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American Zionist Policy Committee, Zionist Organization of
America, 1945.

ההסתדרות הציונית של ארצות הברית

ZIONIST ORGANIZATION OF AMERICA

1720 - 16TH STREET, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C.

January 14th, 1945

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To All Regional and District
Presidents and Secretaries

Dear Friends:

Reports that reach us indicate that Zionists throughout the country are still bewildered by the barrage of publicity, regarding the controversy surrounding the events which led to the deferment of the Palestine Resolution and the subsequent re-organization of the American Zionist Emergency Council. Through the medium of the press and in individual communications American Zionists are subjected to a flood of accusations and charges which tend further to confuse the issue and to split our ranks.

I do not think that it is necessary at this time to repeat the facts in the case. They have been fully set forth in my statement published in the December 29th issue of The New Palestine which has undoubtedly reached your hands. It is important, however, to emphasize that in this hour when unity is of paramount urgency American Zionists cannot afford to permit the present controversy to cause a cleavage which will place our entire movement in danger.

Differences, strains and controversies appear from time to time in all democratic bodies. We see their manifestations again and again within the body politic of American life,

In the American Jewish scene controversies are not unfamiliar phenomena. What is most deplorable is not the presence of the controversy, for controversies are sometimes unavoidable, but the absence of an overall democratically body to discuss Jewish questions, controversial and otherwise, and to adopt decisions regarding them. A body such as the American Jewish Conference, if it were comprehensive enough, could be such a forum and tribunal. One recalls Dr. Silver's strong appeal in connection with the debate on the Palestine resolution at the first session of the Conference in which addressing



himself to the minority, he urged them to bow to the decisions of the majority, and stated that this was the fundamental principle of unity.

For the past several weeks, there has been a controversy going on within the ranks of the ZOA and the American Zionist Emergency Council touching the matter of the deferred Palestine resolutions before Congress. At a meeting of the Emergency Council held December 28th it was voted to reorganize the Council under the sole chairmanship of Dr. Wise. Those who had been opposed to that reorganization have accepted the decision of the majority and are working loyally with the Council in its present reorganized structure, which includes Dr. Hayim Greenberg as Chairman of the Executive Committee and Mr. Herman Shulman as Chairman of the smaller Administrative Committee.

The following statement issued by the Emergency Council is important:

"The American Zionist Emergency Council desires to make it clear that the controversy referred to in the public press does not involve any difference with respect to fundamental Zionist policy or maximal or minimal Zionist program, but is rather one of procedure, methods of implementation and the authority of its officers. The American Zionist Emergency Council will go forward with continued vigor and determination for the realization of its objective - unrestricted Jewish immigration into Palestine, full opportunity for Jewish colonization and the reconstitution of Palestine as a free and democratic Jewish Commonwealth. For this it will seek the active support of the executive and legislative branches of the United States Government and the good-will of the American people."

The Emergency Council noted with satisfaction Dr. Silver's statement that he is remaining a member of that body.

This was a democratic way of resolving a difficult problem. The fact that the minority accepted the majority decision is significant. It should serve as an example to the rank and file of Zionists throughout the country.

So far as the ZOA is concerned, the matter came up for discussion at a meeting of the Administrative Council composed of representatives from regions and districts in all parts of the country, held in New York January 7th. After five hours of debate in which both sides participated, the Administrative Council, which is the supreme body of the ZOA between Conventions, voted by an overwhelming majority to sustain the action of the ZOA Executive which resulted in the reorganization of the Emergency Council. It is noteworthy that of the five former Presidents of the ZOA who were present, four voted with the majority and one refrained from voting. There is also ample evidence that the Executive of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, insofar as it is concerned with the broader aspects of the problem, holds a view which supports the ZOA majority decision.

Admin Council

It was a source of encouragement that following the meeting a number of members of the Administrative Council who had voted with the minority, stated that so far as they were concerned the controversy was over, the issue was decided and they had before them only one task, namely, to throw themselves into the constructive tasks of the Zionist movement. There is every reason to believe that their example will be followed throughout the country.

