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Resolution, Silver's presentation before American Zionist
Emergency Council, 1944.

Silver Before
AZED - Dec. 1944

At our meeting on October 30th, we discussed the Resolutions. At the conclusion of the meeting I stated: "We will not go ahead with the resolution without fully canvassing the situation. If the answer from the State Department is at all vague, I would not recommend proceeding with it." (See Minutes - Oct. 30) This was prompted, as you will recall, not by a desire not to offend the State Department or the President, but to protect ourselves against the kind of surprise which was jumped on us last spring. We wanted to make doubly sure before we moved. In the discussion that developed at these meetings there were some who raised the question whether we should proceed with the Resolution at all; some felt that the Resolution was no longer important since we had the President's statement of October 15th. Others felt that the re-opening of discussion in Congress would give the opposition in Congress an opportunity to attack us. Some felt that we would have a better chance with the next Congress; some objected to the Resolution as it now reads because of the word "ultimately" and thought that we could get a better resolution, perhaps a joint resolution, in the next Congress. While these opinions were expressed, the consensus was that we should move ahead with the Resolution provided the coast was clear as far as the State Department and the President were concerned. No one really expected any opposition in view of all that had transpired in the preceding months. At that same meeting I reported (and I quote from the minutes of that meeting) "that in anticipation of the reconsideration of the resolution when Congress reconvenes, the Emergency Council has been engaged in stimulating afresh the interest of the members of the House Foreign Affairs and Senate Foreign Relations Committees. The local Emergency committees in communities in which these members resided had been asked to approach them again and to bring them up to date on recent developments and to suggest that early action on the resolution, when Congress reconvenes, would be desirable. The results so far are gratifying." Thus the Council, on October 30th was fully informed that continued activities in behalf of our resolution were going

on and would continue in Washington and all over the country. It is false to suggest even by implication that the Emergency Council at its meeting on October 30th ordered all of our activities in behalf of the resolution to be discontinued. It merely directed that we explore the mind of the State Department on our resolution, and there was a consensus of opinion that if the State Department attitude was found to be negative, we would then not proceed with the resolutions. Until such time however activities in behalf of the resolution were not to be discontinued nor was word to go out that we were even considering a possible postponement.

Accordingly Dr. Wise, Dr. Goldmann and I called on Stettinius on November 9th. We told him that we wished to move forward with our Congressional Resolution in view of Secretary of War Stimson's letter removing the military objections, and in view of the party platforms and the President's own statement. We hoped that there would be no objections raised by the Executive branch of our Government. Stettinius had no opinion of his own, but said that he would consult with the President. It is altogether false to suggest as has been suggested that I or either of the other two members who called on Stettinius promised him that we would not press for the Resolution if the State Department or the President registered objections. If any one gave such a promise, it was done before or after the interview and not by me.

On November 15th Stettinius telephoned to Wise who transmitted the information to a meeting of the Executive Committee and of the full Council on November 21st, that the President thought that we should not proceed with action on the Resolution and that the matter should be left with him for a little while longer.

There followed a discussion. It was clear that the Council was not satisfied that Stettinius' reply definitely closed the matter. On the contrary, it was felt by quite a few that a mistake had been made in going to Stettinius in the first place to ask whether there was any objection. We should have assumed in view of all that had transpired - the party platforms, the President's statement, Stimson's letter - that the green light had in fact been given.

I argued at this meeting and so did others that a strong effort should immediately be made to reach the President and to urge him to change his mind. His opposition would be gravely misinterpreted and it was unfair to our cause.

Dr. Wise opposed such action. The President should not be embarrassed...Furthermore, the President was leaving the country almost immediately. He was sure to take up the matter with Churchill. Congress would adjourn in a few days. He had been assured that our Resolution could not in any event be acted upon in the closing days of this Congress. In both of these matters, Dr. Wise was misinformed.

At this meeting, and here again I quote from the minutes: "there followed a lengthy discussion, and it was finally decided that efforts be made once more to obtain clearance from the President through Senator Wagner, and perhaps others." other
There was no action taken at this meeting.

In other words, the Emergency Council, upon second thought, was not satisfied to have the resolution shelved just because the State Department and the President had indicated their objection to the resolution. They were not content to let it go at that. They wanted persuasive influence to be brought to bear upon the Administration to change its mind.

Dr. Wise yielding reluctantly insisted that only Wagner should be seen to carry out this mission and suggested that he and Mr. Shulman should contact Wagner. I as chairman of the Executive Committee felt constrained, you will recall, to invite myself in on that committee and to state that there may be others who might be asked to see the President. Dr. Wise strongly objected to this and contemptuously referred to Senator Taft as not a very likely person to see the President. It was clear to me that Dr. Wise was yielding only to the pressure of opinion and that if the matter were left to him, no earnest effort would be made to urge the President to change his mind. Proofs soon began to multiply that this indeed was the case.

As of November 21st, therefore, our Council had agreed on two things: (a) not

to press our Resolution until we got the green light, and (b) to try to persuade the President to change his mind and give us the green light. Unfortunately, the President was not in Washington and could not be reached. In fact he has not been personally contacted by any one of us or by any friend of our Resolution to this day. Everything has passed through the hands of Mr. Stettinius. Wagner tried to reach the President, I was informed by Mr. Shulman, but the President was no longer in Washington. Instead he talked to Stettinius who gave him the same answer which we had previously received. It was not until December 2, eleven days after the meeting of our Committee, that Wagner wrote a personal letter to the President, a letter which I helped him draft, in which he explained the situation as he saw it and appealed to the President to withdraw his objections, and it was not until December 4 that he received the reply to which I shall allude later on.

But by December 4 certain events connected with our Resolution had already taken place. Things had been set in motion without any pressure on our part. The gossip has been spread abroad that if I personally had not pressed for the Resolution in Washington when I arrived on November 27, the Resolution would have remained quiescent. I did not go to Washington on November 27 to press for the Resolution. I went there to carry out the instruction of the Council to try to bring influence to bear on the President to change his mind. You must remember that the Council had begun to stimulate action in behalf of the reconsideration of our Resolution early in October. I remind you again of the minutes of the October 30 meeting of the Council in which I informed you of our continuing activities in behalf of the Resolution.

Before the national election we requested our Community Contact people to interview every Congressman and Senator and every candidate and to get them to pledge to vote for our Resolution as soon as Congress reconvenes. We sent to every Congressman and Senator our book "America and Palestine," which contained the printed opinion of nearly four hundred members of the present House and Senate.

The President's letter on October 15 was accompanied with the statement of Senator Wagner that the way is now clear for Congressional action. The convention of the ZOA called for speedy action on the Palestine Resolution. Congressman Bloom announced, on the heels of the President's statement, that he would summon a meeting of his Committee on the day after Congress reconvenes -- November 15.

All this propaganda of ours was reflected in the Congress when it reconvened. Congressmen and Senators were set for action; they were expecting action, and good and sufficient reasons would have to be given, especially to the members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, who had been critical of the President's action in the Spring (when following deferment of action by the Senate Committee on our Resolution at the insistence of the Military the President himself on March 9 ignored the Military and issued a statement through Dr. Wise and me, affirming what the Senate Committee was kept from affirming), as to why action, so consistently and persistently called for by the Jews of America, and many non-Jews, should now be deferred.

Congressman Bloom was stopped from moving forward in his Committee by our request for delay. Nevertheless he found himself hard-pressed by fellow Congressmen. He sent a long telegram to Dr. Wise which contained an attack made on him by Congressman Celler for dilatoriness in regards to the Resolution. He was being embarrassed. Editorials reached him from the Yiddish press of New York urging immediate action. Both Senators Wagner and Taft, who sponsored the Resolution, were eager for action. With both of them it was a matter of honor. They were committed to these Resolutions and their sponsorship of these Resolutions had been used, favorably to them, during the campaign. They wanted to discharge what they regarded was ^{their} ~~our~~ obligation to the Jewish people. Already on November 11, Senator Taft had written me: "I have had to delay ~~my~~ my return to Washington until Thursday, but I hope we can proceed with the Palestine Resolution immediately." Senator Taft was one of the co-sponsors of

the resolution. He had resented the postponement of the resolution last Spring. It was he who had kept after the military until he obtained the letter from Secretary of War Stimson withdrawing their objections. As soon as Congress reconvened, he began pressing for his resolution, just as we all did, including the delegates at the convention of the ZOA at Atlantic City.

You may recall that at the November 21 meeting I told you that Senator Taft Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, had already taken up the matter with Senator Connally, and that Connally had invited him to appear before the Foreign Relations Committee on the 22nd. The wheels were already in motion. The Foreign Relations Committee was prepared to act favorably on our Resolution one day after we had decided to try and change the mind of the President. Only out of courtesy to Senator Wagner, who was absent from Washington, was the meeting postponed to the following week, November 29.

