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American Zionist Emergency Council, notes, Abba Hillel Silver,
1943.

I have made a preliminary survey of the organizational set-up of the Emergency Committee and its Executive. I have discussed the subject with members of the Committees and with the staff. I have also had the benefit of some schemes for the re-organization of our work which were previously submitted but not acted upon. Everyone has agreed on three things:

- 1) Excessive duplication and delay.
- 2) Lack of definition of scope and authority of members of the committees, sub-committees and professional staff.
- 3) A serious undermanning.

It is not difficult to correct these conditions. I suggest

- 1) The abandonment of the Public ~~Religious~~ Committee. In a sense it covers practically the entire work which the Executive should be doing. Furthermore it has met, I understand, very infrequently.
- 2) I would also suggest the abandonment of the so-called Political Committee. That, too, can be interpreted as a duplication of the entire work of the Executive Committee.

Instead I suggest that the Executive Committee function through a number of committees whose scope and authority is sharply defined, each of which will be headed off by a member of the Executive, each of which should contain at least one member of each of the parties to be drawn from the larger Emergency Committee, or if necessary, from the alternates, and each of which shall have the right to coopt other members of the type and to the number best suited to serve the purposes of that particular committee.

Each committee shall meet at regular stated intervals and shall regularly report to the Executive Committee at its ~~bx~~ bi-weekly meetings.

Each committee shall be encouraged to exercise initiative and authority consistent with the over-all authority and direction of the ~~Exmmtx~~ Executive Committee.

7) Other colonization projects are being considered by the Government.
(Lehman, Welles)

8) Suggestion that we see the President. (Lehman, Stettinius)

A small committee who would be informed by the President concerned the attitude of our Government, which committee would then in turn be in a position to guide the action of the Zionists of America. (Welles)

9) The idea of an Arab Federation is being considered by Government circles who are rather friendly to the idea although it is far from crystallization. (Welles)

10) The White Paper policy is not a closed issue nor irrevocable. (Halifax)

The Arab Federation is still in the early stages of discussion. We will not be confronted with a fait accompli. The obligations assumed by the Mandatory towards the Jewish National Home would be considered in any future arrangement.
(Halifax)



and experienced executive director who not only has technical ability, but who is thoroughly acquainted with our movement, its problems and its needs. I recommend that the Emergency Committee elect Mr. Henry Montor to this post.

Mr. Arthur Lourie, of course, remains in his present post, as Secretary both of the Emergency Committee and of the Executive. Mr. Montor and Mr. Lourie will arrange their respective fields so that there is no over-lapping and duplication.

Your chairman desires the authority granted to him to appoint the chairmen of the above named committees and in consultation with its chairmen to appoint the members of these committees. A report of these committee appointments will be made at the next meeting of the Executive.

A few additional observations: We are an Emergency Committee. In our work time is of the essence. It will therefore frequently not be possible to postpone vital decisions from one meeting to another, or to await the decisions of the Boards of the respective parties and groups whose representatives make up the Emergency Committee and its Executive. It is suggested that these ~~representatives~~ responsible representatives assume and exercise the authority normally vested in representatives of a democratically elected legislative body to the best of their judgment. They act for their constituency. They do not refer every decision to their constituency before they vote. Conceivably certain very important issues will arise which involve the political ideologies of the respective parties. In that case of course the representatives ~~of~~ on the Emergency Committee will wish to receive direction from their organizations. But certainly, matters of a purely administrative character, and programs of activities whose purpose is to carry out the political program on which the parties have already expressed themselves, should not be hampered by the unwillingness of members of this committee to act. I shall have to be very insistent on this. I shall regard this as a democratically constituted body in which a majority vote will be adequate sanction for action.

II

As far as the budget is concerned - I understand that we have up to \$200,000 with which to operate for the next _____ months. It is as yet impossible to say whether this amount will be adequate or not. For the time being ~~there~~ and until the committees develop and progress, the sum would seem to be adequate. But the of money situation may arise, and quickly arise, when much larger sums/ may be needed. In that case I hope that they will be forthcoming from the funds of the UPA, and that the responsible leaders of the Keren Kayemeth and the Keren Hayesod will see ot it that these funds are forthcoming.



Nov. 11, 1943

Since October 11, when I began contacting individuals, I have had interviews with the following:

October 11th

Congressman Sol Bloom

October 12th

Justice Frankfurter

Congressman Celler

Judge Samuel J. Rosenman

October 18th

Ambassador Steinhardt

October 29th

Governor Lehman

Edward R. Stettinius, Jr.

Sumner Welles

November 8th

Mr. Henry Morgenthau, Jr.

Lord Halifax

From all these conversations, the following emerges.

1) Resistance of the Government or "withdrawal" due to war conditions and not to any change in sympathetic attitude towards us. (Bloom, Welles)

The attitude of the President has not changed. (Frankfurter, Rosenman, Steinhardt)

2) Are not favorable to demonstrations in fighting the White Paper - rather personal contacts with the proper officials. (Welles, Bloom).