*Why
the letter?*

There is one respect in which, I believe, the ZOA constituency can learn a lesson from some of the other Zionist parties. They too have their internal differences but they settle them internally, without creating public convulsions, agitating the Yiddish Press, and disturbing a large outside public which is not involved in the organization because it does not share in its responsibilities.

I have reason to believe that considerable damage has been done already to the ZOA by those who have taken the initiative in agitating this controversy beyond the confines of the organization itself. The damage can be repaired if every Zionist will from now on concentrate his efforts upon the constructive tasks which challenge all of us - membership, expansion fund, Zionist public relations, Zionist education, youth work, economic projects, and not least of all, UJA and JNF.

*Should
be done
of this
upon
yourself*

Three months of the current ZOA year are behind us. Only four or five months remain before the summer. If we do not gear ourselves to our maximum efforts immediately, we shall come to the next Convention with a record of retrogression instead of progress. Only our enemies could wish that to happen.

There is so much to do and so little time to do it.

With warm regards and Zion's greetings,

Sincerely yours,

Israel Goldstein
Israel Goldstein

HIGHLIGHTS OF Z.O.A. PRESS RELEASE (AS REPORTED OVER 'PHONE)

file

✓ It was decided that a Committee should be appointed which will investigate the possibilities of healing the breach in the Emergency Council.

X The Committee is to be instructed not to accept any proposal which can be interpreted as a reprimand to Dr. Wise or which implies that Dr. Wise should cease active leadership.

Dr. Goldstein read an exchange of letters between Wise, Silver and Lipsky...

✓ In his first reply, Silver said that the controversy is no longer being focused on the Z.O.A., but that the Emergency Council is the center of the controversy.

X Silver's second letter -- the one to Wise -- was interpreted by speakers, in the light of conversations held with Silver, as a request that Wise resign and that Silver be given control....Goldstein had accepted the ~~invitation~~ invitation to a meeting with Silver, but Silver refused...

✓ Heller, Shulman, Bouckstein and Weissman attacked the American Zionist Policy Committee, charging that it is carrying on/independent political campaign, and is causing great harm to the Zionist cause by confusing the masses.

The telegram from 146 Zionists was read to the meeting.

Heller and Goldstein emphasized that they want peace, but that they will not agree to the forcing out of anyone.

Speaking for the formation of the Committee to explore the possibilities of bringing about peace were Goldstein, Heller, Lipsky, Ezra Shapiro, Frisch, Fishman, Schanzer, Weisgal and others.

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AMERICAN ZIONIST EMERGENCY COUNCIL

Constituent Organizations

Hadassah, Women's Zionist Organization of America

Mizrachi Organization of America

Poale Zion-Zeire Zion of America

Zionist Organization of America

342 Madison Avenue

New York 17, N. Y.

Murray Hill 2 - 1160

March 26, 1945

Copy

At a meeting of the American Zionist Emergency Council last Monday night consideration was given to a telegram addressed to the Council from New York and received at this office on March 12th. The telegram calls for unity in the Zionist movement here, the reorganization of the Council, militant action and the return of Dr. Silver to leadership. Your name appears among the signatories to the telegram.

This reply is being written you at the direction of the Council and in accordance with the views expressed at that meeting. It is not proposed to enter here into the rights and wrongs of the events which led up to Dr. Silver's resignation. Suffice it to say that while a genuine difference with regard to tactics and procedure existed within the Council, there was never any question of "militant" or non-militant action. Every group represented in the Council and every individual representing these groups is deeply concerned with the achievement of our goal now and not in some distant future, and is anxious to take all necessary and appropriate measures to that end. At the same time there was a difference in judgment as to the steps to be taken at a given moment for the furtherance of our aims and since the view of the majority, reached after a full and free discussion, was not that of Dr. Silver, he tendered his resignation as Chairman.