Congressman Bloom knew of this contemplated meeting of the Foreign Affairs Committee scheduled for Wednesday, the 22nd, and postponed to the 29th. He did not wish the Senate Committee to get ahead of him. Prior to my coming to Washington, he had already arranged to have the Congressmen's endorsements of the Palestine Resolution, which appeared in our publication, "American and Palestine," reprinted as a Government document at Government expense.

I arrived in Washington, as I indicated, on the 27th in order to see what could be done to reach and explain things to the President. I had personally been unable to reach Senator Wagner by telephone. I had wired to Dr. Wise on November 22, the day after our meeting, to this effect: "Because of strikes here, could not reach you by telephone. Strongly urge you to contact Bloom immediately and urge him to see the Chief and persuade him to give clearance to Resolutions...Please inform me by telegram or telephone results of conversation with Bloom." Dr. Wise never replied to this telegram of mine! My original feeling that Wise was disinclined to do anything to help change the President's mind was confirmed. If anything could be done, it had to be done quickly, for the days of the present

Congress were running out, and it could best be done from the base in Washington.

On the very day that I arrived, I went to see Congressman Bloom to urge him to get in touch with the President. To my surprise, he told me that he had already made what to him were good and sufficient inquiries "down the hill," as he put it -- presumably at the State Department. It should be remembered that Bloom hardly ever budges without consulting the State Department. I was amazed to hear from him that what he had learned there was of such little influence with him, that he brushed it aside as of no moment. They had told him something about an item which had appeared in the "Times" as to the Vatican's attitude toward Palestine and something about the Arabs' unfavorable reaction to the President's statement of October 15. He quoted himself as having said to the principal in the State Department: "On October 15, the President had said so and so, and you cannot get around that; the Democratic Platform had declared so and so, and you cannot get around that." He did not need any other green light, he said. "It is none of their business anyhow. Military reasons were something else again; I had to submit to that." Bloom repeated much of this in a telephone conversation with Dr. Wise on Wednesday afternoon after the Resolution was acted upon favorably by the House Committee.

If the responsible Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, I reasoned, a loyal member of the Administration who knew all about the reported objections of the State Department and of the President and one to whom Dr. Wise had previously spoken about deferment, felt free in his own mind to move forward with our Resolution, I certainly was not the man to dissuade him. I did not know at the time how determined was the President's opposition and there was no reasonable ground for assuming that his opposition was unalterable. Congressman Bloom's reaction certainly gave the definite impression that the reasons were not so weighty that they could not be overcome. As I saw my duty, it was not to press for action while we were waiting for the green light. On the other hand, it was not my duty

to check or to discourage action when Congressmen and Senators were pressing for it. I received no such direction from the Council. It was not until Thursday, December 7, that the Council (at an irregular and unauthorized meeting) voted definitely to ask Senators Wagner and Connally to shelve the Resolution, and even this decision failed of re-affirmation at another rump session of the Council on Saturday, December 9, and was finally reversed by the action of the Executive Council on Monday morning, December 11, in Washington.

Bloom was somewhat concerned with the fact that he might be blamed if the Resolution failed passage in his Committee after he took it up and that he would be charged with taking the initiative unwisely. He wanted me to back him up in his resolve to go forward and in sharing the responsibility. I reassured him on that score. At his request I wrote him a letter following our interview in which I backed him up.

As you know, favorable action did take place in the House Foreign Affairs Committee on Wednesday, November 23.

I tried to reach Senator Wagner time and again from the day after our meeting on November 21. I could not reach him. He was in seclusion and his secretary would not tell me his whereabouts. Wise and Shulman saw Wagner in Atlantic City on Sunday, November 26. Shulman reported to me the conversation the next day by telephone to Washington. He had not seen the President. He had spoken to Stettinius ~~xxx~~ and Stettinius had given him the same reply which we had received from him previously. When I finally did get to see the Senator on Tuesday, November 28, in Washington, he certainly had no plans of trying to see the President to persuade him to remove his objections. But he was nevertheless determined to go into the meeting of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee the next morning and press for his Resolution.

It has been suggested that I should have asked the committee to defer action.

This was certainly not my mission nor mandate in Washington. I was there to see

whether I could persuade the State Department and the President to withdraw their objections to the passage of the resolution. Failing in that, the Council would then have to decide what to do, since the first report of the President's disapproval did not close the matter as far as the Council was concerned. I had not yet had the opportunity to contact either the State Department or the President. I was not to see Mr. Stettinius until December 4. Until I had had the chance to persuade them and failed, I could not go, nor did the Council obligate me to go, to the members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and ask them to postpone action on our Palestine Resolution for which the Jews of America had so persistently pressed up to the very last. We were not pressing for the resolution. The pressure came from the Senate Committee itself which was so much interested in the Palestine Resolution that it met on four successive occasions to consider it and it insisted time and again on approving our resolution in spite of two personal appearances before it made by the Secretary of State and in spite of other pressure brought by the Administration against it. Even when the resolution was finally postponed as a result of the persistent pressure from the State Department and the President, two-thirds of the members of the Senate Committee signed a round robin in which they stated that they would have voted for the resolution were it not for this insistence of the State Department and the President.

On that same Tuesday, November 26, Mr. Shulman telephoned Wagner's secretary in Washington and gave him a long line of reasons why the Senator should use his efforts to postpone consideration of our resolutions by the Senate Committee. This you will recall was not Shulman's mission. The sole mission of the committee of three which had been appointed was to try to persuade the President to change his mind -- not to urge Senators to desist from working for the passage of our resolutions. We were working at cross purposes. Wise and Shulman pressing Wagner to have his resolution shelved, and I, following the clear line indicated by the Council, urging the Senator to get in touch with the President to persuade him to withdraw his objection to the passage of the resolution. Wagner found himself

the victim of two opposing forces pulling him in different directions. He was telephoned a score of times by people in New York all speaking in the name of the Emergency Council or of Zionists. He was baffled and confused. Toward the end he became actually sick and took to his bed. I was informed that at the final meeting of the Foreign Relations Committee on Monday afternoon, December 11, when our resolution was finally shelved, Wagner hardly uttered fifteen words. This was unlike the earlier meetings when he spoke up vigorously for his resolution and where he announced that he would press for his resolution even if the President came out in a public declaration against it.

On Wednesday morning, November 29, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee met to consider our resolution. This was the meeting that had been postponed from the week before because of Wagner's absence from the city. Senator Taft, who had been invited to attend the meeting out of courtesy to him as a sponsor of the resolution, made a strong plea in behalf of the resolution. He traced the history of the resolution -- how and why it was introduced, why action had been deferred on it in the Spring, because of the intervention of the War Department, how these objections had now been removed, and finally how both political parties and both presidential candidates had endorsed the Jewish Commonwealth. Upon request of one of the members, he explained in detail what the Zionist Movement understood by the Jewish Commonwealth, and read the official statement issued by the Jewish Agency on the subject. He also stated that the word "ultimately" has led to misunderstanding, and Senator Vandenburg then suggested that the words "as soon as practicable" -- the identical words used by the President in his statement on October 15, should be substituted.

During the friendly discussion which ensued, Senator Connally endeavored to establish that the State Department had objection to action at this time. Whereupon some of the Senators expressed great indignation. How could the State Department

object in view of the record of the President's own endorsement six weeks ago? Some of the Senators insisted that the State Department was evidently speaking for the President and that the President was subjecting them to another maneuver similar to the one which they were subjected to last Spring when the Senate was restrained from acting upon the Palestine Resolution avowedly because of military considerations, and almost simultaneously, the President himself made a public statement to the Zionists which completely ignored the military. They refused to be victimized a second time. If the State Department had any valid reasons for wanting action deferred, Secretary of State Stettinius should come in person before the Committee and accept full public responsibility. He should tell them why these resolutions should be deferred. The Committee at first voted 9-6 to deal with the resolution immediately. Subsequently, and as the result of Connally's continued insistence, in order that it would not appear discourteous to the State Department, voted 11-5 to delay action for a week, with the understanding that Stettinius must appear in person, and also with the instruction to Senator Wagner to endeavor to see the President and to obtain from him a clarification of his reported opposition. After the Committee adjourned, the opinion was expressed by Senators that the resolution would undoubtedly be approved at the next meeting of the Committee on Wednesday, December 6.

On Friday, December 1, Wagner called the State Department to arrange for a conference for himself and me with Stettinius. We wanted to persuade Stettinius not to appear before the Committee, and through him, to pass on to the President our feelings about his reported opposition. This conference was set for 12:30 P.M. Monday, December 4. In keeping with the directive of the Senate Committee, Wagner also decided to send a personal letter to the President. This letter was sent on Saturday, December 2. This was the first direct contact, although still not a personal one, with the President, by any friend of the resolution.

