

American JEWISH CONFERENCE

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NEW INTERIM COMMITTEE MEETS

Henry Monsky Elected Sole Chairman; Hermann Stern Elected Treasurer; Establishment of a Jewish Reconstruction Commission Approved; Additional 12 Members Co-opted to Interim Com.

The new Interim Committee, elected at the Third Session in Pittsburgh, held its first meeting in New York on April 2nd. Henry Monsky presided. Nearly all members were present. The session was devoted to the discussion of recent developments here and abroad and future activities of the Conference, as well as current organizational matters.

The Interim Committee elected Henry Monsky its sole Chairman. By substituting a single Chairman for the three co-chairmen previously heading the Conference, the Interim Committee stressed the growing sense of unity in the ranks of the Conference and the trend towards unification of all the diverse elements of which it is composed. This organizational change, it was felt, will also make for greater efficiency in the functioning of the Conference.

Reporting on behalf of the Committee on Organization, Mr. Frisch recommended that the Executive Committee be composed of the officers, the Chairmen of all standing committees, and nine members representing all the groups within the Conference; the Committee to elect its own Chairman. The proposal was adopted unanimously and the Chairman of the Interim Committee was given authority to name the Chairmen of the standing committees, in consultation with the Executive Committee.

Hermann Stern was reelected Treasurer of the Conference. The new Executive Committee will meet in New York on April 24th.

Acting on the resolution adopted at the Third Session, the Interim Committee co-opted 12 additional members and reserved three places for one representative each from the west coast, from St. Louis, Missouri, and from the youth groups within the organization. The following were co-opted:

Jacob Alson, New York City; Max Bressler, Chicago; Aaron Droock, Detroit; Mrs. David deSola Pool, New York City; Jane Evans, New York City; Professor Hayim Fineman, Philadelphia; Mrs. Barnett R. Kopelman, New York City; Israel Kramer, Trenton; Rabbi Joseph Lookstein, New York City; Adolph Rosenberg, Cincinnati; Chaplain W. Gunther Plaut, Fort Knox, Kentucky; Mrs. Louis A. Rosett, New Rochelle, N. Y.

The Interim Committee heard and discussed reports on the activities of the Conference since the Third Session. It approved the statutes of the projected Jewish Reconstruction Commission and authorized the Executive Committee to create and bring into operation such Commission jointly with the cooperating representative Jewish organizations.

During its all day meeting, the Interim Committee received a number of reports on the current activities of the Conference:

Colonel Bernard Berastein reported on the negotiations with the Department of State and representatives of the Swiss Government, concerning the Jewish claim for reparations and problems arising out of the Paris Agreement on reparations which provided for the allocation of a certain sum for the benefit of Nazi victims.

Meir Grossman, Director of Overseas Relations, dealt in his report with the projected establishment of a Jewish Reconstruction Commission and negotiations conducted on the subject with the World Jewish Congress and the Board of Deputies of British Jews.

I. L. Kenen, Executive Secretary, in a comprehensive report, reviewed the Conference actions in behalf of Jewish displaced persons in Germany, and other interventions with authorities in Washington.

Horace Marston, member of the team of liaison officers sent to Germany, who recently returned from abroad, supplemented his previously submitted written reports with observations on the position of the Jewish displaced persons in Germany.

David Wahl, Washington Secretary, reviewed the activities of the Conference delegation which attended the meeting of the Fourth Council Session of UNRRA in Atlantic City, stressing that considerable progress has been made in securing a better understanding by UNRRA of the specific needs of Jewish refugees and displaced persons.

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Following a discussion of the raid of German police on the settlement of Jewish displaced persons in Stuttgart, the Interim Committee, on the motion of Judge Perlman, authorized the Chairman to submit to the Departments of War and State a protest against permission given to the German police to enter the Jewish settlement, and to stress that denazification of Germany must be carried out with greater speed and vigor.

The Interim Committee, on a motion submitted by Rabbi Irving Miller, decided to appoint a special committee to act on the decision of the Third Session to explore the possibility of establishing a permanent representative democratic Jewish body. The resolution stressed that the Committee, which is to report its findings to the Interim Committee, should be composed of persons with special qualifications necessary for the consideration of this problem.