It should be noted that there have been three elections of officers in the Emergency Council since its inception. A Co-Chairmanship was established for the first time when Dr. Silver was elected Chairman of the Executive Committee. Unfortunately it proved unworkable and the Council was faced, in the light of its experience of the results of divided responsibility, with the matter of electing a single chairman. In the existing situation it was the judgment of a majority that Dr. Wise should serve as that chairman. This action implied no disparagement of Dr. Silver's great gifts nor any lack of recognition of the splendid services rendered by him during his tenure of office. In political life, however, it is no uncommon occurrence that a leader who has served greatly under one set of circumstances is replaced by another when conditions call for a change. To present the issue as one of militancy versus non-militancy is untrue to the facts and confusing to the public, and constitutes an unwarranted imputation on those who with vigor and courage hitherto led the fight in behalf of the Jewish national cause. Moreover, in terms of realistic action, we would ask what is meant by the term "militancy"? In all Dr. Silver's statements since his resignation no hint has been given by him of a specific program of action

different from that pursued by the Council in fulfillment of our objectives of unrestricted Jewish immigration, an immediate decision on the establishment of a Jewish Commonwealth and Jewish representation at the forthcoming international conferences.

That all Zionists should, particularly at this time, bend their united efforts to the achievement of our common goal is obvious and the recent reorganization of the Council need not and should not have been made a question for disunity in Zionist ranks. Indeed when the Council was reorganized Dr. Silver announced publicly that he would remain a member of the Council and would continue loyal cooperation. That assurance was warmly welcomed by all and encouraged the hope of continued cooperative thought and action. In a movement such as ours, and indeed in any democratically constituted body, this is obviously as it should be. Majority action must govern, subject always to the condition that the minority is entitled to the opportunity so to express its point of view that it may influence the action of the majority and hope eventually by constitutional process itself to become the majority. But a majority decision should not be permitted to become the cause of bitter internal rifts and of public controversy of a character damaging to the highest interests of the whole movement.

In this connection we would commend as an example from the past the occasion when in 1931 Dr. Weizmann, as President of the World Zionist Organization, was defeated by a majority in the Zionist Congress. Dr. Weizmann, though out of office, nevertheless cooperated loyally with the succeeding administration until at a subsequent Congress he was once again returned to leadership.

It is deeply to be regretted that instead of similarly adhering to the processes of democratic action and, as originally indicated by Dr. Silver himself, of cooperating in the work of the Council while seeking in due course through the elective organs of the Zionist Organization to obtain endorsement for himself and his policies, Dr. Silver and his followers have now embarked on activities which if continued may be construed by a public, already confused, as representing a separatist political action.

Dr. Silver has the opportunity through membership in the Council to bring to bear his influence and ideas upon the action of the Council. His cooperation in its work will be warmly welcomed. But the campaign at present being conducted on behalf of Dr. Silver from an office specially established for the purpose is such as to create confusion and despondency among Zionists throughout the country and to disrupt and paralyze Zionist work at a most critical time.

Thus Dr. Silver, following the statements of Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill, without consultation with the officers of the American Zionist Emergency Council of which he remains a member, without exercising his right to come to meetings of the Council, and without full knowledge of the facts, issued a statement to the press which could only be calculated to cause an exaggerated and unjustified pessimism in the ranks of Zionists everywhere. A stream of partisan literature and press releases emanating from the office of the American Zionist Policy Committee has kept Zionists in a state of constant and unhealthy turmoil, deflecting them from the tasks at hand and hindering the fulfillment of an effective program of action. By letter and telephone and telegram Zionists throughout the country are being urged to express alarm at present developments

and to demand Dr. Silver's immediate return. Little wonder that under these circumstances Zionists are confused and disheartened when they should be seeking to work together. Action of the kind here described indeed makes difficult, if not impossible, united and fruitful work by the administration in authority for the time being.

