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American Zionist Policy Committee, confidential bulletin, 1946.

AMERICAN ZIONIST POLICY COMMITTEE
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C O N F I D E N T I A L B U L L E T I N

This is the first of a series of information bulletins which will be sent to members of the National Council of the American Zionist Policy Committee. The purpose of these bulletins is to keep you posted so that you may be in a better position to deal with questions which arise from time to time.

"PEACE, PEACE AND THERE IS NO PEACE"

Now that the war in Europe is over and the San Francisco Conference drawing toward its close, Zionists are inquiring more insistently than ever why there is no peace in American Zionism. More than a month has passed since Dr. Goldstein, President of the ZOA, named a one-sided committee to explore the possibilities of restoring unity; but in all this time nothing has been heard concerning the activity of this committee. The nature of its "explorations", if any, has been kept a dark secret. The position taken by the American Zionist Policy Committee when it expressed no confidence in the ZOA "peace committee" appears to be thoroughly justified by all that has transpired in connection with the move, which we briefly review.

The "peace committee" was created only after strong pressure had been exerted on the ZOA Administration by Zionists throughout the country. Equally strong was the pressure of public opinion reflected in the Jewish press. It was particularly difficult for the Administration to ignore resolutions adopted by Region after Region and the telegram signed by 146 prominent Zionists demanding unity and the recall of Dr. Silver. The Administration found it necessary to make a gesture which it hoped would sit well with the Zionist rank and file. Accordingly, at the meeting of the Executive Committee on April 1st, a resolution was adopted calling for the appointment of a committee. Unquestionably many members of the Executive Committee were quite sincere in voting for this proposal. But the motives and intentions of the small clique which controls the organization behind the scenes were not so clear. The day following the meeting, the action of the Executive Committee was given to the press in a release full of insinuations and open attacks directed against Dr. Silver and the Policy Committee. It was aptly described at the time as an "olive branch studded with thorns and emitting an unsavory odor." Suspicions were unfortunately confirmed when the makeup of the "peace committee" was announced by Dr. Goldstein. It was neither neutral nor bi-partisan in its composition, but packed with outspoken opponents of Dr. Silver and without a single representative of our group.

Although the motion passed on April 1st was sponsored by the Administration, it is reliably reported that one member of the Executive Committee openly opposed it, insisting that the matter should be taken up by the Emergency Council. This solitary opponent of the peace move was Mr. Herman Shulman, who in the Emergency Council now occupies the powerful key position of Chairman of its Administrative Committee - a new body set up as part of the "reorganization" of the Emergency Council last December. At a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Emergency Council which took place a few days following the meeting of the ZOA Executive, a proposal was put forward by a representative of Mizrachi that a committee be appointed by the Council to seek ways and means of recalling Dr. Silver to active service and leadership. But this proposal was promptly squelched, the ZOA representatives voting against it. It was subsequently renewed by Mizrachi on another occasion with the same result.

The situation in the Emergency Council seems to be as follows: the ZOA contingent has been waiting ostensibly for the ZOA "peace committee" to complete its "exploration." The Mizrachi have moved repeatedly for peace. The Poale Zion party appears to be divided on the issue, with its majority still holding out for the status quo. Their position is strongly influenced by the fact that under the present setup Mr. Chaim Greenberg is Chairman of the Executive Committee, though the importance of that office has been greatly reduced by the creation of an Administrative Committee. The Hadassah representatives appear to be the strongest backers of Mr. Shulman, who, as Chairman of the Administrative Committee, is in active charge of political affairs and in that sense the real successor to Dr. Silver. By the same token, the majority of Hadassah's representatives are the most strenuous opponents of any peace move.

It is reported that the ZOA "peace committee" has had one or two secret meetings and worked out a so-called "compromise proposal" which was bound to be unacceptable to Dr. Silver and his supporters. It was probably thought that the announcement of the "compromise offer" and its anticipated rejection by our group would clear the ZOA Administration in the eyes of the rank and file and help the Administration to regain the confidence they have lost; but even this "compromise" was frowned upon by the present officers of the Council and by the Hadassah leaders. The "peace committee" has therefore been marking time.

