



## Abba Hillel Silver Collection Digitization Project

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### **MS-4787: Abba Hillel Silver Papers, 1902-1989.**

Series II: Harold P. Manson File (Zionism Files), 1940-1949, undated.

Sub-series A: Main Manson File, 1940-1949.

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American Zionist Emergency council vs. Jewish Agency Bureau,  
1943.



*Copy of Ben Gurion which Mr. Weisgal  
let me see.* *EM*

MEMORANDUM OF A MEETING BETWEEN RABBI SILVER, DR. GOLDMANN, MR. WEISGAL,  
MR. MONTOR AT THE DORCHESTER HOUSE, WASHINGTON, D. C. ON OCTOBER 12, 1943

Dr. Silver reviewed the situation leading up to the establishment of the Jewish Agency office here under the direction of Messrs. Goldmann and Lipsky, stating that if Dr. Weizmann had been permitted to go through with his program of establishing a Political Committee, such an office would probably not be necessary. Now that the Emergency Council has been reorganized, the logical thing would be to dissolve the office and merge all activities into one. Since, however, logic does not always obtain in such matters, it was necessary to define the areas of authority as well as of cooperation. It was Dr. Silver's opinion that the authority of the Emergency Council should be established beyond any question over and above any other authority in this country; that it was necessary in political work for someone to be able to say "yes" or "no" at a given moment and that decision to stand.

Furthermore, Dr. Silver felt there was a great deal of duplication of effort militating against the effectiveness of our political work in Washington. Dr. Silver also deprecated the fact that Dr. Goldmann was engaged, in Washington, on matters relating to the World Jewish Congress and that these activities caused confusion in the minds of many people as to what he actually represented. His desire was not to restrict Dr. Goldmann's activities but, on the contrary, to extend them and to use his great talents to the maximum. But these talents should be concentrated in one field, namely, the Zionist field.

Dr. Goldmann felt that the review of the situation leading up to the establishment of the Jewish Agency was not exactly in accordance with the facts; that as a matter of fact, the Executive had made repeated attempts to establish such an office in the United States some time ago first by Mr. Ben Gurion and then by Dr. Weizmann and that the establishment of such an office was not involved in the difficulties of the Emergency Committee but rather with Jerusalem. Even if the reorganization of the Emergency Committee had taken place at the time when Dr. Weizmann was desirous of putting it into effect, the office of the Agency would still be established just as the Agency had offices in Paris, Germany and other parts of the world before the war. The political work he stated was the prerogative of the Jewish Agency and it could not delegate that authority to any other body. However, he, like Dr. Silver, was of the opinion that the work must be co-ordinated and correlated. But while as a matter of principle, he (Dr. Goldmann) would be reluctant to pass judgment on the question as to the division of authority between the Executive and the Emergency Committee, he felt that there was no need, at this time, to draw such a line of distinction between the two, since it was generally agreed that the policy of the Emergency Committee and the Executive were in all respects identical. Therefore, he counselled, that the question of principle be held in abeyance and that a practical working arrangement be formulated for the purpose of close cooperation and coordination of activities.

With regard to the World Jewish Congress, Dr. Goldmann stated that he does not represent the World Jewish Congress in Washington; as a matter



of fact that work is being handled by James Wise. Only on rare occasions does he appear together with Dr. Wise. This refers especially to the question of rescue with which the Jewish Agency in Palestine is dealing permanently.

Mr. Weisgal recalled the fact that whereas the Emergency Committee started out as an arm of the Jewish Agency, today it is no longer that arm because of the decision that was taken a year ago to transform the Emergency Committee into a purely American body. He felt that there was no question of principle involved and that if Dr. Silver were to reflect on the situation he, too, would not counsel a clear definition as to the authority of the Executive in the matter of political activities, and proceed on a working arrangement that would be satisfactory to all parties concerned. Like Dr. Silver, he felt that there must be cooperation and centralization of authority and no one, not even the members of the Executive, should question his authority in matters pertaining to the American scene of action.

In this connection, it was further recalled, that some time ago an agreement had been worked out between the Jewish Agency and the Emergency Committee and that that agreement definitely envisaged a situation similar to the one which Dr. Silver had raised.

After further discussion, it was finally agreed

- 1) That all appointments in Washington, whether for the Jewish Agency or for the Emergency Committee, should be made through one central source; that each should keep the other constantly informed of their respective activities.
- 2) That no representative of government in Washington be contacted by the Emergency Council or the Jewish Agency without one or the other being previously apprised of the specific activity undertaken.
- 3) That in the field of public relations, legislative bodies, Congress, Senate, etc., that it was entirely in the province of the Emergency Council to initiate and contact.
- 4) That for political negotiations with officials in the State Department, it should be done jointly by the Emergency Council and the Agency, not necessarily always together, but in consultation with each other.
- 5) That so far as other governments, legations, etc., including Latin American countries, that was entirely within the province of the Jewish Agency.
- 6) It was also agreed that the officers of the Emergency Council and the representatives of the Jewish Agency meet informally every two weeks in order to plan activities in Washington.

M. W. W.

*Weisgal*