go no further. There is a theory, strongly held in that quarter, that what with rising irritation against Americans in London, our telegrams and reports tend to add to the swelling indignation of the F.O., North American Department, and so feed fuel to the flames. Could we not, at least occasionally, turn to the more agreeable aspects of our relations and implant more enthusiasm for their allies? Are we not altogether too pre-occupied with the seamy side of the picture – Senator Brooks of Illinois came to lunch the other day with H.E. and behaved himself with great courtesy and were we not rather jaundiced in our view of these simple people? I shall not go on, but you will know how to discount certain sudden wads of cotton wool due to our being thought too alarmist on occasion.

5. Lend-Lease and your letter of 17th November just received (together with your letter of 19th November). I quite agree that more attention was paid to quantity and prominence than to content (but New York did say, so far as I remember, that early United Press despatches, Paul Ward in the 'Baltimore Sun', for example, gave the wrong kind of slant to the story. I even put in Roy Howard and 'Baltimore Sun' into the political cable to rub this fact in to certain persons to indicate the curious results of intensive investment). However, in general you are perfectly right, of course; but there is this explanation: We do not really (when I say 'we' I

suppose I mean your representatives here and one or two intelligent persons in the Embassy. I do not mean the Supply Council boys or (Treasury) believe in the immediate feasibility of popularising ‘pooling’ or the true nature of mutual aid, because of the intense resistance of men and things here to any such idea. America thinks of itself as much too large and rich to think of itself as merely contributing something to a common fund of any kind, much as others contribute, according to their capacity. It is pleased to think of itself as contributing far more than anyone else – and never mind about capacity, etc. – but does not particularly like the idea of carrying the entire economic burden of the war. It has always, therefore, been my view, regarded as pessimistic and somewhat defeatist by our economic representatives, though shared I think by Aubrey, that we should not get reciprocal aid, either as a term or as a concept, working widely in American minds. That what was important was to emphasise the formidable nature of <(absolute size of)> our own contribution – the notion that Lend-Lease was a two-way traffic even if comparisons were instituted between how much the U.S. gave and how much we, unfairly to us or to the other Allies. I should maintain, perhaps over-optimistically, that the success of the White Paper consists in the fact that the two-wayness of the traffic has been very firmly rammed home, and that the invidious comparisons between the amounts contributed are likely to linger here far less than the simpler idea that we have contributed a lot to the pool, even if not nearly as much as the United States<, & even if U.S. deserved repayment in kind, buses etc.> I should maintain that the White Paper itself was a rather poor document for this purpose, inasmuch as it was not particularly well written (Lord K. must have been nodding indeed) and kept oscillating between statements of figures and amounts, which were an obvious temptation to an attempt to ‘balance accounts’, <re.[?]> the notion of ‘repayment’ etc. on the one hand and the old ‘pooling’ and contempt for ‘nicely calculated less or more’ on the other. I know why the Treasury was bullied into giving figures, of course, but the net result is an ambiguous document not capable of making a strong simple impression. Considering that, and the Five Senators, the result of our publicity was really very impressive, because what we were fighting against was almost total ignorance of the very existence of Reverse Lend-Lease which powerfully aided the desire for

repayment. Now I think one may say that (or will I have to eat my words?) while those who demand repayment will, of course, go on doing so (and like rooted anglophobia, nothing we do will really stop that) it has become a very much less plausible thesis; the ‘two-way street’ is, according to some sources, being used already as a familiar simile for other forms of reciprocity (the relations between, I think, Nebraska or Idaho and the federal authorities was described somewhere as ‘a two-way street like Lend-Lease’), which is very satisfactory. I quite understand that in London you are worried about the notion of repayment, war debts, balanced accounts, etc., whereas what you ought to be worrying about is the lack of understanding of the very existence and operation of Reverse Lend-Lease. So do tell them all that the (at any rate short-term) effect of the White Paper is the much wider diffusion of knowledge of the reciprocity of the business – not of pooling indeed but of impressive evidence of, if you like, repayment by us. Whether we have repaid enough is never likely to be as burning an issue as whether we are repaying at all, the latter for the moment having, it seems, been killed. Now, you will see why B.I.S., in its half conscious way, blared forth with such enthusiasm the mere facts of wide coverage, etc. First of all, it was, of course, gratifyingly new. The fact that O.W.I. Domestic Branch is virtually null and void helped us if anything. But also there is the fact that the sheer prominence of information on the Reverse Lend-Lease has done far more to acquaint people with its existence, than has the wrong slant of many despatches misled the public as to the true nature of it <(pure H.W.B.J. prose)>. Therefore I should maintain, and I quite see why there would be a disposition to question this strongly at your end, but I should still maintain, that the wrong slant is not frightfully important this time because the elaborate comparison of figures is not what the people can possibly remember – it merely remembers the fact that we are paying and doing – while politicians likely to use such figures would have fished them up in any case, given that we publish them at all. But you are obviously quite right in not wanting our optimism to act as a brake on London’s publicity activities in this regard. I am, therefore, trying to persuade Thomas to pay for a special poll on reciprocal aid by Harry Field, so as to be able to assess results a little more accurately and then report on all the

spade work that still remains to be done. But it was a little triumph and no mistake.

6. I shall certainly go into the whole B.I.S. Survey question. I find it difficult to be an absentee landlord even though I do once a fortnight go up to see them all. Miss Hanna was whisked away without my being told, while I was on my journeys I suppose, but administration of B.I.S. Survey in New York is theoretically in Thomas's and Rolo's hands and I try not to interfere, reasonably I think, but they do require pulling up and I shall do my best. The Hutton thunder breaks about my ears. I shall try to cope with that, too. Rolo did say something about this to me dimly but did not show me your letter, for which I am grateful. I do not propose to ask him to send me copies of everything he gets and will rely on his paraphrases as being a more tactful procedure, but privately I shall be most appreciative of copies, of course.

Aubrey will tell you, I think, that what is fundamentally wrong with B.I.S. Survey in New York is that they are a headless trunk, since Rolo has neither the prestige nor the personality of a proper B.I.S. director. Nor, so long as they are more or less confined to press and radio survey, does this seem in principle remediable since their work will in principle remain less intellectually taxing than that of the Washington boys. Perhaps it would really be best to cut New York Survey administratively off from me here, giving them a very autonomous head directly under Aubrey, and depend on me for the creation of close diplomatic relations and interchanges which I could guarantee. Rolo is not quite the main for that, and I do not know if P.S.R. would be (he is in a very delicate state, feels persecuted and must be treated gently). You will discuss all that with Aubrey, doubtless, when he arrives. He, whose first love was the Survey and whose pro-New York fanaticism is still as strong as ever it was, wants to build up the New York Survey rather at the expense of Washington, I think. I do not agree at all, of course, as he knows. People like Archie Mackenzie, whom no one could accuse either of too much imagination or of hatred of office routine, would rebel very definitely if threatened with a return to New York. The difference of quality in the material used and the work performed is unfortunately only too glaring, the old division of the upper and lower story will I fear plague us until the end of the war, and all that I can recommend is that a good man

be chosen for New York and that local autonomy be then granted and the mandatory system be abolished. If you could explain the difference between the undesirable ‘photographic’ survey now occurring and the brief period of enlightenment when discrimination and judgment were exercised just before to Aubrey it would probably help. If it is decided to keep the two Surveys definitely as one and under me, I shall try and spend several days in New York at a time and supervise the thing myself. But I would rather not do that and dislocate my present activities unless this was the only possible course. So do reach a decision in London with Aubrey on this and tell me. I shall then act accordingly and at once.

7. And now for some inconsequential gossip. The new head of the Domestic Division of O.W.I., Mr. Healy of the ‘New Orleans Times Picayune’, is a nice enough man whom I saw in New O., young (about 35 perhaps), energetic, Willkieish, a friend of Graham Hutton, a good energetic pink-faced Philistine, who will do a competent job, admire Eric Johnston[e] and make no difference to any of us so far as I can see. You must know that O.W.I., at least on its domestic side, is virtually non-existent. Nobody knows and nobody cares about what it does or fails to do. Nobody cares any longer whether it gets an appropriation or not unless it has to do with overseas, i.e. U.S. troops, i.e. fourth-term propaganda. While Mr. [Brendan] Bracken was here he did much to hoist Elmer Davis’s stock a little in the White House. But Davis turns out to be a very stupid, if honest, piece of hickory and does not understand and, therefore, does not resent his obliteration, so you could forget about Domestic O.W.I. for all practical purposes and expect from them neither good nor evil, at any rate under the present regime.

That is all for the moment.

Yours ever,

Isaiah.

FROM H. G. NICHOLAS

Ministry of Information, London

Typescript, 3 December 1943

Personal.

Dear Isaiah,

We have been in a state of constant agitation these last two days, as you may well imagine, about the 'news muddle' of the Cairo Conference. I cabled Rolo on December 1st, asking him for a round-up as soon as possible of press dispatches or comment on the Three-Power Conference publicity arrangements. What we in fact received were the following:

- 1) A special on December 2nd on the Reuter dispatch.
- 2) Two long survey specials on the 2nd and the 3rd, on the Cairo Conference Communique, the second of which was marked 'Unpublishable' for reasons which are totally incomprehensible here.
- 3) A short, and very inadequate, survey special which reached us this morning on dispatches on Cairo Conference publicity in New York 'afternoons'.

There has also been a fair sprinkling of items amongst our mornings' news summaries.

This is all rather puzzling. These vast specials on the Cairo Conference Communique contain, as you will see if you look at them, relatively little that is of operational interest to us. Detailed speculation on the future of the Marshall Islands leaves us very cold compared with the burning question of what Elmer Davis is saying about the M.O.I. and America is saying about Elmer Davis. In other words, I rather fear that our survey people in New York have gone off the rails, at a time when we are most anxious that they should stay on and give us every item of tittle-tattle on this particular O.W.I.-M.O.I. brouhaha.

I hesitate to complain direct to New York about this, knowing how short-staffed they are, and appreciating, also, how much these cables, however useless, represent in terms of blood, sweat and tears. At the same time, I hate to see such appalling waste of effort

CORRESPONDENCE WITH H. G. NICHOLAS 1942–1945

at a time when our urgent needs could, in fact, be met by a good deal less if only it were to the point.

I mention the whole thing, not because there is anything you will be able to do about it now, but because I feel someone ought to know, in order to prevent a similar train of errors occurring again. I enclose all the cables in question, which I think will enable you to see the whole story for yourself. I am sure that the trouble is due to the usual difficulties of staff, but, at any rate, you ought to know about it.

Yours ever,
Herbert.

<There is no point in spinning out further explanation – God! these problems of communication! You *know* what I mean! HGN.>

FROM H. G. NICHOLAS

Ministry of Information, London

Typescript, 3 December 1943

Personal and Confidential.

Dear Isaiah,

Your cri de coeur of November 22nd about Daphne finds an instant and equally confused echo in our breasts. One thing seems to be clear, that we cannot hope to proceed with the original idea of an exchange. Your staff difficulties are obviously acute and getting acuter. Even from this distance it is apparent that the New York Survey are down to their minimum strength, and we cannot be party to any arrangements which would hamstring them further. We have gone into all the possible alternative proposals before. Each of them, for one reason or another, will not do. Daphne's job, with its combination of chores at one end and rather delicate responsibility at the other (since in the next twelve months a careless phrase in a Survey cable or an ill-judged reply on the telephone may give the CHICAGO TRIBUNE or other friends material for a blockbuster), cannot easily be filled by any of your

candidates who are available. For this reason Robin and I have decided that the only thing to do is to let you have Daphne,

(a) because, you old seducer, you have incited her to travel.

(b) because you obviously do need some such person to cover the political waterfront during the next six months.

(c) because the Survey people in New York, who, from overstrain or human frailty, have forgotten the indoctrination administered by the reforming friar earlier in the year, need someone who will sit down at their right hand and keep them alive to our needs and problems over here.

So much for decisions in principle. Now for the tiresome problem of establishment. If we drop the idea of exchange, how can you add Daphne to your staff? In the cable I sent you this morning I suggested that surely there must be a vacancy in the Survey Department, now that the Army, or Life, or fate, or the vampirish activities of d'Arcy, have so sadly eaten into your personnel. If this is so, we suggest that Daphne fills such a vacancy, that her visit is regarded as a purely temporary replacement, and that Ben need not worry his head about whom he is to give up in order that you may have your prey.

This will leave us with nobody at this end, which is a depressing thought, but is our own headache. We shall play our game of musical chairs, juggling people about in the Division, or else, if we are very fortunate, recruiting someone from outside. Provided you keep your pledge and don't hang on to Daphne for more than six months, we shall manage somehow.

If this plan appeals to you please cable me, the sort of cable which Establishments can understand, and we'll put the whole thing into operation without delay.

If Scott Rankine is bruised at our refusal to demote him from butler in Washington to parlourmaid in London, why not console him by getting him a Frank O. Darvall Travelling Fellowship? Although he would not do for Daphne's job we should be quite happy to see him here on a two months' handshake tour. Better still, of course, yourself.

Yours ever,
Herbert.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH H. G. NICHOLAS 1942–1945

[Not transcribed: Portion of a carbon copy of a report on Hull, with covering compliments slip to HGN from IB, 6 December 1943, on which HGN has written a comment to RJC.]

TO H. G. NICHOLAS

British Embassy, Washington

Carbon typescript, 6 December 1943

Dear Herbert,

Enclosed Professor Nicoll on the Protestants seems to me a fair enough summary. I should myself be inclined to be less sanguine on the ground that the cross currents – pacifism, guilt about Germans and war, suspicion of power politics, British Empire, etc., preoccupation with Asia, trust in European Protestant churches (especially German and Swiss), i.e. liability to accept *their* structures of our plans as valid, etc. and produce a confused, anti-sanctions frame of mind, and faith in ‘understanding’ and ‘consent’ particularly as relating to politically mushy or even undesirable groups in Europe which will merely confound counsel – a sort of soft Wilsonism if you can conceive of such a horror. I commend most especially to your attention an article by William Hard in the December ‘Readers’ Digest’ which you will have got – he is benevolent, ex-semi-isolationist, and still most popular and personally influential, a sort of ‘private face’ W. A. White among elderly politicians and the Myron Taylors. The mess he generates is pretty characteristic of the general frame of mind, a mixture of sincere good-will and anti-European provincialism leading you know whither.

I have now acquired a *ceterum censeo* – White Paper – I do assure you again (despite Brogan’s B.B.C. American intelligence sheet for the relevant date) that the residual effect (precipitate you call it) is that Lend Lease is a *two way street* – a new awareness – and this outweighs the invidious sterling dollar comparisons, i.e. the sheer amount of space in press and radio is what has counted.

Yours ever,

[Isaiah]

CORRESPONDENCE WITH H. G. NICHOLAS 1942–1945

FROM H. G. NICHOLAS

Ministry of Information, London

Typescript, 7 December 1943

CONFIDENTIAL

Dear Isaiah,

The lady whose clipping I attach will be with you very shortly, if not indeed before you receive this letter. I understand that she is going to do a coast-to-coast trip for Colston Leigh. Strictly speaking, she is none of our business, but a Polish McGeachy who has had most of her diplomatic experience at Kuibyshev and who is proposing to cover the American waterfront from end to end, is pretty sure to be part of the business of the Division of Surveys and Reports before she returns.

I strongly suggest that you take one of those opportunities which I know will abound in Washington for making the lady's acquaintance. She has a good deal that is interesting to say, there is pepper and salt in abundance, and in any event, you ought to keep tab on her movements. Let me know what transpires.

Yours ever,
Herbert.

FROM H. G. NICHOLAS

Ministry of Information, London

Typescript, 7 December 1943

My Dear Isaiah,

'To avert wrath', indeed. The coals of fire sear my temples. And you could not have made a more felicitous choice. I had my eye on the old man's Platonic effusion, and was even about to ask you to get me a copy and charge to my account. For a great figure who had latterly sunk to such a trough of isolationist know-nothingism he has made a remarkable come-back. The book has a certain octogenarian serenity and wisdom – even at its most exasperating – which enchants me. It was clever of you to have thought of it and charming to have bothered.

And such a fillip is sorely needed at the moment. The December dreariness has us in its grip. Spell it grippe for fuller effect. Yes, even the indomitable Darvall, who has been out for the count these past three weeks, melancholy and bed-ridden in the Cotswolds, where his doctor says that four years of over-work have levied their toll on his heart, and that rest is the first essential. So we scarcely expect to see him back amongst us this year. Two of our homunculi have chosen this unpropitious moment to desert us – the harrowed Hargrove and the Dotheboys Nickerson. Hamish Hamilton has put himself on half-pay and one-third work, in order that the fortunes of his publishing shall not sink from inattention. Phyllis Bentley sails home at a snail's pace, consigned to one of the tardiest opportunities of recorded time – so rumour has it – as a salutary lesson for having tried to teach New York how to edit *Britain*.³⁴ So the total manpower of the firm is seriously lowered, and I have to waste most of my time on other people's administrative chores. So if you receive fewer acknowledgments of your output than previously please attribute it not to ossification of my critical powers – though that is probably also setting in on the side – but primarily to plain shortage of breath and time. What we shall always find time to do, rest assured, is to read and digest your opera. Only sometimes you will have to accept payment in silence, the cheapest form of praise.

And also, it seems, we are soon to have Aubrey with us, to add to the gaiety of ministries and the burdens of bureaucrats. You say you are becoming more Morganatic. I think I am becoming less so. Early in the year we corresponded about the 'integrity' or lack of it in the BIS and in the course of a long and melancholy survey of the animal, which moved me deeply, because in your picture of it and yourself I recognised so many lineaments of my own, you said that you did not think many of your worthy colleagues were lacking in integrity, as I had suggested. I didn't mean of course that they were placemen, corrupted by the immoral Aubrey, who would commit immoral acts merely to shine in their great taskmaster's eye. I merely meant to imply that Aubrey is the kind of princeling – or business man – who prefers a court of Yesmen, or at least persons who did not have strongly held and independent views on the work that they were jointly undertaking, D'Arcys, Bens, Robert

³⁴ Typed in margin: 'Canard – not for Morgan ears.'