This was the state of affairs when I arrived in Pittsburgh to attend the American Jewish Conference, on Saturday evening, December 2. The Senate Resolution was hanging fire, pending word from Stettinius and a reply from the President to Senator Wagner's letter. Senator Wagner and I were waiting for our appointment with Stettinius, Monday noon. The Senate Committee was determined to act and had made its determination very clear. The Committee was not being pressed or prodded by me. The House Foreign Affairs Committee had already acted favorably. Its action had been warmly hailed by the Jewish press, and by the Jewish public and by most of the leaders of the Zionist parties.

It was my intention upon my arrival in Pittsburgh, on Saturday evening, to call together the members of the Interim Committee, which you will recall we had agreed was to consult on our affairs between meetings of the Emergency Council - that is, the two co-chairmen of the Council and the representatives of the Jewish Agency. To my amazement, I discovered upon my arrival that Dr. Israel Goldstein had during the day called a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Zionist Organization of America to discuss not only the resolution which had been adopted by the House Committee, but everything else connected with the pending resolutions, the matter of the green light, and why Dr. Silver had contravened the decision of the Council, etc. etc. Dr. Goldstein knew full well that neither the Interim Committee nor the Council had as yet discussed the matter, and that I, the Executive Chairman of the Council, who was closest to the whole situation, was not in the city to give his committee information on the subject even if I were willing to overlook the fact that if there was to be a report by me, it would first have to be given to the Emergency Council.

When I arrived, I found the halls of the William Penn buzzing with all kinds of rumors, fragments of information and misinformation, as well as criticism of the resolution which had been approved by the House Committee. I cannot understand what

Zionist purpose Dr. Goldstein intended to serve by calling such a meeting, at such a time and place, where hundreds of delegates, many of them non-Zionists, were gathered not for a Zionist Convention but for the American Jewish Conference, and where nothing but mischief could result from hasty and ill-considered opinions expressed on insufficient and largely inadequate data. It was difficult to escape the impression that this was the start of a campaign to "run down" the resolution passed by the House Committee to spread the opinion among the delegates that the resolution was a bad one, and to discredit, if possible, Dr. Silver whose name had been so closely identified with the resolution. The minds of some of the delegates were actually poisoned by this subtle propaganda. Fortunately the overwhelming majority welcomed and acclaimed the resolution as evidenced by the reception which it received when it was read twice, by Mr. Kaufmann in his opening address, and by myself in my address on Sunday night.

The resolution as passed by the House is of course an excellent one. You will agree with me that were Churchill to announce tomorrow that England has resolved to open the doors of Palestine for the free entry of Jews and to grant them full opportunity for colonization so that the Jewish people may ultimately reconstitute Palestine as a free and democratic commonwealth, the Jewish people the world over would celebrate that day as a national holiday.

Dr. Wise when he telephoned Mr. Bloom on the day the resolution was passed, told him and me over the telephone that the resolution was a very good one, as so indeed it was. The presidents of Hadassah, the Mizrahi and the Poale Zion, as well as Mr. Lipsky, of the Jewish Agency Board hailed the resolution in public statements, and the Jewish press welcomed it heartily.

It was in such an atmosphere that I found myself when I arrived at the William Penn on Saturday night. I felt that more discussion of our business, delicate and confidential as a good deal of it was, at improvised meetings at the Convention could only contribute to more harm and confusion. I wanted, however,

to report immediately to the Interim Committee, and I asked Mr. Shapiro to invite the members to a meeting that very night, although it was close to midnight. Mr. Shapiro reported that Dr. Wise was too tired, and that Dr. Goldmann was not yet in the city. I therefore requested Mr. Shapiro to call a meeting for Sunday morning. Mr. Joseph was invited to the meeting as a member of the Jewish Agency. I invited Mr. Shulman because he had been appointed, together with Dr. Wise and myself, to try to bring influence to bear on the President to change his mind. Mr. Lipsky and Dr. Goldmann were present for the Agency. But Dr. Wise, who had previously told Mr. Shapiro that he was coming to the meeting, did not come, and Dr. Goldmann finally stated that Dr. Wise refused to come because he wanted a meeting of the Emergency Council. I regarded that as an unwarranted rebuff and an unreasonable attitude for one to assume. Dr. Wise ^{himself} had been largely instrumental in working out the arrangement whereby, between meetings of the Emergency Council, the Interim Committee would consider urgent matters of the Council. I felt that he might have come to hear my report, and following that, if he wished, might have a meeting requested/of the Executive. I could then have indicated to him why I regarded such a meeting at that particular time and place as undesirable. I gave the members of the Interim Committee the essential facts. I told them of the meeting which Wagner and I were to have with Stettinius the next day. I told him of the letter that Wagner had sent to the President and that we were waiting for an answer. I told them of the attitude of the Senate Committee and how they were determined to move along with the resolutions. I corrected for them some of the wild rumors that had been spread among the Conference delegates. None of those present suggested a meeting of the Emergency Council. In fact there was nothing that the Emergency Council could do. We were still following the position defined by the Emergency Council on November 21 -- to try to persuade the President -- although in the meantime action had taken place positively in the House Committee, and tentatively in the Senate Committee, which we could not control.

Although I did not see the wisdom of calling a formal meeting of the Emergency Council in the setting of the American Jewish Conference, and in the atmosphere created by the *rump* ZOA meeting called by Dr. Goldstein -- there may be a legitimate difference of opinion on that score -- I nevertheless wanted to inform the leaders of all the parties of what was transpiring. Accordingly, during the day, I met informally with some of the leaders of the ZOA, Poale Zion and the Mizrachi. I had also invited Mrs. Epstein and Mrs. Halprin of the Hadassah to meet with me. Mrs. Epstein refused. She wanted a meeting of the Emergency Council. Mrs. Halprin, too, did not come.

Dr. Wise then called an unauthorized meeting of the Council for Sunday evening. Our constitution clearly provides that no special meeting of the Council can be called without three days notice. There are always good and sufficient reasons for such constitutional provisions, for they protect an organization against precipitous action and also against over-zealous persons who may call quick meetings when a part of the members of the organization are unable to attend, in order to rush through a certain kind of action which they particularly favor. In a very high-handed manner, and against my express wishes, Dr. Wise proceeded to call such a meeting. I, of course, refused to attend it. The meeting, as I suspected, resulted in nothing except a request that I meet with the heads of the four parties to consider what should be done in case the President persisted in his opposition. I should have been happy to meet with the heads of the parties even though I should not have recognized their mandate from an unauthorized Council meeting which had no legal standing in my eyes, but I had to leave for Washington that very evening immediately after my report to the American Jewish Conference. As you will recall, I rushed from the platform to the train.

I arrived in Washington Monday morning and prepared myself for our interview with Stettinius. This was to be the decisive interview. This was the first personal interview which anyone of us was to have with Stettinius on this subject

since our meeting on November 9, nearly a month previously. If Wagner and I could persuade the Secretary of State that the President was making a colossal blunder in opposing the resolution, that his action would be seriously misinterpreted, that Congressmen and Senators on the Hill were already talking of a "double-cross", that Senator Wagner regarded it as a grave personal embarrassment to himself inasmuch as he had stated publicly when he read the Presidential letter on October 15 that that clears the way for Congressional action -- and more especially, if we could convey through Stettinius to the President that the entire Zionist movement and the entire Jewish people of America were solidly united in wanting action on this resolution which had now been hanging fire for over ten months, and that their hopes which had been raised high by all that had transpired would be dashed to the ground if it became known that the President insisted on a second deferment -- we might succeed in changing the President's mind.

What was our shock and amazement ^{when} we arrived in Mr. Stettinius' office to be shown this telegram sent by Dr. Wise without my knowledge or that of Senator Wagner and without the knowledge of the Council: "IN VIEW OF YOUR MEETING MONDAY WITH SENATOR WAGNER, I WISH TO MAKE MY POSITION AND THAT OF MANY ASSOCIATES UNMISTAKABLY CLEAR. WE WOULD OF COURSE ALL BE HAPPY IF THE CHIEF AND YOU COULD SEE YOUR WAY TO GIVE APPROVAL TO ADOPTION OF PALESTINE RESOLUTION IN BOTH HOUSES. POSTPONEMENT LIKELY TO BE MISUNDERSTOOD BY PUBLIC OPINION WHICH NATURALLY CANNOT BE INFORMED CONCERNING REASONS FOR DELAY. IF HOWEVER CHIEF AND YOU SHOULD STILL FEEL THAT SOME POSTPONEMENT FOR REASONS ALREADY GIVEN I TOGETHER WITH MANY ASSOCIATES DO NOT WISH TO HAVE ACTION TAKEN CONTRARY TO YOUR AND PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION. SITUATION SHOULD UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES BE PERMITTED TO ARISE IN WHICH SENATE COMMITTEE WOULD BE INFORMED OF CHIEF'S OPINION COMMUNICATED THROUGH YOU TO US IN CONFIDENCE. IN THAT CASE IT WOULD BE BEST FOR SENATE COMMITTEE TO POSTPONE ACTION THROUGHOUT THIS SESSION. THIS TELEGRAM IS FOR YOU ALONE. WILL TELEPHONE TOMORROW AFTERNOON AT YOUR CONVENIENCE TO LEARN ABOUT RESULT OF YOUR TALK WITH BOB."