Great Britain should not be attacked. That would be playing into the hands of American isolationists and anti-Britishers. (Frankfurter)

3) The President seems to have been impressed by British official policy or pro-Arab elements in the State Department, or Mrs. Roosevelt, about lack of large scale absorptive capacity of Palestine and possibility of Arab-Jewish strife. (Frankfurter, Steinhardt, Morgenthau, Lehman)

4) On the subject of a Congressional resolution, the suggestion was made that we explore among our friends in the House and Senate to learn whether the passage of such a resolution would be issued. (Frankfurter)

5) General agreement that short memorandum on the Absorptive capacity of Palestine should be presented at the first opportunity to the President and Secretary Hull. (Frankfurter)

6) Considerable concern about the activities of the Bergson group.
(Rosenman)

Nov. 11, 1943

DIGEST OF LETTERS FROM MEMBERS OF THE EMERGENCY COMMITTEE SENT IN REPLY TO A LETTER FROM ME ASKING THEM FOR AN EXPRESSION OF OPINION ON THE STATUS OF OUR POLITICAL WORK AT THE MOMENT AND WHAT IN THEIR JUDGMENT SHOULD BE DONE TO INCREASE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF OUR WORK.

Answers received from the following:

Mrs. Rose Jacobs
Louis Segal
Arthur Lourie
I. K. Kenen
Rabbi Wolf Gold
Mrs. De Sola Pool
Rabbi Israel H. Levinthal
Judge Louis E. Levinthal
Rabbi Max Kirshblum
Meyer Weisgal
Henry Montor
Abram S. Magida

- 1) Our political situation at present not favorable.
(Rabbi Kirshblum, Jacobs)

Our political status has deteriorated and is now at its lowest ebb.
(Kenen)

- 2) Public opinion has not been built up in our favor because we have neglected education and were willing to resort merely to propaganda. (Jacobs)

They have been following up to now everything except real Zionism
(Kirshblum)

Opportunities for influencing public opinion still remain, but far from being utilized. (Segal, Rabbi Gold)

- 3) Conferences should be held with the leaders of the Republican and Democratic Parties for the purpose of enlightening them on the present situation in Europe, on Jewish achievements in Palestine, on the absorptive possibility of Palestine, and on the necessity of Palestine becoming a Jewish Commonwealth.

- 4) Delegation representing the American Federation of Labor and the C.I.O. should be received by the State Department to present our resolutions on Palestine .

- 5) Conferences with the leaders of the _____ and Labor Councils in the larger cities to persuade them to use their influence on State Legislatures and City Councils to adopt resolutions similar to those of the AFL AND CIO.

- 6) Church leaders should be mobilized. Conferences should be held with representatives of the Catholic Church and Protestant Church. They should be asked to issue statements. A joint delegation representing all churches should

be received by the State Department and by the President. (Gold)

7) A proper resolution should be introduced in the House and in the Senate calling for the endorsement of the Jewish Commonwealth, and the American Palestine Committee should be mobilized for that purpose. (Segal)

8) Our activities should be concentrated, not exclusively, of course, but primarily on that very small group of people, perhaps not more than half a dozen, including, of course, the President, one or two immediate advisers and the heads of the State Department in whose hands vital decisions rest. (Lourie)

I should suggest that we stop centering our attention on the easily accessible small fry and give our fullest concern to contacts with those who hold the power to decide and to act. (Kirshblum)

9) All out agitation in the press and on the platform by advertisements and on the radio may not be the most likely method of achieving the results we aimed at. It may produce resentment rather than support in the very quarters we seek to influence. (Lourie)

Our first line of attack must be through channels of diplomacy and negotiations backed up by the prospect of a vigorous public agitation in the event that our case is rejected. It is politic to try out the first approach before we launch a violent public onslaught on the White Paper which will inevitably lead to attacks on Great Britain. (Lourie)

10) The sooner that we drop the pretense that we expect a triumphant outcome from the state department and the colonial office, the better. The sooner that we inaugurate a political offensive against our enemies the more likely we are to strengthen our position. It is now apparent that we have little to lose and everything to gain by such an offensive. We should embark on a bold and forthright attack on our enemies. (Kenen)

11) That we expose Arab disloyalty to the United Nations. (Kenen)

12) That we speak directly and that we do much of the directing. Indirection is weakness and futility. (Kenen)

13) There is much more importance in winning the intellectual groups such as clergymen, teachers, professors and writers. We have concentrated too much on getting favorable opinions from political leaders. (Rabbi Levinthal)

14) More should be done to enlighten people on the Arab problem in relation to Palestine. (Jacobs, De Sela Pool, Rabbi Levinthal) -- and that Zionism is unfair to the Arabs. (Louis Levinthal)

15) The increased activities of the American Council for Judaism should be taken more seriously. Their influence among non-Jews may be harmful.

16) The accusations made by our enemies that our colonies have never become self-supporting must be met and answered by facts and figures. We should publish pamphlets on the future absorptive capacity of Palestine. (Judge Levinthal)

17) Every important American represented in Who's Who should receive our literature and leaders and individuals should be asked to assume responsibility to distribute literature among persons known to them. (Judge Levinthal)

18) Every ideologic group in Zionism can and must be utilized for political contacts in Washington. (Kirshblum)