Marett, Hintons – one does not have to go to a Charles Campbell to make one's point – agreeable, easy, adaptable, unforceful and uninteresting personalities. The result is, as we agree, an efficient department store, which contains practically no one one particularly wants to meet and nothing one wants to buy, except certain standard brands, which can as well be bought anywhere else. And that, I suggest, is due to Aubrey. If you say that this is what America wants, or these are the kind of people propagandists (provided they are not fanatics) are, I reply that that is not so, and one need go no further than the case of Robin, his personal success and his capacity to build without using yesmen as bricks, to prove it. And is it not a fact that one of the results of Aubrey's policy is that the really influential columnists and publicists do not any longer keep in touch with BIS, where they fail to find anyone with a sufficiently interesting and commanding personality to attract them? For a conjectural gain with the masses we are sustaining a serious loss with individuals. As a further proof of what I mean I would adduce the case of yourself and some of your survey people, who are, by a pretty paradox, as much purveyors of BIS's products as they are labourers at market research. What you and your minions put out in the process of snooping around in Washington is, in my opinion, far more effective as propaganda than most of what is put out from the cloistered eminences of New York, principally for the very simple reason that you are abler and freer than the boys in Calico Morgan's workshop.

Which brings me to a related matter of common concern, our relations with the F.O. For some time there has been observable a revival of patrol activity upon that particular front, which we have watched with varying degrees of disapproval. Today we received from Dick Law (to Bracken) that little OWI report on 'American attitudes towards the British', which has been made into a Foreign Office print (Will anyone tell me on what principle they make their Book of the Month selections?). You will remember sending us a copy of same some months ago. This now comes to us with a note which says inter alia 'Almost all of this is of interest to your Department, but I would draw your attention to the last paragraph of Campbell's covering despatch which suggests that if we have any documents of a similar kind it would be good business to communicate it to the OWI'. This is naughty of you (is it not?) to incite the F.O. to get Bracken to reverse his decision to destroy all

copies of our Home Intelligence Survey! But note further. If your Lords and Masters accept your invitation there they reject it elsewhere. Your covering despatch added a strongly worded and badly needed word of caution about accepting the results of so small a sample poll. The F.O. however say, 'The Report seems encouraging and useful, and in spite of Campbell's caution about it, we feel that the evidence on which it is based, apart from its interest, justifies us in printing it and giving it a wide circulation.' Cock a snooks to you, you old cynic of the Chancery. But of course what is principally exasperating to us about this kind of thing is not the difference of assessment but the calm assumption of F.O. authority in a field which is surely the prerogative of this Ministry if anything is at all. If we are not entitled to draw F.O.'s attention to 'American Attitudes' rather than the reverse what on earth are we for?

To be honest with you I must admit that the pass is being sold right here in London. The F.O.'s attitude is like that of the impatient heir who is already reaching out for some of the juiciest parts of the estate, for fear that the old man, now nearing his dotage, will squander them in a last outburst of riotous living. The old man for his part is absurdly indulgent to the child and gives him whatever he asks for, provided he asks for it rudely enough and provided he does not encroach on the weekly allowance for beer and skittles. And what, my dear steward, is going on in your corner of the vineyard? I know that the presence of Butler creates an impossible situation, and I am not necessarily blaming BIS if at Washington there is taking place what appears to be a wholesale selling out to the Chancery, but I do ask, what is happening? Is Michael Wright seeing to it that the School House wins not only the Cricket but also the Football cups? That Butler is a cypher is perhaps the best outcome of a potentially perilous situation, but do all the principal telegrams on the subject of publicity have to go from Halifax to the F.O., who copy them at their leisure to us?

As I say, no one of our bosses here looks like making a fight. We shall die not with a bang but a whimper. We shall not even have the debasing delights of a Field of the Cloth of Gold. We could have easily. I do not doubt that the F.O. would be prepared to sign a concordat any day by which we surrender our souls in return for a reasonable mess of potage. But in fact not even that will occur. The F.O. will continue to barge in without knocking

whenever they feel like it, to cry ‘Fag!’ when they get in a jam, and to stand well out of the reach of the mob when our heads are demanded for lampposts. It’s bad, because in the first place they can’t do this publicity business, they don’t know how, and will merely gum up the tracks of people who do. Also it’s bad for our amour propre, which is not silly interdepartmentalism, but the non-bread-and-butter part of what we live by (you know what the bread-and-butter part of it is worth). People are just not going to bother to bang their heads against the various rocks that dot this weary road unless they are to have some independence and standing in their own right, some support when their work brings them into conflict with another department, and some credit line when they do a good job. I honestly don’t know how Robin and Frank have the heart to keep pegging away against the indifference of superiors and the increasing evidence that the BIS under Butler is just a fine steed for riding off in all directions simultaneously. You were right in the summer of 1942. Robin should have brought himself to go back to Washington. Though if he had I don’t know how I would have sustained existence on all those occasions when only his good spirits and unfailing sympathy made the ridiculous sport seem worth the candle.

The supinity here about Mutual Aid is another example of the kind of thing we are having increasingly to contend with. What is happening on your side? What’s the setup, now that the Will’s power is broken? Do you still have your bottlenecking committee? I asked you some days ago for a report on the White Paper and a timetable of horrors in store. No luck, so far. Are you excogitating something gigantic or fighting the foes of darkness in your own house? I notice that some very weasel telegrams have been coming from Halifax on the subject, with suspicious allusions to ‘our Friends’. What’s going on? Tell me too what on earth Spry is continuing to waste public money on. His task can clearly approximate to that of painting the Forth Bridge, at his present rate of progress; by the time he has finished charting one part of American opinion it will be time to go back and redraw the rest. Could not the money be a sight better spent in refurn[ish?]ing your depleted Survey Department?

And on that. By some miserable fate I seem always to be having to address little else but requests and grumbles to you and yours. But although that is so I don’t want you to think of us as just a

bunch of pestilential quibblers. We are really very grateful for what we do get, and very conscious that we are served, not merely beyond our deserts, but incomparably better than any other Division or Department in London. How well we are kept au fait I particularly realise now that I am writing the weekly editorial notes for *Time and Tide* on American goings on. I have never once found myself devoid of information I needed on anything that was at all important. (The notes of course are an improper exercise, and I keep my identity strictly secret, but they do serve to work off a certain amount of spleen and occasionally to say something helpful.)

This is a pretty disgruntled epistle, as indeed most of mine are nowadays. I apologise for it, but one may reasonably ask what there is to be grunted about. The war comes near to making one physically sick. I have had as many daily rations of destruction as I care for. But they are likely to get much worse yet. I have an extraordinary desire to get out and graze for a spell, before I amass more bile and spleen than my system can take care of. And I am rather tired.

But I can scarcely believe you are any less so, especially after reading this. I apologise. Goodnight,
Herbert.

<P.S. Last headache. The problem of the U.S. troops here is getting to be something terrific. When that lid gets blown – phew!>

TO H. G. NICHOLAS

British Embassy, Washington

Carbon typescript, 8 December 1943

Dear Herbert:

I enclose documents relevant to the cables on the international communications situation recently reported to you. I hope that, if not the Foreign Office, at any rate the British Joint Communications Board, whose local representative, Captain Glover, seems very cooperative, will really furnish you with everything required. Glover will let us have all his stuff for

communication to you, and we shall envelop this with background on local politics.

At present all sides – F.C.C., Congress, State, Navy, War, cable companies, etc. – seem to approve of an international merger to improve their position vis-a-vis us, so that there is no clash of interests. On the other hand, the real stink is likely to come over F.C.C. control of networks, etc., which is in theory exceedingly absolute and which Wheeler politically and Messrs. Paley and Sarnoff commercially find quite intolerable, politically weighted, etc. etc. In spite of agreement here about the necessity for a ‘chosen instrument’ policy in international communications, the press may continue to whoop it up as a good truculent piece of nationalism, especially if we resist, as we seem unlikely to do, since according to Glover the Imperial Conference to meet in London in the spring cannot refuse to let Australia, etc., communicate direct and not via Vancouver or London with U.S. and the rest of the world. This is sad for us but apparently not very sad.

I need scarcely tell you how much tape has had to be cut to push this through to you and get them to ask London to tell you. (Have you in fact not been told? Or were you told and was your request to us only for background political stuff? If so you now have both.) The relevant resolution occurred in October, while I was away, so as usual I have my unbreakable alibi.

Do go on pestering us about this if you like. It is good for everyone, if you see what I mean.

Yours ever,
[Isaiah]

TO H. G. NICHOLAS

British Embassy, Washington

Typescript, 20 December 1943

Dear Herbert:

I enclose the latest results of the O.W.I. poll (via N.O.R.C.) on Lend-Lease and Mutual Aid. It seems very encouraging to me, but was, of course, conducted during the days immediately succeeding the publication of our White Paper.

No doubt you will get a patronising little note about this from your friends in Whitehall. As you very rightly suggest, it would be more valuable to know what people think about this now, i.e. after they have had time to recover from the first impact. Consequently we have succeeded in persuading O.W.I. to conduct another poll asking roughly the same questions in mid-January, the results of which should be ready by early February, i.e. when the new rumblings about the renewal of the Lend-Lease Act and Appropriations are likely to begin in Congress. Stettinius's book on the subject is due to appear about then, too. I have not seen the proofs although I believe Opie has. If it is possible to get them, we shall, of course, supply – meanwhile it may be useful if you could tell the F.O. that the proofs are in existence and get them and/or the Treasury to ask the Embassy, etc., for our common benefit. In this way we shall benefit, too.

Your other letters – about the singular intellectual sterility of B.I.S. in New York – I thoroughly agree with. Butler is now trying (and will doubtless succeed) in detaching Rolo from Survey for other purposes. If that happens, we shall really be in the soup as it is very difficult to demote anyone who has lived by the relatively higher human and political standards prevailing here to what (pace Aubrey) is the arid desert of New York. The proper solution still is to bring the Survey Department down to Washington, I am sure. The only real objection is, of course, the impossibility of providing any analyses (datelines could, of course, be provided as you know) of the New York press to you otherwise than 24 hours late. This is, I suppose, a fatal objection and condemns this [sc. us?] to the present difficult bifurcation. Butler says 'Could not pressure be put on Scott Rankine?' I feel that it can't and shouldn't, and the results would be unsatisfactory.

Yours ever,
Isaiah.

[Not transcribed: Carbon of an undated letter to ? from ?, enclosing the following item; carbon of a report (CR/sb) – by Charles Rolo? – entitled 'Questions on Palestine', 3 December 1943.]

CORRESPONDENCE WITH H. G. NICHOLAS 1942–1945

TO H. G. NICHOLAS

British Embassy, Washington

Typescript, 20 December 1943

Dear Herbert:

I have not met Miss Stark yet but D'Arcy Edmondson assures me that she is very fanatical and might get into a scrape. She has fallen ill again, and has so far only seen the certified anti-Zionist rich Jews of New York (Sulzberger, the Otto Kahn family, Rosenwalds, etc.). I have disowned responsibility for her, and handed her over to Michael Wright, who has asked her to stay.

I shall explore your Polish friend, too.

Yours ever,
Isaiah.

<I enclose some Raphaeliana, which have gone to F.O.>

FROM H. G. NICHOLAS

Ministry of Information, London

Typescript, 20 December 1943

Personal & CONFIDENTIAL

Dear Isaiah,

Every other person here is spending their days and nights on beds of influenza, but the survivors, to the best of their ability, have been trying to cope with your enquiries. This is the present stage of progress.

1. I think we are not going to have a great deal of difficulty in inducing Establishments to obtain from the Treasury authority for Daphne's visit. What will be much more difficult will be to explain to the Treasury that while you need an additional person for a period of six months, you could spare someone from your existing staff, namely Archie Mackenzie, for three months. I am aware of the justification of this proposal, resting on the difference of functions which your two aides are intended to perform, but such

subtleties will undoubtedly prove too much for the Treasury mind. We are therefore proposing to go ahead, release Daphne for a six months' visit, try and secure a temporary replacement if possible (the outlook for that is pretty depressing), and then if all else fails and we find ourselves, as I fear we shall, very hard up for hands to do the work, we might raise afresh the question of a three months' visit by Archie. As you probably know, Aubrey is on the warpath, with schemes of chopping the survey here and fattening it there, which, if carried out, would entail a certain reduction in your domestic establishment at Washington, notably removing your major domo, Scott-Rankine, to head the Survey at New York. Since this would mean that Archie Mackenzie would then be a step nearer the top in your great hierarchy, you might be able to present a more convincing case for him visiting London. At present it is hard to explain to the Treasury why a junior official, whose work is concerned merely with reporting the American scene, should need to visit the M.O.I. in order to do his job any better.³⁵ However, Aubrey, who has been privy to all our talks, will be able to tell you the story in full when he returns.

2. The O.W.I. resignations. I forbore to send you a telegram on this subject, at Robin's request, because he was excessively apprehensive of any leakages occurring along the route. (You know how public a cypher telegram can be.) The story as far as I have been able to piece it together is as follows: Wallace Carroll had, it is true, accepted office only for a limited period, which had expired in September. He had certainly become increasingly bored with his administrative duties and increasingly exasperated by the administrative untidiness of O.W.I. But the last straw which apparently impelled him to resign was the arrival of Jackson with a vague, probing assignment, and a considerable number of excitable aides, all of whom infected the office, which was already running a fairly high temperature, with typical Luce, 'Time, Life and Fortune' office neurosis. It is the general expectation here that Jackson will succeed Carroll (although Brewster Morgan, at present the head of the Radio Section here, is said to have ambitions), and that the London staff will be greatly increased in line with the policy of making London the spearhead of all O.W.I.'s European

³⁵ <Pure Darvall stuff, I know – but the Treasury is full of Darvalls.>

operations. The effects of this on the British Division are not very serious, save in terms of general morale, but the problem of finding a successor to Thomas Eliot still remains. Herbert Agar told me that he had had hopes of inducing Barry Bingham to take on the job, but Admiral Stark came forward with a very attractive Navy proposition and the scheme fell through. Agar now supposes that he will probably have to do it himself, perhaps with someone brought over from Washington to 'look after the administrative side'. It is hard to imagine a more ill-fitting and unsatisfactory arrangement.

I cannot vouch for the absolute truth of all the above, and I do not know if it provides you with the information you want. The immediate effect of the resignations has certainly been to make the O.W.I. office here, which already had the sensitiveness and clamishness of a colony, purse its lips and say very little. If I get any more information on the subject, I will pass it on to you.

3. About Mr. Horabin. I have passed on your letter to the Minister, who I think will find it a solace on his sick bed. Mr. Horabin's version of how he came to be with you is not strictly true. The facts, for your information, are as follows. Horabin first of all got around Dr. Dalton and under the excuse of selling pre-shrunk collars or some such doubtful piece of merchandise, secured the support of the D.O.T. for an exit permit. This had the effect of placing the other departments, notably the Home Office and ourselves, in a rather difficult position, since the Doctor was not disposed to go back on his decision and nobody was really prepared to make it a Cabinet matter. The result was the ridiculous telegram from the Foreign Office to Washington, which you have undoubtedly seen, giving you Horabin's assurance that the visit was purely for business purposes and that he would make no speeches or statements on political matters. The moral is plain.

You draw some very dismal conclusions from the Horabin incident, and even more dismal ones from the ridiculous affair of Cecil Brooks. I wonder very much whether we are not allowing ourselves to be jockeyed into an impossible and very dangerous position on this subject. We were frankly horrified by the concluding sentence of the Washington telegram to the F.O. about Cecil Brooks, which advocated that, as a means for preventing such gaffes in future, nobody should be allowed to go to the

U.S.A. unless he gave an undertaking not to speak on Anglo-American relations. Apart from the straight-forward Nazi flavour of such a gagging proposal, there is its patent unworkability. Influential persons, M.Ps. or others, will always get around Cabinet Ministers and secure exit permits, because no-one will be prepared to incur the political odium of refusal. The object of their visits will not necessarily be public speaking, and in most cases they will probably not go under the auspices of this Ministry at all. They will readily sign undertakings not to open their mouths in public and to return if the Ambassador asks them to do so. Nevertheless, as long as the American scene remains as inviting as it does at present, and fools are as talkative as they always have been, people will speak, and speak out of turn. If, by attempting to impose these bans and to exercise a rigid control over all visits, we accept implicit responsibility for the persons who go, and incidentally the views they express, every time one of these persons puts his foot in it we shall be held completely responsible. This, I think, would be disastrous in the extreme. I would even go so far in avoiding it as to advocate complete lifting of all these 'no public speaking' undertakings, and really letting these lunatics range at will. There would not be very many more of them than at present, and we should be able to deny honestly that they were any responsibility of ours at all. This applies with equal force to the attempts which the indefatigable Bathurst makes to enrol all these people under the F.A.R.A. We have recently received an extraordinary 6-page document from him which proves that everybody who goes to the United States must be the agent of a foreign principal, if only in his capacity as fire-watcher for Mr. Herbert Morrison, or somebody on Mr. Bevin's Central Register. This conclusion means that we register with the Department of Justice every kind of two-legged Chatauqua which we let into the American continent. What a time Senator Nye is going to have when he subpoenas those files in 1946!

Anyway, I would be glad to have your views and further reflections on this subject. I feel very convinced that we are drifting towards rather dangerous reefs.

Yours ever,
Herbert.

<α. Is it true that Senator Langer prefers to chew his Pritchards cellophane wrapped?

β. Your parents have shown me a very debonair portrait of you – Vicar Carrie[?] au plein air.

γ. Aubrey is very frustrated. The D.G. is bored & will only talk about his Utrillos. 'BB' is ill. No one to talk to except us small fry.>

FROM H. G. NICHOLAS

Ministry of Information, London

Typescript, 31 December 1943

Personal

Dear Isaiah,

Here are three riddles for the New Year; we should like to have your answers to them.