The meeting was attended by the following: Jacob Alson, Maurice Bisgyer, Sam Caplan, Dr. Maurice N. Eisendrath, Mrs. Moses P. Epstein, Jane Evans, Mrs. Ida Cook Farber, Dr. Simon Federbusch, Harold O. N. Frankel, Daniel Frisch, Leon Gellman, William Gerber, Dr. Israel Goldstein, Mrs. Samuel Goldstein, Dr. Robert Gordis, Mrs. Samuel Halprin, Charles P. Kramer, Sidney G. Kusworm, Louis Lipsky, Mrs. Albert J. May, Rabbi Irving Miller, Henry Monsky, Dr. Samuel Nirenstein, Judge Nathan D. Perlman, Harry A. Pine, Dvora Rothbard, Judge Morris Rothenberg, Samuel Rothstein, Rubin Saltzman, Mrs. Herman Shulman, Alex Stanton, Hermann Stern, Robert Szold, Mrs. A. H. Vixman, Ralph Wechsler, David Wertheim, Dr. Stephen S. Wise.

AGRICULTURAL TRAINING FACILITIES FOR JEWISH DP'S

In a special dispatch from Germany this week, the American Jewish Conference was informed that as a result of discussions between representatives of AMG, UNRRA, and voluntary agencies operating in the American zone, it has been decided to make available agricultural areas to displaced persons for truck farming. They will also be able to attend agricultural colleges and secure surplus agricultural implements from army stocks. Additional agricultural installations will be placed at their disposal and opportunities for intensive vocational training will be provided.

This action, which followed directives from Washington, is the outcome of representations made by the American Jewish Conference and Dr. Zalman Grinberg during conversations with American officials in the nation's capital. Dr. Grinberg had emphasized the importance of vocational training and educational facilities for displaced persons, to prepare them for resettlement in other countries. If properly executed, the decision made by the authorities will constitute a considerable step forward in the treatment of displaced Jews and will arrest the process of demoralization resulting from enforced idleness.

The American Jewish Conference has also received news that a meeting has been called at Frankfurt to discuss treatment for tuberculosis patients and the desirability of setting up separate hospitals for displaced Jews suffering from this illness, as suggested by the Central Committee of Liberated Jews in Germany and proposed to the War Department in Washington by Dr. Zalman Grinberg.

STATE DEPARTMENT ANSWERS A.J.C. MEMORANDUM ON REPARATIONS

Following discussions with members of the American delegation at the Paris Reparation Conference and release of the terms of the agreement subsequently reached by the Inter-Allied Reparation Commission, the Conference has devoted attention to the problem of securing maximum reparations, restitution and indemnification for the Jewish victims of Nazi action.

On February 5, Louis Lipsky, Chairman of the Executive Committee, addressed a letter to Secretary of State James F. Byrnes, making specific recommendations on the Paris Agreement. Pointing out that the estimated monetary losses sustained by Jews amounted to eight billion dollars, the Conference asserted that the \$25,000,000 allotted in Paris for resettlement and rehabilitation must constitute a first and prior charge on German external assets if it is to have any tangible value. It also urged that non-monetary gold found by Allied armed forces in Germany should be turned over to its rightful owners, or in the event that it could not be traced, to proper representatives of the Jewish people.

The State Department's reply, dated April 2, 1946, concurred in the view that the sum allotted by the Paris Agreement should constitute a first charge upon the proceeds of German assets abroad. J. Kenneth Galbraith, Director of the Office of Economic Security Policy of the State Department, declared that there was "reason to believe" that France and the United Kingdom would also support the American position.

Consultation with representatives of appropriate Jewish organizations on reparation matters was being considered by the State Department, Mr. Galbraith wrote.

The full text of the letter follows:

"Your letter of February 7th, 1946, submitting the views of the American Jewish Conference on the Agreement reached at the Paris Conference on Reparation has been referred to the Office of Economic Security Policy for reply.

I understand that an informal series of replies to the questions posed in your letter has been given representatives of your organization by Mr. Kindleberger of the Division of German and Austrian Economic Affairs, and Mr. Surrey of the Division of Economic Security Controls at a meeting held in Mr. Kindleberger's office on March 13, 1946. May I summarize and refine the answers to your questions there given, dealing with them in terms of the alphabetical listing given in your letter.

a. The United States Government considers that the \$25,000,000 allocated by the Agreement for the rehabilitation and resettlement of non-repatriable victims of German action constitutes a first and prior charge on the proceeds of German external assets, and will support this position in international negotiations both with the neutrals and in the Inter-Allied Reparation Agency. The Department of State, moreover, has reason to believe that this position is also taken by France and the United Kingdom. An early test is expected to determine whether \$25,000,000 in liquid form available for transfer to the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees can be collected in the near future. Pending the outcome of this test, the Department of State is not inclined to give serious consideration to your recommendation that the United States, Britain and France advance the \$25,000,000 against the security of the \$25,000,000 allocated by the Agreement.