This, of course, was the complete give-away. This told the President that the Jews of America would quickly reconcile themselves to the President's attitude if he persisted in opposing the resolutions, and that Dr. Wise, Chairman of the American Zionist Emergency Council, could be counted upon to defend ^{him.} Considered in retrospect, it is clear that Dr. Wise's telegram sealed the fate of the Palestine Resolution. Regardless of what we said from there on, our case was lost. Our back was broken. We proceeded, of course, to make out our case as effectively as we could. Wagner pleaded that his honor was at stake, and the President was putting him on the spot with his own constituency. The President's position seemed altogether unreasonable. I gave all the arguments at my command. I traced the history of the last ten months. I read to Stettinius the President's letter of October 15, of which he had heard, but which he had never read. He asked for a copy of it. He called in his secretary to be sure to obtain a copy of it immediately. Perhaps the President, he thought, had not been made aware of it since the election. His advisers may not have refreshed his memory. The case, as I presented it, he was kind enough to say, was unanswerable. He would immediately communicate with the President. But I feared that our case was lost. I had seen that very morning, on my way to Stettinius, the reply which the President had sent to Wagner. Only a strong, united front on the part of Zionist and Jewish leadership, a show of strong determination on our part to ask for that which we were entitled to, might have persuaded the President. Dr. Wise's unauthorized telegram, sent on December 3, on the very eve of our critical meeting with Stettinius, exposed our nakedness, revealed our division and confusion of counsel, and was bound to encourage the President to proceed unperturbed on the line which he had decided on. It was Dr. Wise's telegram which contributed largely to the defeat of our resolution in the Congress of the United States. But Dr. Wise's grave responsibility for defeating our resolution does not rest exclusively upon this tragic telegram, as we shall see in a moment.

Stettinius told Wagner and me that he would immediately transmit to the President our case which he had characterized as unanswerable. He also assured us that he would not appear before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, nor would he send any representative.

But when the Senate Committee met on Wednesday, December 6, Stettinius did appear. If there is anyone here that imagines that I had the power to call off the meeting on December 6, he is naive beyond words. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee has a mind and a procedure of its own. It had resolved not to be trifled with in this matter. It should also be recalled that following the meeting of the Committee on November 29, every member of the Foreign Relations Committee had received telegrams from the Presidents of the ZOA, Hadassah, the Mizrachi and the Poale Zion, and from Mr. Monsky for the American Jewish Conference, each in its own way urging favorable action on the resolution. The telegram of Dr. Israel Goldstein, sent on December 5, (please note the date) opened with the statement: "We earnestly urge you to report out favorable the Palestine Resolution for adoption by the present Congress" and concludes "Your committee's favorable action would be deeply appreciated as fulfillment President's magnificent message to last Zionist Organization Convention and overwhelming American opinion as expressed recently in both party platforms." This telegram Dr. Goldstein also released to the press.

Please bear these facts in mind -- as of Tuesday, December 5, the Presidents of all the Zionist parties in the United States were officially urging the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to act, not to defer action! This, in spite of the rump meeting of the Council held in Pittsburgh on Sunday evening, December 3.

These telegrams were the voluntary acts of the heads of the Zionist groups. Clearly they felt called upon in the circumstances to take that action regardless of what might have been their respective views earlier. Political situations are fluid and cannot always be dealt with according to rigid formulae. By sending these telegrams to every member of the Foreign Relations Committee, the signers

actually went far beyond anything that I had done, for my contacts were limited to a few key persons. I am, of course, not reproaching them for action on my own suggestion and urging the Senators to act. But if there was a clear decision against taking such steps and if that decision was binding and unalterable, then clearly the sending of such telegrams by the Presidents of the organizations was either a violation of these decisions or a reversal. I am not a lawyer but only a Zionist who has been trying to do his best in a very difficult and complicated does situation; but it/seem to me that the sending of these telegrams by the heads of the groups after consultation with their associates constituted a ratification on their part of the position I took and the course I was following. These telegrams are a matter of record, and there is no getting around it. If the Resolution had passed, all of us would have shared the credit for that achievement. Now that it has been deferred, the situation is of course different.

At the meeting of the Committee on December 6, Stettinius was visibly embarrassed and ill at ease. He was hard-pressed by the Senators who asked very searching questions based on the record of the party platforms and on the statement of the President which Stettinius could not answer. All that he could say was that the President was opposed to the measure. He had plans of his own for the handling of the matter -- some over-all plans for all the Arab lands including Palestine. He would act in due time. In the meantime he would be embarrassed by Congressional action. Efforts were made by Senators to obtain the text of the letter which Senator Wagner had received from the President, but Senator Wagner refused to disclose it, insisting that it was personal. Senator Clark read the President's October 15 statement. "What has occurred since the issuance of that statement that has so clearly changed the situation?" he asked. Mr. Stettinius was without any satisfactory answer. Senator LaFollette, of Wisconsin, next went into action. He recalled that last Spring, the Senate was prohibited from acting because of military objections of the War Department, submitted through General Marshall, the

Chief of Staff, but "two days later, the President issued his statement to Dr. Silver and Dr. Wise and he made us look like monkeys." Senator Wagner, who had been badgered for several days by New York telephone calls in an effort to have him back-track, stood firm. He insisted that the Committee vote. The Committee was about to vote when one senator, as a good will gesture, asked that the Committee delay its vote for two days, until Friday morning, December 8, to give the President one more opportunity to submit in writing, which would be made public, his reasons for requesting that the Senate should not vote on the resolutions.

It was on this understanding that the Committee adjourned. But as the Committee adjourned, Senator Wagner, in the presence of Stettinius, stated that regardless of the President's statement, if any, he would insist on a vote. Other Senators made similar statements.

It was pretty clear that the President would issue no public statement. It was also clear that only such a public statement would persuade the Committee to refrain from voting. The State Department and Mr. Connally, and perhaps also the President then bethought themselves of another way to achieve their end -- the one last way open to them, and that was to get the Zionists themselves to withdraw their resolution under pressure from the President.

The Zionists were to assume the role of collaborationists to defeat their own resolution! Someone got in touch with Dr. Wise, presumably on Wednesday or early Thursday morning, for by Thursday noon, Senator Connally was informing Senator Taft that his resolution would not pass the Committee because Dr. Wise and the Zionists of New York would soon be heard from. On the afternoon of the same day, Stettinius telephoned Senator Wagner and asked him whether he had already heard from Dr. Wise and the Zionists in New York about withdrawing his resolution. I do not know what was said to Dr. Wise. Dr. Wise didn't take the trouble to apprise me of it. Dr. Wise had taken over the running of the Council's affairs, ignoring the fact that I was still the Chairman of the Executive, that I had neither offered my resignation, nor had it been requested, and that as long as I remained Chairman,

I was at least one of the responsible political heads of the Emergency Council.

As soon as the request was made of Dr. Wise, he lost no time to comply with it. Without my knowledge, or consent, he again called a meeting, in fact two meetings, one on Thursday afternoon, the other on Thursday evening -- both meetings illegally convoked in violation of the constitutional provisions. At these meetings it was voted to send a delegation to Washington to arrange for deferment of the resolutions.

The committee arrived in Washington on Friday morning. The Committee was instructed to see me before they went to the Capitol to persuade me to go along with them. Nothing was to be done until they had spoken to me. But by eight-thirty o'clock in the morning, Dr. Wise had already telephoned Senator Wagner again urging him to ask for deferment.

I tried to make it clear to the committee that it would be committing a colossal and tragic blunder if they would do what they were about to do. We were not ~~px~~ responsible for pressing the resolution. The Senate Committee was pressing for it. We should not assume in the sight of the American public and our own fellow Jews and Zionists the pitiable and unenviable role of coming to Washington officially to request the shelving of a resolution which we had spent nearly a year in urging on the American people and the American Congress. It was not our duty nor our responsibility to ask for deferment. If they thought it necessary, it is sufficient to indicate to Mr. Stettinius and through him to the President, that we are not responsible for pressing the resolution, that the matter is and has been out of our hands.

I told them, furthermore, that the Senate Committee was determined to act. The resolution was not our private property. Many other groups and individuals were interested in it, as well as the Senators themselves who had been urged by their constituencies to do what they regarded as a fine humanitarian act.