1) Who are the 'quite influential Englishmen' whose expositions on Balance of Power theories have so much exercised Mr. Lippman[n]? (You have, I take it, seen the remarkable interchange of correspondence between the two pundits, Lippman[n] and Stolper?)

2) How did the Jewish Standard come to carry that very remarkable document of the British Information Services on H.M.G.'s attitude towards Palestine? There is much fuss and flurry about this, here.

3) Mr. Richard Goodman wants to visit the U.S.A. and says you approve of the idea. Do you? The proposal is at present going through the usual channels and will doubtless take form in a cable to B.I.S., asking for their views. If you have anything to add, of an 'off-the-record' character, we should be glad to hear it.

Is there no possibility of your paying us a visit early in 1944? (I say early, because I know that once the election stream gets running, there will be no tearing you away from your desk.) Robin and I talked to Aubrey about it and said how much we should like

CORRESPONDENCE WITH H. G. NICHOLAS 1942–1945

to see you. Cannot you go to work your end and induce them to spare you for a short visit?

Yours ever,
Herbert.

<Will write more soon HGN>

FROM H. G. NICHOLAS

Ministry of Information, London

Typescript, 8 January 1944

Dear Isaiah,

Your letter of 2nd December shows that you are straying from the party line. At least our party line. I mean, of course, about Lend-Lease. We have talked a lot about the reasons you advance for resting content, or reasonably content, with getting across merely the absolute size of our own reverse lend-lease. They are good reasons, and we do not dispute them. But if we advance along this line do we not merely take up a more exposed position than before, which will be subject to the most dangerous bombardment after the war? I mean, if in order to impress upon the Americans the fact that reverse lend-lease exists, and that it is large, we accept, albeit implicitly, the fact that a balancing can be made, how on earth are we going at a later stage to throw the whole idea of repayment, book-keeping, etc. out of the window? Will not our last state be worse than our first? I should have thought, with the experience of war debts in mind, that we were seldom the better for making Americans realise that within the framework of common accounting, we had something to our credit on the books as well. Unless we can get away from the whole idea of comparative accounting, we are surely going to be faced with a bill which it will be impossible at that late stage for us to wave aside as having been already met by the 'imponderables' of 'the year when we stood alone', British casualty figures and the like. I admit very readily that the Treasury paper was not modelled perfectly on this theory of ours. It would have been better, I think, if they had been prepared to accept some of the choicer purple passages (which were excised by the Puritanic pen of Sir John

Anderson), but even so it wobbled harmfully between figures and 'imponderables'. Nevertheless, we still feel that our job is to improve on the Treasury approach, not to regard it as the last word.

Please do not read any of the above as implying that we are disappointed with the B.I.S.'s job on this. On the contrary, we feel that it scored very high marks. They are not to blame for the enormous lag in American opinion which has to be overcome.

You ought to know that Sir Andrew Duncan, who is a Director of I.C.I. amongst other things, will be with you in the States very shortly and that he will be accompanied by Henderson, who is the P.R.O. of the Ministry of Supply. <And a *very* decorative young man. I should like to see him being debugged by Thurman Arnold & his Trust-Busting friends - 'twould do him much good. When you talk to him put the fear of *God* into him. That's our line.> Sir Andrew Duncan is 'very anxious that his visit should receive no publicity' (you will no doubt arrange one of your best air umbrellas to cover his landing and subsequent operations) and Mr. Henderson is a good deal alarmed at the task of keeping the press away from his chief. We have explained to Henderson the effects that today's Dupont-I.C.I. suit are likely to produce on the American mind, and Sir Andrew is undergoing a voluntary course of self-education by reading your last three quarterly reports, lent to him by the F.O. Robin has asked Henderson to call on you, and you will no doubt size up the situation at a glance. But I thought that perhaps a word of warning might be useful.

I see that the F.O. are going to extend your reading public through a series of popular Berlin Digests entitled 'Aloof'. I take it that this is to be a kind of bowdlerized weekly political suited to the tender stomachs of Legations and Press Attaches overseas. Do you know anything about this?

The sturm und drang in the O.W.I. office here continues. Philip Hamblett has arrived to take up his appointment, but nobody quite knows what his appointment is or how he stands in relation to C. D. Jackson, whose arrival is also regarded as imminent. The truth is that Eisenhower is anxious to squeeze the whole O.W.I. overseas outfit off the map, and substitute them by a P.W.B. branch which will be entirely militarily controlled. Until this issue is decided, O.W.I.'s jitters are such that they can scarcely be spoken to except from a safe distance. Bruce Lockhart is ill, and so

CORRESPONDENCE WITH H. G. NICHOLAS 1942–1945

is Crossman <phlebitis is the disease – just like another old Wykehamist!>, and that, as you may guess, makes things more complicated than ever.

Yours ever,
Herbert.

TO H. G. NICHOLAS

British Embassy, Washington

Typescript, 12 January 1944

Dear Herbert,

1. Aubrey's back but, so far as I can see, nothing has altered. I gather we may expect Daphne sometime this month, which is very gratifying. I promise solemnly to return her at the end of the stipulated period.

2. There is nothing much to tell you about Healy, the Hoyt successor as the head of the Domestic Branch of the O.W.I., except that he is an energetic opportunist of the first water; young, 'brash' and quite amiable but with no discoverable principles; a great friend of Charlie Campbell from the New Orleans' days. His division has, anyhow, ceased to count for anything at all.

3. You will have had Stettinius' book by now, I suppose. The whole Lend-Lease repayment situation seems better than it was, although Landis, who as you know has given great trouble since his return from Cairo (being anti-British since his Y.M.C.A. days in England during the last war; and I suppose that the fact that his father was a hard-shelled Presbyterian Pastor in Japan while his mother was a hard-shelled Prussian does not help matters), told someone that as we were going to have to repay for Lend-Lease in any case why didn't we do so now by transferring goods under Lend-Lease instead of selling them in the Middle East? He has apparently been ticked off in the State Department by persons close to the top, although welcomed with open arms by the Near Eastern Division, who are said to be unfriendly to us.

4. Chancery has had a cable from the F.O. recommending a violent counter-blast against a particularly hostile and mischievous

advertisement by the revisionist Zionists attacking the Colonial Office. I really do not know what they expect us to do (in any case, it would be better, surely, if such things went through you than direct, but I suppose it makes little difference). I have recommended Aubrey to find a stooge for this purpose but am not particularly sanguine of success, and H.E. will constitutionally be reluctant to act.

5. Freya Stark has now gone to Chicago without any broken china in Washington, so far as I can tell. Mr. Lubin has described her as so naive as to be dangerous, and Winocour is complaining of her anti-Semitism. I, unfortunately, get on excellently with her. Her views on Palestine are, as you know, fanatical. She is not amenable to advice, but provided she does not sound off in public and give the Zionists an opportunity of flaying her (letters received by them from Palestine have whipped them on to considerable frenzy about her, but they admit they can do nothing until she makes her first big mistake). I think it may all go off quietly. And if not, not. I really do not think that we stand to lose much either way (or gain, for that matter). <But you should look at her proposed propaganda line as cabled to F.O. (I saw it only after it was sent): I do not agree with it at all: to maintain the Brit. Emp. is now run on Wilsonian principles seems to me both false & mischievous.>

6. You will be interested to hear that there is some difficulty about political reporting as American officials here buttonhole their intimates (there are such) in the British Embassy and complain that facts about them communicated by us to London (in Political Summaries, I suppose) get back to the State Department via the American Embassy and cause flurries whenever, as is normally the case (I say smugly), the information is correct. Consequently there is a movement here to stop reporting such facts because of the unreliability of our London recipients who leak far and wide, particularly personal gossip. My line is that I shall continue to report and let the censors do what they wish, and this, on the whole, is still the view of Chancery, except that they want to start a new series of 'No distribution' telegrams for the private edification of N. Butler and Co. You will go on receiving my white sheets, but do be careful as this process is becoming more and more precarious <(e.g. on Finletter)>. I am thinking of asking permission to come to London in late June or July after the

conventions, when I shall have something to say, since at present all is confusion and darkness.

7. The Morgan scheme for complete home rule for the New York Survey pleases me, as absentee control is really unsatisfactory, as you know. I really do not know who will direct the fortunes of that department; I imagine ultimately Aubrey himself. If you think of some particularly suitable press and radio survey chief available in London, do let me know since I could sell him without difficulty. But it will have to be someone happy and content to be under the permanent thumb of A. Morgan, and as I am sure you can well understand, that will doubtless limit the choice somewhat.

8. I enclose Rolo's post mortem. Naturally there is no action called for, but this might as well be put in some melancholy file in London as here. Under Aubrey's new scheme I look forward to much delightful triangulation.

Yours ever,
Isaiah.

<I also enclose a little piece of research on the future Senate which may one day trundle through the F.O. & emerge in some queer form. Are you well? happy? at least contented? I enjoyed the N.Y. card very very much. But you are right about the N.Y. office. Death reigns there. Mackintosh is the only thinker. That ought to make the point. I.B.>

[Not transcribed: Letter to IB from Charles J. Rolo, BIS, New York, 27 December 1943.]

FROM H. G. NICHOLAS

Ministry of Information, London

Typescript, 14 January 1944

Personal & CONFIDENTIAL.

Dear Isaiah,

Thank you for your note of December 20th about Miss Stark. What you say confirms my fears and is, in turn, confirmed by what

Miss Stark is cabling and writing back home. The more the Embassy, whose bright idea she was, look after her and the less we have to do with her, the better.

The Minister, on the subject of her lengthy ‘memorandum’ on British propaganda about the Middle East in the U.S.A., wrote ‘Miss Stark’s Simon-like arguments are unlikely to cool the enraged Zionists. I do not think the British Government should say much. The best of all arguments is that military necessities require no changes in Palestine in war-time.’ I think so too, but in that event, why did we send Miss Stark to the U.S.A.? Why, indeed!

Yours ever,
Herbert.

TO H. G. NICHOLAS

British Embassy, Washington

Typescript, 19 January 1944

Dear Herbert:

Your two last letters.

1. *Lend-Lease*. I agree with you, of course, that my line to you was somewhat defeatist in that it assumed that the question of repayment was inevitable whatever we did, and it could be scaled down to smaller portions but not eliminated. About this, I may be wrong. And perhaps I am quite wrong from a propaganda point of view, i.e. that in order to obtain even as much as I modestly hope for we must aim at the maximum, i.e. complete pooling and no reckoning, except that it is difficult to do so here in view of the President’s explicit assertion to the opposite effect during Mr. Churchill’s last visit. Stettinius’ book will no doubt help, but before we can start outdoing the White Paper we must build up the notion of the immense Reverse Lend-Lease which we are performing and then, and only then, say ‘The amounts are large on both sides. It would ruin everything to calculate equivalences.’ Otherwise we shall merely feed anti-British flames, which in the economic field are certainly burning brightly at the moment – U.S. officials back from the Middle East, Marquis Childs back from Brazil, etc., either themselves tell stories, or report the stories of

others, to the effect that the British are staking out claims (in e.g. Belgian and French colonies, in Africa, Latin America, etc.) which it would be mere common justice for Americans to expose and frustrate.

2. Now as to the New Year's riddles. I have not seen the Stolper-Lippmann correspondence, since no-one told me about it. I shall look in Butler's files (no-one in B.I.S. knows about them, and here only Opie. They stem from Graham I suppose, but I was not sent a copy). I think the 'influential Englishmen' is an alibi, although Lippmann quotes Voigt, of course. <he knows about 200 eminent Englishmen anyway.> The persons he talks to about this sort of thing are Sir R. Campbell, Bob Brand, Michael Wright, and Colonel Bebb. Of these, only Wright is unlikely to have advanced such theories – the rest would have produced them promptly, probably almost automatically. But this is pure guess-work, and I may be quite wrong. I will try and do some tactful questioning.

3. I have no idea how the Jewish Standard came to get hold of that particular bit of 'War Notes', but they could have done very easily from any commentator here who would have got them and handed them over to his Zionist contacts. These things are not really meant to be secret, as you know, and that particular story, as told by Raphael after the most careful vetting by Chancery, seems to be quite a respectable statement, and one we could not be ashamed to have given circulation to. The problem of transmission is one for you and the Censorship. I do not know what our line on this is: The Foreign Office are in a very truculent mood, it seems to me, about this at the moment, and are continually whipping on the Chancery to make some sort of reply to the charges against us. Thus far the only pronouncements we have made are (1) the War Notes thing in question; (2) the letter concocted by Raphael and Hayter and signed by Aubrey Morgan replying to Edgar Mowrer's favourable review of Van Paassen's very anti-British pro-Zionist book 'The Forgotten Ally' which you will have seen. We sent the letter to Mowrer (supposing that it might get published), but when he actually asked us whether he might we asked him to publish it in full if at all. He did not do this, but published it in triple column, first a thesis by Van Paassen, then the Morgan answer, then the Mowrer 'impartial' summing up which, of course, always went heavily against us. Now the question arises are we or are we not to

take up challenges? Certainly nobody else will do it for us. No Jew is going to go out on a limb to save the skin of the British, and no gentile is interested enough. (The Arabophiles are personally afraid of charges of anti-Semitism or else anti-Semites. In either case, their activities are not satisfactory.) If we are to take up the glove we are bound to lose, since a terrain is always chosen by the enemy and we have to be cautious and they can say anything. If not, we are accused of cowardly letting go by default and the Foreign Office rages at the other end. Hayter believes that, on the whole, as we do not otherwise get our case stated at all, it is better to get it into print even if it is 'refuted' than to allow the case to go completely by default. I do not know what I think. I do not think it really matters much either way so long as we have no definite policy. Meanwhile, Freya Stark has had an interview with herself published in 'Newsweek' in which she makes some sort of pro-White Paper remarks. The Zionists began to roll up their sleeves to flay her, and curiously enough my own eloquence has managed to persuade them not to just yet on account of the 'important conversations in London' which they say are going on in London at this time, and how it would upset the nice calculations of statesmen, their friend the Prime Minister, etc. etc., but I can't hold that line long if she blows off in Chicago or Baltimore. Who is making the 'fuss and flurry' in London? If the Foreign Office or the Colonial Office, would they complain direct to the Embassy? Then we shall have fun. A directive bidding us to keep silence save for a repetition of official London pronouncements would suit us excellently but is scarcely what we are thought to exist for. Please tell me more about this.

4. You say Mr. Richard Goodman wants to come here. Surely not Richard? He was a New College poet in my day. You mean H. A. Goodman, the Jewish adviser to Martin in the Religions Division. I wrote you about this, as far as I remember, in early November (about the 9th or 10th or 11th) and also to Goodman on November 9th. In case you cannot find it, what I said was:-

'Incidentally, the unattractive but I suppose very useful Mr. H. A. Goodman, the Jewish expert employed by Martin in the Religions Division, has written to me privately asking my view as to the advisability of his touring this country. The Zionists are so bitterly clamorous at the moment that perhaps he may do some limited

good, so unless there is strong reason against it I shall probably answer in reply to him and say that I see nothing against his plan (he says that the Chief Rabbi can send him and not the Ministry), although I must confess I don't think it will make the slightest real difference and must be classified as a mild racket.'

I wrote somewhat more politely to Mr. Goodman saying I saw no objection and would say so if pressed (Butler, of course, agreed).

5. As you will by this time doubtless have learned, Paul Scott Rankine will probably be leaving us. If this goes through, Reuters will have secured a genuine scoop at last, as he is infinitely better than anyone else they could have hoped to get. He is naturally anxious that his government associations should not be brought up against him here, in view of Reuters unenviable reputation, and I personally think that I shall gain more in his new capacity than in his old in the ways I need not elaborate. We shall doubtless have to arrange for clandestine meetings. The vacancy will have to go to New York where the clamour is serious, but with Daphne here even for six months we ought to be able to manage it. Archie will thereupon take over, and I am sure do excellently. The solution seems to me to be good in every way, although there is no obvious prospect for the headship of the New York Survey. I am rather sorry to lose Paul now and can think only of his virtues. I hope that you will impress on Robin the necessity, if asked by Reuters, to enlarge upon his enormous merits, how angry he is that we should have let him go, how lucky they are, etc. He will set off on a series of interviews with Governors and Presidential candidates, which ought to be most illuminating. As for my own return, I want to come back, naturally enough, at once, today, tonight. But on sober reflection I suppose I shall be most useful after the conventions when I shall be able to go out on the limb more boldly and usefully than at present – if I go now, which perhaps I could persuade them to let me do, I should madly want to return again in summer in order to pound away at all sorts of propositions which cannot be conveyed except personally and will seem to me absolutely vital at that time. So unless two voyages can be arranged (that would delight me no end) I suppose I shall have to wait. But goodness, how I want to get away from here! Thomas says grimly that three weeks is the maximum for which I shall be

CORRESPONDENCE WITH H. G. NICHOLAS 1942–1945

spared and that my return arrangements will have to be completed before I leave. I foresee tears and despairs.

6. I have not heard of the 'Aloof' series, and the thought of it rather disturbs me. I shall get the Chancery to make innocent unattributed enquiries.

God bless you.

Yours ever,

Isaiah.

<Michael Wright is making a small fuss about not being told about Daphne's arrival.>

FROM H. G. NICHOLAS

Ministry of Information, London

Typescript, 5 February 1944

<Personal & CONFIDENTIAL>

Dear Isaiah,

Many thanks for your letters of January 12th and 19th, which owing to a series of delays with the air bag, took rather a time to arrive here. By the time of their arrival, a lot of water, as you know, had gone under the bridge, particularly in the matter of Daphne and Scott Rankine. You will have had my own explanations of our views on both these subjects; I am awaiting with interest your own ripostes, but most of all I should like to have a chance to talk with you about these and a thousand-and-one other matters. The question of your visit is being energetically pursued by Robin with the Foreign Office, and before this reaches you you will probably have received a cable from him. Our feeling here is that if we have to be content with one rather than two visits this year, we should greatly prefer to have you in March rather than in July, which is a long way off, and when a great deal of the most disputable election issues will already have cleared themselves up.

