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American Zionist Emergency Council, Princeton University, 1946-
1947.

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October 16, 1946

Dr. Harold Willis Dodds
President, Princeton University
Princeton, New Jersey.

Dear Dr. Dodds:

In connection with the celebration of the Bicentenary of Princeton University, we were interested to learn that it is proposed to hold a series of conferences on subjects of general interest, including one on the Near East which will have as its topic "The Arab Moslem World: Studies and Problems". This particular discussion, we understand, is to cover three days, from March 25th to March 27th, 1947.

The Director of the Conference on "Near Eastern Culture and Society" is Professor Philip E. Hitti, who is presumably primarily responsible for the arrangements for this part of the proceedings. Professor Hitti has played and is playing a very active part in this country in promoting anti-Zionist propaganda and sentiment and, in these circumstances, it is not surprising that nowhere in the program is there any mention of the Jewish National Home in Palestine as part of the Near East. Indeed, from the names of various speakers who have been invited to address the conference, as well as from the subjects for discussion, it seems that the Conference is likely to be used as an anti-Zionist forum in which a Zionist point of view is likely to receive little, if any representation.

We trust that you will not feel it an intrusion if we suggest that any such result, which, we are sure, is neither contemplated nor desired by the heads of the University, would be both unfair and unfortunate, and we respectfully venture to bring the matter to your attention in the hope and belief that it will be found possible to make arrangements for an adequate representation of the Zionist point of view.

We should deeply appreciate your consideration of this matter and shall be glad to know what action it may be found possible to take.

Sincerely yours,

Stephen S. Wise Abba Hillel Silver
Joint Chairmen, American Zionist Emergency Council

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Princeton University
Princeton New Jersey

October 31, 1946

Dear Sirs:

In reply to your letter of October 16, the conference to which you refer is entitled Near Eastern Culture and Society and is one of a series of fifteen conferences of scholars from all parts of the world which are being held throughout the year as part of our bi-centennial celebration.

This particular conference will be attended by perhaps fifty or sixty scholars carefully selected for their scholarly competence. The program will be concerned with the history and culture of the Near East. The three main topics are: "Islamic Art and Archeology: New Approaches in Research": "Arabic Literature and Religion: New Approaches in Research": "Interaction of Islamic and Western Thought in Retrospect and Prospect."

The subject of Zionism is not to be a part of the program. The purpose is a conference restricted to recognized scholars. To place on the program a speaker to represent the Zionist's point of view would not be in keeping with the character or purpose of the conference.

Incidentally, I may add that no names of speakers or topics of this conference have as yet been announced to anyone anywhere, and I am therefore at a loss to understand the sentence in your letter as follows: "From the names of various speakers who have been invited to address the conference, as well as from the subjects for discussion, it seems that the conference is likely to be used as an anti-Zionist forum". I repeat that this is not the intention, and I can only assume that you have been misled in some way as to its nature.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ Harold W. Dodds

Dr. Stephen S. Wise
Dr. Abba Hillel Silver
American Zionist Emergency Council
342 Madison Avenue
New York 17, N. Y.

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November 14, 1946

Dr. Harold Willis Dodds
President, Princeton University
Princeton, New Jersey

Dear Dr. Dodds:

We wish to thank you for your letter of October 31 and are glad to have your assurance that there is no intention that the Princeton Conference should offer a forum for the expression of anti-Zionist views.

We note that the three main topics of that part of the Conference which will deal with the Middle East are "Islamic Art and Archeology": "Arabic Literature and Religion": and "Interaction of Islamic and Western Thought in Retrospect and Prospect." It is possible that the information on which we had based our letter to you is out of date and no longer holds good. But we had been given to understand that one of the major topics for discussion would be "The Arab Peoples in Their National and International Relationships" - a subject which can hardly fail to concern itself with the Palestine issue; and that among the leading participants would be Dr. Costi Zurayk, of the Syrian Legation, Dr. Habib A. Kurani and Dr. A. E. Prince.

From what we know of the views of each of these gentlemen, it seemed to us likely that there would be a one-sided presentation of the problems involved, and it was for that reason that we had ventured to write to you in the belief that you would feel it appropriate that another point of view should also be presented.

Sincerely yours,

Stephen S. Wise Abba Hillel Silver
Joint Chairmen, American Zionist Emergency Council

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PRINCETON UNIVERSITY
Princeton, New Jersey

November 26, 1946

Dear Sirs:

In reply to your letter of November 14, I think you can rely on Princeton University not to become a propaganda agency for either pro- or anti-Zionism. Of the three gentlemen you name as taking part in the program Professor Prince has been dead for some time and Dr. Kurani has nothing to do with the session to which you refer. I have seen the outline of this session, and it contains no reference to Zionism. The question may of course arise in discussion, but again we are relying on the representative membership of the Conference for a balanced discussion.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ Howard W. Dodds

Rabbi Stephen S. Wise
Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver
American Zionist Emergency Council
342 Madison Avenue
New York 17, N. Y.

