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American Zionist Emergency Council, minutes, 1944.

MR. MEREMINSKI'S SUGGESTIONS

At Meeting of Executive Committee March 20, 1944

Mr. Mereminski made the following suggestions for an immediate plan of work:

1. Instead of the telegrams that were sent previously to the President asking support for the resolution, we must now have letters sent to the Chief Executive stating that we are pleased with his statement, that there was in his words a hint that immigration will continue and every citizen is awaiting from him concrete measures that will convert the promise into actuality, that in the near future he will make an announcement re immigration of Jews into Palestine on a large scale which will lead to a Jewish Commonwealth.

2. Letters should be sent immediately to the Foreign Affairs Committee and to all its members stating that we are shocked at the postponement of the resolution because of military reasons. Although every citizen must reckon with the demands of the military situation, it is also the duty of each one to request the Foreign Affairs Committee to bring out the resolution in its present form at the first change in the military situation. As a citizen of this democratic country, the letter should say, I hope that the Foreign Affairs Committee will not permit the postponement for military reasons to be exploited for the purpose of weakening the content of the resolution or changing it to the detriment of the Jews at present or in the future. They should point out that the message of Secretary Stimson says: "without reference to the merits of the resolution." That is to say, the postponement can not and should not change the content, and the Foreign Affairs Committee should not itself, nor permit others to introduce a resolution which in part is included in the present resolution and which someone might introduce only for the purpose of defeating our resolution which is already in the hands of the Committee and which was supported in Congress by the Majority and Minority leaders.

3. The Emergency Council ought immediately to send a memorandum to all the local Emergency Committees indicating that the president's statement was obtained as a result of their activities, as a result of the great campaign which they carried on all over the country. The committees themselves and all those who were active should know that the work of assuring a Jewish Palestine does not begin and does not end with a resolution in Congress, nor with this statement or another statement by the President (even if there be clearer and more promising statements). The political activities will continue not only for a few months, and not only in the United States, but also in England and wherever there is a Jewish community. The memorandum should stress that, even though the White Paper will not be abrogated, because it cannot be implemented, the de facto abrogation of the White Paper is the main thing for which we are fighting. And there is no assurance that an actual change will take place unless we continue an open fight in public for uninterrupted immigration as well as for the assurance of a Jewish Commonwealth. We are not looking for a temporary refuge - the Jews who want a homeland are entitled to come to their country and build it with the assurance that they will have international support in upbuilding their National Home. Those who asked only for immigration, only for the absorption of refugees, are endangering what already exists in Palestine, are transforming Palestine into a temporary haven of refuge, are denying the population there the possibility of fighting for their full rights and of establishing themselves in large numbers, and are hindering the Jewish Agency in their efforts to cultivate the barren lands of Palestine. A real danger exists of an amended resolution in favor of immigration only being introduced. This amendment would not mean an improvement, but the defeat of our resolution, and against this we should fight.

4) In the above mentioned memorandum, or in a separate one, it should be indicated that every state and city, wherever there is an emergency committee, should immediately contact their State Legislatures, Congressmen and Senators and express their disappointment at the deferment of the resolution by the Foreign Affairs Committee, even if it is for military reasons. It should be requested of each Congressman and Senator that he should not permit advantage to be taken in the meantime for any activity against the resolution, or the introduction of another resolution in place of the present one which will deny the hopes of the Jews for a Jewish Commonwealth.

5) Even without the resolution, temporary refugees could come into Palestine as into any other country, and for that purpose there is no need to introduce any special laws for the absorption of refugees. And this should not be used as a motive for weakening or changing our resolution, or the fight for it.

6) It must be remembered that in the word "ultimately" which appears in our resolution there is already a compromise with reference to the establishment of the Commonwealth; and to delete the Commonwealth part of the resolution would mean to give up hope for a Commonwealth, for which 95% of American Jews voted.

7) A special memorandum on the activities of Bergson and his group should immediately be sent out. It should be stated in this memorandum that this is the Revisionist group which congratulated the American Jewish Committee after Judge Proskauer visited Lord Halifax. Recently a delegation of this group met with the Jewish Labor Committee and suggested cooperating with them for the minimum demands of rescue, which means a compromise on their part and a desire for cooperation with the opposition or the neutrals, not for the benefit of Palestine but in order to bring about the defeat of the Wagner-Taft resolution.

8) The leadership of the American Jewish Conference, including Mr. Monsky, should immediately invite this group to meet with them and warn them against the activities which they have undertaken. At this meeting it should be called to their attention that only because of their desire to avoid publicity in the general press the Emergency Council did not publicize the document which is in its possession revealing the connection between Bergson and the Irgun Zevai, whose present activities in Palestine are endangering the Zionist cause.

9) Pressure should immediately be put on this group from Palestine. (I have already given to the Davar information on their efforts to find partners in working against the Resolution). But the Vaad Leumi and the Agency should be mobilized for that purpose. I am ready to submit more detailed proposals in this connection.