I have read and circulated all the interesting things you have to say about the present Zionist and anti-White Paper tumult. Beyond prodding the Colonial Office, we have really done very little about this; we share your own feeling that in the absence of a definite

policy on the part of H.M.G., our only hope is to try and keep the waters from being troubled; it is wild optimism to think that we can drain them off. <‘This must be hell for you.’>

Freya Stark is clearly sailing very near the wind, as her letters home bear out. We have seen her memorandum to the F.O., with its proposed propaganda line. The Minister’s comment on it would, I think, meet with your approval: ‘I do not much care for this. We should confine ourselves to saying that the over-riding consideration in Palestine at the moment is that of military necessity.’

Do we really want to send any visitors or speakers, however good, touching on this field? I had thought that Goodman (whom you correctly identify as H.A. rather than Richard; stupid of me) might have exercised a tempering influence, but in view of your own comments on that suggestion I think we shall all think again. Rabbi Finkelstein’s suggestion of a touring pair made up of the Chief Rabbi and Canon Danby seems to emanate more from Tin Pan Alley than from the ruminations of the Hebrew hierarchy. The pair would make an admirable comic turn, of a rather knock-about variety, but in the view of everybody concerned here, would serve no other useful purpose. We are, however, in touch with the F.O. (i.e. Angus Malcolm) to see whether there is anybody else whose visit would really do us any good.

You ask who is making the ‘fuss and flurry’ in London. In general, of course, it is a reflection of the general irritation prevailing in the North American Department against the supineness of H.E. and his less energetic advisers (among whom, of course, you must not include yourself), breaking out, perhaps irrationally, on this particular subject of Palestine, but basically due to those old standing London v. Washington differences with which you are perfectly familiar. On a lower level the fires are backed by Neville Butler; on a higher by Richard Law.

Since you have not seen any of the ‘Aloof’ series, I am enclosing a couple of samples for your benefit. As you will see, they are a pretty dehydrated product, organised on the principle of ‘Let us inform, provided we do not amuse’. <‘Their distribution list is v. comic reading.’>

I am grieved and not a little worried by your news of leaks at this end about the contents of your political cables. These popular documents have, as you know, rather a wider circulation than most

cables of their type, so that it is hard to make an intelligent guess as to where the carelessness is occurring. You can rest assured that it is no-one in this building, nor can I think of anyone in the F.O. itself who would be so indiscreet. <[in pencil] Unless conceivably, Allan Dudley?> At the same time, if it continues it can cause us all the gravest embarrassment, apart from the unfortunate tendency which you mention of encouraging clamping down at your end. Obviously, the problem cannot be solved by any written *démarche* from your end; but it would be very well worth your while, when you come across in March, to make representations in your sternest tones.

I am glad you are happy about the Morgan scheme for home rule for the New York Survey. But whom are you going to get to run it? Some very extraordinary suggestions have been made, about which you may or may not know, but on which I cannot trust myself to dilate on paper. <What is happening in the meantime?>

We were very grateful for your cable about the O.W.I. situation. It repeats with a dreary exactness the embrolio of this same time last year, Home v. Overseas Branch, Washington v. New York, Realists v. Crusaders. I suppose it will have as dreary and indefinite an outcome. No-one at O.W.I. here seems to know what is happening; on the few occasions when our paths cross, they ask us rather pitifully whether we have any information on their likely fate.

Yours ever,
Herbert.

<You ask if I am well? happy? at least contented? The answers are No, no, no – in that order, but paper & shame forbid elaborations. But I warn you, if you come over in March – which *please* do – you may have to listen to outpourings. I suspect your answers would be the same? Anyway, it was nice of you to ask. There are some questions which it is heartening even to be asked!>

TO H. G. NICHOLAS

British Embassy, Washington

Typescript,³⁶ 17 February 1944

My Dear Herbert:

As there seems to be some feeling at your end on the subject of Scott Rankine's resignation, I should like to put the facts on record.

1. No possible pressure of any sort by hint or implication was exercised upon him here. But he was visibly chafing himself. He laboured, as you probably know, under a number of grievances (a) that he was treated unfairly by London in the matter of his salary,³⁷ (b) that, having been head of the Survey Section in New York in the old B.P.S. days, he was degummed from it and then put under my orders, so that while everyone else had gradually been promoted he had found himself in a blind alley, with me, conspicuously unambitious for further heights, as a kind of cork in the bottleneck. He genuinely felt that his potentialities were not obtaining full scope.³⁸

2. At about the time of Mr. Churchill's last visit, he went to Aubrey and said he yearned for wider fields and might he become a Consul or a Consular Public Relations man somewhere in the United States. I offered no objection, since, from my point of view, although he was both capable and conscientious (I know you don't agree)³⁹ he was not very willing to do straight drafts in the manner of Mackenzie or Judson but yearned for the more interesting sort of political stuff which, after all, is not so much there to be worked on as has to be invented every morning out of the void by me. I assigned him the world of the Consuls as his province, he was Lord of all he surveyed there, the Consuls I think

³⁶ HGN annotates: 'Robin. I have let myself go most improperly – in the margin – I snatch only one crumb of comfort from this sad paper – that Isaiah will apparently soon be with us. HGN.' Further footnotes to this letter are HGN's, except when in square brackets.

³⁷ He had a v. reasonable salary.

³⁸ Whose do?

³⁹ But I do. The adjectives fit to a nicety, though others need to be added!

liked and respected him, and although it was not an ideal arrangement it worked. After the blow-up which led to the demarche to Aubrey,⁴⁰ he came to me and said he no longer wished to be Consul but would be happy, if not very happy, to continue as he was. All this occurred last November.

3. Before Aubrey left for London, both he and Rolo made very urgent representations⁴¹ about the need for an extra person in New York, quite apart from the question of who was to head that section.⁴² Aubrey complained that the best blood had been drained to Washington and that this was the sole⁴³ reason of the relative decline of New York. I agreed also in November that if a re-organisation was decided on I was willing to lose one post in Washington to have it transferred to New York, as Establishments would plainly not allow of an actual increase, provided that certain work was taken off me and transferred to New York as well (London Specials, for example). I asked Scott Rankine whether he would consider going to New York possibly as head of the Survey Section there, and he said that he disliked the thought of that very much, as New York after Washington was excessively flat and boring. I reported this to Aubrey, who rightly took the line that it was not his to choose but also thought that he was a bad manager of people and that Mrs. Cook, etc., would almost certainly resign under the dispensation. I took a less gloomy view of the prospects, and Aubrey maintained, doubtless rightly, that he knew whereof he spoke and that he would only take Scott Rankine if all else failed. I thought, and still think, that this is rating him too low – that he began by being over-rated by Aubrey and ended by being under-rated.⁴⁴

4. Be that as it may, things jogged along without much change until Mr. Cole of Reuters appeared. I did not see him and did not know he was here. He was on the lookout for talent as you know, and interviewed MacColl, Winocour, Wills, etc., but without apparently

⁴⁰ What happened? Did Aubrey refuse to make his hack a Consul?

⁴¹ ? Not to us, as I recollect.

⁴² *N.B.* It was under B.C.T.'s Sumner[?] plan for reorganisation of BIS that N.Y. Survey was cut.

⁴³ !!

⁴⁴ But when Aubrey *left* London it was with the *firm* intention of making P.S.R. head of NY. We agreed.

being satisfied. Nobody, so far as I know, on our side recommended anyone to him except S/L Russell, once owner of the *Morning Post*, and that didn't go either. He met P.S.R. because Reuters' Washington man, Leonard, is a friend of P.S.R.'s and introduced him spontaneously, it seems. Love at first sight appears to have occurred, and Mr. Cole went away under the impression that he had met a man of genius. He returned to New York and asked Thomas whether P.S.R. was dispensable. Thomas, with some alacrity, said that he was and caused MacColl to confirm this to Cole. About three days after this happened, I was told this story for the first time by Ben, who said that Reuters were nibbling but had not yet bitten. I displayed no indignation inasmuch as it was evidently felt in New York that they would prefer to have a clear vacancy to be filled⁴⁵ either at the top or at a low level of the Survey (in the latter event, Rolo and Mrs. Cook to be promoted) rather than have to mold the difficult medium of P.S.R. Upon my return to Washington I said nothing about it to P.S.R., or he to me until at least a week had passed and he threw out some dark hints about possible departure, whereupon I confessed that I had heard something of it before. At this point he sought my advice. I said it was difficult for me to give him any as it affected me and my work too closely, but I gave a long list of pros and cons. The principal pros were that (a) he would work much better, (b) he would be able to supply us with a great deal of useful material, particularly this year, on the views of various personalities, etc., (c) easily the most important, that the British correspondents here were a very thin collection and that someone who understood the position and could discuss it more seriously than Messrs. Smith and Oliver could do incalculable good by sending the right kind of despatches not only to London but elsewhere, and that inasmuch as a special post-war fate was contemplated in London for Reuters (so at least our Minister told us) it was a natural transition. The cons were obvious, that he would be suspected as a stooge and that Reuters, seeking to wash themselves, would only deepen suspicion. Elmer Davis' views are not of the slightest importance,⁴⁶ but those of other departments, e.g. White House and State Department, are more so. Nevertheless, this suspicion would linger anyhow, and,

⁴⁵ Yes, but how? Aubrey admitted he cd. think of no one but PSR.

⁴⁶ ?

Aubrey feels this most passionately, we could not get ourselves into a position where the mere fact of having been employed by B.I.S. tarnished you forever as a stoolpigeon and made private employment afterwards in America difficult or impossible.⁴⁷ Aubrey was very warm in his advocacy of the plan. On the other hand, nobody sought to influence Mr. Coles,⁴⁸ so far as I know, or sing P.S.R.'s praises to him at any stage. I, as I say, had no communication with him at any stage and played no part in the entire business; indeed I was much too embarrassed by the whole thing and asked that I be not consulted by anyone on this. Mr. Coles' enthusiasm, which you saw in the intercepts, is, therefore, entirely P.S.R.'s own work. He must have many qualifications suspected neither by you nor by me which will doubtless find a rich flowering.

5. You speak of Rennie, Winocour, etc. Rennie would not dream of accepting such a post; as for Winocour, Rolo, etc., the draft would swallow them immediately if they did,⁴⁹ and indeed it is only fear of that that keeps Rolo with us. Nor is the Hutton example particularly relevant, as he often told me that he did not want the Manchester Guardian job and is anyhow now resigning evidently without any opposition from London. In any case, the only principle to follow is that those who can be spared should be and those who cannot should not.⁵⁰ Nobody here, unless perhaps MacColl, are at all saddened by the appointment except, of course, that Wills is sitting in the Press Club saying that P.S.R. is (a) a moron, (b) forced down the throats of Reuters by M. of I. as a kind of Gestapo figure,⁵¹ but all this, I say gayly but also sensibly, will blow over. Wil{ }mot{t} Lewis welcomes the appointment (at least to us), and I must say that I think that it is a far better one than Reuters had any right to expect, inasmuch as there will be at least one source of continuous intelligent political reporting on the American scene which can surely do more to correct the British perspective than anything Government officials can do. That is the

⁴⁷ This is scarcely a serious risk – ask Mr. Hindle!

⁴⁸ ['Coles' corrected to 'Cole' before this, but not from here on.]

⁴⁹ Why doesn't this apply to P.S.R.?

⁵⁰ Or those who make nuisances of themselves may leave, those who are docile must stay.

⁵¹ [HGN triple-sidelines.]

moral and political justification of the move, and I repeat that I do not think it really matters what Elmer Davis or the A.P. think or even say. There was no hanky-panky about the appointment at all. The moves Coles-Rankine-Thomas-Coles-Morgan, countersigned by I. Berlin ('after action' as they say in files) is all that happened.

Now to move on to other topics. Elmer Davis' victory was fairly unexpected, and, as you say, represents a case of victory of Washington over New York. The villain of the peace [*sic*] was Clauver, and the depression of D. Bowes Lyon and Cowles is understandable enough as Sherwood and his boys were the only allies they had, and there can in the nature of the case be no others in O.W.I., inasmuch as the victory of Washington over New York is in itself a nationalist and to that extent anti-us event. The new appointees are pallid characters of no political flavour, particularly the 'Newsweek' man. The new line apparently is that American propaganda to Europe by radio is to be diminished – on the supposition that nobody can listen and think little of it when they do and a corresponding vast increase in press agency is to occur – hundreds of thousands of freely supplied words in Allied and occupied and neutral countries. So there. The whole thing would not have happened if Byron Price had been willing to shoulder some of the O.W.I. duties, but, wise man, he refused. Barnes, Warburg and Ed Johnston are said to be furiously angry with Sherwood's alleged 'treachery' apparently after professions of most burning and indissoluble devotion. That is all we know, and I must own, all we need or care to know. The whole topic has become infinitely trivial from our point of view here, though it may still be formidable at your end. I expect to be filled up with gossip when I visit you all next month. A funny tidbit is that Eric Johnston[e] thinks that America is in for gigantic unemployment unless production is scaled down gradually, which can only be done if it supplies the Russian market. Consequently he has been telling the 'Readers Digest' that it must stop its anti-Russian attitude and butter Russia up along tough Rickenbacker business lines. The Digest is alleged to be listening favourably to his siren song, and the experts have been switched on to writing a studiously impartial article on the U.S.S.R.

7. As for Miss Stark, she is remote at present in the far West putting her squibs quietly in among the haystacks. No real attempt

at interfering with her has so far been made by the Zionists, despite Celler's speech and the pressure on the Department of Justice – that is, nobody has asked us or the Department of Justice actually to stop her, nor do I think that her visit will make a very great impression either way, since it is not knowledge of facts that is going to save us from criticism of the Palestine policy – any more than about India – unless some new dramatic announcement of policy is made in London. What altered the entire picture here was, as you know, the Cripps' Mission, which served as a lever to the dissemination of hitherto unknown facts. Miss Stark's relatively puny efforts cannot do this without some sort of leverage from London, although she is optimistic. Hideous accusations are levelled against me by the Zionists of conniving at her nefarious activities which I laugh off as best I can. What B.I.S. is worried about is that the sleeping dog of F.A.R.A. has now been woken, and the Department of Justice, not particularly interested in the Stark developments but genuinely interested in anything liable to pack the Roosevelt vote whether about Jews, Negroes, labour or whoever now looks like proposing to scan every speech by every British speaker with a view to determining whether it is likely to upset the political balance in this country. Biddle is naturally passionately concerned with the re-election of F.D.R., and if enough people tell him that the Jews will be upset by what is done he will complain. Yet I think it will take him a long time to get around to doing this and fundamentally the thing may be a nuisance but will not boil up to anything of consequence, so I shouldn't get too worried yet. What I do not quite understand is the attitude in London towards our publicity on this whole thing. When the B.I.S. War Notes Palestine Peace [sc. piece?] was reprinted in the 'London Jewish Standard', you said that there was a great fuss and flurry. I gather from your last letter that Messrs. N. Butler and R. Law are anxious for more answering back to be done. Consequently, they cannot surely be fussing and flurrying about the fact that an answer was given but about the fact that not enough answers are given. Aubrey's line is that if we attempt to answer our detractors in the press, they and the papers which print them will always get the best of the argument, since we have to follow the Queensbury [sc. Queensberry] rules and they do not. Be that as it may, are we or are we not to answer back? And if we are, does it matter if this stirs up hornets nests, are we prepared to be

bitten in return for displaying life and animation under attack? That is what London has got to decide.⁵² You must remember that any reply made in London carries much further than anything said by the relatively [*word omitted*] British agencies here, and if London insists on preserving silence it is imprudent to expect us to go to war with the toy weapons which is all the F.O. provide. Could not our Minister and R. Law get together and decide what we are to say, if anything? The thing has not become an Anglo-American issue strictly speaking, nor do I think that it ever will; it is an Anglo-Jewish one, and the danger is that the Jews will vote and press and act purely on the White Paper and the American and British Governments' attitudes towards it. The Zionist leaders are in a pickle at the moment because they have this very strong political resolution before Congress at the moment, and Stimson seems to have written saying that it is untimely in view of the military (and incidentally, oil) situation. If this defeats the resolution, the Jewish lobby will suffer a considerable reverse, which, from our point of view (although not that of the Democratic party), is a clear advantage. On the other hand, I suspect that the thing will be settled out of court by some compromise.

8. The latest telegram about my journey to you may, I fear, have struck you by its sternness, but the non-arrival of Daphne – and who more than I understand her motives, since I returned to England in 1940 for precisely the same reasons, blitz, etc. – is a very grave impediment and what the telegram said about that was literally precise. Aubrey and Ben were genuinely upset by the assumption that her presence was not really required but was regarded as in the nature of an agreeable luxury, and Ben will never, I think, forget⁵³ Frank Darvall's question to him 'What is all this Daphne Straight racket about?', which he mutters under his breath every time the issue is mentioned, but quite seriously, if Mackenzie is to do political summaries, quarterly reports, the annual report and all the other odds and ends of daily necessity, all specials, etc., and Judson is to do Consular reports, Congress and

⁵² But I agree – only it is v. far from true to say that 'London has got to decide.' Over & over again London has avoided decision – & on other things besides Palestine!

⁵³ This is absurd.

dissemination of information to all British agencies on the internal political scene, who is to do primaries? Con, besides not being an entirely full-time worker, has the Nationwide and the homefront in part to look after. So what are we to do?⁵⁴ The Scott Rankine issue is, as you know, irrelevant, since he would have fifth wheeled in any case. I am strongly in favour of filling his post at a junior level in New York and leaving Rolo in charge, which will relieve them to a considerable extent. But even so, Judson will have to do at least half the primaries here which overloads him. That is why my London journey has, alas, been curtailed (that point has been borne in on me very strongly by everyone, since my inordinate desire to stay in London forever and ever is excessively well known here and led to such dreadful scenes last time). If I come to you now I can see my visit in July melting away into thin air, and yet that is the month, before the beginning of the August primaries, when, after the Republican Convention, there will be so much to say. However, you know best. So do say whether you approve of the proposed arrangement. The reason for not being able to leave after the Consular Conference is the fact that Rolo has broken down temporarily, and someone (I) must replace him in New York for a week or so before going. I will be followed after a week by H.B.B. himself, which will be very nice for us all.

