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

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Council of Middle Eastern Affairs, 1947.

COUNCIL OF MIDDLE EASTERN AFFAIRS

More and more, the Middle East is coming to the fore in world affairs, and the United States, because of its role on the international scene in general and its specific interest in the Middle East in particular, is becoming increasingly involved in Middle Eastern affairs. There is, and there will no doubt be a still greater interest, in following and studying the development of events in that region. This will inevitably result in the rise of institutions, endowments, chairs, publications and so on, devoted to the area, and these in turn will become instruments for influencing and molding public opinion and high level political circles. Zionist organizations and bodies must find a place for their point of view.

There is as yet in the United States no well organized or sufficiently informed body of specialists in the field of the Middle East. It would therefore be possible for a qualified group, putting out material which would have to be recognized as authoritative, non-biased, informative and reliable, to assume a position of importance and influence in this field. It is with this objective in mind that the following plan is submitted for your consideration.

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A Council of Middle Eastern Affairs, composed of representative Americans, both Jews and non-Jews, should be organized.

Membership

A selected group of about 100 important individuals in the United States should be invited to become founding members, each subscribing \$100. About 2,000-5,000 regular members, from the United States, England and the Middle East, should be invited to join, at a \$10 a year membership fee.

Activities

1. Meetings

The Council should meet at least once a year for the election of officers. At this meeting, outstanding authorities would give lectures and lead discussions and panel groups on the various problems of the Middle East.

2. Publications

A. The Council should publish a bi-monthly magazine, to be called Middle Eastern Affairs, the purpose of which would be

- (1) To publish articles of a high scholarly standard, by outstanding and authoritative writers, dealing with the various issues of the area.

- (2) To supply current information on the development of events in the area.

The journal would thus be not only a source of authority, but also a source of information. It would also report, in reviews and annotated listings, on the literature of the area, not only in European, but in the native languages. At the moment, there is no such all-encompassing publication.

B. The Council should prepare standard reference books on each of the countries in the area. At the moment, no authoritative standard books on the various countries are available. Y. Shimon has published a book on the Arabs of Palestine, in Hebrew. Similar volumes should be prepared on the other countries and peoples of the area. The Council should also publish monographs on the various problems involved.

The following are prerequisite for the plan:

1. An editorial council. To be composed of men of reputation and knowledge who would be contributors, as well as responsible editors in their respective fields for articles written by others. This body would also decide on the monographs and studies to be published by the Council.
2. An editorial staff. To be composed of permanent workers primarily qualified to prepare the information section on current developments in the area. The members of the staff would also be responsible for the technical end of the publication, and some might write articles themselves.
3. Financial guarantees. It is assumed that the minimum expenses for the first year of operation would be between \$30,000-\$40,000.

A number of outstanding men in their respective fields - Lowdermilk, Speiser, Friedrich, Albright, Hanna, Welles and others - should be approached and invited to become members of the editorial council. It is very likely that they would agree. A number of outstanding authorities in Jerusalem and England should also be invited to join the council on a corresponding basis.

As for the editorial staff, it is felt that the present facilities of the Research Department of the American Zionist Emergency Council, with the addition of recruitments from Jerusalem, would be adequate for the first year.

It goes without saying that unless the Jerusalem office of the Jewish Agency will cooperate wholeheartedly and supply the necessary information, the venture should not be undertaken. Moreover, it is expected that some assistance in that direction would come from the London office of the Agency.

As to finances, it is expected that \$20,000 a year could be raised from the founding members and the general membership. Certain amounts could also be obtained from individuals and funds in London, from groups and foundations in the United States, and from Jerusalem.

July 17, 1947

Benjamin Shwadran