10) In conclusion, I call the attention of the Emergency Council, and especially of its leadership to the fact that the British Parliament sent an invitation to the American Congress to send a delegation to England. It is necessary immediately to ensure that this delegation consists of members who will act in our favor instead of against us.

AMERICAN ZIONIST EMERGENCY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

November 21, 1944

A meeting of the Executive Committee of the American Zionist Emergency Council was held Tuesday, November 21st, at 342 Madison Avenue, New York City.

PRESENT

Dr. Abba Hillel Silver (presiding), Rabbi Philip S. Bernstein, Mrs. Judith Epstein, Dr. Israel Goldstein, Chaim Greenberg, Mrs. Rose Halprin, Mrs. Rose Jacobs, Rabbi Max Kirshblum, Louis Lipsky, Marvin Lowenthal, Rabbi Irving Miller, Emanuel Neumann, Mrs. Tamar Pool, Judge Morris Rothenberg, Louis Segal, Herman Shulman, Herman Weisman, David Wertheim.

Dr. Nahum Goldmann, Dr. Bernard Joseph, Judge Bernard A. Rosenblatt.

Arthur Lourie, Harold P. Manson, Harry L. Shapiro.

Dr. Joseph Cohn.

MINUTES

The minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held October 30th were approved.

CONFERENCE OF ACTIONS COMMITTEE

It was reported that shortly after the meeting of November 9th a cable had been received from Mr. Ben-Gurion stating that Dr. Weizmann was expected in Palestine at the end of November and that if American participation in the Conference could be assured Dr. Weizmann would be urged to prolong his stay.

The parties had discussed the matter and each group has indicated that it is prepared to send three representatives. With regard to priorities, it was clear that it would be necessary for one of the heads of the Council to approach the highest authorities in Washington; otherwise there would be no possibility of securing the number of places required.

Dr. Goldstein stated that the Executive Committee of the Z.O.A. had taken up the question of the proposed Conference in Jerusalem at its meeting in Chicago. The views expressed by Dr. Goldmann and Dr. Joseph at the Council meeting of November 9th had been conveyed to the Z.O.A. Executive, and although no vote was taken it was the feeling of the meeting that it would be more feasible to hold the Conference in London.

Dr. Goldmann reported that at a recent meeting of the members of the Action Committee at present residing in New York, the position was taken that the members of the Actions Committee should have priority in attending any meeting to be called of the Greater Actions Committee. There are 25 to 30 members of the Actions Committee in New York and they decided that they should select five or six to go to Jerusalem, or London -- wherever the Conference takes place. They indicated that they would cable the Executive in Jerusalem to this effect.

Dr. Silver read a communication which he had received from Dr. Weizmann with reference to the political position and the possibility of an early decision.

In the course of the discussion which followed it was urged on the one hand that there are major questions to be settled, e.g. regarding the interim period, plans for the handling of a vast immigration into Palestine, etc., and that people in Palestine do not wish to make such vital decisions themselves. As regards having the meeting in London there could not be a representative meeting without a considerable Palestinian delegation which in present circumstances was hardly possible. On the other hand, however, the desirability of a meeting in London was stressed in view of possible political developments in the forthcoming period, in which connection London would be the center of gravity. Difficulties in obtaining transportation to Palestine would also be far greater than in the case of a delegation to London.

It was finally decided to send a cable to Dr. Weizmann in Palestine setting out some of the considerations raised in the discussion and asking for a definitive opinion from him. If he should say that he wished a delegation to come, whether to Jerusalem or London, that would be final and immediate action would be taken to seek to obtain priorities. (The attached cable was sent to Dr. Weizmann on November 22nd).

PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

Mr. Lipsky reported that Prof. Friedrich's memorandum "American Policy Toward Palestine" has just been issued in paper book form by the Public Affairs Press, having been published under the auspices of the American Council on Public Affairs. The Emergency Council has purchased 1500 copies, at a reduced price of sixty cents per copy. A large number of these are being sent out by the American Palestine Committee, to leading libraries, institutes of post-war research, radio commentators, journalists, members of the State Department, etc. The Publications Department will cooperate with the publishers in promoting the book.

Work has been begun in connection with the promotion of "Justice for my People", in which Mr. Lowenthal is cooperating. The book will sell at \$2.50 and will be procurable through the Emergency Council at a lower rate.

5000 copies of the Canadian paper covered reprint of Dr. Norman Maclean's "His Terrible Swift Sword" have been purchased, at a cost of eight cents each. This book will be used widely by the Christian Council on Palestine and a special effort will be made to have it reviewed in church periodicals.

Three pamphlets have just been issued; 1) "A Year's Advance", which is Dr. Silver's political report presented to the Convention of the Zionist Organization of American in Atlantic City; 2) "Arabs, Jews and the Middle East", by Ephraim Broido, originally published in London; 3) "The Jews - A Problem That Cannot Wait" by Dr. Robert Gordis, which is a reprint from "The American Scholar", the quarterly published by Phi Beta Kappa. Other pamphlets, by Dr. Niebuhr and Dr. Lindeman, are to be published for the American Palestine Committee and the Christian Council on Palestine.