As a further indication of our desire to do all that we could to meet the President's position and at the same time not to compromise our own by making

a formal request to shelve the Resolutions or by having them die in the present Congress after the House Committee had acted and our people were eagerly expecting further action, I suggested that perhaps some compromise could be worked out whereby an agreement would be reached with Stettinius that the House would go forward with its Resolution since its Foreign Affairs Committee had already voted it out and that we would then undertake to persuade the senators that in view of this agreement and in view of the President's position, the Senate might defer action on the ground that hearings on the Resolution had not yet been held before that body, or as an alternative, that the Senate Foreign Relations Committee might vote out the Resolution, with the understanding that it would not come to the floor of the Senate for final action at this session.

The Committee which the rump Council meeting sent down thought well of these suggestions and an appointment was made with Stettinius to see him immediately. As I understand it, the Committee made it clear to Stettinius that the Zionists were not pressing for action, that pressure came from the Senate Committee itself. Stettinius informed the Committee that as far as the House was concerned, he was in no position to say anything. As far as the proposed suggestion to the Senate Committee was concerned, he himself thought rather favorably of the idea — said that he would telephone Connally, and as I understand it, suggested that the Committee should go to the Capitol and see Connally. But Senator Connally refused the suggestion out of hand. He told our people that that was not the way the Senate Committee did business. Connally was confident that he had the resolution on the skids, since there had been an agreement reached with Dr. Wise, and the very presence of the Committee indicated to him that his plan and that of the State Department was working out quite satisfactorily. Other members of the Senate Committee, which was in session while your committee was hovering outside its doors, were fully aware of what was going on. The Zionists were divided. The Jews themselves didn't know what they wanted after high-pressuring them for nearly a year to act in behalf of their resolution. And this was only forty-eight hours

after the same Zionist leaders had sent them telegrams urging action on the resolution!

Senator Wagner and Senator Connally were called out of the meeting to listen to proposals and counter-proposals and half-hearted suggestions by your Committee for dropping and not dropping the whole matter, while in the adjoining room Senators of the United States were waiting impatiently to act on our resolution. The Senators were standing by while your representatives were in the next room trying in some confused manner to prevent and not to prevent action on the resolution. Your committee was actually invited by Connally to come into the meeting of the Senate Committee and to tell them what they had told him and Senator Wagner. Fortunately they did not accept this invitation.

The Senate Committee finally got down to the business of considering our resolution. Stettinius who was expected, did not come. Neither did he transmit the requested formal statement from the President. Instead of which a statement was submitted, the statement which was finally issued by the State Department the following Monday, stating that the State Department regarded action on our resolutions as undesirable because of the international situation. This made no impression on the Committee. Senator Connally proposed that the resolution be tabled. This was defeated 11-8 -- the second time that the Committee voted favorably to us. At this point, and before Senator Wagner could move for a direct vote on his resolution, Senator Vandenberg proposed a substitute. This substitute eliminated reference to the word "Jewish" in the phrase "Jewish people" and "Jewish Commonwealth." Because of all the delays and the confusions which had taken place since the first meeting of the Committee on November 29, because of the intensive campaigning which Lessing Rosenwald and his group did among the Senators in the interim, and because some of the Senators had become convinced that the Zionist leaders themselves were divided in their support of the Wagner-Taft Resolution, some of them came to the conclusion that a "watered-down" resolution might be the easiest way ~~out~~ out for

everybody. Several senators who had previously told Wagner that they would go down the line with him, switched over to the Vandenberg substitute. It should be borne in mind that up to this meeting of December/^{8th}there had been no talk of amendments!

The telegram which the heads of the parties sent to the Senators asking that the word "Jewish" be retained before "Commonwealth" had, I am afraid, the opposite effect. It served to point out to the Senators the major point of conflict and disagreement and made them more wary of it. The point had up to that time not been raised by anyone but Senator Austin.

Another unfortunate thing about the telegrams was that Dr. Goldstein chose to make his telegram public. This served notice on the Jewish public that the Zionists of America had accepted the lying interpretation which Lessing Rosenwald had placed on the resolution, as it was adopted by the House Foreign Affairs Committee, as a victory for the Council for Judaism's position. It was public acknowledgment of a Zionist defeat, when in reality it was not a defeat at all but a great victory for our cause. Lessing Rosenwald's group which had suffered one defeat after another during the past year, and for whom this action in Congress was the final and crushing defeat, naturally seized on the straw of the elimination of the word "Jewish" before "Commonwealth," to try to rehabilitate itself and to show to the world that it had scored a victory. The Zionists, through their President, by accepting Rosenwald's utterly perverted interpretation, fell into a miserable trap.

The Vanderberg substitute was carried 10-9. However, because of the closeness of the vote, it was agreed that Senator Vandenberg and Senator Wagner should meet together sometime before 2:30 Monday afternoon and in the meantime see if they could work out a phrasing of the resolution satisfactory to all.

I reported this action to your Committee which had come to Washington. I

told them that it may yet be possible to get a phrasing of the resolution which would be satisfactory to us. We agreed that it would be desirable to call a meeting of the Executive of the Emergency Council in Washington for Monday morning prior to the final meeting of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. I requested Mr. Lourie to call such a meeting.

That same afternoon I met with Senator Vandenberg, who was not fully aware of all the implications of his substitute motion. He felt that the word "Jew" and "Jewish" appeared six times in the preamble and in the resolution, and that to him it appeared somewhat too provocative. But he agreed readily to the suggestion that the resolution should read following the preamble "Resolved that the Senate re-affirm the action of Congress on June 30, 1922, and in conformity therewith, advises the President to use his good offices to the end that the doors of Palestine shall be open for free entry of Jews into that country and that there shall be full opportunity for colonization so that they may as soon as practicable reconstitute Palestine as a free and democratic commonwealth." He asked me to inform Senator Wagner that this revision was entirely agreeable to him. There was still the prospect that in further conference the word "Jewish" might be substituted for "they."

That same afternoon I ^{was} called by Mr. Lourie who said that Dr. Wise wanted a meeting either on Saturday or Sunday evening to talk over the situation. I told Mr. Lourie that I had no objection if our friends wanted to talk over what had transpired. I personally could not attend such a meeting as I had been away from my pulpit for two successive Sundays and must, out of deference to my own duties at the Temple, occupy my pulpit that week-end. Perhaps Mr. Lourie did not fully understand me, but this was taken to mean that I had consented to a special meeting of the plenum of the Council. Why my consent was necessary in the first place, I could not understand, since meetings had been called by Dr. Wise during the week not only without my consent, but in opposition to my clearly expressed wishes. In any event, I ~~was~~ passed on through Mr. Lourie the request that no action

should be taken since we would meet on Monday in Washington and I would then have the opportunity to participate in the deliberations.

A meeting was accordingly held on Saturday night which I understand lasted to the wee hours of the morning. Attempts, I understand, were made to put through resolutions to repudiate me and my action. Actually no action was taken.

On Monday morning, ^{the} Executive of the Zionist Emergency Council met in Washington. At this meeting I gave a tentative report. I succeeded in persuading the members not to register any formal objection to the passage of our resolution! I need not now re-state the reasons which I gave. The Executive Committee agreed and, in so doing, reversed the decision taken at the unauthorized meeting of the Council, December 7! Instead, our Executive considered a proposal to request Stettinius (an appointment with him had previously been made by Dr. Wise) to issue a statement (a) that his appearance before the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee in opposition to our resolution is in no wise to be construed as indicating that the State Department is not in accord with the line of clear policy laid down by the President on October 15, and (b) that if we agreed to the deferment of our resolution the State Department would raise no objections to it when it would be re-introduced in the next Congress. I approved the first part and strongly opposed the second part, and the Committee agreed to eliminate it. It was then suggested that I accompany Dr. Wise to the interview with Stettinius. Dr. Goldstein and Mr. Shulman joined the delegation. In the cab on the way over, Dr. Wise made sure to destroy that part of our draft proposal which suggested postponement of our resolution. Mr. Stettinius thought favorably of the suggested statement and said that he would take it up with the President. Dr. Wise said that he would send him a corrected draft of the suggested statement.

It was now an hour or two before the scheduled meeting of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. The Committee met at 2:30. The version agreed on by Wagner and Vandenberg was presented, and while the committee was discussing it,

Mr. Stettinius made a second appearance before it. He brought a personal plea from the President not to act on the resolution. He read, too, a telegram which had been sent to the President on November 19, from a group of Moslem societies in Cairo. A copy of this telegram Mr. Stettinius, at the request of the President, forwarded to Dr. Wise and to me on December 13. It had evidently made a great impression on the President, for echoes of it are found in his letter to Senator Wagner.

The telegram reads as follows:

"To the President of the United States

Franklin D. Roosevelt

The White House

Washington.

1. The Arabs, who are anxious to maintain cordial relations with America, do not wish to attach great importance to certain declarations regarding Palestine which were made during the recent political campaign, for they realize, on the one hand, that these declarations were made in abnormal circumstances, and they consider on the other hand, that the declarations contradict the spirit of justice sponsored by you and by the noble American Nation, and are prejudicial to the cause of peace for which America is fighting. Moreover, they are contrary to the right of Arabs to live freely in their own country.