My parents once more seem to be worried about my health and fate; do reassure them.

Yours ever,
Isaiah

FROM H. G. NICHOLAS

Ministry of Information, London

Manuscript, 19 February 1944

My Dear Isaiah,

Your EMPAX 80, about your own visit to London, & staff in the Survey Dept. has put us in a difficult position. You *know* why

⁵⁴ There is substance in this. For all we ask of them, they are short-handed (at least as long as Rolo is ½ employed elsewhere & J.A.J. is only intermittently compos mentis). If Rolo leaves & I.B. gets ill, where are they?

Daphne is not coming – that it is a revocation of our earlier decision due solely to personal reasons of her own.⁵⁵ Inasmuch as the basic reason for your original request for her was – admit it – personal on your part, such grounds ought to be comprehensible to you. They are at any rate as valid as personal grounds can ever be in a matter of this kind. And, by way of compensation, we are doing everything possible to get you your two visits – glutton! – by way of relieving the weariness of your vigil. But such an effort is not made any easier by cables which elaborate staff difficulties at your end, revive the Daphne issue in a way which makes it very difficult to justify our decision not to proceed, and set Establishments asking querulously – Why *must* you have a visit from Berlin if his presence in Washington is so imperative? Cypher cables too, so that of course the F.O. can chortle *en passant* & ask awkward questions. Forgive me if I sound wrathful, but can't you get Butler to stop all this fretfulness & simply let you come over, without dragging in everything from P.S.R. to the Wisconsin Primaries?

Daphne knows nothing of this at present. She's had enough embarrassment already over the decision in January not to send her, & I don't want to set her rocking again. She has however been heard to say that she wonders when you'll send a reply to her letter

This much, at least, is certain, I take it – that we shall see you in March. May I urge you in the meantime to restrain Butler or Aubrey or whoever it is from dragging the Daphne issue into cables or 'official' letters again? If they do it can only be a matter of acute embarrassment & distress to her. I know that from Washington this must all appear as more of London's bloody-mindedness. Believe me, it's not, as you'll agree when you return to the restorative breezes of your native heath.

Tonight I go off for a fortnight amid the Northern Lights. I shall hope to see you practically on my doorstep when I get back, with all your epigrams shining & polished for Ditchley, Chatsworth & Chequers

Arivederci,
Herbert.

⁵⁵ What *were* the reasons?

CORRESPONDENCE WITH H. G. NICHOLAS 1942–1945

TO H. G. NICHOLAS

British Embassy, Washington

Typescript, 16 May 1944

My Dear Herbert:

I enclose two letters of the highest urgency to be transmitted – in particular the one to the Warden asking him to entertain a man called Hooker, who is Berle's personal assistant but exceptionally nice and affable. Archie MacLeish cannot speak too highly of Warden Adams, whom he thinks nearly as charming as Lord Simon to whom he lost his heart. He also maintains that Anderson told him that Mr. Irving Berlin was asked to lunch by mistake for Professor Isaiah Bowman mistakenly believed to be in London at the time.

I have washed you very clean in New York, while skilfully preventing too sinister a picture of Daphne. I enjoyed myself far too much in your and everyone's society and am now sunk in corresponding gloom and guilt. On Friday I perform the pilgrimage to New York to bear the words of the Master to the trembling sheep of the Survey Department. There is much fresh trouble there, I understand. So everything is going nicely as usual, really.

Yours ever,

IB.

P.S. Could you, for Heaven's sake, press Machell to cable me whether anything can be done about Landau. If I get no answer by the end of next week, I shall tell him that there is nothing doing, and expect a break in diplomatic relations, the ghastliness of which I shall duly exaggerate.

FROM H. G. NICHOLAS

[Ministry of Information, London]

Carbon typescript, 13 June 1944

Confirmation copy

Dear Isaiah,

The Kingsbury Smith 'Spotlight on the State Department' in the Readers Digest for May seemed to me such a remarkable document, particularly in its verbatim quotation of an 'hitherto unpublished full text' of a British diplomatic document, that I sent it to the French department of the F.O. for their information and comments. You may be interested in Cowell's reply.

'It is not a pleasant article and whatever gratification it may give the State Department will be of small consequence in comparison with the annoyance it has caused the French. Of this we have recently had evidence in the French Political Intelligence Report No. 26 from Allied Force Headquarters which reports that the article has been severely criticised both in the press and in the Assembly in Algiers.

Mr. Kingsbury Smith has not got all his facts right on the subject of the 'hitherto unpublished full text of the British communication to General de Gaulle in November 1940'. The French National Committee was not set up until 24th September 1941, and our letter to General de Gaulle about it was dated 26th September 1941. Although Mr. Kingsbury Smith does not quote it accurately it is near enough to the original to make it clear that he has had access to a version of it. We did not publish it although we reserved the right to do so but on the other hand we did not regard it as secret. The substance of it was sent to our Embassy at Washington for the information of the State Department and for guidance 'in answering enquiries'. The insinuation that we 'secretly took a stand' is therefore baseless, although the fact that we took the stand indicated is true enough.

I may add that the substance of the letter (but not the paragraphs in which we made it clear that we were not expressing any views as to the various constitutional and juridical considerations involved and that we could not have regular

diplomatic representatives) was given by the Secretary of State in answer to a question in the House of Commons on 26th November 1941. This may be the source of Mr. Kingsbury Smith's 'November 1940'.

In the circumstances we think it best to ignore the article – not that I assume you were proposing that any action should be taken. You may however like to remind your people in the United States of America of the facts of the case outlined above.'

If you know of any other clues in this enthralling case we should be very interested to hear of them. Mr. Kingsbury Smith is at present in London; we are doing our best to keep tab of him.

Yours ever,
[Herbert]

TO H. G. NICHOLAS

British Embassy, Washington

Typescript, 13 July 1944

Dear Herbert:

A brief note on Kingsbury Smith's story on the State Department on which you wrote to me on June 13th. Inquiries reveal no other clues in this case save the obvious one – he got it all hook, line and sinker from the State Department as always. His stuff is very much in line with what our people hear from people in the State Department and it all tallies beautifully.

What am I to tell you about the elections? It seems to me that the Republican Convention was exactly what it was expected to be, with Dewey as a cold, shrewd, routine little dummy, the voice of what might be called the enlightened reactionaries of the West Coast or Winthrop Aldrich. Not even his closest friends attribute any beliefs or purposes to him. Bricker will guarantee that the Mid-Western machine and bosses will know where to turn. Their platform is really a terrible <what?>⁵⁶ and they know it, and let no Agar talk to you now about the enlightened idealism of Republicans. The bogus <? inspired misprint.> of it lies not in

⁵⁶ Typist left a blank.

what it positively says so much as what it thinks it can get away without.

Willkie would, I feel sure, quite have liked to have been angled for as the Democratic Vice President, but as Hopkins says it is too late for that now. The President would sincerely, I think, like Wallace, but has been persuaded to date that this may ruin the ticket, and therefore generally proposes to endorse Wallace but not to make it a condition of his own acceptance. Consequently the names of Justice Douglas (Brogan's nationalistic friend), Byrnes, Rayburn, Barkley and even Judge Minton of Indiana, a New Deal ex-Senator and ex-Presidential assistant are being bandied about. Byrnes and Rayburn would lose the negro votes, which as someone in the New York Times pointed out, are worth more than the entire Solid South vote.

Drew Pearson has been very busy lately, (1) in putting out chunks of Professor Lange's memorandum of his interviews with Stalin; (2) that he is doing Wallace's work for him, flaying the present Chinese regime as corrupt and divided between the Soong's and the feudal war lords which is equidistant from the other aspirations of the Chinese masses. He also said that Churchill and Hopkins want Wallace out in favour of Winant, who was the British stooge as desired by the President. Stettinius actually went so far as to suggest that we ask the P.M. to deny it! As far as we know this is a pure piece of viciousness to which Pearson was put up by some friend of his in a moment of general enthusiasm. Douglas is a pretty strong candidate, although Hopkins hates him as a member of the Ickes-Janeway-Tom Corcoran group. Consequently Messrs. Joe Kennedy, Krock and Luce rather favour him as a deeply blood and soil American, which indeed he is, typical semi-isolationist and New Deal radical with a touch of frontier demagoguery and anti-British nationalism, though not as bad as Laughlin [sc. Lauchlin] Currie, the renegade Canadian, who openly says that only those people in America are pro-British who are anti-Russian and for that reason.

If Roosevelt is re-elected I still do not see why he should come in with a Republican House and a hostile Senate, but that is my private heresy. The Democratic platform is likely to contain a plank on Palestine – to rival the Republican plank; one on Poland echoing Stalin's demand for a 'democratic, independent, strong Poland'; and one on the need for a national authority to whom

colonial powers shall be accountable for their stewardship of the governed peoples. It will also demand that national contingents be kept up by the major states to prevent aggression, and take up a particular New Deal line on domestic policy. All this is on the President's desk and not a word has been heard as yet.

Have you read Lippmann's book? Pretty bad it seems to me, particularly the plan for Germany, which seems mad as well. If the Germans wish to sell a thermometer and the Russians wish to buy it that may not be, because it has got to be seaborne first. It goes to Brazil who does not want it, while the Russians wait for a Chilean thermometer, which arrives late, expensively and not at all what the Russians want. Most peculiar, as the late Queen Victoria would say. Lippmann is really an isolationist in the sense that he is anxious for security only and how to bolt and bar the doors and windows and nothing about what goes on inside or outside. Welles book is said to be much better, but as Fowler in New York has broken down completely on early delivery of unpublished books, we have not seen this yet. Nicoll will have to try to get such books by his own devices. B.I.S. in New York is functioning beautifully within its cage but not a millimetre beyond it.

Yours ever,

I.B.

<Be an angel & transmit my letter to Legg advocating, in answer to solicitation, Smith. IB. I received a letter urging *me* to stand for the Chichele Political Theory chair. It arrived 15 days after Cole's election. Funny. IB.>

FROM H. G. NICHOLAS

Ministry of Information, London

Typescript, 5 August 1944

CONFIDENTIAL

Dear Isaiah,

Mr. Poynton, the Colonial Office representative on the British delegation to the Dumbarton Oaks Conference called at the Ministry yesterday to seek our advice and counsel. He was sadly in

need of some such assistance, but I doubt if there was very much that we could do for him. The plight of the Colonial Office in this matter appears to be so serious that it will take more than the medical skill of our combined selves to rescue them. At the same time, it may be useful to you to know the worst.

Mr. Poynton has a little knowledge of the States, derived from previous visits as ‘aid’ to Lord Beaverbrook and Mr. Lyttelton, but he is deeply impregnated with the Colonial Office mentality and approaches problems of American publicity through their distinctive blinkers. He told me that the Americans are proposing to include on the agenda of the Conference a section on Colonies, which will recommend a system of international control. The C.O. are proposing to object to this on every conceivable ground, from the highest to the lowest, from the point of view of the self-determining colony which would regard the imposition of international control as a set-back, to the straightforward argument of the ‘what we have we hold’ variety.

By every means of verbal persuasion in our power, we tried to convince Mr. Poynton that, at any rate from a publicity point of view, such a course could lead only to disaster. We should once again appear in the role of the accused, defending himself by a variety of contradictory arguments, even the most successful of which would not make any serious impression on those Americans who believed that the U.S.A. was planning for freedom while we were digging our toes in for imperialism. We urged that we should take the field with constructive suggestions of our own. Mr. Poynton admitted that we had some such projects in the blueprint stage – e.g. a scheme of international functional bodies, in such fields as health, labour, nutrition etc., which they regarded as more effective than a revived form of Permanent Mandates Commission. Unfortunately, these schemes were still waiting for Colonel Stanley to find time to talk to Lord Cranborne. There was no possibility that they would be ripe in time for us to present them at the Conference.

What was most disturbing, besides this sheer absence of good cards, was Mr. Poynton’s conviction that, despite this, he would be able to call the Americans’ bluff. His attitude, as he outlined it, would be that we were in entire agreement with the noble aspirations of our American allies, but that the tried methods of the Colonial Office were a much more effective means of releasing

[sc. realising] them than their experiments in internationalism could possibly be – an approach so strongly reminiscent of Sir Frederick Leggett's at the I.L.O. Conference that only a miracle can avoid the same kind of 'schoolmaster in the pillory' effect.

I suggested to Poynton that he should take an early opportunity of talking to you when he arrives in Washington, which will give you an opportunity of making these discoveries for yourself. We also urged upon him that he should pay some attention to the press arrangements for the Conference, since it was certain that the State Department would be working their pipe-lines overtime and it was desirable, especially on the Colonies issue, that we should have our outlets too. I presume the Embassy is giving some serious thought to this.

We have just received from Mr. Butler the plan for the post-war B.I.S. Never was such a large scheme conceived so exclusively in department store terms. A great empire and Sears Roebuck minds go ill together. Were you on hand when this monster was born?⁵⁷

With best wishes,

Yours ever,

Herbert

<Thanks for your letter. Send more. I hope to find time to write at length & off record soon. H.>

MEMO FROM IB TO 'MR. WRIGHT/MR. GORE-BOOTH/MR. BERLIN'

16 August 1944

This strikes me as somewhat exaggerated but may be of some interest.

I.B.

[Not transcribed: Comments handwritten on the memo by Gore-Booth and Jebb. The document referred to is HGN's letter of 5 August 1944.]

⁵⁷ This paragraph is deleted and marked 'Ignore' in Gore-Booth's[?] handwriting.

TO H. G. NICHOLAS

British Embassy, Washington

Typescript, 24 August 1944

My Dear Herbert:

What is there to tell you? They are all here. The conference is being held in vast secrecy and already Mr. Reston has secured his leak and published something which purports to be the three plans. Having carefully avoided either reading the plans or meeting Mr. Reston so far, I go about lecturing various persons on the unwisdom of bottling up the U.S. press and the damage the corks will do when finally they blow up. Mr. Poynton seems to be all you said, but his colleagues seem well aware of this and Jebb has got him firmly, almost brutally, in hand with the help of Professor Webster, who is in literally roaring form and answers everyone's questions to whomsoever they may be addressed. I attended only one conference with the Prof. in the course of which he practically invited all questions be addressed to him and shouted down even Gore-Booth. As soon as Brogan arrives, I propose to inject him into the party and let the best man win. <It shd be added that Webster is *far* the most popular member of our party so far as the Americans are concerned. His behaviour in the Night Club flanked by M. Zarpkin & Adm. Rodionov, the refusal of a roquette to waltz with him & many other matters must be left to a later chronicle.>

Meanwhile, we specialists on internal affairs are very much in the background. Truman has put his foot in it already with the article in 'Colliers', but it won't do him much real damage. The really interesting thing is the boomerang of the N.A.M. Lend-Lease story as reported in the Political Summary. It is clear that Beaverbrook will try to represent that Law unseasonably stirred up a hornets' net by bringing up the 7th Article at a time when no-one was thinking of it. Actually, Hull is systematically pressing for talks on that subject and Law did no more than his duty when he so reported. Beaverbrook now will try to say that the N.A.M. Lend-Lease broadside was caused by Law's busybodydom. The fact that it provoked reactions on the whole favourable to us ought to be a feather in Law's cap if he knows how to pluck it and emblazon it

properly <(he won't)>. I was carefully away from Washington during the entire period of Beaverbrook's stay but gather that, finding the oil situation relatively placid, he whipped it up into an angry turmoil – then Law and Robbins and their friends rushed round to the Americans and begged them with tears in their eyes not to let the wicked destructiveness of one man ruin relations in so important a field. After much hurrying and scurrying, things were patched up, and Beaverbrook then cabled home saying that despite all the cunning intransigence of the hard-boiled American Big Business negotiators, he, Beaverbrook, had managed to pluck the beautiful rose from the thistle. Donald Hall, as you may imagine, speechless with indignation, looking more like a very red, very hard-boiled Easter egg than ever and the Americans sweating with relief at the departure of the Beaver and congratulating themselves on not being completely diddled by him.

Mr. Wallace, we are told, is entertaining megalomaniac talks about being Secretary of State in 1945 and President in 1948. I dare say Cripps, too, has his dreams. The latest Gallup Poll shows the usual edge for the President, but the Democrats rightly fear apathy on the part of their voters who may too easily conclude that the President will be in anyhow, so fail to turn out in adequate force. On the other hand, the Republicans are pretty defeatist, too, although Luce and Mrs. Read display a certain modest confidence. It must be admitted that Dewey and John Foster Dulles have caught Mr. Hull slightly flatfooted inasmuch as, having been manoeuvred into inviting Dulles to talk to him, he now is faced with Dulles' statement that postwar organisation is a fit matter for campaign oratory and that the public should be kept informed. He can, therefore, neither freely talk nor freely abstain from talking to Dulles without great risks either way.

