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Jewish Agency, World Center in Palestine report, 1947.

REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE WORLD CENTRE IN PALESTINE IN THE

PERIOD OF JANUARY 1st TO MARCH 31, 1947.

The World Centre in Palestine was set up at the Basle World Conference of General Zionists in December 1946. Thus, it is an entirely new body, which had to be built up from the very foundations. First of all we had to organize the apparatus of this new organ. The General Secretary was elected on the 5th of February, and started his work on the 12th, the typist - only at the end of February. It is to be pointed out that because of shortage of financial means, we were not in a position to enlarge our apparatus as required in respect of the tasks, the World Centre has to fulfill.

Dealing with activities of the W.C. in Palestine in the first quarter of 1947, we have consequently to take in account that this quarterly report actually covers a considerably shorter period.

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

We considered it as the main task of the W.C.P. to bring to bear the influence of General Zionism upon the Agency and its organs, to an extent which should do justice to our position in the world movement. It was a new experiment as up to that time General Zionism had failed to act as a united body and to exercise its power in that direction. Of course, we met with great and sometimes unsurmountable difficulties, as we were opposed by a well organized and solid system. To make it comply with the letter and spirit of the resolutions of the last Congress is an end which can be achieved only step by step, through hard and consequent efforts. In spite of these difficulties and the short space the W.C.P. succeeded in achieving some positive results.

In the framework of our activities our participation in the budget-commission of the Agency deserves of special attention, as it is there where the most important decisions are arrived at. It was too late to carry through any far reaching changes in the Budget of 5707 and therefore we had to content ourselves with the adoption of some of our amendments which nevertheless were of considerable importance.

The effects of our activities in the budget commission are likely to materialize in the next budget.

We have four representatives on the budget-commission, one of them acting as a co-chairman.

In a special meeting of the W.C.P. in which our members of the Agency and the Budget-commission took part, the principles were laid down on which our representatives in the commission have to act. Fuller details in the minutes of that meeting. We are now in a position to state that the Commission adopted nearly all of our amendments. A full report will be forwarded to you as soon as available. The budget commission will constitute an object of our greatest attention.

The last congress decided upon the creation of a consultative commission at the Organization Department of the World Zionist Organization. It was convened for the first time on the 31st March. A far reaching plan concerning the construction of the Zionist Organizations in Europe, Africa and South-America and

their tasks was put forward by the Organization Department.

We have on that commission four representatives who are on the alert to prevent the reconstruction plans from becoming an instrument against the interests of General Zionism. We will let you have all materials concerned as soon as they are available.

We were anxious to be in constant touch with our members of the executive in order to have first hand informations about what is going on and to be in a position to keep informed our "chaverim."

The department of Immigrants "Mador Le-Klitath Olim" which exists at our centre (see below), encounters difficulties on the part of the Agency-Mador which became a domain of the Mapai. We have approached the Immigration Department of the Agency, which is responsible for the Mador and have presented our grievances. We have asked to engage two General Zionists and we are still pressing for it. As you see, it is not easy to introduce our people in the apparatus of the Agency.

The case Schatz referred to in your letters is one more instant of the existing state of affairs. Owing to our pressure it is to be hoped that Mr. Schatz's appointment is a matter of a few days.

To conclude this part of our report it should be added that the W.C.P. is to be credited with an important achievement, namely owing to the efforts of our representatives the Jewish Agency consented to secure the full budget of Bnai Zion. This decision made it possible to start with the establishment of a new settlement of General Zionists.

Organizational Activities

As already mentioned we cannot afford to enlarge our apparatus. This state of affairs is a serious handicap in our work. Besides, our office is accommodated in an unsuitable place and we have to work in very poor conditions. Their effects are not to be underestimated. Suitable accommodation and surroundings are of course of importance for the office of a World Centre of a political movement.

The first meeting of the World Centre in P. was held on January 29th and until the end of March there were eight of them. Besides, on March 22nd, a great reception was arranged in honour of Dr. Silver, Mrs. Rose Halperin, Dr. N. Goldman, Daniel Frisch and others. The political speeches made at this meeting, especially by Dr. Silver, were given great prominence and were widely commented on in the whole Hebrew press of Palestine.