The American Zionist Emergency Council regards itself as an arm in this country of the Jewish Agency for Palestine. We are pursuing a policy the ultimate responsibility for which rests with the Executive of the Jewish Agency. Nor do we intend now or in the future to conduct an independent political line. It would indeed produce chaos and mean the end of the Zionist movement were branches of the movement in various countries to act in any other manner. It is our view that the line which we are at present pursuing, in coordination with the World Zionist leadership, is the correct one at this time. Until that line is changed no individual or group, however gifted or powerful, can engage in an independent political campaign without producing consequences of a serious character.

We would repeat once more: Dr. Silver's close collaboration in our work will be warmly welcomed. He has all the possibilities within the movement to bring his influence to bear in regard to the development of action and policy. We therefore ask, through you, that Dr. Silver be moved again to lend his great abilities to our work as a part of the Emergency Council. The Chairman of the Council has written separately to Dr. Silver asking him to attend meetings of the Council in order to share in its work and to give us the benefit of his help and advice. It is the sincere desire of all members of the Council that he will see his way clear to collaborate with his colleagues in this crucial period in Zionist history. It is in this direction that we believe that your influence should be brought to bear.

Yours sincerely

AMERICAN ZIONIST EMERGENCY COUNCIL

By: Arthur Lourie
Political Secretary

AL:CK

COHEN'S

Furniture Clothing

Jewelry



UNIONTOWN, PA.



WRHS



Mr. Harry L. Shapiro
American Zionist Policy Committee
55 W. 42nd St.
New York 18, N. Y.

APR 16 1945

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SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION OF INTERNAL CONTROVERSY AT MEETING OF ZIONIST
ORGANIZATION OF AMERICA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ON SUNDAY, APRIL 1, 1945

The discussion followed the reading of a telegram signed by a number of Zionists, and report of resolutions adopted by a number of districts and regions, requesting the recalling of Silver to the active leadership of the American Zionist Emergency Council.

Dr. Goldstein stated that as a democratic organization the ZOA is obliged to give due consideration to requests emanating from members of its constituency even though they comprise a minority.

In the course of the discussion, the chairman and a number of members of the Executive Committee sharply scored the activities of an organization of Dr. Silver's protagonists recently formed under the name of the American Zionist Policy Committee on the ground that it was issuing statements on Zionist political matters outside the framework of the Emergency Council which is the only authorized body to deal with such matters and is so recognized by the World Zionist Executive. It was further charged that the activities of that Committee were harmful to the Zionist cause and tended to arouse confusion among Zionists. It was feared that it might develop into a separatist movement.

The chairman reported on an exchange of letters between Louis Lipsky, Dr. Wise and Dr. Silver. In his reply to Mr. Lipsky's communication Dr. Silver is reported to have stated that he considers the controversy no longer as being focused on the ZOA and that the center of the controversy is the American Zionist Emergency Council. Other members of the Executive construed Silver's answer to Wise, in the light of conversations with Silver which were reported to the Emergency Council as implying that Dr. Wise be given an honorary position and that Dr. Silver be given control of the Council.

Dr. Goldstein revealed that when Mr. Lipsky wrote him proposing the naming of a committee to meet with Dr. Silver for the purpose of bringing about a reconciliation, he Dr. Goldstein accepted the proposal promptly, but that no such acceptance was forthcoming from Dr. Silver.

Mr. Lipsky confirmed this information.

Dr. Goldstein and Dr. Heller as well as other members of the Executive indicated that the ZOA administrative is eager to resolve the controversy in the ranks but that under no circumstances will they agree to others being forced out.

By an overwhelming vote the National Executive approved a motion by Dr. Heller for the appointment of a committee to explore the possibilities of resolving the internal controversy. However, it was the general consensus that the committee in its endeavors to bring about a reconciliation between the Silver and Wise factions, should reject any proposal which may be construed as a lack of confidence in Dr. Wise's leadership or which would imply his ceasing active leadership in the Emergency Council.