Reston's leak today seems to have led to a natural uproar in the State Department. I suppose we shall all automatically be accused as usual, but I really do believe that we are completely guiltless and so are the Russians. Verb sap. The State Department have long been anxious to acquire the able and conscientious Mr. Reston, to prize him out of the clutches of the British by whom he was thought to be over fascinated while in London. However, after the Phillips' and the Lange leaks, they are really in no position to point fingers at us. <The left wing researcher Stone et al. are happily

immersed in digging up Dulles's past. Drew Pearson has just administered a really well aimed foul – in fact it's warming up.>

What about John Foster Dulles? Dull, duller, Dulles is an old joke now; *PM* is trying to smear him as a lawyer of corrupt corporations; actually there is no great distance between him and Hull save that he is a little too anxious to forgive our enemies and is too ashamed of his own part in the League; his manipulation of the Protestant churches shows that he is an able enough practical politician; his chief bogey is coercion, his chief desire the possibility of periodical revision of treaties and arrangements. He is fundamentally <a> friendly <Hoover (duly isolationist in 1939) quite kind> to us and so, curiously enough, are most of the parties concerned, both the American negotiators and the possible Republicans. I don't mean that Vandenberg and Co. are any good, only that Dulles and even Dewey are less impossible than Harding and Lodge and that the Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate is, despite everything, a more respectable body than it was in 1919. What we lack most is a clerico-political contact with the dreariest and most important part of the American Protestant public – I should, with some exaggeration, maintain that there are 30 men in the U.S. who, in their turn, influence clergymen and lay-preachers, who between them control a better organised body of political opinion than any other in the U.S. and that with this body we have least contact. I dare say Aubrey will be writing to you about a Protestant specialist – I have rather prodded him into that, since our godliest figure at the moment is the Ambassador and that doesn't work altogether adequately. The fact there is no-one amongst us for Dulles to talk to is even more important than there is no-one for Ben Cohen to do likewise – his appointment as a U.S. negotiator is a definite sop to the liberals; he appears to be playing a very real part in the whole thing and is fawned upon by Professor Webster.

I must stop as there is a series of meetings stretching before me. Be so kind and forward Oxford intrigue by forwarding the enclosed letter. Have you seen the surprisingly favourable article by Demaree Bess in the 'Saturday Evening Post' called 'The British Empire feels its Oats', and the Beards' new book?

Give them all my love,

Yours ever,

Isaiah.

<I feel the latest Pearson-Phillips flurry is quite serious (Pearson is thought to have got hold of some of our cables – a very overdue security search may occur – in vain I suppose) – we've denied that he was declared p. non grata in London – technically true but in a deeper sense ... (see Gov. of India's telegrams) & someone in London should let fly at irresponsible Senators (Chandler) who blow off without evidence etc. I wonder if my powerful draft will reach F.O. (Abate No 1.) I.B.>

FROM H. G. NICHOLAS

Ministry of Information, London

Typescript, 21 September 1944

Dear Isaiah,

I enclose some notes on a festive little occasion at which Mr. Luce let his hair down in the presence of Geoffrey Wilson, Dick Crossman, Vernon Bartlett and a few others, including myself. It was a great brainfest which went on into the small hours and covered many more subjects in heaven and earth than are dealt with in my brief precis. You would have enjoyed the spectacle of Dick Crossman as the new Machiavelli arguing the case for no war aims, with Harry Luce as the exponent of a chastened but indomitable American idealism.

Mr. Luce was in the most amiable mood throughout this occasion. The great tycoon laid his robes aside and was, as you Americans say, most 'democratic'.

His visit is only a moderate success in general. Invited by the Beaver, for purposes which are still dark and hid, he arrived at a time when there was such a grave insufficiency of Eminent Persons and Cabinet Ministers in town for him to hobnob with, that he actually had to resort to a pilgrimage to Churt. You see, you have skimmed the cream off our London.

Yours ever,
Herbert.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH H. G. NICHOLAS 1942–1945

<P.S. Don't keep Robin up *every* night until 3.00 am. Be generous – R.J.C. for Grant McKenzie is a handsome exchange! Send us back our Director in good shape.>

[Not transcribed: HGN's 'Notes on a Discussion with Mr. Luce', 8 September 1944.]

TO H. G. NICHOLAS

British Embassy, Washington

Typescript, 26 September 1944

Dear Herbert,

Robin is with us, and to that extent things are looking up. I am supervising the last rites whereby my independent little corner store is about to be integrated into the Chancery colossus next door. This is the way the world goes; very much out with a bang, etc. I am not now sure when I am coming home; January or February I should think. Mr. Butler has eloquently reported in a minute that he had discussed the matter with Sir C. Radcliffe and they had decided that, so far as they were concerned, it would not be necessary to replace me. I thoroughly agree, and gracefully acknowledge the expressions of sympathy on this bleak attitude on the part of my employers, which I have received from unexpected quarters, the Chancery and elsewhere. I have rejected all offers of singing under a different management and have announced my intention to retire to a castle in Wales before my voice has gone and while the public still retains fond memories of the Mad Scene in Lucia. You will observe the influence of our friend in these pretty embroideries.

<here follow words not quite so confidential, which may, if you *insist*, be shown within a horribly narrow circle.>

[*new page*]

And now for something more important: As a result of stories about disagreements at Quebec about degrees of 'soft' and 'hard' peace, as well as much previous whispering, the impression has grown here, particularly in Administration circles, that we are not too anxious for too hard a peace for Germany, largely because of our political and business interests. The 'Economist's' leading

article on this has, of course, increased this impression, whereas, so their thought runs, the chief proponents of soft peace here are sentimental – churches, liberals, etc. – or honourable anti-Reds – minorities, Catholics, etc. Our soft peace merchants belong to a more sinister variety, namely (a) ‘powerful business interests’, responsible for the Dusseldorf Agreement with the Germans of 1939, and their political counterparts who, despairing of American collaboration, proposed to entrench themselves politically in Europe which must include an anti-Russian Germany. In short, we suspect each other of roughly the same dark intentions, which is a common enough story. The person alleged to be most affected by all this is the Prime Minister himself, and people like Quentin Reynolds in ‘*Colliers*’ say that he is less bloody minded than either Stalin or Roosevelt, while Mr. Ward of the ‘*Baltimore Sun*’ hints that the State Department has pointed out to him that Germany was, after all, Britain’s best customer in Europe before the war. Firm though our directives from London are, this is not enough. And our old friend Shepherd Jones of the State Department has conveyed to me that the British desk in the Department is most anxious to obtain whatever information it can about the state of sentiment about this in England, in particular about groups exercising influence on the P.M. and the Government, their composition and importance. They get reports about all this from the U.S. Embassy in London which, it is my impression, tends to confirm the view that such an influence does exist and is fairly powerful. Morgenthau certainly thinks that our economic nationalists are getting the whip hand (which may be true) and that this is tending to strengthen the soft peace party. Anything, therefore, which could disabuse U.S. officials of this would, therefore, be most welcome. The people in the State Department naturally have not and will not come to the Chancery for formal refutation or confirmation of this, any more than we go to them about reported ‘rot’ said to be developing in this or that Administration group. If I could informally feed my Mr. Jones with something which does not look cooked up to him and he in his turn ‘serve this up’ to his clients in the Department, percolation of such information might have a decisive effect in the present state of uncertainty about all this. We have, as you know, been strictly forbidden to pass on anything from the Home Intelligence Reports. Nor am I too anxious to tell Jones that the British public

is complaining about the B.B.C.'s 'overdoing Germans' friendly reactions to invading Allies' (Home Intelligence Summary, September 21st et foll.), since this will merely mean to him that while the British public may be sound, the B.B.C., i.e. the Government, is not. What I should really be grateful for is a political summary of the state of opinion on all this – who thinks what and influences whom. There would be no harm in conveying verbally (I am not expected nor would I pass on anything in writing) that our churches or the left wing of the Labour Party feel more softly towards the Germans than some of us, nor indeed about any other humanitarian protests against Vansittartism. The thing to dispel is the impression that the City of London or the F.B.I. are manipulating Mr. Churchill in some way. <But if they are in fact misbehaving some hint could be given on that, if only not to contradict the Americans' own reports too unplausibly.> Personally, I do not believe that that kind of soft peaceism amounts to a row of beans, but I would like to have concrete evidence. Has the Ministry conducted any private surveys on this? Is it likely to? Could you explain to others concerned that no, repeat no, conceivable publicity will be given to any findings, that no written material will be passed on, that the State Department is not O.W.I., that no Senatorial committee could ever subpoena anything, and that the whispering campaign about Mr. Churchill's sinister softness, however outrageously false, is doing genuine damage. Mr. Butler's first reaction when I discussed this with him was to send a telegram to London saying all this, to the F.O. in the first place and asking for ammunition against it. I have dissuaded him from this (although anything sufficiently prominent will, of course, be reported in political summaries) because I thought that all we should get at best would be a formal denial and assurance that this was a false view of the situation which might reassure us <*sic*> but would be of no use in talking to American officials, since they would want something a little more elaborate and precise, even if not statistical. I have discussed this with Robin, who agreed that I should write to you and said that when he returns he will himself see whether a survey of some sort could not be supplied. I hope I have conveyed what it is that is wanted – results of a bona fide investigation of the problem, classifying groups and their opinions and the kind of tie-ups they have with political leaders.

Obviously these results should not look white-washed. Otherwise no credence will be given to them. Could you bestir yourself?

[*new page*]

<*Not for circ.*> One of the things I am afraid of is that even with McMillan at the head, the combination of the Catholic Murphy, the Catholic Kirkpatrick and some-one like Crossman attached to them will inevitably not only irritate Russian allies, but be exploited by persons who still believe in the British tendency to appeasement here, and who will represent Murphy as a reactionary snob by now totally under our influence. The effect will not be a stiffening of 'hard peace' sentiment here, but disgust with the political immorality of the British and the moral drawn will be that the U.S. must strengthen her own resources, since she has no reliable allies in Europe. You know how this sort of thing is simultaneously played up by liberals, isolationists, the 'Christian Century', 'Life', 'Readers Digest' and all.

Meanwhile God bless you, and how strange this will all look from the New College Lane and Turl.

Yours ever,
Shaya

<About the elections I have written to Daphne. I am not quite clear about when I am to toss off the official coil – December or February. Anyway by March I shall have ceased to exist. Robin's advice is that I 'see the new set up (forsooth) in to the saddle' i.e. transfer them to F.O. on Jan 1 (& myself for two months). Then go. Possibly.

IB.

Brogan has been & gone, not as good as usual. He can tell you about a luncheon disagreement between Reston – who thought HMG much more pro-Russ than U.S.G. & Paul Ward (Balti-Sun) who thought the opposite. I am inclined to think that F.D.R. is more 100% clear everything with Joe [Stalin] than W.S.C., but as of immediately below them Reston is right. So?

I.B.>

CORRESPONDENCE WITH H. G. NICHOLAS 1942–1945

FROM H. G. NICHOLAS

Ministry of Information, London

Manuscript, 11 October 1944

Dear Isaiah,

Ah! Quelle richesse! Daphne and I have been wading all the afternoon through our leaves of greenery. Truly the dam has burst & your pent-up silence has found voice at last. It is all most impressive, most important & most enjoyable – & comes very pat on the very day of the Dumbarton Oaks release. I shall have more to say in reply to it before I end, but first of all some personalia.

So the Berlin show is finally going to close? After *such* a run, *such* houses, *such* box office, *such* costumes? And you *really* think that you will find contentment at Craig-y-nor[?]? It is not to be thought of. Your public accepts its fate, but winces at the loss. No replacement? Of course not! Is there a Lander Junior, a Patti No. 2, a De Reske[?] Minor? Least of all had I cast myself for such a role.

But I'm more surprised at the disposition of the rest of the cast. To be turned back to Chancery? Turning the Old Vic over to Benson? Covent Garden to Carl Rosa? The idea was mooted by H.B.B. on his visit & didn't please me then. Nor did the circumstances in which the news was first confirmed to us delight this poor toiler. I had been pressed to join F.O.R.D. & write their 'policy papers', whatever that means. I turned it down but told Frank, who immediately wrote off to Robin, who replied describing the new Survey setup in Washington but assuring us that the N.Y. Survey will continue until 'V-J day', so that 'Nick can be re-assured; there will be plenty for him to do.' Since Nick is aching to be out of the whole thing & back comfortably teaching Hobbes, Locke & Rousseau, this isn't quite the 're-assurance' he's looking for. I look down a vista confined to eternal wrestlings with the Press Summaries & deprived of the only really beguiling landscapes – those bootlegged from Washington. So don't let too many people get the idea that H.G.N.'s stay will persist long after I.B.'s exit.

One feature of the plan does, however, delight me – the vacancy it creates for Frank. Poor Frank! Talk of hope deferred!

He has become the most Tchekovian character in the Ministry. Will he ever get to Moscow? Really it is hard to believe it. Bad luck rains on him like a Job. And now, cruellest of all, the F.O. offer him a consulate – which would suit him *admirably* – just when he's committed to this Butler job – *if* the Treasury sanction it. (That, by the way, is strictly private. I've written to Robin about it because he must know at once, but no one else has been told.) Meanwhile negotiations with the Treasury, with Keynes, with Butler with drag on so that it is hard to resist the impression that neither H.B.B. or Aubrey want to have Frank in the USA at all. He is mortified, patient – far too patient, of course – and quietly despairing.

I have just heard that Robin is on his way back. Maybe that will straighten things out.

Now to your letters. I had suspected some funny business over Lippmann when I compared the Pol. Cable with your bootlegged draft. It is all uncommon disturbing & I agree, needless to say, with the whole burden of your song. What can be done? With the P.O., by us, little. This, I fear, is their province – 'political' – par excellence, & the Guards Brigade are not going to accept guidance (however wrapped) from the Territorials. However, something can be done. TIMES leader-writers, perhaps. Some reviews of WAR AIMS, due in about a month's time, can be slanted. Awareness can be spread amongst pundits & sundry. The risk is – and it is a real risk, I'm sure – that people will just become bored – with everlasting America, with ignorant & windy Senators, with the Constitution & the 2/3rds rule, with recurrent reminders of Wilson and All That etc. The New Statesman ballad on *Don't Let's be Beastly to America* reflects a mood of ironic, bored exasperation, always latent, now explicit, & extraordinarily prevalent. I have it half my working day – & so do you.

Germany the same. Already one is rather bored by the dreary iteration of distasteful alternatives – 'hard', 'soft' – 'partition', 'control' – etc. Can one read the Economist leaders & correspondence or Sir Walter Layton's[?] pamphlet? Only with immense difficulty. And if we are bored now – what in 5 yrs. time?

It is not going to be easy to supply you with your GERMANIA survey for 'Shep[?]', especially if Home Intelligence is ruled out. As a start I skimmed through the morning papers, the results of which I enclose – a random, one day's bunch. Could easily give a false

impression. At the moment public opinion here has taken 2 hard, unsettling knocks – the 1st, the Morgenthau Plan, whose history, provenance, sponsorship & significance have never been explained (not even by I.B., if I may say so), but which reads like such damned nonsense that it has provoked acute alarm everywhere. Is Europe to be turned into an economic farce by a country whose troops of occupation will want to go home at the end of 6 months? – that is the question everyone has asked. The second is the barrage of ‘friendly’, fraternising photographs released by SHAEF from territories occupied by U.S. Armies. The result of these events has been a certain rocking of the hitherto sound (& still, I am convinced, basically sound) public opinion on this topic – I’m sure that the area of divergence between Left & Right, City & Labour, Bloomsbury & Transport Hse. on this is really very small though perpetual bandying of ‘soft’-‘hard’ antitheses confuses it. Everyone agrees on a politically ‘hard’ & economically ‘soft’ peace – i.e. complete control, but no monkeying about with the economic clock.

But I’ll go surveying, & write you more later.

What, of course, will rock people most of all when it’s known is the personnel of the Allied Control Commission. Brigadier-General Foster (you remember his gallant action at FARA?), Major General Wheeler-Bennett, Sir (rank still uncertain) Walter Monckton (oh! *he’ll* be tough!) – once these names are known there’ll no longer be any doubt about whether the Germans are being let off lightly or no. Am I authorised to deny that your return from Washington is associated with the assumption of a Major-Generalship?

You’d better have this now. But I’ve much more to tell & will write again soon. You too.

Ever,
Herbert.

TO H. G. NICHOLAS

British Embassy, Washington

Typescript, 23 November 1944

My dear Herbert:

The forces of light have triumphed and virtue is reaping a handsome reward. I am not referring to Mr. Roosevelt, but to the other Frank. I may as well tell you that Sir G. Campbell, who as Robin can tell you has always looked on Frank as the author, however unwitting, of all our misfortunes over the Foreign Agents' Registration Act, was over-ruled, largely through a splendid internal rising on the part of the friends of sea green incorruptibility within the walls of this ancient establishment. <don't tell F.; he will have to collaborate with Sir G. after all.> Denver is in the bag; I think a very good thing. Lobbying the Consular advisers will have been the last such operation carried out by certain persons. Hurray!

You will by this time have received our fine roundup of opinion on the Middle East. I originally intended to send it to you Saving, since perhaps too elaborately I assumed that your en clair enquiry was meant to secure direct communication. As my elaborate enquiries on the subject necessarily involved researches in Chancery which revealed curiosity on the Ministry's part, those in Chancery thought it a good thing if the F.O. saw the answer in transit, hence the cypher cable. I only hope that you will not get spanked for taking an interest in U.S. politics again and that they will take the information contained to heart. It originally contained some unfriendly comment on the effect of Landis here, of whom the State Department are said (by Christelow) to be very proud – a kind of anti-British Darvall as it were – but that was eliminated by persons engaged in maintaining that our officials who don't like Landis are even more damaging to the common cause than Landis himself. I don't entirely agree with this, but it is a small point.

There is really nothing to report until the comprehensive despatch is drafted and sent. It took two wars to panic this country into the concept of international security supported by international force. It will take another depression, presumably, to ram home the same lesson on the economic front (international regulation of international services and commodities). The political

front thus looks far better than the economic, than it has for a long time. There is a lot of growling in the State Department about our Western Bloc as likely to make inevitable a conflict between the Western and Eastern Bloc with U.S. to our rescue again. It may not be his fault but my opinion of the statecraft of Daphne's old friend is not rising. Oddly enough, I found far more enlightenment – even desire for radical steps and swift action on the part of my new friend, the British Ambassador, here (ever since the composition of our Lippmann tiff our relations have grown wonderfully warm). <But he won't do, all the same. Still my vignette of him would be warmer.>

I had a curious conversation with David Bowes Lyon about the death of Geoffrey Dawson of which I expressed something approaching satisfaction. He informed me that he was one of his best friends and had rendered very noticeable service to the nation in stopping us from committing an act of national criminal folly in 1938 when a lot of idiots clamoured for war. Funny how one never knows what people will think or say.

