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Volume I

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By
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* * * * *

The Ohio State University
1978

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INTRODUCTION

Internal conflicts have been present in the American Jewish community ever since this community became heterogeneous—from the moment it came to include Jews who differed from each other in national origin, economic status, social orientation, political philosophy, and religious practice.

The first Jews to set foot on American soil arrived in 1654. They were Sephardim, some of whom emigrated from Spain, Portugal, and Holland, and others who came by way of South America. The Sephardim were mostly petty traders, peddlers, and small shopkeepers.\(^1\) Some of the Sephardim followed the frontier, some even becoming fur-traders who obtained their pelts from Indians in exchange for trinkets, guns, and liquor.\(^2\) A few Jews became wealthy


\(^{2}\)Learsi, *The Jews in America,* p. 35.
merchants in mercantilistically minded colonial America. The Franks family and Aaron Lopez of Rhode Island were wealthy merchants who became official purveyors and agents for the British Crown. Before the advent of a quartermaster corps, commercial purveyors "were vital to the success of any military undertaking. Army supply was a form of enterprise in which many Jews, particularly in Europe, achieved wealth and influence. . . ."\(^3\)

The Sephardim were chiefly orthodox in their Judaism. In colonial America, the synagogue occupied a most important position in the Jewish community. Unlike Europe, the Jewish community in America was not a chartered corporation. It possessed no specific rights; it was not legally recognized by the State; and it had no power in relation to its component membership. Whereas a Jewish community in a European town could control the right of settlement and the right to establish a business, could collect taxes, and even had its own laws where rabbinic laws were authoritative, no such "kahal" or "gemeinde"

\(^3\)Jacob R. Marcus, Early American Jewry: The Jews of New England and Canada, 1649-1794, v. 1, (Philadelphia, 1951), p. 65. The Frankses were also engaged in the "tea trade," shipped lumber to the West Indies, dealt in bills of exchange, and outfitted ships for privateering.
(community) existed in America. The Jew belonged to the Jewish community "because he wanted to belong . . . ."4

Though there were few formal edifices that housed the Holy Ark (usually a rented room sufficed), the Jewish community created several institutions that served its constituency. The cemetery, or House of Life, was usually the first institution created by the Jewish community in a town; sometimes it would be almost a century before the synagogue would be erected. Philanthropy was an adjunct of the synagogue. Alms were paid out of the congregational treasury and the amounts expended sometimes reached almost 25 percent of the Jewish community's budget.\(^5\) The president of the synagogue would dispense funds to "messengers" from Palestine, help poor itinerants through town, and make adequate provision for the local poor, sick, and aged.\(^6\)

Another adjunct of the synagogue was the religious school. The New York and Newport, Rhode Island Jewish communities had buildings for schools. The curriculum consisted of Hebrew and religious training in the all-day

\(^4\)Jacob R. Marcus, Early American Jewry, volume 2, pp. 432-434.

\(^5\)Ibid., pp. 482-484.

\(^6\)Ibid.
schools; after 1755, Spanish and the traditional "three R's" were offered. By 1762, English was the language of instruction. Yet, despite the critical need for religious training and Jewish education, the Jewish community in colonial America did not do much about it. One historian of the American Jewish community surmises that the "synagogue did not see it as one of its functions to educate the children; rather, the task was the responsibility of the parent."  

After 1725 most Jews coming to the colonies were from Central or Eastern Europe; these were the Ashkenazim. Though the entire Jewish population in the thirteen colonies did not exceed a few hundred, the Ashkenazim and Sephardim quarreled amongst themselves. The Ashkenazim were forced to pray with the Sephardim. Family disputes, business jealousies, and private feuds were behind much of the synagogue dissension. Religious "differences" played a part in the clashes of colonial days; one year the Ashkenazim in Philadelphia held separate High Holy Day

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8 Jacob R. Marcus, Early American Jewry, volume 2, pp. 71-73.
services. The Sephardim retorted in a letter to a co-religionist in England: "The new Jews are a plague. . . . Pray prevent what is in your power to hinder any more of that sort to come. . . ." One minister who visited Savannah, Georgia wrote:

Some Jews in Savannah complained to me the other day that the Spanish and Portuguese Jews persecute the German Jews in a way no Christian would persecute another Christian. . . . They want to build a synagogue, but the Spanish and German Jews can't come to terms. . . . The Spanish and Portuguese are not strict insofar as eating is concerned. . . . They eat, for instance, the beef that comes from the warehouse. . . . The German Jews, on the other hand, would rather starve than eat meat they did not slaughter themselves.

A new wave of German-Jewish emigration to the United States began after the Congress of Vienna. Prior to the Napoleonic Wars, the Jews of Germany-Austria lived precariously. Joseph the Second, successor of Maria Theresa, tried to alleviate the condition of the Jews in the Empire. On October 21, 1781, he decreed that Jews no longer were required to wear a distinctive sign or dress in a particular manner; they were accorded permission to enroll in

\[\text{\textsuperscript{9}Ibid.}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{10}Ibid.}\]

public schools and universities. Too, they were now able to lease land for agricultural purposes (though they could not employ Gentile labor), and engage in the mechanical trades, arts, and commerce. On December 10, 1781, he abolished the iniquitous poll-tax levied against Jews. He issued on January 2, 1782, the Toleranz-Patent, in which he declared that all subjects—without distinction as to creed or nationality—could share in the welfare and freedom of the country. Jews were given the right to serve in the armed forces, and all economic prohibitions were abrogated.\(^{12}\)

Less than a decade after the promulgation of the Toleranz-Patent, Joseph the Second died and Francis the First ascended the throne. In 1792, when Austria was being attacked by France, Francis abrogated all the laws about the Jews, and new humiliations were heaped upon them. Though many were intended as petty annoyances, such as the special tax on wine, candles, and meat, others restricted the rights of the Jews as to place of residence, marriage, and interference in the internal affairs of the Jewish community. Jews could not have music on Chanukah, or dance on

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Purim; they had to take an examination on religion, the examination based on Herz Homberg's *Bene Zion* (1810). Jews were required to serve in the armed forces though they could not become officers.14

Napoleon's defeat brought about the negation of elementary human rights which he had introduced in the conquered lands.15 In June, 1815, a resolution was proposed to the Congress of Vienna which read:

The Congress of the Allies will consider how the civil improvement of those professing the Jewish faith in Germany is to be effected in the most harmonious manner, and how in particular the enjoyment of civil rights, and participation in civil duties, may be secured to them. The rights already conceded them in the several federated states will be continued.

The resolution sounded promising. But a delegate from Bremen proposed the alteration of the word "in" to "by," in the last sentence. The change in language was of crucial importance, for all ameliorations introduced after the Revolution, were rendered null and void. Since those "rights and privileges" had been granted by the federated

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14 *Ibid*.
15 For a more detailed discussion, see Chapter Three.
states, it was their right to take them away.\textsuperscript{16} Denied elementary rights, and faced with the prospect of no relief from Metternich and other influential politicians of the Holy Alliance nations, many German Jews emigrated to the United States.

In 1820, the Jewish community in America was largely native-born, small in number, English-speaking, and very much assimilated into the American mainstream. The Sephardic community in America often looked upon the "inelegant newcomers with condescension or irritation." Unable to ignore the newcomers (their consciences and Christian neighbors prohibited them from doing so), the small Jewish community came to their aid.\textsuperscript{17}

In the decade before the Civil War, the large number of immigrants coming to the United States as a result of the failure of the Revolutions of 1848 posed great problems for the small established Jewish community. The synagogue, which had formally been the center of philanthropic activities, could not cope with the large influx of immigrants. The local Hebrew Benevolent Society performed a variety of

\textsuperscript{16}Margolis and Marx, \textit{A History of the Jewish People}, p. 633.

\textsuperscript{17}Rufus Learsi, \textit{The Jews in America}, p. 66.
charitable functions; in the larger centers of Jewish life, numerous independent charitable societies arose, each devoted to a special field, such as the care of orphans, the distribution of food, fuel and clothing to the poor, and finding employment for the newly arrived immigrants. Free loan societies were established to help the needy toward self-sufficiency by advancing interest-free loans. German-Jewish immigrants were provided with the necessities for religious observance of such festivals as Passover; free burial societies saw to it that indigent newcomers were not denied a place in the House of Life because of insufficient funds. Those who emigrated from Germany earlier helped the newly arrived immigrants accustom themselves to the United States. German literary, musical, and cultural groups such as that found in Albany, New York offered the newcomers a chance for fellowship amongst those who spoke German. Moreover, by 1860, national fraternal orders had been established, among them the Sons of the Covenant (B'nai Brith) which had already more than fifty lodges scattered throughout the country, the Independent Order of Sons of Abraham, and Free Sons of Israel.

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18 Ibid., pp. 75-76.
19 Ibid.
The German Jews who emigrated to the United States kept their native speech for a considerable period. Unlike the Sephardim, they followed the Ashkenazic ritual, and though many of them joined Sephardic synagogues, a goodly majority organized congregations of their own. Thus, in 1842, the German-Jewish community in New York City established three congregations. The Jews who came from Germany to Cincinnati in the 1840's established their own congregation, Sons of Jeshurum. The same pattern repeated itself in Chicago, Louisville, and Detroit. Not only did the German Jews prefer the Ashkenazic ritual, many of them found the existing synagogues practicing Orthodoxy. Many of the new congregations preferred Reform Judaism.

Reform Judaism was started in Amsterdam late in the eighteenth century; however, the center of Reform was found in Germany. Advocates of Reform Judaism believed that the doctrines and practices of traditional Judaism were no longer germane to an ever-changing world. Coupled with powerful political and social forces associated with the struggle for emancipation, Reform Judaism became attractive to many Jews in central Europe. If Jews were to be

\[20\text{Ibid., pp. 74-75.}\]
equal citizens, then it was imperative that their religion not thwart or retard the emancipation process. Indeed, Reform rejected or reinterpreted the doctrines which reflected the particularist character of the ancient faith and prayed for the national restoration of the Jewish people. Traditional Judaism emphasized the "selectiveness" of the Jewish people, and looked upon the dispersion of the Jews as punishment for its sins. To the Reform element this was incompatible with the granting of civil and political rights. Divine selection was not repudiated by the Reform Jews; the dispersion was viewed by Reform Jews as that condition by which Jews could show non-Jews "the Unity of God and His law of righteousness and purity." Reform Jews advocated the doctrine of the "Mission of Israel."21 The personal Messiah was replaced with the coming of the Messianic Age in which the divine law of justice would be honored universally. Too, national restoration was anathema to Reform; they believed it to be directly contradictory to the Mission of Israel. The restoration meant that Jews were only temporary residents of a country; if such was the case, the Reform questioned whether it was fitting and

proper for these temporary residents to ask or demand equal rights. Indeed, as the Charleston, South Carolina Jewish community leaders declared: "This country is our Palestine, this city our Jerusalem, this House of God our Temple."\(^{22}\)

By the mid-1840's, there were some forty organized Jewish congregations in the United States. The religious life that prevailed in almost all of them was chaotic. "The habitual indecorum of the synagogue was usually in evidence."\(^{23}\) Very few Jews in the United States benefitted from a Jewish education. There were only six religious schools to teach Jewish children. "The school system in general was in a deplorable condition. Religious instruction was imparted one hour a week by the ladies..."\(^{24}\)

Attempts to remedy these deplorable conditions met with hostility, jealousy, and a desire on the part of many Jewish congregations to remain autonomous. In 1841, Rabbi Isaac Leeser, a German immigrant who became the Orthodox leader of the Philadelphia Jewish community and who had


published a Hebrew spelling-book and catechism, proposed a plan for unifying the synagogues in the United States. He believed that the religious condition of the Jews in America was in an abominable state.

But what have we done, or what do we do towards producing a religious renovation in our members, of which we all stand in so much need? . . . [W]hat exertions do we make now, to perfect ourselves as a people in the observance of those duties which our religion demands of us?

He warned that a cancer was permeating the Jews of America, and that if no corrective action was taken, Judaism as a religion and way of life would disappear. "Where are our schools? Where are our teachers? Where are our colleges?"

He cited the need for collective action:

But if we combine our efforts, call each other to council . . . the work will go bravely on . . . . Above all things, union is requisite; a union of heart, a union of action. . . . 25

Leeser envisioned the union of all American Israelites under a "Common Ecclesiastical Council," which would have the power to supervise the spiritual affairs of the various congregations, the power to establish schools, and the power to convene periodic assemblies of deputies of all

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25 The Occident, 7/16/1843, pp. 293-296; 11/1843, pp. 361-364.
American congregations. Leeser's plan, however, was never adopted. The Sephardim were most apprehensive about their minority position vis a vis the Ashkenazim in the proposed Council. The elders of the leading Sephardic synagogue, Shearith Israel, therefore declined Leeser's invitation to participate, and other Sephardic congregations followed suit. The leading Reform congregation, Emanu-El, declined to participate in Leeser's council because Leeser wished to follow the Sephardic pattern of the religious liturgy instead of the Ashkenazic.