Among those who spoke in favor of the motion were Dr. Goldstein, Dr. Heller, Louis Lipsky, Ezra Shapiro, Daniel Frisch, Jacob Fishman, Albert Schanzer, Meyer Weisgal and others.

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Pursuant to the motion adopted by the National Executive Committee Dr. Goldstein has appointed the following as members of that committee: Judge Louis E. Levinthal, Philadelphia, chairman; Daniel Frisch, Indianapolis; Louis Lipsky, New York; Ezra Shapiro, Cleveland and Dewey D. Stone, Brockton, Mass.

CONFERENCE OF JEWISH WELFARE LEADERS SEEKS RECONSTITUTION OF UNITED JEWISH APPEAL

CLEVELAND, April 2. (JTA) -- Representatives of twelve of the largest Jewish welfare funds, at a conference held here during the week-end, resolved to make one final effort to reconstitute the United Jewish Appeal. In connection with this effort, a committee of three will be appointed to confer with the Joint Distribution Committee, the United Palestine Appeal and the National Refugee Service.

The meeting recommended the creation of a fact-finding committee which would, in collaboration with the JDC, the UPA, and the NRS, conduct a special study of their 1945 budgetary and program needs under the auspices of this provisional Committee for Inter-Welfare Fund Cooperation. The fact-finding committee was instructed to submit its reports and recommendations by May 15th.

Present at the session were representatives from the Jewish Welfare funds in Detroit, Chicago, St. Louis, Baltimore, Boston, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Kansas City, Milwaukee, Hartford and Newark. The group requested the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds to organize a public relations department to render campaign and year-round publicity and promotion services to the welfare fund communities.

The meeting received a proposal that a fact-finding commission be sent at a later date to Europe and Palestine. It was suggested that the commission's report might serve as a basis for establishing the nature and extent of the responsibility of American Jewish communities for programs abroad requiring aid. Those present agreed in principle to the general proposal. It was decided to name a committee to draw up a proposed outline of organization and study, after conferring with the JDC, the UPA, and NRS, as well as with other appropriate private and governmental agencies. The committee assigned to draw up the details of the proposed plan is to submit its recommendations to the inter-city committee and in due course to the welfare funds represented. Abraham Srere, of Detroit, was named temporary chairman of the Inter-City Committee; James H. Becker of Chicago, temporary vice-chairman; Jesse Welfert, of St. Louis, treasurer, and George Rabinoff, of Chicago, secretary.

Z.O.A. EXECUTIVE APPOINTS COMMITTEE TO SEEK AGREEMENT BETWEEN SILVER AND WISE

NEW YORK, April 2. (JTA) -- The National Executive of the Zionist Organization of America, by an overwhelming vote, has approved the appointment of a committee to explore the possibilities of bringing about a solution of the controversy in relation to the American Zionist Emergency Council, it was announced today. This Committee, which will endeavor to bring about agreement between the Dr. Abba Hillel Silver and Dr. Stephen S. Wise factions was, however, instructed to reject any proposal which might be construed as a reprimand to Dr. Wise, or which would imply his ceasing active leadership in the Emergency Council.

The decision to appoint such a committee was taken after a debate in which Dr. Israel Goldstein, chairman of the meeting, reported on an exchange of letters between Louis Lipsky, Dr. Wise and Dr. Silver. In reply to a communication from Mr. Lipsky Dr. Silver is reported to have stated that he feels that the controversy is no longer centered around the Z.O.A., but around the American Zionist Emergency Council.

PIONEER WOMEN LAUNCH \$150,000 DRIVE FOR RESCUE OF JEWISH CHILDREN FROM EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

NEW YORK, April 2. (JTA) -- The Pioneer Women's Organization of America has launched a new drive to raise \$150,000 for its Child Rescue Fund, it was announced today by Miss Dvora Rothbard, national secretary. The first sum on account of this quota, a \$35,000 Passover gift, was cabled to the Jewish Agency in Jerusalem before the holidays.