That the ZOA leaders did not take their own peace move seriously is clearly indicated by the fact that Dr. Goldstein and others have been touring the country and continuing their unbridled attacks upon Dr. Silver and his supporters. Dr. Goldstein has been particularly active in this regard on the Pacific Coast and elsewhere, making venomous and baseless accusations, so many and so varied that it is difficult to catch up with them. Surveying the whole picture and taking all facts into consideration, the conclusion is inescapable that the whole peace move was little more than a maneuver by which the Administration hoped to placate their constituents and ensure their own continuance in office and power. But apparently the maneuver is not working out.

CONDITIONS OF PEACE

If this analysis is correct, it is unlikely that a peace offer of any kind will emerge. Nevertheless the Administration may be forced to make a new attempt or at least a new gesture because of the steady deterioration of the political situation and the increasingly ominous outlook. From the mood of excessive optimism which the present leadership helped to generate last fall, the movement has been passing into a mood close to despair after Yalta and Cairo, the death of President Roosevelt, the course of the San Francisco Conference and the termination of the European war without the slightest indication of a change of policy regarding Palestine. It is therefore important to bear in mind the only conditions under which it would be possible for Dr. Silver to return if and when he is approached. The indispensable conditions can be briefly stated as follows:

- 1) The restoration of Dr. Silver to active political leadership - in accordance with the original understanding reached in August 1943, which contemplated placing in his hands the "centralized direction" of our political efforts.
- 2) The creation of such conditions within the Emergency Council as will enable Dr. Silver to carry out effectively the militant policies ardently desired by the great body of American Zionists. Obviously it would be senseless for Dr. Silver to assume the heavy responsibility of leadership in most difficult circumstances without the assurance of adequate support and cooperation in the Council.

3) The assurance that the Administration of the ZOA will cooperate fully and will sincerely abandon its past tactics.

In other words, the ZOA administration must frankly face the fact that they have been going counter to the views and wishes of their constituents, thereby forfeiting the confidence of the rank and file, and make a sincere effort to create an entirely new situation within the organization and the American Zionist movement. If they have not learned their lesson, the struggle will have to continue until the will of American Zionists prevails.

ANOTHER MANEUVER TO BLOCK PEACE?

There has been considerable excitement within the American Zionist Emergency Council over a proposed amendment to the Council's Constitution which was presented on the recommendation of the Administrative Committee, of which Mr. Shulman is chairman. The amendment states that "elections of officers shall take place annually at a meeting of the Council of which at least two weeks notice shall be given and which shall be held not later than December 1st of each year."

While this proposed amendment is open to varying interpretations, there is little doubt in the minds of those on the inside that it is designed to block the return of Dr. Silver and unity in Zionist ranks. When the amendment was first presented to the Council on April 16th, some members pointed out that its adoption would be generally regarded as proof of the unwillingness of the present leadership to bring about peace. It was also emphasized that a two-thirds majority vote is required for its passage.

The amendment did not receive the necessary majority, following which it was decided to ballot by mail. At this writing, it is unlikely that proponents of the amendment will secure its passage, but this is another indication of the determination of Dr. Silver's opponents to employ various devices in order to create a "legal basis" for ignoring the will of American Zionists.

LEWISOHN STADIUM RALLY

As you have probably heard by this time, Dr. Silver was among the speakers at the impressive Palestine Rally which was held on Sunday, April 29th, in Lewisohn Stadium, New York City. Dr. Silver's powerful and superb address was the outstanding feature of the meeting and was wildly acclaimed by the audience of 60,000 men and women. The announcement that Dr. Silver would participate occasioned no little speculation as to whether the present Zionist leadership was making a gesture toward unity. The listing of Dr. Silver's name among the speakers also surprised many of his supporters, who felt that an invitation to participate in the demonstration was not in keeping with the declared attitude of the present leadership towards Dr. Silver.