Leeser tried again in 1845 and 1849. He was allied in 1849 with Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise of Albany who believed that the creation of such an "Ecclesiastical Council" would aid his attempt to unite Reform Jews in the United States. Wise announced that a meeting would be held in June, 1849 to consider Leeser's proposal. At the same time the delegates would also consider Wise's proposal for a uniform Minhag America, a revised prayer book that introduced a great number of changes in ritual and service. Wise envisioned the creation of a union of congregations to be represented by chosen delegates which, it was hoped, would eradicate the

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spreading disease amongst the Jews of America:

the want of 'prayer concert,' teachers in Jewish schools who lacked proper qualifications, the dearth of 'good' schools, no knowledge among Jews of their own history or of the essentials of their religion; no authority in Jewish life to which to refer questions; no institutions or means to instruct poor children; the absence of proper devotion in homes and synagogues.27

Wise and Leeser agreed that the latter would advocate the project in Philadelphia and in the West and South; Wise was to "make propaganda for it" in New York and the East. Wise went to New York City and conferred with Rabbi Max Lilienthal and Leo Merzbacher of Temple Emanu-El. Lilienthal favored the proposal; Merzbacher opposed it on account "of the unpreparedness of the orthodox congregation for such a movement." Wise met with failure in New York. The Boards of the various congregations refused to participate. Said one:

As far as New York, progress will have to emanate from the Society of the Friends of Light (a Reform group). No other movement is advisable at present.

While Wise fretted in New York, he received a letter from Leeser stating that the congregations in Philadelphia were waiting for their New York brethren to take the first step,

27 The Occident, 3/1849, p. 581.
and that without the cooperation of New York, the Philadelphia congregations would not move for such a union. The plan ended thus.  

Wise and Leeser went their separate ways; Wise still sought to unite all of American Jewry, while Leeser clung to his original idea of an "Ecclesiastical Council." But any hope of unity was illusory. Factional leaders feared that unity would cost them their pre-eminent positions among their followers; moreover, the revolutions of 1848 in Europe diverted attention from proposals for local unity. Many American Jews thought that the revolutions, if successful, would give the Jews of Europe the rights and privileges of full citizenship.

But the revolutions failed, and once the trauma induced by the failure of the revolutions had subsided, interest in some form of union reawakened. In the early months of 1855 Wise began to advocate a conference of rabbis and concerned laymen. The alleged purpose of the conference was to coordinate the establishment of a Jewish


orphan asylum and a college. He also wished the conference to discuss the desperate need for textbooks, and for other educational materials. With increasing intensity, he published editorials in The Israelite, of which he was editor, urging the Jews of America to unite "to cement a union of actions and sentiments." In another article he maintained that:

Well aware of the principle of progress being vital to Judaism, and of danger of leaving this principle at the disposition of every individual, acknowledged [sic] the religious powers and rights of a synod to make, amend and repeal laws, customs, ceremonies and usages, and in accordance with the spirit of the Mosaic dispensation . . . we must have a conference to organize a synod.

The synod was to meet at least once every three years and its officers and standing committees would have the power to carry out its decisions. The call for the conference appeared in The Israelite of August 17, 1855. Buried

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30 An orphan asylum had already been founded in New Orleans; the Jews of Philadelphia had secured a charter for a college at an earlier date, and a Jewish group in New York was investigating the idea for one.

31 The Israelite, 1/26/1855, p. 229.

32 The Israelite, 2/9/1855, p. 244; 3/2/1855, p. 268.

33 The Israelite, 3/9/1855, p. 276; 8/17/1855, p. 44.
Deep in the call was Wise's plan for a uniform Minhag America.34

Delegates to the conference convened in Cleveland in October, 1855. After much debate, a platform was agreed upon by Leeser and Wise. The platform called for the creation of a synod which was to be guided by the following principles:

1. The Bible as delivered to us by our fathers and as now in our possession is of immediate divine origin and the standard of our religion.

2. The Talmud contains the traditional, legal, and logical exposition of the Biblical laws which must be expounded and practiced according to the comments of the Talmud.

3. The resolutions of the Synod in accordance with the above principles are legally valid.

4. Statutes and ordinances contrary to the laws of the land are invalid.35

The platform as presented to the delegates was a compromise. To be sure, the document, as a biographer of Wise states, is "rather dubious and unclear."36 Was every word and phrase of the Bible literally inspired? Were the

34 Ibid., Wise, Reminiscences, pp. 307-308.
36 Heller, Isaac M. Wise, p. 293.
decisions as set forth in the Talmud binding upon all Jews? Moreover, was the *Shulchan Aruch* to be the definitive authority on the Talmud? Or was Maimonides to be the final arbiter? In essence, the platform is contradictory, for on the one hand it says that the Talmud is the binding authority; on the other hand, were the Jews of America to disregard Maimonides, the *Shulchan Aruch*, or one of the codes interpreting the Talmud?

Leeser and Wise agreed to such a platform because they interpreted the platform as they saw fit. That little else was accomplished at the Cleveland Conference mattered very little to the delegates; the Synod would decide questions of importance at a later date.37

Soon after the delegates departed from Cleveland, attacks upon the proceedings appeared in the Jewish press. Leeser accused the "Reformers" of perpetrating a fraud, of being willing to sign their names to a set of principles in which they neither believed nor were willing to act upon. Moreover, Leeser adamantly opposed Wise's *Minhag America*, for he thought that Wise would omit any reference to the orthodox doctrines of a personal Messiah, the

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restoration, or of sacrificial worship.\textsuperscript{38}

Leeser was not the only one to attack the proceedings. Rabbis David Einhorn of Baltimore and Samuel Adler of New York attacked the platform. They believed that Judaism rested upon a purely rational, "natural" basis without some doctrine of revelation; that Judaism consisted of the "axioms of the human mind"; the Bible was symbolical; and that "Reform was the essential matter, Judaism is secondary."\textsuperscript{39} Protests against the Cleveland Conference came from Baltimore, New York, and Charleston. The proposed synod was stillborn.

All attempts to unify the Jewish community for its own sake bogged down immediately and completely in factionalism. Crisis situations usually created a temporary, partial unity, though even that dissolved once the crisis was past. The Damascus Affair of 1840 was the first such crisis. It involved the imprisonment and torture in Syria

\textsuperscript{38}\textit{The Israelite}, 9/4/1857, p. 69. Leeser clashed with Wise over the latter's proposal for a Minhag America some seven years earlier. See \textit{The Occident}, July, 1855, pp. 158ff.

of a group of Jews on an ancient canard—ritual murder. Samuel I. Joseph of New York formed a committee to call a protest meeting, but the Board of Trustees of Shearith Israel disapproved, and though he was a member of that congregation, Joseph was unable to hold the protest meeting at his own synagogue. Joseph was finally able to hold the meeting at another temple where thirteen representatives from as many synagogues acted as vice-presidents of the meeting. They resolved to petition President Martin Van Buren to direct his Consul in Egypt to "induce the Pasha . . . to manifest more liberal treatment toward his Jewish subjects. . . ." Secretary of State John Forsyth informed the petitioners that the President had already directed him to instruct the Consul at Alexandria, John Glidden, to "employ, should the occasion arise, all those good offices and efforts which are compatible with discretion and your official character, to the end that justice

40"Ritual murder" is allegedly the Jewish practice of using the blood of a non-Jew in the performance of a religious ceremony.

and humanity may be extended to these persecuted people. . . . "42 Mass meetings were also held in Philadelphia, Cincinnati and Richmond.43 These protests, added to those of Jewish communities abroad, and the crucial interventions of Moses Montefiore and Adolphe Cremieux, leaders of British and French Jewry, succeeded in freeing the imprisoned Jews.44 But as soon as this immediate objective had been attained, the initiative toward unity dissipated, and the various protest groups did not go on to other communal enterprises but dissolved instead.

In 1857, American Jews for the first time attempted to use political pressure to force an end to an abuse. In certain cantons of Switzerland, Jews, including American Jews passing through Switzerland, were denied freedom of domicile and worship. The treaty then in force between the United States and Switzerland disregarded these acts of discrimination. Though American Jews protested ratification


43Ibid., pp. 274-276.

44Ibid., p. 276.
of that treaty, their efforts were to no avail. What aroused the anger of the Jews of America was the seemingly blase attitude of the United States Government toward Swiss discrimination against American Jews. An American Jew had informed the American Ambassador to Switzerland, Theodore Fay, that he was asked to leave the country because he was a Jewish merchant. Fay protested to the Swiss Federal Council; the Federal Council decided that they would let the American-Jewish merchant stay, but he was never officially given the right of domicile. All of this occurred before the American-Swiss Treaty was ratified and all of these happenings were known to the State Department.46

After ratification of the Treaty in 1855, Fay applied to the Federal Council of Neufchatel for permission for the merchant, a Mr. Gootman, to stay. Again, the Federal Council allowed Gootman to stay, but denied him the right of domicile. News of the Gootman case reached the United States in mid-1857. Isaac Mayer Wise began to

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46Ibid., p. 95.
agitate against the Treaty in The Israelite.

Agitate! Call meetings! Engage the press in your favor!!!! Israelites, freemen and citizens! Let not the disgrace of the treaty . . . remain upon the history of our country. Do not stand the insult heaped upon the Jewish citizens by unprincipled diplomatists. . . .

Mass meetings organized by groups of Jews in Baltimore, Chicago, and Cleveland were held, demanding an end to the treaty and the discrimination. But leaders of the Jewish community in New York resented Wise for taking the initiative in regard to the Swiss treaty, and the meeting scheduled for New York was so poorly attended as to be a failure. On August 16, 1857, Rabbi David Einhorn was notified that a meeting had been held in Baltimore at which a committee was appointed to communicate with similar groups protesting the treaty in other cities. The Baltimore committee recommended that a convention be held in Baltimore on October 26, 1857, and that, en masse, they would proceed to Washington to lay their grievance before President Buchanan. However, The Israelite printed in its issue of October 9, 1857, that the convention was to be held in Baltimore on October 28, 1857. The confusion and resultant poor attendance at the meeting held on October 26,

47Quoted in Ibid., p. 96.
prompted the delegates to send only a memorial on the subject to the President. A few days after the abortive convention, an anonymous call appeared in the Baltimore Sun for a meeting in the Eden Street Synagogue, and it was this meeting that Wise attended. This group proceeded to Washington and received an audience with the President; the President told the delegates that he would rectify the existing situation.48

Most New York Jews were outraged by Wise's action; he had not invited them to participate in the Baltimore Convention, they considered him unqualified to represent them in such matters, and they would have preferred to plead their case before the proper authorities without public demonstrations and "irresponsible" newspaper editorials. Therefore, a group of New York Jews formed a committee to make representations to the State Department to modify the existing treaty. They sent a small delegation to Washington, where State Department officials told the delegates that they were trying to rectify the situation and could do little more.

In fact, the State Department was in a quandary. Switzerland was a loosely governed confederation in which

48 Ibid., pp. 103-104.
each canton was independent in domestic affairs and even in the formulation of foreign policy. Moreover, within each canton every commune "enjoyed similar liberties." Treaties entered into by the Swiss government were often ignored by individual cantons and communes, and the federal government could do little, if anything, to coerce them into adherence.

The discrimination against the Jews was finally ended by the efforts of Ambassador Fay and liberal elements among the Swiss themselves. Fay did not demand that the Swiss government force cantons and communes to guarantee Jews freedom of domicile and worship; rather, he set about to convince the people of Switzerland that denial of such freedoms was morally wrong. He made a thorough study of the social and political conditions among the Jews in Switzerland and in neighboring countries, and then published his findings in a brief entitled, "The Israelite Note," which he circulated among the cantons. Through logic, statistics, and precedents, he refuted the arguments of those who condoned discriminatory practices, and it was not long before a number of cantons removed all restrictions against Jews. In 1864 the Swiss Federal Council informed Secretary of State William E. Seward that it was ready to modify its
treaty with the United States and would grant equal rights and protection to all citizens of the United States. Negotiations followed, but it was not until 1874, when the new Swiss constitution established religious liberty and made the treatment of aliens a federal matter, that the discrimination ended.⁴⁹

In 1858, outrage over the Mortara case stimulated American Jews to another attempt at unified action. Catholic clergymen in Italy had kidnapped and secretly baptized a Jewish child, Edgar Mortara of Bologna. Delegates from twelve New York congregations met on November 8, 1858, and decided to form a group to protest the kidnapping. The group, calling itself Representatives of the United Congregations of the Israelites of the City of New York, was loosely knit, and its function was to plan and execute protest meetings. Two weeks later, a mass meeting resolved that the President of the United States be urged to intervene on behalf of the Mortara child by sending an official protest to the Pope. A delegation from the United Congregations met with Secretary of State Louis Cass and President Buchanan, but the

President declined to intervene on the grounds that

it is the settled policy of the United States to abstain from all interference . . . as they [sic] expect other nations to abstain from all interference in the affairs of our country.50

The Mortara Case brought into being the first national Jewish organizations: in France, the Alliance Israelite Universelle in 1860; the Anglo-Jewish Association shortly thereafter; in Austria, the Judisches Allianz. In the United States, the Mortara Case and the resultant protest action led to the formation of the Board of Delegates of American Israelites. This was the successor of the local United Congregations of New York that had led the Mortara protest and the first national organization of the American-Jewish community.51

The leaders of all these newly created national organizations were for the most part rabbi, business , and heads of Jewish philanthropies. The tradition of the Hofjude (the court Jew)--shtadlan (in Yiddish)--had been transplanted to the United States. One of the results of the persecution of Jews in lands that denied them elementary

50Quoted in Ibid., p. xxvii.

rights was the rise of a succession of individual Jews who "stood out as intermediaries between their people and the sovereigns or authorities of a country, by whose grace and favor it alone was possible for the Jews to live." Jews from Germany comprised the majority of the American-Jewish community since 1840, and it was influential German Jews such as Simon Wolf who constituted themselves the spokesmen and representatives of the American-Jewish community whenever occasion required. Indeed, this de facto delegation of power and authority to "leaders of the community" worked quite well in the United States because the Jewish population was quite small and, despite internal conflict, shared many strongly unifying beliefs and attitudes. There were frequent arguments amongst Jews over tactics, but few over goals.