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March 27, 1947

Dr. Harold Willis Dodds, President
Princeton University
Princeton, New Jersey.

Dear Dr. Dodds:

In view of your letter of November 26, 1946, to
Rabbis Stephen S. Wise and Abba Hillel Silver, a
copy of which I am taking the liberty of enclosing,
I am sending you a clipping from the New York Times, of
today, for your consideration.

WRHS
AMERICAN JEWISH
ARCHIVES
Sincerely yours,

Harry L. Shapiro
Executive Director

HLS:ZEF
Encls.

NEAR EAST EXPERTS RAISE POINT ON OIL

Whether West Can Exploit the
Fields Without Encroaching
Discussed at Princeton

MAR 27 47

By MORRIS L. KAPLAN

Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

PRINCETON, N. J., March 26—Whether the West can exploit the oil fields of the Near East and develop commerce without encroaching "on the interests of the people" was a question raised today at the second day's sessions of the Princeton University Bicentennial Conference on Near Eastern Culture and Society.

Dr. Matta Akrawi, Iraq's director of Education, who posed the question, emphasized that the member states of the Arab League espoused the policy of self-determination. He and Jobra'il Jabbur, Associate Professor of Arabic at the University of Beirut in Lebanon, defended the right of Arabs to govern Palestine.

Dr. Akrawi held that "political ambitions of Zionism" and not a religious dispute were the crux of the Jewish-Arab problem. The five hundred and fifty thousand Jews who have entered Palestine in the last twenty-five years are "all the land can hold," he said, noting that the Arab population has a two-to-one majority.

Professor Jabbur urged that the United Nations declare the independence of Palestine immediately, with no consideration of any plan of partition.

At another session representatives of countries in the Near East strenuously upheld their claims to independence. Dr. Walter L. Wright Jr., former president of Robert College in Istanbul, declared that Turkey was "fiercely determined" to remain an entity.

The former chief historian in the United States War Department asserted that the Turks feel that America will carry out "an impersonal job" in the administration of any funds it might lend to that country. He said he felt that Turkey was our last bulwark against the encroachments of communism.

With the Communist party illegal in Turkey, the people are experiencing "democracy" through the functioning of two major parties, he explained, adding: "East and West have been meeting in Turkey for 200 years."

Dr. Charles Malik, Minister from Lebanon and his country's representative on the United Nations, saw the Arab League as a "moderating and mediating influence" in the Near East.

Emile Zaidan, newspaper editor from Cairo, Egypt, reiterated his country's claims to the Sudan.

There was no disposition on the part of any conferees to question the necessity of an American loan to Turkey. Dr. Wright said Turkey would use the money to "strengthen its power of resistance."

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PRINCETON UNIVERSITY
Princeton, New Jersey

President 's Room

April 23, 1947

Dear Mr. Shapiro:

Frankly I don't see much profit in continuing our correspondence, but the delay in replying to your letter of March 27 has been occasioned by my absence from Princeton and the heavy pressure of work.

I may say that it was in a radio interview that Akrawi and Jabbur expressed the views recorded in the New York Times. They with other participants submitted questions in advance which they were willing to answer. Akrawi is director of higher education in Iraq. Jabbur is associate professor of Arabic literature at Beirut. The questions they submitted were mainly cultural and related to their respective countries. At the microphone, however, the moderator who represented the broadcasting company and had nothing to do with the conference asked them impromptu questions relating to Palestine. They had not expected such questions, but they naturally felt bound to answer them when asked rather than to attempt evasion.

In this way the performance was neither anticipated by the university nor was it able to be controlled by it.

In the regular conference sessions the word Zionism was used only once, and that was by Professor Gordon of Dropsie College, who asserted that its advocates could work out a system of collaboration with the Arabs. No one commented on his statement and the question was dropped.

I cannot assert too forcefully that the representations in my letter of November 26 were fully fulfilled, and I protest the implication of your curt note.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ Harold W. Dodds

Mr. Harry L. Shapiro
American Zionist Emergency Council
342 Madison Avenue
New York 17, New York.

MEMORANDUM

To Dr. Abba Hillel Silver

Date April 29, 1947

From Harry L. Shapiro

I am forwarding the folder of correspondence with Princeton University for your information.

Shapiro

HLS/ZLB

Encl.