The facts are as follows: Dr. Silver was not invited to participate in the rally until less than a week before the date of the meeting. The invitation was extended only after the Emergency Council had been deluged with requests to secure Dr. Silver which came from Zionists in all parts of Greater New York. The Committee on Arrangements, in attempting to enlist the cooperation and assistance of Zionist Districts, Regions, etc., was confronted with one insistent demand: We want Silver! When it was seen that the success of the meeting depended largely on Dr. Silver's participation, an invitation was extended by the Emergency Council -- not before then.

As for the reception accorded Dr. Silver by the tremendous audience -- it was generally agreed that New York has seldom witnessed the type of ovation given him. The usually reticent New York Times included the following in its

story: "Seated near Dr. Wise on the platform was Dr. Abba Hillel Silver of Cleveland. This was their first public appearance together since their controversy last December over tactics of the American Zionist Emergency Council, as a result of which Dr. Silver resigned his post as co-chairman.

"Dr. Silver was introduced by Dr. Wise as a 'gifted leader of the Jewish people and the Zionist cause'. As the Cleveland rabbi stepped to the speakers' rostrum, thousands of his supporters in the audience cheered wildly, rose to their feet and started singing the Palestinian national anthem, Hatikvah. The stadium audience and most of those on the platform stood and joined in the singing, but Dr. Wise remained seated although some of Dr. Silver's supporters shouted 'Get up to Hatikvah!'"

HADASSAH'S STRANGE BEHAVIOR

Many sincere Zionists who are in the know are disturbed over the role being played by some of Hadassah's representatives on the American Zionist Emergency Council. It is reported that Hadassah is now a major obstacle to the restoration of unity. For example, after the insistent demands of Zionists for Dr. Silver's participation in the Lewisohn Stadium demonstration had finally brought the matter before the Executive Committee of the Council and it was there proposed that Dr. Silver be invited to address the rally, only one voice was raised in opposition -- that of Mrs. Halprin, who now holds the office of Treasurer of the Council. Similarly, when an effort was made to set up a committee which would explore the possibilities of restoring unity, it was Hadassah which moved to table this resolution. This does not reflect the attitude of many Hadassah chapters throughout the country, some of which have begun to question the actions of their national office and to express independent views.

PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES

Mr. Daniel Frisch, Chairman of the Administrative Council, has sent out a letter suggesting a number of changes in the ZOA Constitution, including a proposal to enlarge the Executive Committee, and another to provide for elections by closed ballot. The suggestions are interesting and some of them have been urged and advocated by our group. However, the proposals require careful study and analysis. A special memorandum on this subject is being prepared and will be sent to you in the near future. Our comment in the meantime is twofold:

(a) The Frisch proposals show that the Administration is aware of a growing dissatisfaction and a demand for greater democratization of the ZOA.

(b) Some of the proposals may not be as innocent and virtuous as they look.

MISCELLANY

Resolutions calling for Dr. Silver's return to leadership continue to pour in. The Detroit Zionist Emergency Council, the Detroit Zionist District, the Bronx Zionist Region, the Parkchester (Bronx) Zionist District, the West Bronx District 39, the Connecticut Zionist Region, the Ohio Valley Zionist Region, the Columbus Zionist District, the Lorain-Elyria (Ohio) Zionist District, the Tri-City Zionist District, are among the many groups which have taken such action in recent weeks. . . The publications of the American Zionist Policy Committee are immensely popular with the Zionist masses, judging from the numerous requests for literature which have been received by our office. In greatest demand are Dr. Silver's "Nothing to Lose but our Illusions" and Marvin Lowenthal's "Backstairs to Nowhere." Also available for general distribution are "A Little While Longer" by Rabbi Leon I. Feuer, "Public Opinion on the Zionist Controversy", and the reprints, memoranda and press releases which have been issued by the American Zionist Policy Committee.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L B U L L E T I N

On Sunday, June 24th the Executive Committee of the Zionist Organization of America approved the following proposals which were submitted by its Peace Committee:

(1) That Dr. Abba Hillel Silver and Dr. Stephen S. Wise shall serve as equal joint chairmen of the American Zionist Emergency Council.