The German-Jewish spokesmen functioned as communal leaders to the general satisfaction of the American-Jewish community.

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community until the equilibrium of that community was disturbed by the third and largest Jewish migration to the United States. In the years 1880 to 1914, approximately 1,895,000 Jewish immigrants came to the United States from Russia, Austria-Hungary, and Roumania. The total Jewish immigration in that period was 2,497,000. Of this number 71.6 per cent were from Russia, 17.9 per cent from Austria-Hungary, 4.3 per cent from Roumania, and 4.3 per cent from Western Europe. A great shift had occurred; prior to 1880, the Jewish immigrants came mostly from Western Europe, with a few from North Africa and the Middle East; the new immigrants came from lands east of the Bug and Dneister Rivers.

The new immigrants did not assimilate easily into the general population; many intended to continue their old life-style unaltered in the new land. As one immigrant stated: "For though I was in America, I had lived in practically the same environment which we brought from home. . . . But on the whole we were still in our village in Russia."  


The newly arrived Jews from Russia and Eastern Europe faced circumstances and problems completely different from those that had confronted their German-Jewish predecessors. In contrast to the German Jews, they were unfamiliar with Western society and therefore could not easily be assimilated into their new surroundings (even if they wished to be, which they did not). The differences between Eastern Europe and industrial America were huge compared to the differences between pre-industrial Western Europe and pre-industrial America.

The new immigrant's arrival destroyed the already minimal cohesiveness of the American-Jewish community. Many native and naturalized American Jews looked with apprehension and disdain on their immigrant co-religionists, fearing that these less advanced immigrants would jeopardize their own position in American society. With but very few exceptions—notably Simon Wolf and Benjamin Franklin Peixotto—the American Jewish community in the period 1870 to 1890 attempted to deny the immigrants admission to the United States or "grudgingly received" them. The Board of Delegates of American Israelites felt that the American Jewish community was incapable of caring for the mass of
immigrants. The United Hebrew Charities, created in 1874 for the purpose of providing relief to needy Jews, returned to Europe many Jews who were not able to make a living. Moreover, the financial panic of the 1870's added to the fears of the established American Jewish community. Mayer Isaacs of the United Hebrew Charities stated:

The dispatch of poor emigrants to America has long constituted a burden and unjust tax upon our large cities. . . . Complaints continue that it is habitual with benevolent organizations in certain cities in Europe to dispatch utterly helpless Jewish families to America—only to become a burden upon our charities.

The flood of emigrants from Russia caused much dissension between American and European relief societies. There were wide differences of opinion as to the proper allocation of funds and as to the methods of receiving and caring for the immigrants between the Hebrew Emigrant Aid Society and such organizations as the London Mansion House Committee, the Alliance Israelite Universelle of France, the German Central Committee and the Vienna Committee of


the Alliance. The American Jewish community wanted
their European counterparts to take care as to which emi-
grants were to go to America and to provide enough finan-
cial assistance for their settlement. Thus, Edward Lauter-
bach of the H.E.A.S. told a meeting of relief organizations
in Vienna:
We would receive no more emigrants except in a few
exceptional instances, confined to those now at Brody,
who could not be repatriated and who could not be dis-
posed of in some European or non-American community,
and these should be sent, with such sums and upon such
conditions only as should be exacted by the HEAS, and
only after the express consent of that Society had been
obtained.

Antagonism toward the newly arrived immigrant Jews
was relieved somewhat by the establishment of the Baron
de Hirsch Fund in 1889. American Jews could no longer cate-
gorically state that they alone were responsible for the
financial burden which large-scale immigration imposed. Yet,
they did not wish to see many more immigrants come to the
United States. Oscar Straus, later to become Secretary of
Commerce under Theodore Roosevelt, wrote to Hirsch warning
him that the fund was not in any way to foster or encourage

57Ibid., pp. 42-43.

58Quoted in Gilbert Osofsky, "The HEAS of the United
States, 1881-1883," in Karp, The Jewish Experience in
America: The Era of Immigration, volume 4, p. 83.
further emigration from Europe. If such was the intent of the fund, then he wanted no part of it.59

Though many German Jews would have preferred the new immigrants to stay in Europe, self-interest, if not compassion, prescribed aid once they had arrived.60

Unprotected and undirected, many immigrants will naturally fall into bad associations and disgrace . . . the Jewish community.61

Augustus A. Levey, Secretary of the Hebrew Emigrant Aid Society, observed that the Russian Jews' way of life in their old homeland has stamped upon them the ineffaceable mark of permanent pauperism. Only disgrace and a lowering of opinion in which American Israelites are held . . . can result from the continued residence among us of the wretches.

To avoid disgrace and shame, Levey urged that the immigrants be helped.62


62 Quoted in Ibid., p. 15.
If avoiding disgrace was the primary end, one of the most efficient means appeared to be rapid Americanization of the immigrants through education. Institutions such as the Educational Alliance, located on the lower East Side of New York, were founded by German Jews. Their objective was to erase every characteristic of the Eastern European Jew that marked him as an alien. Its scope was defined by Education Alliance leaders as being "of an Americanizing, educational, social and humanizing character." Indeed, the founders of these schools were trying to mold the East European Jews in the image of the American Jew of German descent, totally disregarding the fact that the two had little in common except their religion, and that even the religious practices of the Eastern European Jews were looked upon by many German Jews with scorn. The East European Jews were derided for their general "medievalism," their Yiddish speech, their outlandish appearance, as well as for their unfamiliar mode of religious expression. One observer wrote that it would have been better to "send American-Jewish missionaries to Russia to civilize them there rather than give them an opportunity to russianize us."  

The "Uptown Jews," as the Russian-Jewish immigrants resentfully called their Germanic brethren, tried to guide them, to teach them American customs and manners, so that they would not embarrass the Jewish community as a whole. Adult Jewish immigrants learned "the privileges and duties of American citizenship"; youngsters were instructed in such classes as civics, American history, English, and vocational education courses. Moreover, the Educational Alliance, in conjunction with other public agencies, co-sponsored physical fitness programs, concerts, Shakespearean plays, and lectures.

The speaking of Yiddish inside the walls of the Educational Alliance building was forbidden; the Alliance's People's Synagogue conducted religious services in Hebrew or German. Anything that smacked of alien ideology or practice was anathema to the German-Jewish Americans.

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65 Ibid. See also, "Interview with Yonathan Shapiro," Tape #525, (Transcript, pp. 3-4), in possession of Mrs. Ruth Richards Eisenstein, New York City, Archives of the Jewish Information Bureau.

66 "Interview with Yonathan Shapiro," Tape 525, (Transcript, pp. 3-4).
With the influx of tremendous numbers of Jews, Oscar Straus, who was closely connected with the Educational Alliance and who was appointed by President Grover Cleveland as minister plenipotentiary to Turkey, complained that the newly arrived immigrants were "swelling the ranks of labor agitators and . . . bring misery upon themselves by continually joining strikes. . . ." Indeed, the social antipathy between the German and Eastern European Jew also had economic roots. Until about 1855, ready-made clothing was produced on the premises where it was sold, by women working in the "back" of the shops. These shops were mostly owned and operated by German-Jewish Americans, and they catered to the lower classes. After the introduction of the heavy steel cutting knife in 1876, which allowed several garments to be cut at one time, men replaced women garment workers; at the same time, improvements in the sewing machine rendered it more efficient for the merchant to buy his stock from a factory than to produce it "in the back." Demand for ready-made goods increased rapidly, and the railroads fostered and increased this demand. A tremendous expansion in the clothing industry took place, and the newly arrived immigrant Jews,
many of whom were unskilled laborers and who worked for pitifully low wages, were absorbed into this highly competitive industry.67

The German-Jewish shopkeeper aspired to become the German-Jewish factory owner. Wages for the immigrants were terribly low, and conditions in the clothing factories were very bad. The buildings were mostly filthy, and the most elementary health and safety precautions were rarely taken. In their bitterness, a few immigrant Jews turned to labor agitation. Joel Entin, a Jewish newspaper editor, vented the anger of the immigrant Jewish worker against his German-Jewish boss:

The rich Jews in their magnanimity have taken us into their cloak shops and factories. We have then become by their grace a people of tailors and tailoring has become our national industry. Of wages our richer brothers paid the lowest and the sanitary arrangements in the workshops were far from satisfactory. An attitude of ridicule against the people were [sic] adopted. Our language and even our religion being made fun of [sic]. . . . Charity was given but the spirit of the people was trodden upon and insulted. . . .68


Immigrant intellectuals such as Abraham Cahan and Morris Hillquit began to challenge the leadership of the German Jews in communal affairs; they questioned the relief measures being taken to aid newly arrived immigrants and chastized the "uptown Jews" for their patronizing attitude. "The time has come," stated Bernard Richards,

for all self-respecting Jews to call a halt to the efforts of men within our own ranks to traduce the name of our people, and to reduce our dignity and importance. The time has come when we must tell the men of the U.A.H.C. [Union of American Hebrew Congregations], of the B'nai Brith and other organizations endeavoring to abolish the Jewish race, that their efforts to establish in official quarters their own definition of the Jew, is obnoxious and offensive to us. . . .

The writer added that if the bastions of Reform Judaism and the centers of German-Jewish power did not relax their pressure, an open quarrel would ensue. "[We will] make them eat their own words--long, laborious Germanized English words that are sure to choke them. . . ." 69

The worsening conflict between the two groups led to renewed efforts to establish an organization that would represent all factions within the Jewish community and thus, hopefully, introduce elements of harmony. At a

69 Bernard G. Richards, "Jewish Leaders and the Jews," The Jewish Advocate (Boston), 1/21/10.
convention held in Philadelphia in February, 1891, Jewish
delegates representing Jewish organizations in nineteen
cities attempted to gain what they considered their proper
share in communal leadership. Among the delegates were
such notables as Simon Wolf, Dr. Solomon Solis-Cohen, and
David Blaustein of the Educational Alliance. They estab­
lished the Jewish Alliance of America, which was to be a
permanent organization whose purpose was to "unite
Israelites in a common bond . . . [to] more effectively
[cope] with the grave problem presented by enforced emigra­
tion. . . ."70

The Jewish Alliance, however, was beset by obstacles
that caused its quick demise. Eastern European Jews ridi­
culed the new organization as but another attempt to guide
and control them. Those German Jews who had consented to
attend the convention were not willing to give up or even
share power and influence within the community. On the one
hand, the German Jews sympathized with the East Europeans' 
yearning for a modicum of self-determination, and with

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70"Draft of Chapter One of the History of the
American Jewish Congress," in possession of Mrs. Ruth
Richards Eisenstein, New York City, Archives of the Jewish
Information Bureau.
their contention that they themselves could best judge what aid they needed; on the other hand, alleviating the immigrants' problems required a great deal of money, and the German Jews insisted that they, who paid the piper, should also call the tune. Eventually, the Jewish Alliance of America had to merge with the Baron de Hirsch Fund because the Alliance could not find the money to finance its projects.71

Between 1903 and 1908, approximately half a million Jews left Russia, and 90 per cent of these came to the United States. Increasing anti-Semitism, expressed in ever-more frequent and violent pogroms, only reinforced the Jews' desire to leave a country of little economic opportunity. News of the government-inspired pogroms, along with the swelling tide of immigration, shocked American Jews. The leaders of the existing Jewish organizations in the United States realized that they and the private Jewish relief agencies were unable to cope with either the protection of Jews abroad or the needs of the community at home.

Rabbi David Philipson, a Cincinnati Rabbi, proposed a plan for an all-encompassing Jewish organization and presented it in the form of a resolution to the convention of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations in January, 1903. He and his co-sponsor, Rabbi Joseph Stolz, based their plan for an American Jewish Congress, which was also to be the first step in the establishment of a World Jewish Congress, on the valid assumption that conditions are such

in the world that united efforts on the part of the Jews all over the world is [sic] becoming more and more urgent to meet such problems as the Russian Jewish question, the Roumanian Jewish question, the Galician Jewish question, the evils of over-crowding in our cities, the immigration question. . . .

The next step was for the U.A.H.C. to initiate preliminary conferences to arrange the first meeting of the American Jewish Congress, but nothing happened. The Executive Board of the U.A.H.C. failed to take action on the resolution. Personal prejudices and group rivalries again prevented unity. Simon Wolf of the Board of Delegates on Civil Rights, which worked closely with the U.A.H.C., had often represented Jewish interests to the highest councils of government, and he looked on the proposed Congress as a

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72 Ibid., p. 12.
potential usurper of his position and prerogatives.