"The American political campaign is now over, and Arabs expect you, Mr. President, to dispel their fears, restore their faith in American justice, and draw closer the bonds of friendship planted by American schools and nurtured by American teachings and doctrines in the Middle East.

"2. No country in the world has suffered a greater injustice than Palestine. From time immemorial it has been an Arab country. Jews entered it as invaders and only occupied it for a short time; for they were constantly at war with the aborigines, and other invaders soon drove them out until the Arabs, more than thirteen centuries ago, finally liberated the country and settled it.

"3. Palestine is, by the will of God and the patriotism of its people, an Arab country and will forever remain so. Seventy million Arabs, supported by three hundred million Moslems, are determined to redeem it with their lives. Neither the Balfour Declaration, nor the declarations of statesmen and the power of Zionism employing various measures of force and coercion can change the course of history or dissuade Arabs from defending Palestine and checking the tide of Zionism.

"4. Arabs have always sympathized with Jews in their afflictions in past, mediaeval and modern times and history bears witness to this fact. But Zionism has met this kindness by conspiring against Arabs and attempting to wrest Palestine from them. This has naturally led to feuds and bitter feeling which have left no hope of reconciliation or mutual understanding.

"5. The project of installing Jews in Palestine will undoubtedly lead to permanent conflicts which will not only come to an end by one people destroying the other, not only in Palestine but in the whole East as well. This fact is worthy of your attention and the attention of all those who are anxious to establish universal peace and tranquillity in the future.

"6. Arabs cannot believe that Democratic America is capable of helping usurpers, encouraging injustice, sacrificing her reputation, repudiating her mission in this world, discarding her friendship with the Arab world, and foregoing the moral and material interests which she has in Arab and Moslem countries, all for the sake of a race which is widely scattered in the world, and which only relies on the power of money for the realization of its designs.

"For the above reasons, Arabs meeting in Congress hope that you will uphold them in their own country and that Zionism will be given no support by you, your Government or your people."

"(Signed)

"THE ARAB UNION SOCIETY,
Fouad Abaza Pasha, President
Assad Dagher, Secretary General

"THE YOUNG MEN'S MOSLEM ASSOCIATION
Dr. Dardiri, Secretary General

"EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE INTERNATIONAL ARAB
PARLIAMENTARY UNION CONFERENCE,
Mohamed Aly Allouba Pasha, President.

"EL-IKHWAN AL-MUSLIMIN
Hassan El-Banna, President.

"MOSLEM SOFIE SECTS,
Shaikh El-Sayed Ahmed Al-Bakri, President.

"HIGHER COMMITTEE FOR THE DEFENSE OF PALESTINE.
Hamed El-Meligui Bey, Secretary General."

Stettinius stated to the committee that the State Department would assume full responsibility for the deferment of action. This had the effect of persuading some of the Senators, and a resolution to postpone action for the time being was carried by a vote of 11-8. It is significant that in this vote of 11-8, the Chairman had to include two votes of absentee members, one that of Senator Glass, who has not been in the Senate for nearly two years.

How the members of the Committee actually felt about the whole business is indicated by a Round Robin which twelve of the Senators -- seven Democrats and five Republicans, constituting two-thirds of the Senators who actually participated in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee meeting, signed the very next day. This declaration read as follows:

"Although the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, at the request of the State Department, postponed action for the time being on the Palestine Resolution, ~~xx~~ we wish to record our own personal approval of the Resolution which calls for the free entry of Jews in to Palestine and full opportunity for colonization so that the Jewish people may as soon as practicable reconstitute Palestine as a free and democratic commonwealth."

II

Taking stock of our situation as of to-day, following the postponement of our resolution I should like to make the following observations. We have suffered a set-back. There is no doubt about that. But it is not as serious as some have assumed.

Suppose what had transpired in the last few weeks had not taken place. Suppose nothing has been done in connection with our Resolutions in the House and in the Senate. What would have happened? The Resolutions would have died in the present Congress. It is naive to assume that nobody would have made any inquiries as to why the Resolutions were not acted upon. The whole country had been stirred up to the very last days of the present Congress to demand and to expect action. As I indicated earlier, to the very last days telegrams and petitions were pouring into Washington, many of them from the hands of Zionist leaders, pressing for action. Some satisfactory explanation would have had to be given. What could we say? That we regarded the President's statement on October 15 and the political platforms as sufficient and there was no longer any need for the resolutions? Then why in the world did we keep on pressing for the resolutions after October 15 with the full knowledge and approval of the Zionist Emergency Council? Why did the ZOA Convention in Atlantic City, following the President's statement, ask for Congressional action? Why did we ask Congressmen and Senators all over the country to pledge themselves before election to vote for our resolutions? No, that explanation would not hold water. We would then have to say that the State Department and the President had requested us to defer action and that we complied. This would have called forth indignant inquiries as to why the State Department and the President asked for deferment; the same

indignant inquiries which are now being made and on top of it the Zionist leadership would have been roundly condemned for having consented to such action.

Our enemies certainly would have made maximum capital of the situation. Congress, in spite of all the urging and prompting of the Zionists, refused to act. The Arabs would have hailed that as a great triumph, for they had appealed directly to Congress not to act on our Resolutions and Congress complied with their request. Anti-Zionists in the United States would have had a field day at this major defeat.

But how do we stand now as the result of what has transpired in the last few weeks? There was no actual rejection of our resolution by the Congress of the United States.

On the contrary. Every indication is conclusive that the Congress was prepared to approve of it. The House Foreign Affairs Committee actually approved of it, and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, as evidenced by the Round Robin, which the Senators signed, had a majority and more than a majority to approve it. The President, had the resolution deferred. We have not lost ground therefore with the American people, with American public opinion and with the legislative representatives of our country. The action of deferment has been severely criticized by the public press. There has hardly been anywhere an approval of its action. It has not convinced the American people. These are fact, and these true facts should be stressed and driven home to our people and to the American people generally. We should not talk of the defeat of our resolution - even if some of us are anxious to discredit this or that leader. It will do great hurt to Zionist morale. Every Zionist body will suffer.

As far as the President is concerned, future events will show that we have gained rather than lost ground. The report which has been widely spread that the President is angry at what has happened, as far as I know, rests on no evidence. It appears to be either a surmise or an interpretation calculated to create a panic

mood in our ranks and force through certain action which certain people have agreed upon. As part of this panic campaign one must point to the memorandum which Dr. Nahum Goldmann sent me, and the contents of which he revealed to a press conference. It concerned the request which we made of Mr. Stettinius on December 11 to issue a statement declaring that his appearance before the Senate Committee did not indicate a divergence from the policy announced by the President in his October 15 letter to Senator Wagner.

I was a member of the committee which called upon Mr. Stettinius to request that statement. The reply of Mr. Stettinius was not given in writing to the Council, but orally to Dr. Goldmann and Dr. Wise who happened to be calling on the Secretary of State on another mission. Dr. Goldmann sent me the following memorandum a few days later:

"Mr. Stettinius called Dr. Wise and me into his room before meeting with the delegation. He told us that he had been in touch with the President about the statement which we had suggested he should issue. He said that the President was in a very bad mood because we had gone ahead with the resolutions and instead of acquiescing in his request to hold the matter up for the time being, had sought to bring pressure to bear through the Senate. He felt that the Zionists had lost confidence in him, and Mr. Stettinius said that in the circumstances it was difficult to discuss such questions with him at this time. It would not be possible for him (Mr. S.) to issue the latter suggested."

I was surprised and disturbed by this report for in my two previous contacts with Mr. Stettinius there was no indication whatsoever given that the President was in a very bad mood or that he felt that the Zionists had lost confidence in him.

In preparation for my official report to the Emergency Council, which was to be given on December 20, and in order not to do any injustice either to the Secretary of State or to the President, I made inquiries as to whether this memorandum of Dr. Goldmann correctly represented what Mr. Stettinius had said,

and whether perhaps he had been misquoted, or misunderstood.

I received a reply to the effect that Dr. Goldmann's memorandum "was not quite in accordance with the Secretary's record. The Secretary told Dr. Wise that he had been in touch with the President as he had ~~x~~ offered to do regarding the statement which Dr. Wise and Dr. Silver had requested him to make. The reaction that Mr. Stettinius obtained was that the President felt that this group should have confidence in his handling of the matter and that it would not be appropriate for Mr. Stettinius to issue the statement. Mr. Stettinius asked Dr. Wise if he would be good enough to give this information to Dr. Silver."

This, of course, is a radically different version from that of Dr. Goldmann's. There is nothing here about the President being ⁱⁿ a very bad mood, or feeling that the Zionists had lost confidence in him.