Mr. Lipsky further reported that a great number of excellent letters about "America and Palestine" have been received, including some from Government departments and officials.

REPRESENTATION OF PARTIES ON EMERGENCY COUNCIL

Attention was drawn to the representatives of the Z.O.A. on the Emergency Council and Executive Committee designated after the 47th Annual Convention.

The five designees on the full Council are: Judge Louis E. Levinthal, Dr. James G. Heller, Herman Shulman, Daniel Frisch and Maurice Boukstein; with Irving Lipkowitz, Samuel Rothstein and Herman L. Weisman as alternates. The designees of the Z.O.A. for the Executive Committee are: Dr. Israel Goldstein, Judge Levinthal and Mr. Shulman. (3)

Dr. Goldstein explained that Mr. Lipsky had not been designated as a representative of the Z.O.A. on the Executive because he understood he sat on the Executive Committee by virtue of the fact that he was a member of the Jewish Agency Executive. (Mrs. Edward Jacobs is on the Executive in the same capacity. Judge Rothenberg had been elected ad personam as one of its members by the Executive Committee.)

In connection with a proposal to elect Messrs. Lipsky and Neumann as members of the Executive Committee it was decided to appoint a small committee to study the constitution and to advise with regard to the set-up.

BUDGET

Mr. Shapiro reported that a meeting of the Joint Committee of the Keren Hayesod and Keren Kayemeth to take up the budget of the Emergency Council for 1944-45 has been held. Since neither Dr. Silver nor Dr. Wise could attend on the date set by the Joint Committee, they sent the Committee a letter explaining in detail the reasons which made it essential for a budget such as had been submitted to them to be made available to the Council.

There was a great deal of discussion on the budget at the meeting of the Joint Committee, which finally decided to accept Judge Rothenberg's proposal that a committee, to be composed of two representatives of the Keren Hayesod, two representatives of the Keren Kayemeth and a committee to be appointed by Dr. Silver for the Executive Committee of the Emergency Council, meet and study the Council's financial statement, which was not available in time for the meeting of the Joint Committee. This committee, whose investigation must be completed within three weeks, will make its recommendations to the Funds. In the meantime the Joint Committee decided to make a grant of \$60,000 to the Council to enable it to continue its work until the complete budget is passed upon.

Judge Rothenberg, supplementing Mr. Shapiro's report, stated that the Keren Kayemeth met the day after the meeting of the Joint Committee, and voted its share of the \$60,000.

Reference was made by several members of the Executive to criticisms which had been voiced at the meeting of the Joint Committee of the Funds, by members who are also members of the Council, of the procedure of the Council with regard to finances. Such criticisms, they said, should have been made within the Council and not in another body.

The question was also raised as to the extent to which the Joint Committee was entitled to enter into the actual functioning of the Emergency Council.

Judge Rosenblatt and Judge Rothenberg, heads of the Keren Hayesod and Keren Kayemeth respectively, felt that there had been some misunderstanding as to the attitude of the Joint Committee. That Committee has no desire, and no authority to intervene in the affairs of the Emergency Council. It was certainly a function of the Joint Committee of the Funds, however, to ask how subventions which they are granting are being spent. Otherwise they would not be exercising their duties in regard to the trusteeship over the Funds.

It was pointed out that the members of the Finance Committee of the Emergency Council are not sufficiently conversant with the affairs of the Council, and a motion was made and adopted that the Finance Committee be reconstituted with the majority of its members to be members of the Executive Committee.

The question of the Treasurer of the Council was raised. Dr. Silver explained that Mr. Szold had sent in his resignation last spring. He was asked whether he wished to have it acted upon but has not let us know definitely. It was agreed that the secretary be instructed to take up the matter with him again, urging him to withdraw his resignation.

The meeting adjourned at 6:05 P. M.

A. L.



C
O
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Y OF CABLE

RCA (NOVEMBER 22, 1944)

NLT CHAIM WEIZMANN
JEWISH AGENCY
JERUSALEM (Palestine)

REFERRING EXECUTIVES PROPOSAL FOR PALESTINE CONFERENCE OBSTACLES THIS
END INCLUDE ONE UNDESIRABILITY PRESENT DEPARTURE AMERICAN LEADERS ANY
LENGTH TIME TWO DIFFICULTIES OBTAINING TRANSPORTATION PRIORITIES LARGE
GROUP THREE UNCERTAINTY PURPOSES VALUE CONFERENCE STOP ONE AND TWO EASIER
IF CONFERENCE HELD LONDON STOP CABLE WHETHER VIEW ABOVE YOU DEEM ADVISABLE
OUR COMING PALESTINE IF SO HOW LONG YOU REMAINING ALTERNATIVELY WHETHER
MEETING DESIRABLE LONDON



ABBA HILLEL SILVER