I observe that a figure called Bullock has been elected to history fellowship in New College (to succeed W. Legg, I suppose). He is described as 'very vigorous'. Very disquieting. So was Crossman. I must hurry home.

Yours ever,
Isaiah

[Not transcribed: Letter to A. R. K. Mackenzie from HGN, 6 December 1944.]

FROM H. G. NICHOLAS

[Ministry of Information, London]

Carbon typescript, 9 December 1944

CONFIRMATION COPY.

Dear Isaiah,

Before you leave, you ought to do a little lobbying amongst your acquaintances in the interests of beauty and truth, and in particular I want to suggest that you should persuade Archie

CORRESPONDENCE WITH H. G. NICHOLAS 1942-1945

MacLeish in his new capacity as Assistant Secretary of State to invite E. M. Forster to visit the United States. I cannot imagine any better gesture for MacLeish to begin his new office with. I saw Forster today and asked him a lot of questions about America, and his new popularity there and discovered that he would quite like to pay the States a visit. (I do not doubt that Mr. Trilling's book has done a great deal to sharpen his curiosity about the Dark Continent.) As far as I can make out no one, either British or American, has thought of sending Forster previously, but there is no doubt that he would prove an export of superlative quality. He tells me that he does not know MacLeish personally, though I think they have exchanged letters.

I am assuming of course that Senator Connally is going to allow MacLeish to become Assistant Secretary. Is he?

Yours ever,
[Herbert]

TO H. G. NICHOLAS

British Embassy, Washington

Typescript, 14 December 1944

Dear Herbert,

I need not enlarge on the sudden fearful clouding of the skies, so abrupt and violent after the beautiful sunshine induced by the White Paper publicity. Aubrey Morgan, who was in bed unwell, doubtless laid low by his Herculean efforts over the White Paper, declares that the change in political weather when he returned to work was something astounding; a Rip Van Winkle entering a wholly altered world; crackling and whispering and scheming everywhere. <He is now off for some 8 weeks I think. Doubtless physical collapse was assisted by Sir D. Scott's letter defining Dudley's status.> The B.I.S. surveys, which are quite accurate so far as they go, do not, perhaps, indicate quite sufficiently that what has happened is a new suspicion and hostility on the part of our natural friends and offers of alliance from the reactionaries and isolationists and the Russophobes which we could not profit by in any case. However, Archie Mackenzie will doubtless convey this to you better than I can when he calls on you sometime this month.

The officials are somewhat disturbed and would like to pour oil upon a storm they have themselves done something to raise; but let no mistake be made, this is a strong symptom of the new State Department line. During the hearings on the new Assistant Secretaries, Stettinius took trouble to stress the 'new liberalism' of his Department, something to bring it more into line with public sentiment. Appeasement and Badoglio are dreaded like the devil, and if the Marshal were found shot in the streets of Rome tomorrow, little regret would be either felt or expressed here. Naturally this is partly an instinctive come-back over the Darlan nightmare.

As for the latest leaks – e.g. the Churchill instructions to Scobie, the State Department are conducting a witch hunt also, they say. After the Phillips' letter, Dumbarton Oaks (of which I still believe our people to be innocent) and now this latest gush of Greek documents, it is a little difficult for the U.S.G. to charge us with leakages, but I suppose it is wiser not to start a slanging match on that subject. Yet Swing & X Sc. M. did say last night that this last leak was a worse affair than our not consulting the U.S. authorities on Sforza and made diplomatic negotiations between the two powers very difficult. Nobody knows who did it yet, and since the political summary predicted it some two days in advance, we are enjoying nervous respect for a little while. Acheson told Sylvester Gates, who is here, that he was certain that it was Wallace Murray, the head of the Near Eastern Division of the S.D., who was responsible for this, as for other similar information. <But this does not sound right. W.M. is solidly anti-Brit, but more anti-Russ, & is alone in S.D. in applauding our acts in Greece together with Hearst & the Brooklyn Tablet.> This was not well received when I reported it to one of my colleagues, since it contradicts, if true, a view apparently held and fostered both in the F.O. and here that the London visit had done Wallace Murray much good and brought him round to us. He may have done so for three weeks, but after that seems to me to have worn off completely. However, those who cultivate him here cannot be expected to accept this easily. Be that as it may, he is probably being shunted off into an embassy fairly soon, which is bound to improve matters. The departure of Berle and Wallace Murray ought, in spite of the new aggressiveness of the S.D., as good as prophesied to us by Hopkins, to make things better in general, since what we mind,

after all, is not an aggressive U.S. foreign policy, even if it clashes with ours at various points, so much as a maliciously anti-British one which it will not, I sincerely believe, necessarily be.

I imagine that you are at least as unhappy as I am about our muddle in Southern Europe: I cannot believe that the obduracy of persons in the F.O., as against the greater imagination of liberalism of persons in other places, is not altogether to blame; perhaps it will all be straightened out when the Big Three meet. How long, I should like to know, will Stalin preserve correct silence while his emissaries, one after another, tell me that the people of Greece are calling for his aid? And how much shall we hear of Senator Kilgore's or Senator Murray's questions as to whether Lend-lease was meant to be used by one ally of the U.S. against another? Gloom, gloom, gloom. I shall write a gayer letter as soon as I am able.

Yours ever,
[Isaiah]

<P.S. Having shoved off the crude efforts of 'Life' to use me for copy, I am now engaged in fending off the 'New Yorker' to whom I keep secretly offering Butler (who has, by the way, refused the London request on grounds of age and insufficient ferocity of temper, wisely, I suppose, save that his views on that particular subject are profoundly sound, a rare enough thing) which has its delicious possibilities.

Would you be kind for almost the last time and forward the enclosure.

<I observe that my last pol. sum. has been emasculated. Please N.B.: the Security Boys (& some are intelligent enough) are gloomier than I & think we have been irreparably damaged here, rather like U.S. in Britain after Darlan, even though pleasant exchanges will continue. I think, within limits, this is true. What do you yourself feel? we get angry cables from F.O. etc. saying could not *true* facts be advertised here? do you, on the basis of these same true facts, feel v. differently from the local wiseacres about this? allowing for U.S. smugness, lack of policy, lack of right to criticize etc., is not the pot often in the best position to determine the precise shade of the kettle's darkness? I cannot see how this wound is ever properly to heal. We are now like an hour glass

CORRESPONDENCE WITH H. G. NICHOLAS 1942–1945

focussing all the hatreds – of isolationists, internationalists, U.S. imperialists – everyone except Russophobe moderates. Dear dear.
IB.>

TO H. G. NICHOLAS

British Embassy, Washington

Carbon typescript, 10 January 1945

Dear Herbert,

I enclose a memorandum by Nicoll on publicity organisation of the State Department, which speaks for itself. I don't know if I have much to add, save that Archie MacLeish clearly expects to take over the at any rate Overseas Section of O.W.I. at the end of the war, and in the meantime proposes to have weekly meetings with them to agree on a line, and Butler may, indeed, be invited to attend. Whether this will reduce proceedings to an innocuousness which makes them wholly ineffective you will be able to judge as well as I. I think that Archie will devote himself mainly to dealing with F.P.A. and the like and try to send light streaming through the intelligentsia. He himself points out pertinently that the demarcation of functions between himself, McDermott and Wilder Foot[e] (Ed's personal man) will depend on personal relations between them and that so far they have all proved very cooperative. McDermott will presumably go on dealing with the press, international conferences, etc., and although he will lose the personal position he held under Hull, will presumably still be pretty central. The conservatives are wondering whether Archie will leave them in a huff in a short time on the grounds that the S.D. is really too impossible; I doubt that strongly, as he is ambitious and something of a snob and delighted to have got in and will do his very best to make a good job of it.

On other topics (1) I really do not think that H.B.B. would have made a good inquisitor, and he realises this himself. He feels reasonably enough that it needs a younger and more ruthless personality. (2) As for E. M. Forster, supposing he did get out here, what would he do? I do not quite see how A. MacLeish could circulate him much to his political boss. It looks to me more like something for Colston Leigh. Would you like me to ask Miss

CORRESPONDENCE WITH H. G. NICHOLAS 1942–1945

Hayes or, indeed, John Carter to put it to him? It would be very nice to have this great man here on any pretext, but Archie would, I think, only go for pretty brazen trumpets of popular democracy and not so fastidious a devotee of private life and personal relations.

Yours ever
{Isaiah}

FROM H. G. NICHOLAS

[Ministry of Information, London]

Carbon typescript, 31 January 1945

Dear Isaiah,

How you play upon our nerves! First of all we are rung up by obscure persons in the Personnel Department of the F.O. who say you are going to hospital on such and such a date. Then we telegraph our condolences and anxieties and receive back a telegram which begins: 'Please beg Nick to terrorise my parents with imaginary accounts of my possible maladies.' This is a large assignment, particularly since the only practise I have had in this field has been in allaying your parents' terrors, assuring them that although you are in hospital you are in fact in the pink of health, and generally lying in as blatant and convincing a manner as possible. Your telegram concludes that your health is 'wholly unimpaired'. Obviously this explains why you have gone into hospital at such short notice that your poor lieutenant Archie has to cut short the first visit he has paid to the land of his fathers since the war, leave his vital conversations with the Ministry, the F.O. and the rest hanging in mid-air, and hasten back to the imaginary bed-side at which you are being cured of a non-existent malady. As we say in the cables: "This is all very puzzling. May we have guidance?"

About Forster, perhaps my suggestion about Archie MacLeish was a little ill-advised. When I made it I had only a hazy notion of his exact role in the new State Department. I had assumed that he was going to become a prince and patron of Culture, a kind of poetic Grover Whalen, who would invite eminent *littérateurs* almost in the style of the French Academy. Obviously, if Congress

won't foot the bill and if the whole thing is so embryonic, the idea of his inviting Forster is absurd. But equally so, I am afraid, is the idea of putting Forster into the Barbara Hayes, or Colston Leigh hopper. Anyway, as Mr. Butler will tell you, there is a Ministry ban on commercial lectures, and Forster, whom I cannot ever imagine on a commercial lecture platform, would be the last man for whom we might try and break it. So let's forget all about it, and please accept my apologies for pestering you.

There are rumours here that a government in exile is being formed at Cuernavaca, and that revolutionaries like yourself and John Wheeler-Bennett may be found working your way across the border on any moonless night. Do you confirm?

We shall all be thinking of you during your next few weeks of unimpaired health. Please remember that I cannot convincingly terrorise your parents, unless I have some information to go on. Even Major Ormerod needs an occasional cable. And, if you are really concerned about your parents' anxiety, may I suggest that instead of adding a footnote to every letter addressed to this department you sent a gentle word in your own handwriting. I understand they can be reached at New College. I cannot think of any device which would so effectively convey to them that impression of radiant health which is obviously your first concern.

What *are* you up to?

Yours ever,

[Herbert]

[Not transcribed: Letter to HGN from A. R. K. Mackenzie, 3 March 1945.]

TO H. G. NICHOLAS

British Embassy, Washington

Typescript, 4 April 1945

Dear Herbert:

It is possible that medicine really helps, since undoubtedly I feel better. I try not to, but there is no denying it – I take more pleasure in the external world. The internal world remains as barren as ever. I was much touched by the very nice letters which

you all sent me – particularly by Robin’s splendid masterpiece, first Aubrey and then to myself. I shall reply to him separately. My parents, too, seem to have behaved unhysterically and not to be in need of those crude lies which I so mercilessly tried to force you to take upon your conscience. So that’s all right.

I shall not be going to San Francisco since, with Archie there (as requested by F.O.), somebody must continue to send Political Summaries from here, and the local turmoil is certainly sufficient to justify continued residence. I have had my second interview with H.E., who rode an even higher moral horse, spoke of honour, conscience, duty, etc. Nevertheless, I am determined to return if only on a visit in mid-summer if that is possible. If that is refused, then for good and to Oxford. That institution seems to have got completely out of hand with the dismal Sumner at All Souls, the moronic Alington and the scarcely more impressive Wild at Univ., the denationalisation of Jesus. The mad attempt to appoint E. H. Carr to the Professorship of Russian, the dim figure of Mr. Bullock at New College, etc., time to go back and strike a blow for reason, I feel, don’t you?

As for things here, the Korda party expedition shows no signs of arrival. Their names are on none of the incoming craft. If they left on the 10th, where are they? Even a raft should have arrived by this time.

Politics are getting madder and madder here: Messrs. Lyttleton and Llewellyn say they have nobody to talk to about food: even Byrnes was suddenly whisked away under their very noses, leaving the sound and benevolent but uninformed Vinson. Americans first asked for three votes in the Assembly, then said they didn’t want them. Gloom about Russia is, to say the least, immense. Mr. Boothby has been campaigning against Bretton Woods and claims to have killed it anyhow pro tem. Was he sent here by the Beaver as a hatchet man? ‘I will not’, he said, ‘be made a martyr or a scape-goat by your damned Embassy’. ‘Scape-goat for whom? For himself?’ He really has done quite a bit of damage. His company is exhilarating and amusing and he does not disguise either his methods or his motives. If he were not such a naked mischief-maker, I should, for all his caddishness, be inclined to rather like him, if only for his resemblance to John L. Lewis of whom he is a kind of jolly variant.

Mr. Ridsdale is amongst us with no specific function save that of staying with Ferdie Kuhn, who seems to have invited him. I cannot conceive of anything emerging from a combination of two such weak elements. Aubrey, mightily bearded and correspondingly fierce, doubtless giving him a piece of his mind even now. The arrival of Roger Makins here has made all the difference in the world to the general morale of this Embassy. There is a limit to ungeniality and M. Wright has easily reached it.

As for your specific enquiry – about Communications – New York is to send you clippings, while I shall forward by the usual bootleg methods copies of the regular reports which the Chancery send to the F.O., plus any telegrams – they are very rare – which may be exchanged. In the meanwhile, Nicoll tells me that you offered some sort of commercial newsletter regarded as very valuable by the Chancery on this topic, costing \$100 a year, which you invited to try and find other customers for, e.g. the Post Office to share the cost and that no reply had yet been received upon the subject from the Treasury. So I suppose nothing can be done on that score.

Prof. Hayek has arrived: Readers Digest, Scripps Howard, etc., have made much play with his book, which is being used powerfully against us. I need not add that Mr. Butler has warmly praised it and presented it to the B.I.S. Library. The latter is in a very pathetic condition re. San Francisco, etc. I think it is wicked of Robin not to be coming and have told the Russians that this is revenge for their not sending Molotov. They seemed a little dazed but will doubtless report this to Moscow and the counterattack will duly appear in ‘War and the Working Class’.

Mr. MacLeish is frightfully unhappy, and wants to know what is to become of his new policy of candour with the people. However, the President has managed to stroke him down a bit, and like the house cat that he is, he is purring again. If the President dies or retires, will U.S. foreign policy be managed by Messrs. Truman and Stettinius? On this interesting note, I close. I shall soon write again.

Yours ever,
Isaiah.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH H. G. NICHOLAS 1942-1945

FROM H. G. NICHOLAS

[Ministry of Information, London]

Carbon typescript, 24 April 1945

PERSONAL.

Dear Isaiah,

It is good to know that Mexico has set you up. The most extraordinary tales have been reaching us of your bubbling health; there is a long saga of John Wheeler-Bennett's going the rounds, about your appearance at his wedding at Ashfield and the consequent sensation created amongst Southerners of both sexes, both colours and all ages. We take this as certain evidence that you are yourself again.

In these circumstances we should have expected you to be just such a fatted calf as would be sacrificed on the altar of San Francisco. Never again probably will you be in such excellent physical form for climbing to the top of the Mark. You are a shameless Achilles to be skulking in your Washington tent while weaklings like Neville Butler and Mr. Ridsdale face the horrors of the golden gate. We shall expect you to expiate this laziness by sending us long letters full of every bit of gossip, no matter how second-hand.

Here there is a notable lack of interest in the goings on at S.F. Germany, despite the stoppage of V.2's, seems so much nearer. Also, the domestic fireworks are starting up again with Mr. Bracken and Mr. Bevin having slanging matches in quite the old style. One of Judson's wretched Congressmen, on being introduced to the Minister a few days ago, congratulated him on his recent speech with the remark that 'it might have been made in Brooklyn'. For the first time, B.B. appeared not to know what to say.

Incidentally, you may tell Judson that his last batch of Congressmen have excelled even their predecessors. They have now been in London four days without affecting any contact with anyone in this Ministry or anyone else so far as one can make out. My pet scheme for preventing World War III is to re-create the

horrors of Buchenwald, peopling it this time exclusively with Congressmen.

Which leads us naturally to Mrs. Luce. She is very full of all that he has seen in a fortnight's tour of Germany. She appears to have had a red carpet laid down for her throughout the ruins, which she says has made 'the Congressmen' very wild. (Her use of the phrase is curious; it suggests that she does not think of herself as a Congressman at all.) I think the experience nevertheless has left some impressions on her mind, which may be salutary. She has however discovered that most of the prisoners were Communists, and is very worried about what they will do now that they are out. She also talked to several Polish inmates who said that conditions in Buchenwald were a good deal better than in the Russian camps where they had been previously.

Nor has she buried feelings with Mr. Roosevelt. His death she says did not surprise her at all. To anyone like herself, who knew the President intimately, it had been obvious that this would happen and it was incredible that she should have been pilloried for making an election speech in which she said so. It was 'disgraceful' of Mr. Roosevelt to have run again under such conditions. No, she did not think Mr. Truman was unhappy on his new throne. It was a wonderful world in which one could get so far thanks to one's earlier association with a criminal. But it was frightening to think that the Americans had virtually elected this man president although he had never been outside his own state of Arkansas (sic). However this would mean the end of the Democratic Party, with its uneasy alliance of reactionary Southerners led by Byrnes and starry-eyed idealists who looked to Wallace. The Democrats would be out of office for twenty years.

