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American Jewish Committee, 1935-1936.

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

171 MADISON AVENUE, NEW YORK



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MORRIS D. WALDMAN, Secretary
HARRY SCHNEIDERMAN, Assistant Secretary

Dear Friend:

We are sending you herewith twenty-five (25) copies of a pamphlet recently issued by three major Jewish organizations, The American Jewish Committee, The B'nai B'rith and The Jewish Labor Committee, giving the facts on Communism and the Jews.

In the light of the enormous agitation being carried on by Nazis and by native anti-Semitic groups in the dissemination of the myth of the link between Jews and Communism, we urge you to distribute these pamphlets to leaders in your community and to your Christian associates and friends.

If you need more copies, please write us and we will send you an additional quantity.

Sincerely yours,

Morris D. Waldman

November, 1935.

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

461 FOURTH AVENUE

NEW YORK, N. Y.



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MORRIS D. WALDMAN, Secretary
 HARRY SCHNEIDERMAN, Assistant Secretary

May 20, 1936

Personal and not for publication

Dear Rabbi Silver:

I am venturing to approach you as I am some other Rabbis in the United States concerning the World Jewish Congress and from a point of view which I think you will understand cannot be presented in any public statement. Without considering whether you are affiliated with the Zionist Organization or not, or with the Jewish Agency, I trust that I may assume that you are interested in the welfare of Palestine and the security of the growing Jewish population there. To these I consider the proposed World Jewish Congress a distinct menace. I need not point out to you the present tense situation between Arabs and Jews in Palestine. If there should assemble a so-called World Jewish Congress in Geneva this summer, they would claim to represent the 16,000,000 Jews of the world. Such a meeting would, I have reason to believe, be followed by a call for a pan-Arabic Congress which would not only include the Arabs of Palestine but also of Egypt, Syria, Trans-Jordan, Iraq and Hedjaz. And it might also go even further and bring about a pan-Moslem movement which would bring in the Moslems of India and Persia.

There are in my opinion serious objections to a World Jewish Congress from the point of view of the position of the Jews of Middle and Eastern Europe, but I am resting this letter mainly with regard to Palestine which has been, the last few years, the most considerable outlet for Jews migrating from Poland and Germany.

If you agree with this point of view I hope that you will use your influence in your own community to persuade people to abstain from participating in the steps toward this Congress. If its proponents cannot be persuaded to abandon the project, they may perhaps realize that, in view of the tense situation in Palestine, the postponement of the proposed Congress is advisable.

I do not advise public addresses or public meetings at which it would be inadvisable to advance the considerations I have mentioned above but I do advise private meetings and conversations to minimize what I consider a real danger.

Faithfully yours,

Cyrus Adler

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MORRIS D. WALDMAN, Secretary
 HARRY SCHNEIDERMAN, Assistant Secretary

May 25, 1936.

Dear Friend:

In response to inquiries from individuals and organizations in America and abroad as to the position of the American Jewish Committee in regard to the proposed World Jewish Congress, a special meeting of the Executive Committee of the American Jewish Committee was recently held, at which the subject was considered anew. After thorough discussion, a resolution was adopted, reaffirming the Committee's opposition to such a gathering and its decision not to participate.

At the same meeting of the Executive Committee, a representative of the B'nai B'rith stated that that organization also had resolved to continue to adhere to its opposition to the proposed World Jewish Congress. An announcement to this effect has since been made public by them. It was also announced that the Jewish Labor Committee, representing over 200,000 Jewish working men and women, declines to have any connection with the proposed World Jewish Congress. In addition, the Free Sons of Israel, the National Council of Jewish Women, and the United Synagogue of America have decided not to participate. In England, the Board of Deputies of British Jews, and in France, the Alliance Israelite Universelle have voted to abstain from participation.

The recent resolution of the Executive Committee of the American Jewish Committee confirmed the position taken by that body and unanimously approved by over 500 delegates from all parts of the country, at the Annual Meeting of the Committee held in 1935.

The reasons for our position have been fully stated before. They rest mainly upon the following considerations:

- 1) There is no evidence that such a proposed World Jewish Congress would be of any benefit to the Jews of the World.