Besides, the mutual resentment of the Reform and Orthodox, German and Eastern European, was still strong; even Atlantic seaboard and Middle Western Jews regarded each other with a certain unfriendliness. 73

The idea of an American Jewish Congress thus founded but the pogroms continued, and American Jewry was bitterly divided over what to do about them. In December, 1905, a group of prominent New York Jews met to discuss the plight of the Jews in Russia and Roumania and what American Jewry could do to help them. The idea of a permanent Jewish organization whose sole purpose would be to aid the oppressed Jews of Russia and Eastern Europe was considered. Louis Marshall, a brilliant constitutional lawyer and a leading shtadlan, remarked that a permanent Jewish committee organized for other than charitable purposes was frowned upon by most of the group. Yet, the Wanderers, as the group called itself, were very much afraid that if they did not initiate such an organization, Jews whom they considered to have "objectionable" tendencies would surely do so. "In order to avoid mischief it was desirable that

73Ibid., p. 12.
we take the initiative."

American Jews of German ancestry were terribly fearful of what might happen to their position in American society if the immigrant ghetto Jews from Eastern Europe and Russia moved to take action; any organization they established might espouse socialistic theories. As one of them stated:

The need of a better feeling between the native and foreign elements of American Jewry is recognized, and I deplore the license of speech that has grown among us. The suggestion that mere numbers can give rise to statesmanlike advice in matters affecting the Jewish people is unthinkable. . . . [The] arrogant assumption of the so-called East Siders that mere numbers give wisdom ought to be treated as nil. There is more to American Jewry than is comprised in the ghettos. . . .

On February 2, 1906 a conference was held at the United Hebrew Charities Building in New York to discuss the creation of a permanent national organization. After much debate over the form such an organization should take, a subcommittee was appointed to form "an American Jewish Conference, whose purpose shall be to promote the cause of Judaism and to aid in securing the civil and religious

75 Quoted in Ibid., p. 15.
rights of the Jews in all countries where such rights are denied or endangered. . . ." The majority of the subcommittee voted to call for a conference of 150 delegates who were to be elected by members of Jewish congregations, but this scheme was too democratic for conservative elements of the subcommittee, who succeeded in preventing its implementation. 77

Further meetings led to some arguments. On May 19, 1906, Abraham Schomer, a New York lawyer, called for an "International Jewish Parliament." His less imaginative colleagues considered him a wild-eyed radical who did not understand the ultimate consequences of his own hyperbole, and the idea came to naught. Instead, the subcommittee proposed an American Jewish Committee. Even this proposal

76"Draft of Chapter One of the History of the American Jewish Congress," in possession of Mrs. Ruth Richards Eisenstein, New York City, Archives of the Jewish Information Bureau.

77 Each delegate was to represent 10,000 Jews, which thus presupposed the Jewish population in the United States to be 1,500,000. One half of this total was concentrated in the greater New York metropolitan area; hence, 75 delegates should have represented the Jews of New York. Yet New York City and its environs were given only sixty delegates. For a thorough critique of this plan, see The Jewish Advocate (Boston), 11/11/15, pp. 1, 8.
met with opposition. Simon Wolf and his adherents objected to organizing American Jews "as Jews," except on religious or philanthropic matters. Once again they may have been motivated as much by self-interest as by genuine belief in assimilation. Any new national Jewish organization was a potential rival of the B'nai Brith and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations for funds and influence.78

Despite the opposition of Wolf and the most ardent assimilationists, the conference designated a committee of fifty "for the purpose of cooperating with the various national Jewish bodies in this country and abroad on questions of national and international moment to the Jewish people."79 The American Jewish Committee held its first meeting on November 11, 1906.

The founders of the American Jewish Committee intended it to be a "skeletal organization" that could be expanded in times of crisis. Policies and strategies were to be decided on by an executive committee, but in reality

78"Draft of Chapter One of the History of the American Jewish Congress," in possession of Mrs. Ruth Richards Eisenstein, New York City, Archives of the Jewish Information Bureau.

79Ibid.
the executive committee existed for the most part on paper, and the most influential shtadlanim on the Committee--Jacob Schiff, Louis Marshall, and Cyrus Adler--actually made the decisions. The American Jewish Committee epitomized the Hofjude tradition; Louis Marshall, its moving force, avowedly preferred to work through "discreet pressure and backstairs diplomacy." This philosophy had far-reaching effects on the structure and operations of the organization. Marshall and his supporters were opposed to anything beyond the alleviation of crises by what they considered traditional methods. "Bureaucracy was as repugnant [to them] as direct democracy. . . ." Bureaucracy was odious because it implied permanent institutions, and permanent institutions might by their very existence arouse and crystallize the enmity of non-Jews, particularly in times of strife or unrest. Democracy, the shtadlanim feared, would provide radical Jews who advocated un-American philosophies with a forum and a license to speak, thus bringing discredit on all American Jews. It was far better to stick to traditional methods than to risk discredit and alienation. Even after the American Jewish Committee led the successful

80 Naomi Cohen, Not Free to Desist, pp. 19-20, 25.
campaign to abrogate the Russian-American Treaty of 1832, a campaign in which the Committee grudgingly used public protest and demonstrations rather than discreet pressure, Marshall and other leaders of the Committee continued to practice silent diplomacy.\textsuperscript{81}

Thus, although the American Jewish Committee did relieve crises and repel attacks on Jewish rights, it did so employing approved German-Jewish methods. The main criterion of strategy was to avoid offending non-Jews. The East Siders were not nearly so concerned with non-Jewish opinion, and the Bingham incident of 1908, in which the Police Commissioner of New York City claimed that more than 50 per cent of the crime there was perpetrated by Jews, led them to form a new organization, the New York Kehillah (Union).\textsuperscript{82}

After much public protest and critical editorials, Commissioner Bingham retracted his statement. To East Siders, the significance of the incident was plain. Judah Magnes, Assistant Rabbi at Temple Emanu-El, was quick to

\textsuperscript{81}Ibid., pp. 78-80.

\textsuperscript{82}For a complete history of the New York Kehillah, see Arthur A. Goren, New York Jews and the Quest for Community: The Kehillah Experiment, 1908-1922, (New York, 1970), passim.
point out that the Bingham incident was only a harbinger of future attacks and that the Jews of New York would have to protect themselves against such defamations. Said Magnes:

They need a permanent and representative organization that may speak in their behalf, that may define their rights and liberties, and that may also cope with the problems of criminality just as Jewish charitable organizations are coping with the problems of destitution and disease.83

The Kehillah merged with the American Jewish Committee soon after its formation, under an agreement whereby questions of national or international scope were handled by the Committee while the Kehillah dealt with local problems and got its funds from the Committee. Though its substantive accomplishments were few, the Kehillah served a very useful purpose. The Kehillah was the organization of the Russian and Eastern European Jews who were beginning to acquire education, culture, and economic stature. At the Kehillah meetings they could refine their political, rhetorical, and organizational skills which were to prove invaluable in the fight for an American Jewish Congress.

American Jewry was divided over tactics, not strategy. Differences in social, economic, religious, and

political philosophy prohibited the American-Jewish community from establishing some organization that would speak for all Jews in times of crisis. World War I was to be the catalyst for the American-Jewish community to establish such an organization, and to determine which faction within the group would have the preponderant voice in the organization.
CHAPTER I

THE FORMATION OF THE AMERICAN JEWISH CONGRESS

World War I galvanized American Jewish efforts toward unity. The outbreak of the war did not reconcile the philosophical differences, tactical disagreements, class antagonisms, or personal rivalries in the Jewish community; it did not even paper over them. But it did provide the twin spurs of fear and hope--fear for the present fate of the Jews in the war zones, hope that the debilitating and unsettling effects of the war would in the end loosen the restrictions of anti-Semitic governments (particularly Russia's) on their Jewish populations. Many Jews began to realize that only a true national organization could hope to raise sufficient funds for war relief or exert political pressure sufficient to secure equal rights for Jews living under anti-Semitic governments. Therefore, despite continuing dissension, mutual suspicion, and jealousy, national organization and national unity were
more and more clearly perceived and urgently felt to be correct goals for American Jewry.

The effect of World War I on the Jews of Europe, particularly those in Eastern Europe, was devastating. At the start, most knowledgeable observers predicted that the conflict would be over by Christmas, and that total mobilization of the economic resources of the combatants would prove unnecessary. European Jewish organizations, such as the Alliance Israelite Universelle, the Anglo-Jewish Community of London, the Alliance Israelite za Wien, and the Jewish Colonization Association, whose function was to transplant Jews from Eastern Europe to North and South America and to prepare them for agricultural and industrial careers, likewise failed to foresee the prolonged and devastating nature of the conflict and consequently did not prepare for the financial burden that befell them in terms of aid to refugees, food for devastated areas, and medical supplies. Jews in the neutral Scandinavian countries were able to lend some assistance, but their resources were negligible in comparison to the need. Less than four months after the outbreak of hostilities, Jewish charitable organizations applied to Jacob H. Schiff, a New York financier and one of the leaders of the American Jewish
Committee, for cash loans to carry on their work. "We look toward America . . . for our chief support," wrote one Scandinavian Jewish leader.\(^1\)

American Jews were shocked by the outbreak of war. Jewish organizations in the United States diverted money to European relief and began to organize fund drives for additional succor to their European brethren. Many American Jews were not satisfied, however, with traditional methods of aiding the unfortunate, and began to question whether mere relief was a valid final goal. Clearly, the war made relief work increasingly imperative, they felt, but the massive scope of the relief effort must not be allowed to blind people to the fact that relief was not enough. Stated Bernard G. Richards:

But what about the right to live? What about the rights of our Jewish brethren to live as human beings; to return to their homes . . . on equal terms with the people among whom they dwell. . . . Shall the Jewish blood have been shed in vain, and shall Jewish bravery and suffering and sorrow go for naught? Shall not our people receive in recompense for their irreparable losses of lives and property at least the civic rights which long ago should have been theirs? Should they not be allowed to live like men in the lands for which they died like heroes? It is for us to answer.\(^2\)

\(^1\)The American Israelite, 11/12/14, p. 7; Simonson to American Jewish Congress, 11/14/16, Leon Motzkin folder, Bernard G. Richards Mss, Jewish Theological Seminary.

\(^2\)The Jewish Daily News, 1/20/15.
Indeed, American Jews were no longer prepared to countenance the continuance of European Jews in their pre-war status; the Jews of America were determined to eliminate the economic, political, religious and social restrictions placed on European Jewry.

On August 30, 1914, four weeks after the outbreak of hostilities, the American Federation of Zionists was called into conference by Dr. Shmarya Levin of the World Zionist Organization Executive Committee to decide upon ways to aid the Jews in the war zones. At the meeting, a Provisional Committee for General Zionist Affairs was established to carry on the work of the World Zionist Organization which, because of the conflict, was unable to function. Louis D. Brandeis, by this time famous as the "people's lawyer," was elected Chairman of the newly formed Committee. Bernard G. Richards, Nahum Syrkin, and Baruch Zuckerman, delegates to the conference, presented a

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resolution empowering the chairman to use his good offices to bring about a convention of American-Jewish organizations. The purpose of the convention was two-fold: to create a relief fund for Jews in the war zones and to assess the situation and aims of world Jewry under the conditions likely to obtain at the war's end. 4

Brandeis, after the passage of the Richards-Syrkin-Zuckerman resolution, contacted Louis Marshall of the American Jewish Committee and asked him if the Committee would cooperate in the calling of the convention. Marshall accepted Brandeis's offer and appointed a group from the American Jewish Committee to work with Brandeis in this endeavor. 5 Lewis E. Miller, editor of the Varhe&nt, stated that such a convention would be held to "organize and prepare world opinion . . . for the world problem, which is known as the Jewish problem. . . ." 6


5 Ibid., p. 7; The Jewish Advocate (Boston), 9/4/14, pp. 1, 8; 10/9/14, p. 8.

6 Quoted in Rappaport, "Jewish Immigrants and World War One," pp. 213-214.
On October 25, 1914, delegates from more than forty national Jewish organizations met in New York City to join forces in providing relief to the Jews in the war zones. Judah Magnes proclaimed this conference an opportunity to unite the Jewish people, but the delegates were immediately caught up in a long debate over who (or what groups) was to control the National Relief Committee. Cyrus Adler urged that the relief program be entrusted to a committee of fifteen to be appointed by the chairman of the convention, Louis Marshall, but Magnes disagreed and argued that if any committee was to be formed it must be democratically selected and broadly representative, comprising at least fifty delegates. Indeed, the conflict between the Hofjuden and "democrats" was here explicit!

Jacob Schiff tried to reconcile the opposing views. He and Rabbi Samuel Schulman proposed that the Chairman appoint a committee of five to select an executive committee of twenty-five, which would in turn select a general committee of 100. Schiff's proposal would have kept power in the hands of the Hofjuden. But Magnes and his allies, Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, Jacob DeHaas, and Harry Cutler, a Providence, Rhode Island manufacturer, soldier, and civic leader, turned down the compromise as well in favor of a
resolution offered by Richard Gottheil, Professor of Semitics at Columbia University and President of the Federation of American Zionists. This resolution, which after much debate prevailed, required each of the national organizations attending the convention to elect representatives to a general committee that in turn would elect an executive committee, which would oversee the relief campaign and distribution of the funds. It was a significant victory for the "democratic" faction, and it taught them their strength. Though they acceded to the wish of the Marshall-Adler group that the executive committee be limited to raising and disbursing relief money, they soon began to use their political strength to effect their views within the Jewish community.