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b. The agreement provides that non-monetary gold found by the Allied armed forces in Germany be made available to the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees for rehabilitation and resettlement of non-repatriable victims of German persecution as a monetary sum over and above the \$25,000,000 referred to in a. above. It is not contemplated that actual gold will be so transferred. The Department is inclined to the position that all gold objects, the total value of which is not greatly in excess of the monetary value of the gold content, would be melted down, sold for foreign exchange, and the proceeds made available to the Intergovernmental Committee. The Department recognizes that the bulk of the objects found in Germany were looted from Jewish victims of German action. It would point out, however, that some objects found in the SS-loot, including gold objects with a value considerably in excess of the monetary value of the gold content, and certain other non-gold objects, have been looted from Catholic churches. Present policy is to restore these to their owners, or in the case of ecclesiastical objects to the faith from which they were looted, insofar as these owners or the relevant church or synagogue can be identified. Present policy does not cover the disposition of objects falling in the foregoing category which cannot be subjected to restitution procedures.

c. The Department will give careful consideration to any proposals which the American Jewish Conference may have to make as to the disposition of assets in neutral countries that belonged to victims of Nazi action who have since died and left no heirs. While the Department would agree that the bulk of such assets were Jewish possessions, it is not, however, prepared to accept the statement of your letter that they all were.

I am informed by Mr. Surrey that in discussing this point, Mr. Bernstein, representing the American Jewish Conference, asked the Department to consider the negotiations in the Inter-Allied Reparation Agency of an agreement that assets which belonged to victims of German persecution who have since died and left no heirs in United Nations participating in the Agency should be made available for the benefit of other victims of German persecution. The Department of State will give earnest consideration to this proposal.

d. Your assumption that the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees, designated to act under the agreement in the resettlement and rehabilitation of victims of German persecution, will consult with appropriate and representative Jewish organizations is broadly but not strictly correct. It is presently contemplated that the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees will distribute the funds made available to it from the various sources discussed in the foregoing paragraphs to existing organizations engaged in the work of rehabilitation and resettlement of victims of German persecution. It is believed that the majority of these organizations are such as to qualify under your expression "appropriate and representative Jewish organizations". To the extent that this is the case the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees will not only consult with but also operate through such Jewish organizations.

e. Your assumption that German external assets or any other assets otherwise available for reparation which can be identified as having been acquired or taken from Jews subsequent to January 1943 will not form part of the general reparation pool is correct to the extent that these assets do not take the form of industrial capital equipment in Germany of a type which is forbidden to remain in Germany under the terms of the Potsdam Agreement. Your further assumption that such

assets will be restored to the original owners or their heirs if they can be located, or will be made available for purposes of Jewish rehabilitation and resettlement is true of German external assets in neutral countries. The disposition of such assets in United Nations awaits agreement of the character suggested in my response in paragraph c. above to the oral suggestion made by Mr. Bernstein. The disposition of this property within Germany is a subject of much larger scope on which the Office of Military Government and the War and State Departments are currently actively engaged.

I trust that the foregoing will serve to supplement and give precision to the informal responses to the questions put in your letter made to your representatives. The Department of State is grateful for your interest in the large and difficult problems posed by the necessity to aid the victims of German persecution and the disposition of their property, and would welcome any further communication on the subject you may care to make."

CONFERENCE URGES INTENSIFIED DENAZIFICATION

Contending that past denazification procedures have failed to accomplish their objectives, the American Jewish Conference, on April 5th, urged that denazification in Germany be prosecuted with increased vigor, in communications to Secretary of State, James F. Byrnes, and Secretary of War, Robert P. Patterson.

The charge was based on the recent developments in Germany, particularly the killing of Samuel Dantziger, 37 year-old survivor of the Oswiecim concentration camp who was shot on Friday morning, March 29, by German police in a mass raid on the Stuttgart displaced persons settlement. Three other Jews were wounded and twenty-six were arrested.