Acting in conformity with long established custom, Jews have organized themselves into societies in the various countries of their residence to carry on their own religious and communal work and also to aid their brethren in other lands where their economic condition was depressed or their rights threatened. This has long been done in most European countries and also in the United States. This wise policy should be continued, and we feel that Jews should act, as they heretofore have acted, in individual units and through the respective countries, in which the Jews are so situated as to be able to take such collective action.

- 2) The positions and points of view of Jews in various parts of the world differ.

In some countries they may wisely act in one fashion and in others, in another. The wide spread of the Jews in America and Europe, in the Near East and the Far East, and in Africa, has resulted in the establishment of communities capable and efficient in the management of their own affairs and in contributing to joint Jewish interests.

- 3) Such improvement in the work of existing organizations as can come from a personal interchange of views and ideas can be had through conferences of their representatives.

Such conferences have been held over a period of years, with useful results. These conferences are intended for action and not for debate. Over a period of many years, more especially since the World War, steps have been taken and are now continuing to be taken by existing agencies to alleviate the situation of the Jews in Germany, Poland, Roumania, and other countries where dangerous situations exist. For Palestine, this Committee is confident that the Jewish Agency for Palestine and the various other organizations created to aid in the sound upbuilding of that country are fully competent. We believe that a World Jewish Congress would at the moment be especially harmful to Jewish interests in that country.

- 4) The American Jewish Committee and, we believe, the vast majority of Jews in America, who have dispassionately considered the matter, are entirely at variance with the conception underlying the proposed World Jewish Congress.

In the words of the proponents of the proposed Congress, it is "based on the conception of the Jewish people as a unified national organism" and, it "should be a legitimate representation, authorized and in duty bound to deal with all questions of Jewish life, and to represent the Jewish people to the outside world in a struggle for its civil and national rights". Such a Congress, if it were established and undertook to deal with these problems, would have no power to enforce its decisions and would not even be in a position to command the support of the representatives who vote for the propositions that would be placed before the Congress. It surely would have no right to speak in the name of the responsible bodies, here and abroad, who oppose the entire concept, and who represent large constituencies.

- 5) While it cannot serve any useful purpose which is not now being served by voluntary Jewish organizations in these countries, the proposed World Jewish Congress can only endanger the status of the Jews in the countries of which they are citizens.

The Congress seeks to become a permanent body, the deputies of which are to be authorized to deal with all matters affecting Jewish citizens. As citizens, Jews recognize only the authority of the Parliament or Congress of the country in which they live.

- 6) Probably the most baneful proposal in connection with this proposed World Congress is its expressed aim "to establish, and become responsible for, a permanent agency for the defense of the rights of the Jews, and for the reconstruction of the economic life of Jews in those lands in which discrimination is practiced against them, and where they are the victims of social and economic persecution."

This proposal is, in effect, a plan to supplant tried agencies which have done notable service for the Jews of the world, and which enjoy the respect and confidence of both the general and Jewish public, and to endeavor to take their direction out of the capable hands in which they are, or, if this does not succeed, to bring about a confusion which would weaken these existing agencies and replace them by an organization

which would be without means or power to carry into effect the plans which have been and are continuing to be set up, and which have been of great benefit to the Jews in those countries in which such benefits are so urgently required.

- 7) The proposed Jewish parliament would give aid and comfort to those who promote hostility against Jews on the ground of alleged "national" solidarity.

It would raise doubts in the minds of our fellow-citizens as to the status of the Jewish citizen. These dangers, as a consequence, will follow, although such a Congress would in fact not represent all Jews. Such a Congress obviously would have no power to enforce its decisions. These consequences are inevitable although, in practice, the proposed Congress can be scarcely more than a platform for the making of speeches and a convocation for the passage of resolutions.

We believe that American Jews will recognize the menace inherent in the proposed World Jewish Congress and will declare their opposition to it as an undertaking which is freighted with embarrassment and even disaster to Jews everywhere.

We shall welcome a prompt expression of your views, either by letter, by telegram, or by means of the enclosed card.

Very sincerely yours,

CYRUS ADLER,
President

SOL M. STROOCK,
Chairman, Executive Committee