But not all Jews were satisfied with the results of the above convention. On November 22, 1914, Dr. Joseph

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7 The American Israelite, 10/29/14, p. 4; The Jewish Advocate (Boston), 10/30/14, pp. 1, 8.

8 Some observers attributed the struggle in Jewish life to the Americanization process. "The schism in Jewish life is merely a part of the old struggle between the few powerful vested interests seeking to retain their... privileges, and the many, hitherto supine masses, now as a result of their Americanization, recognizing their natural rights and seeking to make their voices heard in the determination of their own welfare. ..." The American Israelite, 11/2/16, p. 4.
Krimsky, a Brooklyn physician, called a conference to discuss the means of securing full civil and political rights for Jews of all nations after the war. This conference established an organization known as the Jewish Emancipation Committee. Krimsky attempted to channel the movement in favor of Jewish enfranchisement.

Krimsky and his colleagues were aided by several Russian and Eastern European Jews who had fled their homelands. Chaim Zhitlowsky, who made his first visit to the United States in 1904 to raise money for the Russian Socialist Revolutionary Party, and Pinchas Ruthenburg, who came to the United States to help form a Jewish Legion to fight against the Turks, joined in the agitation for an organization which they called an American Jewish Congress to work for Jewish rights. They were not the only recent arrivals among the early advocates of a Jewish Congress; recent immigrants possessing almost every conceivable radical philosophy were represented among the proponents of the Congress.

The early Jewish Congress movement had a distinctly anti-Russian flavor to it. Most of its early supporters believed that Russia's defeat would lead to the hoped-for liberation of Poland; they were therefore actively pro-German.
Many Jewish leaders, like Abraham Goldberg, editor of Dos Yiddishe Folk, thought that the defeat of Russia would lead directly to the emancipation of all Jews in Greater Russia. Many Congress supporters also wished Germany to conquer Roumania. They naively believed that the Germans would treat the Jews no worse than they treated the rest of the populace. The Jewish Comment of Baltimore editorialized,

It stands to reason that with the conquest of Roumania a brighter future opens for the Roumanian Jews. While Germany is supreme in that country, we can rest assured that just as in the case of Poland, the Jews will not suffer more than the rest. With the conclusion of peace Germany is pledged to secure humanity rights [sic] for the Jews in Roumania as in the other Balkan states.\(^9\)

Opponents of the Congress movement were quick to point out the anti-Russian and, by extension, anti-Allied sentiments of the more outspoken Congressists. Louis Marshall of the American Jewish Committee believed that the German government paid numerous agents provocateurs in the United States to arouse, "among the Russian Jews especially," a feeling of antagonism toward Russia and its allies. He

believed that the Germans were influencing the Yiddish press in America to favor Germany. He wrote that the American Jewish Committee had so far prevented the Jews of the United States from taking in "their collective capacity" any position that might have been deemed inimical to the Allied cause and that the real aim of the advocates of a Jewish Congress was to have the Jews of America endorse the purposes of the Central Powers. ¹⁰

But the proponents of a Jewish Congress were skilled advocates of their cause. Most of them came from Russia or Eastern Europe; many had been professional revolutionaries there and had long experience in converting large numbers of people to their point of view. Allied with the more radical Zionist groups, particularly the Poale Zion, these Congress advocates set to work on Jewish opinion.

Through editorials in the Yiddish press, handbills, posters, lectures, discussion groups, and street meetings, the "Congressists" bombarded the Jewish community with

publicity for the Congress. Pinchas Ruthenburg epitomized the Congressists. He had come to the United States to raise a Jewish Legion against the Turks, but he stayed on to publish a vociferously militant Yiddish weekly called the Jewish Congress, whose purpose was to whip-up pro-Congress sentiment on the Lower East Side. Other Yiddish newspapers took the theme—The Jewish Daily News in January, 1915, the Varheit, the Jewish Leader, and the Day soon after. So persuasive and pervasive were they that Louis Marshall felt helpless to counteract what he considered the infinite mischief they caused:

There is no way to guide them or advise them, or to instill into them a sane view on any subject. They do not hesitate to pass judgment on the most delicate questions of diplomacy without a moment's thought. ... Where calmness and self-control are required, they froth at the mouth. Where secret councils are indispensable, they demand mass-meetings, Jewish Congresses, and loud vociferation. Men who should know better are carried away by this insanity. ... 12


By March, 1915, the Congressists felt sure enough of public opinion to proceed from publicity to organization, and on March 21, after several preliminary discussions, the Jewish Congress Organization Committee was formed. Most of its members were American Jews of Eastern European or Russian ancestry, most were also from organizations with headquarters in New York. Its Chairman, Gedalia Bublick, like most of the other members of the Organization Committee, held a rather restricted view of the proper scope of Congress activities: the Congress was to send representatives to the future peace conference to plead for Palestine as a Jewish homeland and for improvement of the Jewish conditions in Eastern Europe. Some Congressists wished the American Jewish Congress to evolve, after the war, into a World Jewish Congress; others felt it should disband once having secured Jewish interests at the peace conference. They did not conceive of the Congress as a permanent organization to speak for the American-Jewish community on all questions.

One organization, however, viewed the American Jewish Congress as a means to gain mass support and become the dominant Jewish organization in the United States. The Federation of American Zionists had been struggling for its existence since its formation in 1898. It had few members and almost no money. Louis Brandeis, president of the F.A.Z., saw the need to espouse some popular cause that would attract new members. The Congress movement was tailor-made for this purpose.\footnote{Yonathan Shapiro, The Leadership of the American Zionist Organization, 1897-1930, (Urbana, 1971), p. 80; Melvin I. Urofsky, American Zionism from Herzl to the Holocaust, (Garden City, 1975), p. 166.}

The proposed Congress embodied Zionist principles and purposes--its structure and operation were to be democratic (in contrast to the aristocratic American Jewish Committee), and its acknowledged goals were a Palestinian homeland and the amelioration of Jewish life in Eastern Europe. The Federation of American Zionists proceeded to tie itself so closely to the Congress movement that in 1916 The Maccabean, the Federation's official publication, editorialized that, without the Congress, "Zionism in this great crisis was doomed to continue its existence as a minority party in a nationality which had
not the strength to attempt to organize itself. . . ."\textsuperscript{15}

The technique worked. In 1914, the Federation had about 7,000 members. By tying itself so closely to the Congress movement, the Federation was able almost to triple its membership. Brandeis was able to capture the "hearts and minds" of the recently arrived immigrants from Eastern Europe and Russia through the twin spurs of "democracy" and the desire to aid their brethren in the war zones.\textsuperscript{16}

Having gained the active—in fact, zealous—support of Zionists and those Jews who believed in the doctrine of national rights, the Jewish Congress Organization Committee concentrated on securing the endorsements of the large Jewish fraternal organizations.\textsuperscript{17} By the end of May, 1915, the Federation of Russian Polish Jews and the Independent Order Brith Shalom, which together had a membership of 50,000, endorsed the Congress movement. In June, 1915, the Independent Order Brith Abraham, one of the largest of the Jewish fraternal orders in the United

\textsuperscript{15}The Maccabean, (July, 1916), p. 162.

\textsuperscript{16}Shapiro, The Leadership of the American Zionist Organization, pp. 86-87.

\textsuperscript{17}See Chapter Two.
States, endorsed the idea of an American Jewish Congress. So did the Federation of Bukovinian Jews and many other organizations and fraternal orders. On May 9, 1915 the Provisional Committee for General Zionist Affairs at its convention in Boston endorsed the formation of the American Jewish Congress. Moses J. Gries, President of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, aptly summed up the cause for this intensifying and accelerating movement for a Jewish Congress:

The crisis condemns 'division of counsel' and demands unity of action. Let the multitude of committees and leaders surrender their claims to priority and precedence. They must unite to create 'one committee,' which shall be 'permanent'—and thoroughly representative and duly authorized, with the right and power to speak and act on behalf of all the Jews of America. . . .

With the needed endorsements safely in hand, the Jewish Congress Organization Committee at once turned its efforts to keeping the idea of a Jewish Congress continually

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18 Jewish Congress Organization Committee, To the Jews of America, p. 10. See also, The Jewish Advocate (Boston), 6/11/15, p. 1; 8/6/15, p. 1; 9/7/15, p. 1. The Independent Order of the Free Sons of Israel of Boston, The Union of Orthodox Congregations and the Association of Orthodox Rabbis, over sixty Jewish organizations in Baltimore, Jewish groups in Nebraska, the Y.M.H.A. of New England, and a group of Jewish lawyers in Chicago endorsed the movement.

19 Quoted in The Jewish Advocate (Boston), 7/23/15, p. 2.
before the public. To this end, at its meeting of July 27, 1915, it established a Congress Bureau and Publicity Committee whose function it was to publicize and dramatize the plight of the Jews in the war zones.  

The staff of the J.C.O.C. prepared for this purpose a Black Book describing the suffering and persecution of Jews in war-torn Europe, helping thereby to influence American public opinion in favor of discussing equal rights for all Jews at the future peace conference.

The Congressists were aware that their opponents criticized the movement as un-American; Jacob Schiff opposed the Congress on the grounds that it would create for Jews the problem of dual political allegiance. It would lead Jews to consider themselves a nation (rather than a religious denomination) at the same time that they remained American citizens. But the Congressists dismissed Schiff's argument as a non-sequitur. Before the Eastern Council of Reform Rabbis, in June, 1915, Louis Brandeis declared that he saw no incompatibility between Jewish and American nationalism:

\[^20\text{Ibid.}, 7/30/15, p. 1; The American Israelite, 8/5/15, p. 8.}\]

\[^21\text{The American Israelite, 8/19/15, p. 7.}\]
Multiple loyalties are objectionable only if they are inconsistent. A man is a better citizen of the United States for also being a loyal citizen of his state . . . and city . . . . Every American Jew who aids in advancing Jewish settlement in Palestine, though he feels that neither he nor his descendants will ever live there, will . . . be a better man and a better American for doing so . . . .

The Congressists also countered their opponents by depicting the Congress as a creation of the Jewish masses and an instrument of democracy, in sharp contrast to the oligarchy of rich and influential Jews who opposed it.

But the Jewish people cannot stand by and simply look on with folded arms . . . . We must take other action after careful deliberation . . . . But we can do this only if the Jews of America will that these conditions shall end; and undertake to express that will through action . . . . If we acquiesce in decisions made for us not by us it can only be because we are practically indifferent . . . .

A letter to the American Israelite warned that without an American Jewish Congress "the old-European ways of political pressure on behalf of Jews by Jews will continue . . . ."

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22 The Jewish Advocate (Boston), 6/18/15, pp. 1, 2, 8. See also Rappaport, "Jewish Immigrants and World War One," p. 225; Zionist Organization of America, Brandeis on Zionism, (New York, 1942), p. 28.


24 The American Israelite, 4/1/15, p. 4.
Congressists also sought and received confirmation and reassurance from prominent non-Jews that their cause, far from being un-American, was in the highest tradition of American democratic thought and action. Even Senator Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts expressed his support in 1915. Lodge stated in a letter to the *Warheit*:

> Everyone who believes in freedom and democracy must earnestly hope that when this great war comes to an end and terms of peace are agreed upon provision will be made which will secure to Jews everywhere the freedom to which we in the United States believe all men are entitled.\(^\text{25}\)

Theodore Roosevelt too expressed the hope that the Jews of Europe would be granted their rights.\(^\text{26}\) And in 1916 the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor declared its support for the Congress movement.\(^\text{27}\)

Having won the endorsement of numerous organizations and beaten back the charge that their cause was un-American, the Congressists could finally turn to the work of organizing the masses of individual Jews into a coherent movement. Louis Lipsky, a leader of the Federation of American Zionists, continued to exhort all

\(^{25}\text{Quoted in Rappaport, "Jewish Immigrants and World War One," p. 217.}\)

\(^{26}\text{Ibid., pp. 217-218.}\)

\(^{27}\text{Ibid.}\)
Zionists to work for the Congress. He importuned them to arrange local conferences and mass meetings in which to seek resolutions calling for a "democratic" Congress. Mass rallies were held all over the United States; pro-Congress sentiment was around in such places as Chattanooga, Tennessee.  

So intense was Lipsky's propaganda assault that Cyrus Adler complained bitterly to Brandeis that Lipsky was deliberately sabotaging the negotiations then taking place between the American Jewish Committee and the Brandeis group concerning the Congress. "I do not believe," charged Adler, 

that, pending negotiations, upon which we entered in all loyalty and with the fullest desire to bring about cooperation, you have sanctioned a policy on behalf of an organization so closely connected with the Provisional Executive Committee for General Zionist Affairs as is the Federation of American Zionists, to bring about a series of agitations throughout the country aiming to influence these negotiations. . . .  