(2) That Dr. Silver shall serve as chairman of the Council's Executive Committee, and that Hayim Greenberg, Herman Shulman and others selected from the constituent organizations in the Council shall serve as vice-chairmen of the Executive Committee.

(3) That representatives shall be added to the Council from its component organizations in a manner likely to promote harmony and effectiveness of work.

Also included was a proposal for the creation of a small consultative or steering committee, to be headed by Dr. Silver, which would meet when necessary.

A committee of three, consisting of Judge Louis E. Levinthal, Louis Lipsky and Judge Morris Rothenberg, has been appointed by Dr. Israel Goldstein, president of the ZOA, to approach the other parties represented in the Council, as well as Dr. Silver and Dr. Wise, in order to carry out the Peace Committee's recommendations.

While a number of points in these proposals must yet be clarified and while the picture is by no means complete, it will be obvious to all that the formula approved by the ZOA Executive Committee represents a great stride forward toward the realization of one of our goals -- the restoration of Dr. Silver's leadership and policies in the sphere of American Zionist political work. Final judgement will come from our own Peace Committee, which reflects the views repeatedly expressed by the Zionist rank and file. This committee, which will render its opinion after the formula is crystallized, consists of the following members: Marcus Abramson of the Bronx, Rabbi Leon Fram of Detroit, Abraham Goldstein of Hartford, Samuel Goldstock of Pittsburgh, Judge Emanuel Greenberg of Brooklyn, Samuel J. Keiser of Baltimore, Joseph Lerner of Newark, Samuel J. Perry of Long Island and Jacques Torczyner of New York City.

Pending further developments we are providing you with the following brief resume of events leading up to the ZOA Executive Committee's action:

The Peace Committee which was named by Dr. Goldstein after the ZOA Executive Committee meeting of April 1st was inactive for more than two months. As you know, this committee was created only as a result of the pressure exerted on the Administration by you and other Zionists throughout the country. But it did not communicate with our group, and as recently as the beginning of June, Judge Levinthal, the committee's chairman, reported that "progress" was being made, but failed to indicate the nature of the committee's "explorations".

Nothing further was heard until the Mizrachi Organization, at a meeting of its Central Committee held during the first week in June, decided by a unanimous

vote to serve an ultimatum on the American Zionist Emergency Council demanding a re-organization and the recall of Dr. Silver to active leadership within two weeks. A few days earlier the Annual Conference of the Westchester Zionist Region adopted a strongly-worded resolution calling for the immediate return of Dr. Silver. This resolution was passed by an overwhelming majority, despite the fact that the fight against it was waged on the floor by Robert Szold, a leading Administration spokesman, who was soundly defeated in his own Region. Both the Mizrachi ultimatum and the Westchester resolution were widely reported in the Jewish and English-Jewish press.

Immediately thereafter, representatives of the Peace Committee, on their own initiative, got in touch with spokesmen for our group and expressed an earnest desire to draw Dr. Silver back into leadership and liquidate the controversy. While these conversations were by no means formal negotiations and were only in the nature of soundings, they left a definite impression that because of the steadily deteriorating political situation and the mounting pressure of public opinion, a portion of the ZOA Administration was anxious to make a strong effort to restore peace. The Peace Committee was evidently planning to bring in a report to the meeting of the ZOA Executive Committee scheduled for Tuesday evening, June 12th.

During the week-end of June 9th-10th there were further favorable developments. The Annual Conferences of the Bronx and Manhattan Zionist Regions adopted vigorous pro-Silver resolutions by overwhelming votes. In the case of the Manhattan Conference, an attempt to water down the resolution by an amendment was defeated by a vote of 176 to 30.

On Monday, June 11th, however, a new factor which served to muddy the waters was injected into the situation. Dr. Nahum Goldmann had returned to New York from San Francisco, and the members of the Peace Committee were invited to meet with him, Dr. Wise, Herman Shulman, Meyer Weisgal and others in the office of the Jewish Agency for Palestine. There the Peace Committee was urged to delay and make no report at the meeting of the ZOA Executive which was to be held the following day. The principal argument employed was that David Ben Gurion was expected to arrive from London within a few days and action should be deferred until he gets here.

