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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

February 3, 1953

The President
The White House



Dear Mr. President:

I understand that the matter of the confirmation of James B. Conant as High Commissioner in Germany will come before the Senate within the next few days. I feel as a courtesy to you, that I should inform you of the position which I shall take when this matter comes to the Senate floor.

I am strongly opposed to Mr. Conant's confirmation on the following four principal grounds:

1. His speech made in New York City on October 7, 1944, which, in my opinion, can be interpreted only as advocating the destruction of all industry in Western Germany, as shortly thereafter advocated in the Morgenthau Plan, which, as you know, was to a great extent prepared by Harry Dexter White. I feel that the Morgenthau Plan was completely unrealistic and played directly into the hands of our enemy. In fact, I believe Mr. Cordell Hull referred to it as a plan of "blind vengeance" and that you referred to the plan as "silly and tragic". You understand, of course, that I am not taking the position that Mr. Conant collaborated with Morgenthau or Harry Dexter White, but his plan covered in his speech was the same in its essential aspect, namely the destruction of industry in Western Germany.
2. His article in May of 1940 in the Atlantic Monthly, entitled "Education for Classless Society". Therein he states:

"If the American ideal is not to be an illusion the citizens of this republic must not shrink from drastic action. The requirement, however, is not a radical expropriation of wealth at any given moment, it is rather a continuous process by which power and privilege may be automatically redistributed at the end of each generation."

It will be noted here that he opposes the Communist idea of a "radical expropriation of wealth at any given moment", but that he does favor a process by which the wealth will be automatically distributed at the end of each generation.