The identical letter to the Secretary of State and Secretary of War, over the signature of Henry Monsky, Chairman of the Interim Committee, reads as follows:

"An incident in the American occupation zone of Germany on Friday, March 29th, not only destroyed the life of one Jew who survived the Hitler terror, but also compromised the fair name of the United States, and the democratic principles for which we, as Americans, fought in World War II.

We refer to the killing in the displaced persons camp at Stuttgart of Samuel Dantziger, 37 year old survivor of Oswiecim concentration camp, who, according to press reports, was shot when 200 German police, armed with guns, rubber truncheons, and accompanied by police dogs, invaded the displaced persons center early in the morning, searching for violators of ration regulations. Three other Jewish survivors of concentration camps were wounded, and 26 were arrested.

That German police were permitted to raid a Jewish camp, in the company of American military personnel, gives courage to the Nazi underground, whose existence AMG admits, and certainly does not help inculcate democratic principles among the civilian population in Germany. Such an act also demoralizes American occupation troops, who are continually exposed to Nazi indoctrination in their contact with the German population.

The report that one member of the German raiding party was recognized by a Jewish displaced person as a former guard at Oswiecim, is even more serious for it indicates that Germans used in police work have not been thoroughly screened.

We appreciate that Lt. General Joseph T. McNarney, Commander in the European Theater, promptly suspended the right of German police to enter Jewish displaced persons centers. We believe that every step must be taken to prevent a recurrence of this incident. It is patent

that Germans must not under any circumstances be permitted to control or supervise the lives of Jewish displaced persons. German armed guards must not be permitted to patrol borders through which Jewish persecutees enter the American zone. We are confident that the investigation now being conducted will result in punishment of those guilty.

However, the Jewish people of the United States are very much concerned that the causes of this outrage shall be attacked at the roots and shall be eliminated. We therefore urge that denazification in the American zone of Germany be prosecuted with increased vigor. It is apparent that the procedures that have been employed in the past have failed to accomplish this objective.

We recognize the efforts of American military authorities to assist the Jewish victims of Nazi concentration camps, and to improve conditions in the assembly centers. But these of themselves cannot be expected to remove the cancerous growth of anti-Semitism from German soil.

In addressing this letter to you, I wish to state that this situation was reviewed at a meeting of the Interim Committee of the American Jewish Conference on April 2nd, in New York, and I was directed by that body to communicate these views on behalf of the American Jewish Conference."

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"THE DISINHERITED JEWS OF EUROPE MUST BE SAVED"

-- Judge Simon H. Rifkind

Addressing an audience which filled every available seat in the grand ballroom of the Biltmore Hotel on April 2nd, Judge Simon Rifkind, former Civilian Adviser to the Commanding General, USEET, made it unmistakably clear that immediate evacuation of the 100,000 Jews still on German soil is imperative if they are to be saved. Speaking at a reception given in his honor by the Interim Committee of the American Jewish Conference, Judge Rifkind gave the first public report on his five months activities in American occupied Germany.

His message, which deeply stirred the audience, answered three specific questions uppermost in the minds of his hearers. They were, how do these Jews (the displaced persons in Germany) live; what do they need; and what is the solution of their problem?

Louis Lipsky presided and the meeting closed with a statement by Henry Monsky, Chairman of the Interim Committee. Mr. Monsky declared that the Dantziger incident at the Stuttgart displaced persons camp, upon which Judge Rifkind had commented, had aroused the indignation of the entire civilized world. As presiding officer of the Interim Committee, he announced he would communicate to the State Department American Jewry's urgent insistence that the denazification program be pursued with full vigor to prevent recurrence of such incidents.

(The full printed text of Judge Rifkind's address is attached to this Bulletin).

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REPORTS ON THE THIRD SESSION

The national office of The American Jewish Conference is in receipt of further communications indicating that delegates throughout the country have reported on the Third Session to their constituents.

On March 1st, Rabbi Louis Simsovitz addressed a meeting at the Jewish Center of Port Chester, New York.

On March 6th, Mrs. Benjamin Gottesman of Hadassah rendered a report to her Chapter at New Rochelle, N.Y.

Mrs. Arthur A. Barnett, Jefferson Peyser, and Rabbi Saul White, B'nai B'rith delegates from San Francisco, Calif., held their report meeting on March 11th.

Rabbi Tobias Rothenberg addressed the Jewish Center of Middletown, N.Y., on March 22nd.

Notices of report meetings continue to reach this office and another list will be published in the next Bulletin.

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