Our work in the said period had rather a preparatory character of laying the foundations of the activities to be undertaken in different areas so badly neglected by the General Zionists for many years.

Our relations with our organizations all over the world are in a beginning stage. We contacted not only European countries but contacted also Australia, Canada and Africa. We regret to say that the majority were not responsive.

We concentrated our special attention on the Constructive Fund of General Zionism. We considered detailed plans as to the tasks of this important fund and worked out the basis of its legal construction, the latter being of great importance for the prospects of its undisturbed development.

The terse minutes of our meetings provide only a faint picture of the amount of energy, care and time invested in our efforts to set the fund going. On April 2nd a temporary executive of the Fund was elected to which we transferred the responsibilities in respect of this Fund. The executive consists of: Dr. Bernstein F., Grinbaum J., Kolodny M., Dr. Sneh M. Mr. Kubowitzki is acting as director.

We strived for the strengthening of the ties between the party and the "Haoved Hacyoni." This tendency found its expression in the speech made by the vice-chairman of the W.C.P. Mr. Serlin at the last conference of the Haoved Hacyoni said it is our strong hope that constant cooperation will gradually wipe out differences and bring us ahead to the point of the so much desired unity.

We were also anxious to contact our friends from abroad visiting Palestine. We think we have to some extent filled a gap complained of by our chaverim coming to this country. We are aware of some shortcomings, but we hope to have made the right beginning of an important but so far neglected job.

MADOR LE-KLITATH OLIM

The department for General Zionist immigrants which exists at the Merkaz Haolami is engaged in the important task of reestablishing our new Olim. It is a very difficult problem and our movement is far behind other parties which have at their disposal for this purpose large means. We have to make up for lost time and to carry on with very limited means.

In the said period 155 new olim, mostly maapilim, registered with our department. They came from Poland, Rumania, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Germany, Yugoslavia, Lithuania and sundry countries. About half of them were directed to the settlements, the remainder settled in the towns. It is to be noted, that the olim did not in most cases return to their former trades and were provided for in new callings. Most of them were housed with our assistance at the following places:

Tel-Aviv, Cholon, Rischon-Letzion, Rechovot, Nes-Ziona, Bnei-Brak, Givath Shumel, Shohonat Borochoy, Bnei-Brak, Petach-Tikva, Magdiel, Hertselia, Netania, Even-Yehuda, and Haifa.

We should like to underline the following facts:

1. Six families have received agricultural training in Hedera, and are to join the cooperative village (Moshav) "Shaar Yeshuv" in the next few days.
2. A training-group of 20 chaverim was set up in Kiriat-Shaul. This group will be increased up to 15 families and is to be used as reserve to reinforce "Shaar Yeshuv."
3. The foundation of a free loan association "Gmiluth Hessed."

We secured for this association a loan of L.P. 500 from the constructive fund. The Agency and the Head office of the free loan associations promised L.P. 500 each.

Up to now only a part of the promised sums have come in. The purpose of this "Gmiluth Hessed" is to enable the olim to acquire the necessary equipment for their trades, to help them in housing difficulties and so on.

This fund was of great help to our chaverim especially in emergency cases during the martial law period.

In view of the increasing demands and the need to enlarge the range of this Department's activities, commissions were set up to deal with the following matters: housing, employment, vocational training, social, medical and legal help, clothing and maintenance.

Also the cultural needs of our olim were provided for, as far as possible, and in February 350 books were sent to Cyprus as the beginning of a special library of the General Zionists. The collection of books is being carried on and the youth organizations are most helpful.

It is worth noting that we have now in the transit-camps in Palestine (Atlit and Kiryat-Shumel) about 350 chaverim, and in Cyprus - nearly 2000.

To complete this part of our report, we have to mention another aspect of our care for the olim. "The Mador Leklitat Olim" at the Immigration Department of the Jewish Agency is responsible for the housing, employment, maintenance etc. of the Olim, but among the 60 officials of this section there are actually no General Zionists. The new olim are a source of reinforcement for the parties in Palestine, and there is no better way to gain their confidence as through rendering them help and assistance. The officials of the above mentioned Section are of course the first to come in contact with the Olim. Partisan keenness is not always compatible with official duties. As far as possible we are on the alert that the interests of our chaverim are not prejudiced and we try to keep them away from certain influences. We are in constant touch with the Immigration Department and present our demands whenever necessary, but not always with the required measure of success. Our request to appoint two General Zionists as officials to posts which are of importance to us has not yet been fulfilled.