29 Letter of Adler to Brandeis, 7/28/15, printed in The American Israelite, 8/12/15, p. 1. The American Jewish Committee proposed a conference of 150 delegates; the organizations to be represented were to be chosen by the Committee. Adler in a letter to Brandeis outlined the three guiding principles on which the organizations were invited: (1) the "number of members in each organization;
It was a plea to call off Lipsky's all-out campaign, but Brandeis ignored it. He replied that Lipsky was following Adler's own example and admonished Adler to recall that one day prior to the scheduled adoption of a plan of cooperation, Adler had committed the United Synagogue of America (the organization of Conservative Jewish congregations) to support the American Jewish Committee's proposal.  

Opposition to the formation of an American Jewish Congress came primarily from German-Jewish Americans, and for the following reasons. The German Jews wished to be assimilated; they regarded Judaism as a religion only, and themselves as Americans of the Jewish faith. Indeed, one historian states that the German Jewish congregations were "in tone and form modeled upon liberal Protestantism." For them, therefore, it was a contradiction to participate

(2) the diversified interests of the Jews of America; (3) the geographical distribution of the Jewish population in America..." Adler to Brandeis, 8/3/15, quoted in The American Israelite, 8/12/15, p. 1.

30 Brandeis to Adler, 8/10/15, Max Heller Mss, Box 521, American Jewish Archives.

in exclusively Jewish organizations other than charitable or religious ones. Moreover, they differed from the East Europeans in language, culture, and religious practice, as well as in being richer, better secularly educated, and more Americanized, and they took these differences as indicators of their own superiority. Hence, they arrogated to themselves the role of shtadlanim for the newcomers, and when their role was challenged by the East Siders, they became angry at their "less experienced" brethren. Rabbi Stephen Wise summed up the attitude of the East Siders:

The real difficulty lies in the circumstances that the German Jewish millionaires in this country, led by Schiff, persist in treating the Jewish masses as if they were forever to be in a state of tutelage and incapable of having anything to say with respect to the management of their own affairs. It is a very serious question and must be fought out.32

Organizations that drew most of their members or funds from the German-Jewish community declined to join the Congress movement. The Union of American Hebrew Congregations, with headquarters in Cincinnati, Ohio, decided overwhelmingly not to participate in the Congress; the B'nai Brith deemed it antagonistic to the principles of the Order and "subversive of its mission" to enter into any

alliance with other institutions limited in their "scope and lacking . . . universality." 33

Active opposition to the Congress movement was led by the American Jewish Committee and based squarely on assimilationist assumptions. Jacob Schiff argued that such an institution would brand Jews in the United States as a nation within a nation. "The holding of a Jewish Congress," he declared,

means nothing less than a decision . . . that we are Jews first, and Americans second. If we are not Jews first, if we are Americans of the Jewish faith, or Jewish people only, we have absolutely no right to hold such a Congress. The Congress means the establishment of a new government, a government for the Jews by which the Jews are to be bound. This is something new in Jewry since the dissolution of the Jewish nation two thousand years ago. . . . We will become a people by ourselves. We will become a compact mass of Jewish Americans, and not of American Jews. 34

Another spokesman for the American Jewish Committee voiced the assimilationists' other bete noire: that if the Congress were held, its only accomplishment would be to anger non-Jews and fan the flames of anti-Semitism. Louis Levy, President of the Philadelphia Association for the Protection of Jewish Immigrants, put the case explicitly: as a

33 The American Israelite, 1/20/16, p. 1.

34 Quoted in Naomi Cohen, Not Free to Desist, pp. 92-93.
forum for contentious discussions and bitter speeches against foreign governments both sure to be exaggerated if not distorted, the Congress would be grist for the mills of anti-Semites.35

Furthermore, their ingrained shtadlan-ism, their belief that they only could speak for all the Jews of America, made the anti-Congressists truly afraid that public discussion of the rights of world Jewry could only be counter-productive. For those reasons, Louis Marshall deplored the convening of a Jewish Congress.

We shall certainly not consider the calling of a Congress, or of any meeting which will result in indiscreet public speeches and inflammatory rhetoric. . . . I fear that, whatever we do, the firebrands and the professional agitators will not be content with our action [italics mine]. They live on notoriety, and if they can make a speech in which they can denounce everybody and everything they will be perfectly happy, even though the destruction of our European brethren might immediately follow. . . .36

Others concurred:

There can be no doubt that wild statements would be made on the floor of such a convention which would

35The American Israelite, 9/9/15, p. 4. Levy was a Zionist, but he opposed the calling of the Congress on the grounds that Zionism could only come at a later date and that the first priority of the Jews of America was to aid their suffering brethren in the war zones.

only complicate a very delicate situation. The all-
important need now is . . . calm judicious prudence.
Mere protest, no matter how justified or how impas-
sioned, will not avail. . . .

Statesmanship, of which the shtadlanim believed only they
were capable, was required.

Protests . . . may excite the multitude . . . but there
it will end. . . . To have that indignation reiterated
on the floor of what is called a Congress would be
merely cumulative. But the evils for our brethren
abroad might be only increased thereby and no permanent
good for them accomplished.37

Indeed, in such delicate matters, the shtadlanim believed
that the decision-making should be left to them; they knew
what was best for the Jews of America.38

Finally, the anti-Congressists asserted that the
Congress was bound to be an exercise in futility, because
the organizations would not subordinate their autonomy to
it. As evidence, they cited the discord that the idea of
a Congress had created. Even its most humanitarian and
least controversial purpose, aiding Jews in the war zones,
had aroused dissension. They compared the differences

37The American Israelite, 5/6/15, p. 4. Cyrus Adler
stated: "The inflamed condition of public opinion in Europe
and America, the large number of Jews in the belligerent
lands . . . make the possibility of intertemperate and even
ill-considered speech so great, that we feel that we in
this country have no right to risk injury to our brethren
abroad in these times." The American Israelite, 8/12/15, p. 1.

38Melvin Urofsky, American Zionism from Herzl to
the Holocaust, (Garden City, 1975), pp. 161-164.
between German-Jews and Eastern European and Russian Jews to the deep divisions separating Protestants and Roman Catholics and felt them to be equally unbridgeable.

Each and everyone is willing to lead, none is willing to follow. . . . Publicity only serves to call attention and the futility of all efforts to effect a change. . . .39

And if the Jews themselves would not be bound by the resolutions of a Jewish Congress, were European governments likely to agree or even listen to its demands? The irresistible conclusion was that only men of the stature of Jacob Schiff, Louis Marshall, or their influential European counterparts could make their voices heard in the councils of diplomacy.40

These arguments, despite considerable merit and cogency, were gradually overborne by the skillful advocacy of Congress supporters. The first sign of weakness in anti-Congress ranks appeared when the New York Kehillah, an appendage of the American Jewish Committee, urged the Committee to request a conference of representatives "of all Jewish national organizations of the country [to form] a united American Jewry." The Kehillah published an

40Ibid., 8/17/16, p. 4.
"Appeal for Unity," containing valid criticism and impartial reproof of Congressists and anti-Congressists alike. Mass meetings could not resolve the crisis in the foreign Jewish community brought on by the war, but neither should a small group of men, however influential, decide such grave issues behind closed doors. The Kehillah proposed that no new national organization be formed, merely a union of existing organizations, thereby avoiding friction and saving precious time.\(^{41}\)

The Congress question dominated the Kehillah meeting of April 25, 1915, with Marshall debating those in favor of convening the Congress. The Congress, warned Marshall, could only breed infinite "mischief," causing Jews to be misconstrued, ridiculed, and reviled by precisely those Gentiles whose compassion and understanding they most needed.\(^{42}\) In place of a Congress, Marshall said the American Jewish Committee would call for a conference of national Jewish organizations to exchange views about


\(^{42}\) The Jewish Congress Organization Committee, To the Jews of America, p. 8.
what should be done. But despite Marshall's warnings, and alternative proposals, Congressists presented the Kehillah convention with a resolution calling on the American Jewish Committee to summon a Jewish Congress to "consider the Jewish question and to devise ways and means how to place the same on the agenda of the peace conference." The Kehillah appointed a committee of fifteen to devise a plan of representation for the Jewish Congress. Angry debate flared afresh on the issue till Magnes suggested that the convention adjourn for a month to allow opinion to crystallize for or against the resolution.

The importance of this Kehillah convention cannot be overemphasized, for the Kehillah contravened its own constitution to discuss the calling of a Jewish Congress. Though the American Jewish Committee succeeded in its delaying action, it was becoming apparent to members and opponents alike that its arguments and strategy were merely postponing the inevitable.

As the American Jewish Committee retired to formulate new strategy, the Congressists redoubled their

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efforts, flooding the community with more pamphlets, handbills, and posters. Wise, Lipsky, DeHaas, and a host of others made speeches, wrote articles for the Yiddish, Anglo-Jewish, and American press to support their cause. They attacked Marshall's proposed conference of Jewish national organizations; they suggested instead that each organization elect its own representatives to such a meeting, and an Executive Council, "recognized as authoritative on all matters connected with the war by all of the participants in the conference," would be appointed.45 The Congressists fully realized that no organization would give their representatives the power to dismantle their own organizations and, that the American Jewish Committee "would not commit Hara-kiri by practically surrendering its initiative to any executive council. . . ." 46 They intended the American Jewish Committee to reject their proposal, thereby discrediting itself and increasing public support for the Congress. This tactic is clearly discernable in the resolution proposed at the New York

46 Ibid.
Kahillah meeting of May 23, 1915, urging the American Jewish Committee to "consider the advisability of calling a conference of the character favored by this convention in lieu of the conference which the American Jewish Committee has heretofore planned." The resolution passed, but the American Jewish Committee did not feel itself bound by it.

Nevertheless, its leaders saw that Jewish public opinion was increasingly turning against them. Congressists were managing to persuade the Jewish public that the American Jewish Committee's opposition was arbitrary, unfair, and unreasonable and, moreover, harmful to the Jews in the war zones. Throughout the summer of 1915, representatives of the Jewish Congress Organization Committee and the American Jewish Committee met to discuss compromise and cooperation. But neither side would make substantive concessions, so the American Jewish Committee proceeded to call its proposed conference, and those organizations that depended on the Committee for financial

47 The Jewish Congress Organization Committee, To the Jews of America, p. 9. Hourwich stated that the use of the word "conference" was a concession to those who were opposed to the use of the word "congress." See, "The American Jewish Congress," pp. 2-3, in possession of Mrs. Ruth Richards Eisenstein, New York City, Archives of the Jewish Information Bureau.
support accepted its invitation. An unnamed Congressist noted:

If you examine the list of organizations that the American Jewish Committee has invited to participate in its conference you will see that it has invited a list of organizations that have no real constituencies and which by a system of interlocking directorates are practically under the control of the Committee. 48

Acrid mutual recriminations followed, each organization accusing the other of bad faith and of jeopardizing the welfare of foreign Jews. 49

At this juncture, the President of the Independent Order B'ni Brith, Adolph Kraus, tried to mediate the dispute. He sent letters to the warring factions in which he outlined his proposal. If the presidents of all national Jewish organizations were to meet and agree upon some plan of action, then the dispute could be settled quite satisfactorily. To be fair to both sides, he suggested that each faction be given the right to invite an equal number of organizations. 50

48 The Jewish Advocate (Boston), 8/27/15, p. 1.

49 For an analysis of these letters—commonly referred to as the Adler-Brandeis correspondence—see Solomon Solis-Cohen, The Jewish Exponent (Philadelphia), 9/10/15, p. 1.

50 Kraus to American Jewish Committee, 8/10/15, Kraus to Jewish Congress Organization Committee, 8/10/15, David Philipson Mss, Box 1321, American Jewish Archives.
others had failed. The American Jewish Committee was amenable to the plan only if the "Zionists" (Congressists) agreed, while Brandeis stated that Congressists would come to such a meeting only if the American Jewish Committee agreed to the stipulation that no one attending is to bind, in advance, the organization which he represents to any specific policy which may be submitted, or appear to be the prevailing opinion at the conference. . . .51

Nothing came of the negotiations.52

The failure of Kraus’s mediation effort was a serious setback for the American Jewish Committee. Jewish opinion was turning increasingly against it, and pressure to postpone its proposed conference, which was scheduled for October 24, 1915, was mounting. Organizations such as the Federation of Roumanian Jews and the Jewish National Workers Alliance demanded that the Committee postpone the October meeting. Bernard M. Kaplan of District Grand Lodge Number One of the B’nai Brith revealed to Bernard G.

51Ibid., Adler to Kraus, 8/29/15, 9/3/15; Kraus to Adler, 8/31/15; Brandeis to Kraus, 8/25/15. See also Brandeis to Kraus in The American Israelite, 9/23/15, p. 8.

Richards that his constituents were not at all in favor of the meeting, and that he was more inclined to "acquaint" [associate?] the B'nai Brith with the Congress movement.\textsuperscript{53} Forced wholly on the defensive by the Congressists, the American Jewish Committee postponed its conference and retired to consider three alternative courses of action: (1) to repudiate publicly the Congress, as Judge Mayer Sulzberger suggested; (2) to give in to the Congressists and thus "relinquish the leadership it has assumed"; (3) to bargain further with the opposition leaders, and in exchange for "moderate concessions" retain a "restraining influence" on radical Jews as well as an important voice at the future peace conference. The Committee chose the third course. At its annual meeting in November, 1915, a resolution was passed calling for a conference of national Jewish organizations to consider the rights of Jews in the war zones and Roumania, and for the establishment of a "Congress on a democratic basis after the termination of hostilities. . . ."\textsuperscript{54} Even this resolution

\textsuperscript{53} Richards to Lipsky, 7/22/15, Louis Lipsky folder #4, Bernard G. Richards Mss, Jewish Theological Seminary.