She says that every G.I. in Germany thinks that the moment V-E day comes he will return to the U.S. She thinks this is the biggest problem which confronts the Americans. She also thinks that the initials A.M.G. stand for American Military Government.

No doubt much of this before long will be floating around Washington, but this preview given to me while driving from the airport to Lord Beaverbrook's (where she is staying) may serve as advance warning.

People have still not recovered from the Roosevelt shock here. It is evidenced by the surprising frankness with which people talk about the drawbacks of Truman and the loss sustained by F.D.R.'s

death. See for example the Economist. The Daily Mail however went too far in featuring an article which described Truman as a lover of Sinatra and a frequenter of Toots Shor. The general feeling is really one of complete uncertainty, with everybody groping around in a haze. Your political cables during the next few weeks, I am sure, will be much more eagerly scanned for guidance about Truman, etc., than for anything about San Francisco and all that.

Robin is delighted by the arrival of a bonny baby girl. He has resisted my request to call her Empax. There is no sort of inkling of the future of the Ministry or the American Division, which doubtless is true of B.I.S. Very little has happened at Oxford, except the appointments which you so much deplore. I have been ordered to take three weeks' sick-leave in May. So this will be the last you will hear from me for a while. Be charitable and send me letters to which there will be no hope of a reply.

Yours ever,
[Herbert]

TO H. G. NICHOLAS

British Embassy, Washington

Typescript 8 May 1945

PERSONAL

Dear Herbert,

Thank you for your two most interesting and informative letters. I should be delighted if I were half as well as your letters suggest that I am thought to be (God, John Wheeler Bennett's wedding, the bride ...). But although far from ill, I seem to be neither much better nor much worse than during the past 30 years. The newest thing in my life is that I am definitely returning to England at the end of July or the first week in August at the latest, and in September am to go for three to four months to Moscow whither the cynical but very worthwhile Sir A. Clark Kerr has successfully lured me (by the simple but irresistible device of waving a visa in front of me while passing through Washington to San Francisco). I am to be back in Oxford for good towards the end of January and it has so been fixed with Smith who could not

have been more delightful. I may bring back Pritchard for a year as a freak law tutor at New College but tell no one of this as yet. I am extremely glad that the obvious has happened and that Exeter have finally come up to scratch (Coghill told me). I can't conceive why they shilly-shallied for so long; I think Exeter Senior Common Room is becoming much too good; I am not sure that Assembly powers are entitled to quite so much strength which should be reserved for the big three (Christ Church, Balliol, New College). Do you think that Magdalen is France?

As for San Francisco, I have no real gossip for you. Indeed, I wish I had been sent there, since in Washington we hear little else than you do in London. But it appeared otherwise to my betters and here I am. Therefore, as you suggest, I shall concentrate on Truman. My last piece was adjudged to be too hot for the summary and I enclose it. In general, the bootleg sheets have stopped coming because the arrangement was discovered and a quiet, but vigorous demarche made to me personally. However, I had better continue to do this on a sporadic basis, i.e. when something conspicuously interesting does not get in (this particular item is to go as a letter to Sir O. Sargent). As there was a leak about Stettinius (about which he made a terrible fuss at the exact date of the demarche which could only have come (a) from London and (b) from the unincluded part of my Summary draft), I thought it best not to make a stand on this particular issue but I shall not leave you narrowly confined to the official fare. The truth about the White House is that while Truman is clearly sincere, decent ('I know he is decent', said Mr. Ickes on the night of Mr. Roosevelt's death, 'but can anyone mention any other attributes?') and liberal in a provincial mid-Western way, the best kind of American legionnaire, unexpectedly businesslike, brisk, crisp and capable of getting on with people like Eden and Lyttleton, the whole thing is on such a minute scale, such a Dutch interior, that all these virtues cannot provide for the first really big crisis which general principles do not solve. Truman's predilection is quite simply for respectable, unfrighting hacks. He will probably get rid of Ed because he must have someone to lean on in the matter of foreign policy, but voices are already whispering about Byrnes, 'Are you going to be president or is he?', so it may be someone like Senator Hatch or Barkley or some good but enormously limited crony. It won't be someone like Coolidge because Truman has a

genuine desire to help the little man and hates Big Business and doesn't like Nelson Rockefeller (the latter has all the ruthlessness of his grandfather and the smoothness of his father, and has our poor, mad, Haddow thoroughly in willing tow). But it will be tremendously low level and hum drum. I wrote to you or to Daphne about what binds him to Wheeler – it seems that it no longer does; both Wheeler and Krock, who are polite about him in public, describe him as 'just a hack politician' in private. 'Maybe I ought to have been a piano player in a whore house and not President of the United States', he amiably observed to a friend of mine, but Irving Brant in the *New Republic* (not to be confused with Pete Brandt of the *St. Louis Post Dispatch*), who is a kind of older Dilliard, with memories of La Follette instead of Norris, is very glowing about him as a flaming liberal but sounder than the New Deal. You can take your choice.

I will write again to you soon, will not expect an answer, and look forward with genuine feeling to a great discussion in Oxford in August.

Yours ever,

[signed p.p.]

P.S. The rumoured appointment of Judge ex-Senator Schwellenbach is pretty typical. S. was in some trouble about some dairies or fisheries or something in the State of Washington some years ago. He is pro-Labor, anti-isolationist, a good North-Western radical, but not personally too honest and a man of no stature at all, who sat on a back bench with Truman and steadily voted for progressive legislation in a cosy humdrum way with a lot of loyalty to the local machine and a lot of suspicion of 'the Frankfurters and the Tugwells'.

[*enclosure*]

The Presidency

Although it is too early to give a long-term estimate of the general quality and prospects of the new regime, certain contours are becoming discernible. The President, both in his public utterances and his administrative acts, is conceded on all sides to be acting with honesty, firmness and dispatch, and to be carrying on faithfully along the general lines so firmly developed by his

predecessor. Moreover, his relations with Congress (and the press) are conspicuously better than were Mr. Roosevelt's, particularly during his two last terms. He has also shown a tendency to back individuals and institutions liable to attract indiscriminate public attack, in a clear and straightforward fashion which Mr. Roosevelt usually failed to display, preferring to leave each agency to defend its own sector of the front by means of its own unaided resources, with relatively little open support from the White House. Thus his public rebuke of its detractors has arrested the traditional attack on the much-abused Office of Price Administration (by no means the most inefficient of U.S. Federal agencies); he has scotched the rumours that 'Southern Bourbons' led by the die-hard Senator McKellar (whom Truman has tactfully welcomed into the Cabinet) would finally succeed in killing or crippling their bogey, the Tennessee Valley Authority, by refusal to confirm its celebrated Chairman David Lilienthal. After a visit of protest from Senators McKellar and Stewart of Tennessee, Truman rapidly announced his reappointment of the justly admired Lilienthal, which will now probably go through the Senate more easily than might have been the case in Roosevelt's day. Similar firmness is to be expected in the case of other domestic agencies in whose operations Truman took an active interest as a Senator. Notwithstanding his warm relations with Congress he has shown an unwillingness to be put upon by imposing his veto on the attempt to exclude agricultural labourers as such from military service. He has incidentally pleased the public and press by the commonsense forthright way in which he dismissed the premature peace rumour.

A less promising side to the picture is to be found in a perhaps unavoidable lowering of the general administrative level in Washington. The men whom the new President has chosen for his personal staff are of blameless enough reputation but dim and provincial to a degree. His chief administrative assistant, McKim (an old 'war buddy' who served in Truman's battery in the 129th Regiment of U.S. Artillery in the last war) is a blunt but undistinguished Missouri insurance man, who acted more or less as Truman's bodyguard during his Vice-Presidential election campaign. His personal assistant, Matthew Connelly (see Political Summary No. 2769), is a colourless individual but doubtless a competent enough secretary; his military aide, Vaughan, is also a Battery mate (all of which leads Time Magazine to gibe about

‘Government by cronies’). The Party boss, Hannegan, now duly elevated to the traditional post of Postmaster General (regularly held since 1932 by Roman Catholic, Irish, Democratic Party Chairmen) has secured the appointment of Ed Pauley, a slick oil magnate and the financier of the Party, to represent the United States on the Reparations Commission; the two remaining principal appointments – Snyder as Federal Loan Administrator and Ross as Press Secretary – both went to men from Missouri. These new placemen are a collection, at best, of worthy and honourable mediocrities. The general span of Mr. Truman’s appointments seems to extend no wider than from that of an unexciting but honest man like Snyder, with whom the liberals find no fault, to pure and unashamed acts of Party patronage like that of Pauley, which has met with a good deal of quite harsh criticism. No more than routine interest attaches to Truman’s ‘ouster’ of Milligan, the prosecutor of his old patron, Pendergast, from Missouri politics and to his possible appointment of his old Missouri friend and rival, the isolationist Champ Clark, to some well paid Federal job.

More serious, however, than the foregoing developments which amount in the aggregate to blameless if uninspiring *kleinmalerei*, is the uncertainty that still prevails with regard to the conduct of foreign affairs. One does not have to go to the full length of Lippmann’s intensive campaign against Stettinius to realise that the new President needs, and will sooner or later become convinced that he needs, a Secretary of State with sufficient experience and authority to carry weight with Congress, with the public, and indeed with himself. It is unlikely that great use is likely to be made of Hopkins who is recuperating in his Washington house. Byrnes, on the other hand, is still a favourite for this post. While carrying more weight with Congress and the country than Stettinius, the latter, despite his senatorial experience and his visit to Yalta, is scarcely a man of wide or deep direct experience in foreign affairs. Consequently, despite the new President’s obvious integrity and very sound general views on international affairs, and the good influence upon him of such sincere internationalists as Senators Hatch and Barkley, a period is likely to ensue, not indeed of drift or apathy, but at any rate of a passive absence of the vast purposes and energetic drive provided by the late President. If Mr. Stimson were ten years younger he could perhaps have filled the gap. As it

is, we are likely to witness missed opportunities and neglected acts, not so much through any deliberate change of the Roosevelt policies, as because of the sudden disappearance of that combination of political genius and passionately held aims in the foreign field which promised to make so notable an impact on world affairs during Mr. Roosevelt's Fourth Term. Sentiment in the country is of course still overwhelmingly in favour of world collaboration. The weakness is not now principally in public opinion, nor even in the Senate, but in the fact that the Executive, despite its excellent general attitude, lacks men and ideas large enough to cope with the exacting demands of the time. In the meanwhile, and whatever the future may hold, we have no cause to complain at the line taken by Mr. Truman in dealing with day to day problems. His approach so far has been firm, courageous and quick.

FROM H. G. NICHOLAS

[Ministry of Information, London]

Carbon typescript, 6 October 1945

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL.

Dear Isaiah,

We have heard no news yet of your being handed your passport and ordered to leave the country at dawn, so I can only conclude that the State Police have been too thinly staffed in Moscow to look after you; certainly a very large contingent accompanied Mr. Molotov on his British visit and were the laughing stock of London. Indeed we have no news at all of your muscovy rides; why don't you take a little time off between changing disguises to drop us a line?

Here the principal fuss and flurry has been occasioned by the Conference of the Five Ministers which was not a conference – it was conducted in a very curious atmosphere with the minimum of publicity and a surprising absence of gossip. Once again the American public had about twice as much news as their British opposite numbers. Mr. Ridsdale's boys were as well disciplined as ever and only the readers of New York's press summaries got

much indication of what was happening. At the moment we are still waiting for Mr. Bevin to 'tell all' when Parliament meets.

These agitations have held up such trifling matters as the future of the Ministry which is put down on the Cabinet Agenda at the beginning of every week and has still failed to make the grade by the time the next week-end comes around. Our poor Mr. Williams who has been living a hand to mouth existence between the raging fury of the University of London on the one hand, and the querulous notes of the Beaverbrook press on the other, has been forced to abandon the first of his prepared posts and yield up large portions of the building in which we are housed to make way for the bureaucracy of the University. Fortunately the American Division has been exempted from the fate which has befallen the other Overseas Divisions of being exiled to the Sherlock Holmes quarter to a block of Edwardian flats just off the middle of Baker Street. But the postponement of the execution is only temporary; the entire Ministry is to be expelled before the end of the academic year.

This well reflects our present impotence. The Government has as many plans for us as there are members of the Cabinet. Mr. Morrison would like to put us under a Departmental Committee, depriving us of a Minister and giving us John Maude as Director General instead. Lord Addison thinks that what is needed is a bigger and better M.O.I. which would take responsibility for all the information offices in the Dominions. Mr. Bevin has a curiously complicated and vague plan which can scarcely have been drafted in its entirety by Alan Dudley. Mr. Attlee thinks we should be under the Post Office. Out of this welter of confusion the present betting is that the Ministry's own plan for its perpetuance in pretty much its present form will win the day, but the question may be rendered academic if a decision is very much longer delayed. Uncertainty, coupled with the move to Baker Street, is likely to rob the Ministry of even more of its remaining staff before many months are up.

One bright ray is the appointment of Francis Williams as Public Relations Officer to Number 10. This means that we cannot have him, as the Minister hoped, for our Deputy Director General or, as B.I.S. would wish, as the successor to Butler. But he will be a very useful ally at his new address, and can be counted on to make up some of the ground we have lost as a result of having an obscure

politician for our Minister who lacks a seat in the Cabinet. Not that Mr. Williams has made a poor start. Far from it. He is intelligent and friendly, has lots of ideas, not all of them foolish, and does not interfere much with our day to day operations. He has a curious affection for the spiritual guidance of Herbert Agar who lectures him at length over lunches and whiskies and sodas. That, however, may be only a passing phase. The recurrent rumour of Winant's removal has acquired fresh strength recently. Byrnes is said to be very anxious to see a slightly more wide-awake person in his place. If that happens, or even if it does not, Herbert's days may also be numbered. Although Herbert takes the line that the appointment of William Benton is not at all a bad thing, and that he may introduce welcome elements of efficiency and despatch into the State Department's new overseas publicity operations, it is doubtful if Mr. Benton will find much room for 'A Time for Greatness' in his 'America Unlimited'. Ferdie Kuhn, as you may know, has been made Benton's number 2 until the end of the year. This scarcely improves matters, since it only introduces a weak Liberal facade as a disguise for a tough Eric Johnstone background. Meanwhile, Victor Weybright has abandoned his fortress of the 'Survey Graphic' to become distributor in the U.S.A. for Allen Lane's Penguins. A blood stop marriage if ever there was one. Meanwhile, B.I.S. has been bleeding from the Treasury acts. First of all we gave them a 20% cut, and now they have come back and asked for more. Mr. Butler is surrendering £3,000, but even that will not satisfy them. With Aubrey having left to look after his ranch, d'Arcy is now left in control, and is sending his faithful henchman, Ben, to try and fix things with the Treasury at the end of this month. But I fear the Treasury will insist on every ounce of flesh.

I do not know whether you have heard much of the progress of the Keynes talks. I very much wish that you were in Washington to infuse a little sense into His Lordship. He has been given virtually plenary powers by the Treasury for the conduct of his own publicity. The results to date have been a damaging leak to the New York Times of the invidious and ingenious comparisons of the British and American war efforts which Keynes presented to Clayton and his pals in secret session, and very little else. B.I.S. have been instructed practically speaking, to lay off while 'our friends' do our propaganda for us. This has been attended by the

usual results and made worse by the fact that H.M.G. by no means speaks with one voice in these matters. If B.I.S. has been silent Messes. Dalton, Cripps, not to speak of the formal opposition, have been busy. The result has been a welter of conflicting inspired stories about Britain's position, intentions, strength, weakness, etc., which leaves the British public in a state of complete confusion and enables our American critics to accuse us of whining and blackmailing simultaneously. The trouble is that there is a real risk that Keynes may make an arrangement with his American opposite numbers only at the price of having it repudiated by both legislatures. The feeling is growing here that Keynes is too weak over Imperial preference, an issue on which the wonderfully solid front extending from Cripps to Littleton is now in process of developing. It would really break the Labour Party's heart to have to move in a direction of freer trade.

Otherwise, the Government is doing better than was expected, since the great demobilisation row has been averted by a sudden increase in the rate of release. All the same, we could offer you lots of fun and games next week if only you were in Westminster instead of placing your ear to the ground outside the Kremlin.

Your political summaries are now being written entirely by Jock Balfour, from all accounts. They are very long and very dull. Archie Mackenzie did them much better than this. And why are you not writing any from Moscow? Do you not even pretend to be earning the price of your elegant air passage?

I am sending this by Hare of our Soviet Relations Division. Please take the hint and send me a reply by the same route.

With best wishes for your continued preservation.

Yours ever,

[Herbert]

FROM H. G. NICHOLAS

Exeter College, Oxford

Manuscript, Undated

My Dear Isaiah,

This is the only edition I can lay my hands on, but I can't resist taking advantage of the gallant General's return to correct the only

CORRESPONDENCE WITH H. G. NICHOLAS 1942–1945

serious gap in your experience of literary delights. Sink your teeth into this, you old voluptuary, and don't dare say you haven't time.

Saw your parents on Sunday. They were entertaining in gala fashion. Your rooms in fact were the *mise en scene* for a gigantic clambake. Nonetheless, your mother still awaits that longest-ever letter.

Donald Hall tells me you're well. Vero? Remember, no such item is any longer *ben trovato*. I am eyebrows deep in despondency. *Why* do we waste our time and youth and wits like this?

Herbert.

For information on many of the *dramatis personae* in these letters see H. G. Nicholas (ed.), *Washington Despatches 1941–45: Weekly Political Reports from the British Embassy* (London, 1981: Weidenfeld and Nicolson; Chicago, 1981: Chicago University Press)

© *The Isaiah Berlin Literary Trust, the Estate of H. G. Nicholas, and the Estates of other correspondents severally 2010*

First posted in the Isaiah Berlin Virtual Library 11 November 2010
Most recently revised 20 January 2019