The Peace Committee yielded to this pressure, and, accordingly, at the meeting of the Executive Committee on June 12th, the group once again merely reported "progress". Emanuel Neumann, speaking on behalf of several members of the Executive and "many District and Regional leaders who are not members of this body," said that their patience was well nigh exhausted and expressed deep disapproval over the failure of the ZOA leadership to take effective action.

Even more disturbing was the intervention of persons connected with the New York office of the Jewish Agency. The entire Jewish press frontpaged disquieting reports that it was now being suggested in certain quarters that the Emergency Council be dissolved altogether and that Zionist political work in the United States be taken over by the Agency office. This scheme met with unanimous disapproval in Jewish editorial columns.

It will be recalled that more than four months ago Dr. Chaim Weizmann, president of the Jewish Agency, cabled to Dr. Wise, Dr. Silver and Louis Lipsky urging a composition of differences and the reestablishment of a united Zionist front. Dr. Silver promptly expressed his willingness to confer with Dr. Wise, but no such meeting took place. It was generally agreed that Dr. Weizmann's action was in keeping with the traditional role of the world leadership in such situations -- the role of mediating between contending factions and healing a serious breach.

However, it would seem that Dr. Goldmann, the Agency representative here, had not so conceived his role. He was most active in bringing about the forced resignation of Dr. Silver last December, and in recent weeks, according to press reports, he has been active in preventing Dr. Silver's return to leadership. But public opinion has already reacted vigorously against any attempt to maneuver the Jewish Agency into an obstructionist position, especially when efforts to restore unity in American Zionist ranks are beginning to make headway.

Coming soon after the reports about the plan to dissolve the Emergency Council were indications that the Peace Committee was preparing to bring in recommendations along the following lines:

That Dr. Wise would remain the chairman of the Emergency Council, with Dr. Silver serving as co-chairman -- a distinction which would clearly place Dr. Silver in a subsidiary position and make it virtually impossible for him to provide the strong centralized direction which is so sorely needed today.

The prospects for peace were gloomy when David Ben Gurion arrived and presented to the Emergency Council a disturbing report on the Zionist position in London and Palestine which paralleled the realistic appraisals made by members of our group, as opposed to the unjustifiably optimistic pronouncements of certain American Zionist leaders. Mr. Ben Gurion emphasized repeatedly that what is required is a united Zionist front to carry forward a program of militant political action.

Events were moving swiftly. On June 18th the press had reported Hayim Greenberg's resignation from the chairmanship of the Council's Executive Committee, and on June 20th the Mizrahi Organization, its ultimatum unanswered, withdrew from the Council. The ZOA Executive was scheduled to hear and act upon the Peace Committee's report at a meeting scheduled for Sunday, June 24th, and the Administration was very much aware of the fact that two important Regional Conferences would be held on the same day and that they were prepared to adopt resolutions condemning the dilatory tactics of the present ZOA leadership. (The Annual Conferences of the Brooklyn and Long Island Zionist Regions, the former being the largest in the country, with a membership of 15,000, did adopt such resolutions by overwhelming majorities. Strong pro-Silver resolutions were also passed recently by the Maine State Zionist Conference, the North Philadelphia Zionist District and the Baltimore Zionist District.

Realizing that the matter could no longer be put off and that the Zionist rank and file would reject any formula which failed to recall Dr. Silver to the active political leadership, the Administration took the action reported in the first part of this memorandum. Of course, the "irreconcilables" like Robert Szold, Maurice Boukstein, Irving Lipkowitz and Rabbi William Greenfield of Waterbury, Conn. carried on a bitter struggle against the Peace Committee's formula to the very end. However, Dr. Goldstein, Daniel Frisch, chairman of the ZOA Administrative Council, and others declared that the wishes of the rank and file had been made unmistakably clear and that they can no longer be denied. It should be noted that the strongest efforts to bring about the formulation and adoption of the aforementioned proposals were made by Mr. Frisch, Dewey D. Stone and Louis Lipsky.

We are awaiting further developments and plan to keep you posted on all aspects of the situation.