\textsuperscript{54} Naomi Cohen, \textit{Not Free to Desist}, pp. 92-93, 96-97.
passed only after much debate. The majority report, upon which the resolution was based, recommended that the Committee agree to the calling of a conference of delegates of national Jewish organizations, limited in number to 150 delegates, to discuss the rights of Jews abroad. This conference would also elect an executive committee of fifteen with power to act for it until the end of the war, at which time an American Jewish Congress would be convened. Judah Magnes, always more liberal than the majority of the Committee, presented a minority report recommending that the conference should itself decide when the Congress would convene, but he withdrew his recommendation on realizing how little support it had. So ingrained was American Jewish Committee opposition to the idea of a Congress that even the resolution based on the majority report passed only after much debate.

The Jewish Congress Organization Committee met on November 26, 1915, to consider the American Jewish Committee's proposal and agreed unanimously that to accept it would be fatal to its cause. Still, the Congress Organization Committee continued to negotiate with the American.

55 The American Israelite, 11/18/15, p. 3.
Jewish Committee and its ally, the National Workmen's Committee for Jewish Rights, even while proceeding with its plans for a preliminary conference to plan an agenda and meeting place for the American Jewish Congress. But as negotiations continued fruitless, sentiment among the Congressists turned sharply against persuading their opponents and in favor of proceeding without them. They opined that an end to negotiations and an open rupture could only strengthen the Congress movement and weaken its opponents. Therefore, the Jewish Congress Organization Committee of Chicago passed a resolution urging the leadership in New York to halt negotiations and call immediately the preliminary conference. This resolution was widely circulated in Yiddish and English-language newspapers. The secretary of the Jewish Congress Organization Committee, Bernard C. Richards, declared that Jews would support the Congress Committee rather than the American Jewish Committee and its allies in the event of an open rupture; the Congressists would sustain only negligible loss of financial and moral support, particularly in the big cities, while the National Workmen's Committee would surely be divided over the issue and consequently diminish in importance. Richards further asserted that to yield
to the American Jewish Committee's demand that the Congress not be convened till the war's end, would be to abandon "the basic democratic principle and create demoralization here as well as in a majority of our organized cities." Moreover, if the Congress Committee yielded now, "we shall in the light of our present experience have to reckon with further underhanded combinations . . . in [that] effort to thwart the objects of the Congress. . . ."  

The Preliminary Conference, to decide when, where, and what issues were to be discussed at the American Jewish Congress, met in Philadelphia on March 16, 1916. Rabbi Stephen S. Wise had selflessly declined the proffered chairmanship on the grounds that he was too partisan a figure--too closely identified with Zionism, liberalism, and the ghetto Jews of New York--to be widely acceptable. He recommended Judge Hugo Pam of Chicago, and although Lipsky and Richards thought Pam insufficiently forceful, they accepted him for Wise's sake.  

56 Richards to Friedenwald 4/5/16, Harry Friedenwald folder, Bernard G. Richards Mss, Jewish Theological Seminary.  

57 C. H. Voss, Stephen S. Wise: Servant of the People, p. 60; Wise to Kallen 3/16/16, Stephen S. Wise Mss, Box 947, American Jewish Archives.
The main subject at the Preliminary Conference was Jewish rights. Almost all the delegates agreed that the Congress should strive for full civil, political, and religious freedom for Jews everywhere. But sharp disagreement arose over the issue of national rights—the rights of Jews to have their own religious schools, to speak their own language, to observe religious holidays, to maintain their own social and cultural institutions. The Resolutions Committee had so worded the resolution on national rights that many thought they would have to be accorded to the Jews in the United States and other western democracies. Though some delegates were in favor of this interpretation, the rest did not feel bold enough to demand it.\textsuperscript{58} Wise attempted to compromise the disagreement with an amendment stating "That the Congress consider the question of securing for the Jews national rights in such lands in which such rights are or ought to be recognized."\textsuperscript{59} But

\textsuperscript{58}The resolution read: "That the Congress consider the question of securing to the Jews free and equal rights, civil, political, religious, and national, in all such lands where these rights are denied to them..." See American Jewish Congress, Preliminary Conference of the American Jewish Congress: Report of Proceedings; March 26-27, 1916, (New York, 1916), pp. 20-21.

\textsuperscript{59}ibid.
this compromise was unacceptable for its timidity. Nahum Syrkin called it an affront to the millions of Jews in Eastern Europe who had fought for national rights. Thereupon Wise substituted a more emphatic amendment stating that the American Jewish Congress would go to the peace conference to secure for the Jews national rights in "all such lands in which national rights were or are or ought to be recognized."

In addition to formulating a position on national rights, the Preliminary Conference designated a Committee on Plan and Scope, whose dual function it was to plan studies of conditions of Jewish life in Europe, immigration, and the feasibility of a permanent Congress—and to suggest the personnel to carry out these studies.

The Preliminary Conference was well attended, and surprisingly conservative in both its discussions and its

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60Ibid., p. 22. The final resolution as presented by the committee and adopted by the Conference read: "(A) That the Congress consider the question of securing to Jews free and equal rights, civil, political, religious, in all such lands where these rights were denied to them; (B) That the Congress consider the question of securing to the Jews national rights in all such lands in which national rights were or are or ought to be recognized."

resolutions. The wild-eyed radicals and Zionist zealots who, Marshall had predicted, would bring disaster upon Jews everywhere, were conspicuous only by their absence—or their rigorous self-restraint. But though the Conference disappointed its Cassandras, it dissatisfied its champions as well. The bandwagon effect so confidently predicted by Bernard Richards failed to materialize; opponents remained numerous and adamant. "I believe you are mistaken," wrote Schiff to a Congressist, "if you think that the Jews of the United States were crowned with Unity at the recent conference...; far from this, only an inconsiderable percentage of our people were, as I am assured, represented..."\(^{62}\)

The Preliminary Conference even raised dissensions among ardent Congressists. The Chicago Jewish Congress Organizing Committee, which had been so eager for a preliminary conference, was unenthusiastic about the idea of a permanent Congress. The Chicagoans felt that, despite Hugo Pam in the Chair, the Preliminary Conference was

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\(^{62}\)Schiff to Sadowsky, 4/20/16, Jacob Schiff folder #3, Bernard G. Richards Mss, Jewish Theological Seminary.
controlled by New Yorkers, to the great detriment of everyone else.\(^63\)

The Orthodox Jews among the Congressists were furious at being (they felt) under-represented on important committees and commissions. They warned Brandeis that if the imbalance were not rectified, Orthodox Jewry would foresake the Congress movement.\(^64\)

Since "going it alone" had fallen short of unqualified success, leaders of the Congress movement were still under pressure from their constituents to reach a consensus with their opponents. Again overtures went out to the American Jewish Committee and the National Workmen's Committee on Jewish Rights, but before negotiations could

\(^63\) Richards to Brandeis, 4/30/16, Louis D. Brandeis folder, Bernard G. Richards Mss, Jewish Theological Seminary.

\(^64\) Berlin to Brandeis, 4/27/16, Brandeis to Berlin 5/1/16, Louis D. Brandeis folder, Bernard G. Richards Mss, Jewish Theological Seminary. Discontent and disapproval were not confined to those elements of the movement who felt slighted. Horace Kallen, one of the guiding lights of the Congress movement, believed that Congress activity was very disappointing; indeed, he argued that unless fresh points of interests and discussion were brought forward, the movement would lose its vitality. If this were to continue, the Congress, if called, would represent a clique instead of all American Jewry. Kallen to Wise, 5/18/16, Stephen S. Wise Mss, Box 947, American Jewish Archives.
resume, the leaders of the American Jewish Committee announced a conference of national Jewish organizations, scheduled for July, 1916, to discuss "suitable measures" to aid the Jews in the war zones. The Congress Organization Committee advised all constituent organizations to refrain from participating. Despite these mutual provocations, negotiations continued, and pro- and anti-Congress representatives met on May 31, 1916. While each side adamantly refused to make even the smallest concession, both sides ardently desired a compromise. "Indeed Lehman [representing the American Jewish Committee] repeated definitely that he would not admit the question whether unity could be obtained," wrote Brandeis, "but merely consider how it could be obtained."^6

The American Jewish Committee's conference to discuss "suitable [aid] measures" convened on July 16, 1916 with Louis Marshall presiding and, as a concession to the Jewish Congress Organization Committee, declared in favor

^6 "Minutes of Additional Meeting of the American Jewish Committee, 5/14/16," David Philipson Mss, Box 1321, American Jewish Archives; see also, The American Israelite, 5/18/16, p. 7.

^66 Brandeis to Lipsky, 5/31/16, Louis Lipsky folder #2, Bernard G. Richards Mss, Jewish Theological Seminary.
of a Congress "to be held for the sole purpose of securing full rights for the Jews of all lands, including group rights [italics mine] wherever such rights are recognized and desired by the Jews themselves." The conference then constituted itself the Conference of National Jewish Organizations and delegated an executive committee to prepare for such a congress.

Negotiations continued between the Jewish Congress Organization Committee and the newly formed Conference of National Jewish Organizations. The two organizations agreed that they be amalgamated under the name of the Jewish Congress Organization Committee, and that the former Conference of National Jewish Organizations be allotted some sixty seats on the soon-to-be-formed Administrative Committee of the new organization. Moreover, the Brandeis forces conceded two points: first, some delegates to the American Jewish Congress could be elected by direct suffrage; second: resolutions which tended to commit the


68 ibid.
Congress to the endorsement of any general theory or philosophy of Jewish life were prohibited. 69

Many Congressists strenuously objected to this compromise, particularly to Marshall's wording, which, he stated, was "merely for the purpose of clearness and to avoid misunderstanding." 70 Marshall did not once mention Zionism or national rights; yet he stated the purpose of the Congress was to be

exclusively for . . . defining the methods whereby in cooperation with the Jews of the world, full rights for the Jews of all lands, and all laws discriminating against them may be abrogated. [sic] It being understood that the phrase 'full rights' is deemed to include: (1) Civil, religious, and political rights, and in addition thereto, (2) Wherever the various peoples of any land are or may be recognized as having separate group rights, [national rights], the conferring upon the Jews of the land affected, of such rights, if desired by them, and (3) The securing and protection of Jewish rights in Palestine. 71

The Jewish Congress Organization Committee accepted Marshall's rewording of the document with the following

69 Richards to Brandeis, 7/19/16, Louis B. Brandeis folder, Bernard G. Richards Mss, Jewish Theological Seminary. See also, The Jewish Advocate (Boston), 7/20/16, p. 8; The American Israelite, 7/20/16, p. 4; Marshall to Sulzberger, 8/1/16, in Reznikoff, Louis Marshall, volume 2, pp. 518-519.


71 Ibid.
reservations: that the Congress have the sole power to determine which Jews of the world required such rights, limitations on the scope of the Congress, and the election of delegates by national Jewish organizations. The Congress Organization Committee felt that it lacked the authority to decide on the compromise agreement, which should be submitted to a referendum vote of all the delegates to the Preliminary Conference.

At a meeting of the Baltimore Jewish Congress Committee, the fate of the compromise was very much in doubt. Some argued that the compromise should be accepted so that further unity could be achieved, and that the presence of the American Jewish Committee would add prestige to the Congress. But a large majority did not doubt that the proposed compromise would be suicidal--like opening the citadel to determined enemies in the naive hope that being inside would automatically convert them into allies. The proposal that constituent organizations elect some of the Congress delegates they interpreted as sabotage; an attempt by Marshall and Schiff to send to the Congress the very people they could count on to subvert it and turn it into a rubber-stamp for
themselves. The proposal to convene the Congress after the war's end they attacked on the ground that such an organization would be powerless at the peace table. Violent and *ad hominem* denunciations of the American Jewish Committee and of Marshall and his allies were the order of the day, after which the Baltimore Jewish Congress Committee voted overwhelmingly to instruct its delegates to the Preliminary Conference to vote "Nay" on the compromise referendum.

The reaction of the Baltimore Jewish Congress Committee, though more hostile than most, was, in part, a straw in the wind. Of the 367 delegates to the Preliminary Conference, 243 voted on the compromise referendum. They rejected the proposed program of the Congress and the system of electing delegates by eleven and sixteen votes, respectively. They approved the date of the Congress as well as the composition of the Executive Committee of 140.

The votes were

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<td>(4) Committee of 140</td>
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"Minutes of Meeting," 9/11/16, American Jewish Congress folder, William Edlin Mss, YIVO. See also, Circular
With the defeat of parts of the referendum, negotiations once again resumed. The Administrative Committee of the Jewish Congress Organization Committee instructed its negotiators to inform the representatives of the Conference of National Jewish Organizations that the Conference would have to accept Congressists' definition of "national rights," and that if the Congress were to have 300 delegates, one-fifth could be elected by national Jewish organizations; if 400, one-fourth of them could represent national Jewish organizations. Marshall's supporters and the National Workmen's Committee agreed to these stipulations, though Marshall was able to soften the provision concerning national rights by substituting the word "peoples" for "nationalities." The consensus


Richards to DeHaas, 9/24/16, Jacob DeHaas folder, Bernard G. Richards Mss, Jewish Theological Seminary.