The settling of the Olim is a very important part of our constructive work in Palestine and is one of the factors which will determine the further development of our movement here. We must not be handicapped by lack of means. The result may prove to be fatal.

And now to end this chapter it is to be mentioned that about in August 1947 40 houses will be ready for the use of our "Olim". They are situated between Ramat-Gan and Kfar Azar. This being a result of our interventions with the "Mifde Ezrachi", is an important step in our efforts to help solve the housing problem of our Olim.

BULLETIN

The issuing of a monthly bulletin in many languages was one of our main tasks as a link with our Organizations all over the world and a source of information to our scattered chaverim. Martial Law and curfews interfered with the first publication of our bulletin and though decided on in February and prepared in March delay was inevitable.

The first bulletin was published in the following languages:

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| 1. Hebrew | - 200 copies |
| 2. English | - 300 " |
| 3. Yiddish | - 300 " |
| 4. German | - 100 " |

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| 5. Hungarian | - 100 copies |
| 6. Rumanian | - 100 " |

Bulletins were sent to the following countries: England, America, Canada, Australia, South-Africa, Cyprus, Argentine, France, Rumania, Bulgaria, Germany, Austria, Hungary, and Poland.

The next bulletin will appear in Spanish too, as originally intended.

For the first time our movement here took up such a job in so wide a scope. It must be added that also in this respect we are behind other parties. Now we have to make up for lost time and negligence. The publishing of this bulletin, which is to be issued in larger numbers, is connected with large expenses. Our means are very limited and we think every effort is to be made to dispose of this obstacle.

In connection with this chapter it is to be mentioned that explanatory steps are in progress with a view to publishing a book on General Zionism.

SHLICHIM

A special chapter is the problem of "Shlichim." During the first three months of 1947 three delegates were sent abroad. To 1) Cyprus, 2) U.S.A.
3) Transylvania

Much more could have been done but the promised sums have failed to reach us and we were not in a position to comply with the requirements made upon us, and so our allowances to the "Hanoar Hazioni" and the "Hedhalutz Haklali", amounted to L.P. 60. - instead of L.P. 250. - as demanded by them.

EDUCATION

We set up an Educational Commission composed of eight members. It has to deal not only with educational issues but also with the problem of selecting teachers for the Diaspora. It is important that we make the best of this chance and put in a fair number of our teachers.

The main issue are our schools. The position in our education system is a source of grave concern. The so called "General schools", once forming the overwhelming majority in the existing types of schools, have decreased to about 50%, giving up ground to the right and left wing types. We must emphasize that this sector too is affected by lack of financial means. We cannot compete with our opponents who have at their disposal the necessary funds.

We should like to mention the case of the agricultural school "Magdiel". It is one of the finest examples of General Zionism constructive work. But it is struggling hard for its existence. The World Centre in Palestine dedicated as a special meeting to consider the possibilities how to help them. We twice secured loans for this institution, but that is only a temporary remedy.

RESUME

We fully appreciate that the results of our activities in the first quarter of this year are rather modest. But apart from the fact already pointed out, that our activities cover only a period of about two months, it is to be recalled that

within that period a 15 days lasting Martial law state was imposed on us which caused great disturbance in our work. Occasional curfews in the towns and on the roads are not too conducive to our activities, either.

We are far from being discouraged but the existing conditions effect, delay and even more or less upset some of our activities.

At last but not the least: we subsisted on loans. From the promised budget not a single cent has reached us. The promises of Basle have not materialized. We do not think it necessary to dwell on the effect of such a state of affairs. But one fact should not be lost sight of: The weakening of General Zionism in Palestine means the weakening of General Zionism everywhere.

There are gaps and shortcomings. We are aware of them. But we think we are permitted to express the opinion that in the said period some foundations were laid for a fresh start and further work.