The President, by his action forcing Congress to postpone our resolution, has publicly assumed a solemn and grave responsibility towards our cause in the sight both of Congress and of the American people. In so many words the President told Congress, through his Secretary of State who spoke in his name; "Leave the entire matter to me! Don't do anything yourself! I will take care of the matter fully! You can trust me to look after the interest of free Jewish immigration into Palestine and of the Jewish Commonwealth when the proper time~~x~~ comes." Prior to that moment, we had the pre-election promise from the President, which unfortunately many persons here and abroad had discounted as an election promise. The Arabs had done so publicly and repeatedly. Now, as a result of what happened in Washington, we are entitled to take the position that there is now a new commitment by the President through the Congress of the United States, on the basis of which that body was persuaded not to take action of its own. His intervention could be justified only on that assumption. If wisely and skillfully utilized, this development can be used as a most effective means to urge the President into action. Without such urging he has not moved in the past and is not ~~x~~ likely to move in the future.

It is therefore tactically false on our part to unload all the responsibility for the deferment on our resolution unto the State Department, which as we all know is quite innocent in the whole matter. On the contrary it should be clearly and widely stated that it was the President himself who asked for the deferment on the ground that he felt that such action at this time would embarrass him. He may have been wrong in thinking so. Some of us believe that he was wrong. But that was his judgment. He has promised Congress to look after our interests at the proper time, and because of this promise Congress was persuaded, against its own will, to postpone action on our resolution. The President has asked that we have confidence in him. We shall now eagerly and earnestly wait for the fulfillment of that promise. We would feel outraged if we were let down, but we do not expect to be let down.

This is clearly the line to follow in our press and in our propaganda -- not to heap abuse on the State Department or on Mr. Stettinius who, as we know, acted only as the mouthpiece of the President. Nor to shield the President by spiriting him out of this drama in which he was the chief actor, nor by flagellating ourselves or attempting to sacrifice this or that Zionist leader as a scapegoat for sins which we did not commit.

What has transpired in recent weeks should help further to clear away in our own minds, as the responsible leaders of our movement, certain delusions about the President which some of us have chosen to entertain and some of us have so assiduously cultivated throughout the years.

The President is not sold on Palestine. He does not understand our movement. I doubt whether he has read a single memorandum which we have sent to him. He ~~z~~ entertains towards our movement the same attitude of general good will and uninvolved benignancy which he entertains towards a dozen other worthy causes, but having no intention of pressing for them vigorously on the international scene.

Engrossed as he is in a global war, he cannot be counted on to go out of his way for us unless he is goaded and prodded into it by the pressure of public opinion and by a real and earnest insistence on the part of a determined and not easily appeased Jewish community.

The President wishes to let the Palestine issue ride as long as possible, perhaps until the end of the war not only in the West but in the East. In this he probably shares the views of Churchill. In some vague way he hopes some day when he meets Ibn Saud to make some quid pro quo arrangement whereby the Jews will get something nice in Palestine. He does not know at the moment when he will meet Ibn Saud and what he will ask of Ibn Saud when he meets him, as far as Jewish Palestine is concerned. When the meeting finally takes place, if ever, the President is likely to be guided, I am afraid, by the experts in the Near East Division who as you know are bitterly anti-Zionist. The President is still greatly impressed with the united Arab opposition to our Movement and the fact, as he wrote to Senator Wagner, "that there are a half-million Jews in Palestine and on the other side a massacre seventy million Moslems out to cut their throats, and that/must be avoided. He wants nothing said or done over here for it will add fuel to the flames."

Actually we have never had an opportunity to sit down with the President and to discuss with him adequately the Palestine question and the political realities of the situation. We had expected to have such an opportunity in August. But it didn't come off. The last attempt to do so we made in October, at your direction. The purpose we had in mind, the purpose which I certainly had in mind, was not merely to secure another message, however good, to a Zionist gathering; but to attempt at long last to come to grips with the problem of official policy and to explore with the President the directions in which he might be induced to move. That also mis-carried through no fault of mine. I will refer to the Presidential message a little later on.

The President will, I believe, in the last analysis, follow Churchill's lead. He is not likely to take the initiative or go beyond Churchill. Unfortunately Churchill has come to feel strongly the opposition to our cause within his own Cabinet, his own party, and within military circles. He is turning for support and reinforcement to the United States and to President Roosevelt. One of the reasons, you will recall, which moved many of us at one of the meetings of our Emergency Council to want Congressional action was the revelation in Dr. Weizmann's letter reporting on his last interview with Churchill how eagerly the Prime Minister was waiting for American show of support. President Roosevelt's present grasp, or lack of grasp of our problem and his unwillingness to move energetically in our behalf -- for it is clear that if he were willing, he would most assuredly have welcomed action in Congress, action which could do nothing but strengthen his hands -- do not auger well for us. We will not improve the situation by stifling all criticism of the President, by shielding and justifying him on all occasions. This, I am afraid, is what he has come to count upon in all his relations with the Jewish people. His Administration did very little, next to nothing, during these tragic years in the field of rescue and refugee help, in spite of the great clamor which we made, but the Jews of America criticized everyone but him. Why should it be difficult to get the Zionists to adopt a similar attitude? In my humble judgment there is need for a franker, more realistic and down-to-earth relationship between the President and the Zionists of the United States -- a new relationship which might have come long ago but for a tendency in Jewish life to cling to old-fashioned and bankrupt mah yafit Shtadlanut in Washington which went by the name of political action and statesmanship, and got us nothing.

Our only hope lies in making the President and his advisors realize that the Zionists do not and cannot approve his failure and that of his Administration

to act for five long years on the infamous "White Paper, that they are very unhappy about his ukase to the Senate not to act on a resolution which called for the free entry of Jews into Palestine and for a Jewish Commonwealth, that they have submitted to his judgment with great misgivings, that the Zionists have a right to know what is in the President's mind and in the mind of the State Department with reference to Jewish aspirations in Palestine. The hour is late, the air is full of plans, proposals and counter-proposals. So far we have had nothing from our Government but two official prohibitions against a pro-Zionist resolution in Congress on the one hand, and his own statement, which he was unwilling to have Congress endorse!

Those who say that our political strategy is to keep the President always sweet-tempered, to explain away his every error and bad judgment in relation to our cause, and to say "yea" and "nay" whenever he says "yea" or "nay" are, in my humble judgment, terribly in the wrong. To criticize the President is not to attack him. He is being criticized by friends and by members of his own party frequently for what they regard as wrong policies or bad appointments, or political mistakes. So is Mr. Churchill criticized by his friends frequently. The President will gain respect for us and will lend a more attentive ear to us if we grow in independence and in dignified insistence on what we believe to be morally due us. The President must be made aware that there is a critical judgment to satisfy, an appraising eye and an uncompromising determination on the part of the Jews in the United States and non-Jews, as well, who want to see full justice to Jewish Palestine, and count upon the President because of the grave commitments he has made and the responsibility which he has voluntarily assumed to do his utmost to see that this justice is done.

We must always bear in mind that the President is constantly subject to conflicting pressures of all kinds from all quarters on all subjects. He is accustomed to it; it is his daily bread. Moreover, we are assured by some who know

him best that he constantly takes these pressures and influences into account and his action is often the composite resultant of these various pressures. That is natural; that is human. This is true also in the matter of Palestine. Do not deceive yourselves. Apart from such pressure as we exert from time to time, there are always other pressures which our adversaries are exerting in one form or another. The Arabs, British influences, American anti-Zionists, Jewish anti-Zionists and the President's letter of December 3 to Senator Wagner clearly reflects this ~~xx~~ situation. Does anyone really think that if Zionist pressure were removed, we would gain by it? Or would not the inevitable result be that combined and continuous pressure from our adversaries would push the President further and further away from a pro-Zionist line?

I want to make it perfectly clear so that there may be no misunderstanding: I do not mean that we must attack him or that we deal with him tactlessly. Such pressure as we may find it advisable to exert from time to time must be well and wisely considered and we must be sure of our ground. It must be legitimate and appropriate. Surely no one will assert that the proposed action by Congress, repeating in substance what the President himself had said only a few weeks earlier, could be regarded by any reasonable person as being unreasonable or inappropriate. On the contrary, the veto imposed by the Administration was not reasonable in the circumstances. In this matter it is we who are the aggrieved party, not the President, and Mr. Roosevelt as a reasonable man must himself recognize this to be true. That is the only position which we can take as self-respecting men and representatives of a self-respecting movement.

III

What has transpired in Washington in the last few weeks points up again the consequences which flow from dual or multiple leadership in our Emergency Council. I am persuaded that had the conduct of our affairs been left in my hands and had the members of this body remained united behind me, we could have accomplished both objectives, persuaded the President to change his mind, and had the resolution adopted by the Congress of the United States. Cleavage and cross-currents in our ranks have again led to frustration, even as competition for control and prestige led to serious crises in our Council before.

Last August I felt constrained to send in my resignation to this body. At that time it was the case of Dr. Goldmann who carried on independent political work, forestalling us and getting in our way. In October it was the case of Dr. Wise acting on his own, again without the authority of the Emergency Council, in fact in clear contravention to the instruction of the Emergency Council which was that the ZOA should not request a message from the President for its Convention but that the contemplated interview with the President should be devoted to a serious discussion of Palestine, the threat of partition, etc. A request for an interview with the President had been made by Dr. Wise and myself. Dr. Wise on his own, and without my knowledge, arranged for a private interview with the President at which time he requested a statement to be read at the ZOA CONVENTION. As reported in the papers the following morning, the statement which he received from the President was a thoroughly bad one. It read that the President, as a candidate, gives his full support to the Democratic Party plank, with emphasis on the words "as a candidate," upon which the President insisted, as I learned later on. It was only by quick thinking and quick action that I obtained that very day a full endorsement of the Jewish Commonwealth and a promise to work for it if elected,

from Governor Dewey, which forced the hand of the President and made him revise his position twice, with Mr. Shulman and others spending close on to \$400, in telephonic communications with Senator Wagner and the White House to achieve the result. The letter to Senator Wagner which was read at the Zionist Convention was actually no letter, but a composite of telegrams, copies of which you may be interested to see. This letter which was hailed and for purposes of our propaganda, it was most desirable to hail as a great political triumph, was obviously a pre-election promise wrested by force from an unwilling President. That his heart was not in it, that he would have preferred not have issued it, is evidenced by his determined opposition six weeks later to have the Congress of the United States endorse the position which he publicly took on October 15, also by his note to Senator Wagner of December 4.

That entire episode was the product of unauthorized and independent action on the part of Dr. Wise and a few of his confidants. It was also secretive, as far as I was concerned. Dr. Wise informed me neither of his going to the White House, of what he was going to discuss with the President, nor after the meeting what he had discussed with the President. Dr. Wise to this day has not given an explanation to the Emergency Council of why he went in countervention to the Council's instruction, and what transpired, not why he did not inform the Executive Chairman of what had transpired. At the meeting of our Executive on October 12, some of you expressed your indignation at this procedure but not those who are today so much agitated at what they regard a contravention of a Council decision. There the matter rested. No action was taken.

A similar unfortunate situation which led to considerable embarrassment occurred in February of last year, when at the instruction of the Emergency Council as of January 13, an appointment was requested with the President. Such an appointment was finally arranged for us for Wednesday February 2. We were at that time greatly disturbed by reports which reached us from London of an imminent announcement of a new policy for Palestine based on partition. But Dr. Wise who had a lecture tour scheduled on the Pacific Coast, asked General Watson to postpone

that interview to February 14. This done without my knowledge and without the knowledge of the Emergency Council, some of whose members greatly resented this fact. Had we seen the President on February 2, as arranged, possibly the fate of our resolution might have been different.

Furthermore, while we were planning to see the President on Zionist affairs, Dr. Goldmann, and I assume with the knowledge of Dr. Wise, was negotiating with Judge Rosenman to have non-Zionists and members of the American Jewish Committee included in this appointment. On February 3, we received a letter from General Watson, Aide to the President, stating that the President "had agreed to receive on February 14 Dr. Wise, Dr. Silver, Dr. Goldmann, Mr. Monsky, Mr. Blaustein, Mr. Proskauer, Mr. Held." The letter went on to say: "I understand this conference has been requested of the President in order to discuss the continuance of immigration into Palestine and the settlement of the refugees therein. Will you please notify me of your ability to attend at this time?"

The Council voted that we should not attend such a meeting and the meeting was finally called off to the embarrassment of every one. Working at cross-purposes, we had entangled ourselves in an unfavorable situation. We did not meet with the President until March 9 at a meeting which I requested, following the deferment of action on our Resolution as the result of the intervention of the War Department. Thus, in practically every important activity of ours during the year, the duality or multiplicity of leadership resulted in confusion and frustration.

When I assumed the chairmanship of the Executive of this Council, and co-chairmanship with Dr. Wise of the full Council, it was with the clear understanding that the active direction of the political work of our Emergency Council would be vested with me. There could not have been any doubt about this thing in the mind of Dr. Wise for he had twice appealed to me in the presence of Dr. Weizmann, Dr. Goldmann, Mr. Lipsky and others to assume that leadership, because of the low state into which the political work of our movement had fallen.

I twice declined, knowing of the nucleus of opposition to me which existed within the Council. I was finally persuaded to defy this small group for the sake of the cause, to assume the leadership. I made it very clear to Dr. Wise in a letter which I addressed to him on July 29, 1943, from which I am quoting:

"Both you and Dr. Weizmann approached me some months ago with the request to take over the direction of the political work of our movement. You felt, as many of us have felt right along, that there has been an unfortunate confusion, in efficiency, over-lapping and cross-purposes in our political work and that the situation called for complete reorganization and above all for centralization of authority. Both you and Dr. Weizmann as well as Mr. Lipsky and others asked me to take over this work. I demurred knowing of the determined opposition of some of the men who today control the administration of the ZOA. I told you that while I was willing to fight for Zionism, I was not willing to start a fight with Zionists for the privilege of serving the cause. You appealed to me to take over the work on the ground that you yourself are heavily encumbered with many other responsibilities, and are tired..."

"When you told me yesterday over the telephone that you have been persuaded to retain the chairmanship of the Zionist Emergency Committee, I was somewhat bewildered. If it was your intention to remain in that important post, neither I nor anyone else would have considered supplanting you. The office is yours by right of service and achievement in the movement. But I assumed all along that you earnestly wished to be relieved of it. It was on the basis of that understanding that I participated in the discussions in the last few months looking towards a reorganization. If now you feel that you wish to retain that office not in an honorary, but in an active capacity, I wish you would let me know definitely, and in making my reply to the draft letter addressed to me, I will say that Dr. Wise

Wise is head of the political emergency work of the movement and there is no need for drafting me or anyone else, and that as far as the Presidency of the ZOA is concerned, I never sought that office, and I find opportunities for my Zionist services in other fields..."

So that when on August 9, 1943, Dr. Wise, Dr. Goldstein and I signed an agreement in Dr. Wise's study stating "that with the concurrence of all parties, Dr. Abba Hillel Silver, Chairman of the United Palestine Appeal, for long one of the most distinguished figures in Zionism, will be summoned to leadership in the sphere of political affairs by becoming the co-Chairman with me of the American Emergency Committee for Zionist Affairs, and assuming also the Chairmanship of its Executive Committee, the body responsible for the centralized direction of our political efforts," Dr. Wise knew fully what I meant by leadership and by centralized direction. He understood fully that I would not assume the role of a vice-President to him or that he would retain the same authority in the political field which was his before he and others invited me to assume the political direction of our work.

Unfortunately, as soon as the reorganization of our Council began to show results and new life was infused into it, Dr. Wise evidently changed his mind and progressively during the year, began to re-assert his primary position, and towards the end, to act as though I was a secondary and almost negligible officer. I have never accepted Dr. Wise's unilateral interpretation of his role and mine in this Council, and I do not now. The attitude of the ZOA officials who are also representatives on this Council towards me and my work is also well known to you. It acted as an opposition bloc throughout -- at times boldly, at other times covertly.

Already at the Zionist Convention in Atlantic City he and his little cabal were preparing the way for my elimination. The resolutions Committee of the Convention had prepared a resolution which whole-heartedly endorsed my administration. It called for a continuation of the dynamic and successful progress of the Emergency Council "under the present leadership." At a subsequent meeting, Dr. Goldstein

demanded the elimination of the words "under the present leadership." He made that request, he said, in the name of Dr. Wise with whom he had spoken by telephone in New York. I stated, of course, that as far as I was concerned, I intended to hold my office not a single day longer than the Emergency Council wished me to, and that, of course, I would agree to the elimination of the words "under the present leadership."

The ZOA Administration had a difficult time at the plenary session of the Convention to put through the resolution without the words, "under the present leadership." I personally had to step forward and beg the delegates to agree to the omission of those words. But I and my friends knew all along what was in the mind of Dr. Goldstein and his clique.

Many will recall the fight which raged at the ZOA Convention in Atlantic City about my annual report which the administration was determined to schedule at the very end of the Convention when most of the delegates would have gone home, in order to make small change of it. Dr. Goldstein had to yield to the pressure from the delegates but the whole miserable affair was another result of the embittered and envenomed policy of undermining, belittling and discrediting which Dr. Goldstein and his friends had been carrying on throughout the year.

It is clear, however, that this body cannot any longer continue to operate on that basis or we will be going steadily from bad to worse.

I would suggest that a committee representing all parties be appointed to look into this situation closely, to make a careful study of our organizational structure with an eye to the greater efficiency and the smoother functioning of our Council, and to bring in a report for our consideration. This, I regard as of vital importance.