Oscar Janowsky, Jews and Minority Rights, pp. 186-188. The resolution on national rights as adopted stated: "Whenever the various peoples of any land are, or may be, recognized as having rights as such, the conferring upon the Jewish people of the lands affected of like rights, if desired by them, as determined and ascertained by the Congress." See also, The Jewish Advocate (Boston), 10/5/16, p. 1; The American Israelite, 10/12/16, p. 2, 4.
among Congressists was that unity had thus been effected, though, as Wise stated, "we gained little and lost much. . . ." Horace Kallen was even less pleased:

I find that the responsible people [Brandeis and others] have sold our birthright for a mess of pottage --that really they have not shown evidence of being fit for democracy. However, the milk is spilt and the cow is dry. What we shall need to do is to find a fresh cow and very much better dairymen. . . .

Over the objections of Wise and Kallen, the delegates to the Preliminary Conference accepted the new compromise agreement by the astonishing vote of 217 to 4.

The Congress leadership reversed its position because of sheer weariness. Brandeis who had recently been appointed to the United States Supreme Court, was facing a difficult confirmation hearing in the Senate that would surely distract him from future negotiations. Moreover, Brandeis and Marshall realized that the issues of alleviating the plight of their brethren in the war zones and the establishment of a Jewish "National Home" would be

76 Wise to Kallen, 10/23/16, Stephen S. Wise Mss, Box 947, American Jewish Archives.

77 Ibid., Kallen to Wise, 10/31/16. See also, "Interview with Yonathan Shapiro," Tape #525, (Transcript, pp. 17-18), in possession of Mrs. Ruth Richards Eisenstein, New York City, Archives of the Jewish Information Bureau.
lost in a sea of acrimony and bitterness. It was far better to end the interminable bickering and get on with the business at hand.78

Amalgamation of the two organizations was the next order of business. The 150 delegates of the new Executive Committee met in New York on December 25, 1916, to prepare the ground for the Congress, and the Congress-anti-Congress quarrel was instantly and bitterly resumed over the choice of a temporary chairman for the Congress. The Congressists nominated Adolph Kraus; their opponents wanted Louis Marshall. After much debate, Kraus narrowly defeated Marshall by a vote of 49 to 45. Though both Marshall and Kraus later declined the nomination of permanent chairman for unity's sake, the importance of the temporary chairmanship must not be underestimated. The temporary chairman had the power to appoint members to the Executive Committee to replace those who could not continue. Moreover, the chairman could appoint people to the Executive Committee's standing sub-committees which

78Marshall to Brandeis, 6/24/16, in Raznikoff, Louis Marshall, volume 2, pp. 517-518; Kallen to Wise, 10/31/16, Stephen S. Wise Mss, Box 947, American Jewish Archives.
decided upon nominations for permanent office, choice of time and place for the Congress, methods of election to the Congress, and the possibility of providing relief funds for economic reconstruction to the Jews in the war zones. Kraus seized this opportunity to appoint men of the Congressist-Zionist persuasion to these committees. 79

The Marshall faction did not contest the election of Nathan Straus as permanent chairman, because Marshall considered Straus a mere figurehead, too old and sick to be an effective administrator. He placed his own name in nomination for chairman of the Administrative Committee, thinking that authority and responsibility would be centered mostly in that office, and that, once in it, he could restrain the more ardent and vocal Congressists. But he lost the election to Harry Cutler of Rhode Island, a Congressist. 80

One of the subjects heatedly debated at the December 25 meeting was that of providing "constructive relief" at the end of the war to the Jews in Eastern Europe. Prior

79 Schulman to Philipson 12/28/16, David Philipson Mss, Box 1321, American Jewish Archives; The New York Times, 12/26/16, p. 6; The Jewish Advocate (Boston), 12/28/16, p. 8.

to this time, the American Jewish Relief Committee and other organizations had distributed some $6,500,000 to war-afflicted Jews, and they hoped to raise and disburse some $10,000,000 more. Marshall, the leader of the American Jewish Relief Committee, was understandably reluctant to see the Congress take over its function and therefore contended that the Congress should work through existing relief organizations. Although his motive apparently was to pressure an organization in which he was paramount, his argument was that for the Congress to move into relief work would imply disapproval of the work already being done by existing agencies. He also reminded the delegates that since the Congress was not to be a permanent institution, it could not create a permanent relief agency. But the majority rejected his arguments as they had rejected his leadership. As one delegate told Marshall bluntly, his side no longer had the votes:

The presumption is that [the Zionists] will have the majority [at the Congress and] they may call into existence a piece of machinery which will seek to legislate out of existence the present three [relief] committees. . . .

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81Ibid., see also, The American Israelite, 1/4/17, p. 1.
The direction and tenor of the preliminary meetings led some organizations and individuals to dissociate themselves from the movement. The radical Jewish socialists in particular, whose political philosophy rejected nationalism, had aligned themselves more often than not with Marshall. The National Workmen's Committee for Jewish Rights and the Jewish Socialist Federation of America withdrew from the Congress ostensibly because the Russian Revolution of March, 1917 had removed all anti-Jewish laws in that land and, with them, the Congress's raison d'être. But Stephen Wise conjectured that in fact the radicals withdrew because they had failed to seize the Congress "and make it an instrument of economic radicalism. . . ."83

Other organizations refused to join the Congress because of its pro-Zionist platform, and some claimed both reasons. Joseph Gedalecia, President of the Federation of

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82 National Workmen's Committee on Jewish Rights to Straus, 6/8/17, Isaac Hourwich Mss, File #54, YIVO. See also, The American Israelite, 3/22/17, p. 4: "If the revolutionary change in Russia remains permanent the . . . Congress might as well adjourn before it meets. There will hardly be enough left for it to do to justify its creation, much less its existence."

Oriental Jews, refused to commit his organization to the Congress because, on the one hand, the problem of the Russian Jews had supposedly been solved by the March Revolution and, on the other hand, the goals of Zionism could more safely be served by negotiations between the United States and Turkey than by the actions of a Jewish Congress.84

Despite such rejections and defections, planning for the election of delegates to the Congress went forward. The Executive Committee's Sub-Committee on Elections finally allotted a total of 100 delegates to be chosen by national Jewish organizations, defining a national Jewish organization as one having branches in two or more states and meeting at regular intervals; only organizations in existence prior to January 1, 1916 qualified for seats. Institutions engaged primarily in philanthropic work were not entitled to elect delegates to the Congress.85

84The American Israelite, 7/19/17, p. 5.
85The American Israelite, 3/8/17, p. 1. Six seats went to each of the following: The American Jewish Committee, The Federation of American Zionists, the Independent Order of Brith Abraham; three seats went to each of the following: Arbeiter Ring, Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, Independent Order B'nai Brith, Independent Order of Brith Shalom, Mizrachi of America, Order of Brith Abraham, Order Sons of Zion, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations,
Delegates not chosen by national Jewish organizations were elected by nominating conventions held throughout the country. Women were allowed to be candidates as well as to vote for them. Voter registration and education drives were common in the larger cities.

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania serves as a good example of the electoral process. The city was divided into seven voting zones, of which six were in the suburbs. The seventh zone was the city proper, where approximately 75 per cent of the voters would cast their ballots. Every voter had to vote in his own zone. A card index system was used to register the member of every known Jewish organization in Pittsburgh; the cards were to serve as identification tags, to be worn by each voter, at the polling place, and any voter not included in the card index had to prove his identity at the polling place. The purpose of the system was to prevent duplicate voting.86

and the United Hebrew Trades; two seats went to each of the following: the Association of Orthodox Rabbis, the Independent Western Star Order, Poale Zion, and the Progressive Order of the West. A host of other Jewish organizations each received one seat.

86 Avner to the Executive Committee of the American Jewish Congress, 5/28/17, Maurice Avner folder, Bernard G. Richards Mss, Jewish Theological Seminary.
The Zionists mounted a massive American-style campaign for their candidates, including heavy newspaper advertising (in American as well as Yiddish and English-language Jewish newspapers), election rallies at which non-Zionist candidates were vehemently denounced, and a full complement of political "dirty tricks." They issued a circular, for example, under the name "National Congress League," that deliberately conveyed the impression that certain candidates had been endorsed by the Jewish Congress Organization Committee's Executive Committee. And they castigated all "Americanized candidates" as "assimilators and class champions [champions of the upper classes]." Complaints poured into the Congress offices in New York, accusing Zionist candidates and campaign aides of relentless Machiavellianism, of "disgraceful political campaigning [whose result would be] to sidetrack completely the American Jewish Congress platform."\(^8\)

The election held on June 10, 1917, was a victory for the Zionists but left a great residue of bitterness and distrust. Over 330,000 ballots were cast, but it is

\(^8\)Ibid., Charles Levi to Straus, 5/28/17, telegram, Nathan Straus folder #1.

\(^8\)Ibid.
difficult to guess how many Jews actually voted, because the Zionists were charged with innumerable cases of election frauds. Jacob Grossberg of Chicago, for example, cited multiple occurrences in Chicago alone of pre-marked ballots, ballot-box stuffing, lack of supervision at polling places, non-registered voters voting, ballots mysteriously disappearing, and persons voting in more than one election district. Even Bernard Richards castigated Louis Lipsky and his colleagues on the General Board of Elections of the Jewish Congress for "upholding the spoils system introduced by the terroristic element." Though some ballots were challenged, the General Board of Elections of the Jewish Congress did very little to investigate.

After the election, the Jewish Congress Organization Committee had to decide when the Congress should convene. The date was originally set for September 2, 1917 and then changed to November 18, 1917, so as not to interfere with the High Holy Days, but United States entry

89The American Israelite, 10/11/17, p. 1; 10/18/17, p. 1.

90Richards to Lipsky, 6/21/17, Louis Lipsky folder #2, Bernard G. Richards MSS, Jewish Theological Seminary. See also, Richards to DeHaas, 7/27/17, Jacob DeHaas folder #1.
into the war on April 6, 1917, upset this decision and caused a new rift in the Congress movement. In deference to President Wilson's request, Wise and the other leaders of the Congress movement urged that the Congress be postponed. He had consulted with Lipsky, DeHaas, and Richards, Wise said, and all felt that the "urgency of the public business" necessitated postponement of the Congress. Harry Cutler and Louis Kirstein, claiming to speak for Congressists who were also public servants, like Judge Mack and Felix Frankfurter, likewise advocated postponement. Cutler advanced three reasons for postponement: (1) that in view of the delicate international situation, it would be wise to consult with Wilson again as to when the Congress could be held; (2) that even if the Congress did meet in November, it could do little more than talk and then refer everything back to the Executive Committee; (3) that postponing the Congress might help neutralize the "very unfortunate impression" made by Jewish pacifists in the Congress movement who violently opposed America's entry into the war.  

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91 Wise to Brandeis, 9/8/17, Stephen S. Wise folder #5, Bernard G. Richards Mss, Jewish Theological Seminary. Jacob Leiser wrote Richards: "It does not appear likely
But Horace Kallen was unalterably opposed to postponement. He told Wise that he doubted the strength of the pacifists and radical zealots in the Congress movement; all that was needed, he suggested, to keep them in check was a vigorous presidium, whose rules could be composed so as to shut off unpatriotic fulminations. He believed that another delay would be disastrous for the Congress and would only help those who had all along opposed the movement, and warned Wise that to postpone the Congress further would only give the radicals the excuse they needed to hold a rump Congress that the moderates could not control to prevent damage to the Congress and the Jewish cause.\(^\text{92}\) Local Congress committees and

that an American Jewish Congress will be convened. Should one be called it would be the height of indiscretion and even run the risk of incurring the charge of disloyalty on the part of the Jews toward America. It is no time for us Jews to clamor for our rights apart from the right we have of manifesting our devotion to the nation under whose protection we live. I trust none of the zealots will so forget their loyalty to America as to suggest a convening of a Jewish Congress when our chief business now as a nation is to join our allies and crush Germany.

\(\ldots\)" Leiser to Richards', 4/4/17, in possession of Mrs. Ruth Richards Eisenstein, New York City, Archives of the Jewish Information Bureau. See also, Wise to Kallen, 9/24/17, Stephen S. Wise Mss, Box 947, American Jewish Archives.

\(^{92}\)Kallen to Wise, 9/27/17, 10/10/17, Stephen S. Wise Mss, Box 947, American Jewish Archives.
other Jewish organizations protested the postponement; the Pittsburgh, Baltimore, and Boston Congress Committees as well as almost all of the Poale Zion chapters in the United States.93

At a meeting of the Jewish Congress Organization Committee's Administrative Committee, a majority favored postponement but lacked the two-thirds vote necessary to pass the resolution. It was decided to refer the whole matter to the Executive Committee which met on October 14, 1917. At that meeting, Nathan Straus advocated postponement because the United States was at war and suggested that American Jews defer their demands to the common interest. In these opinions, Henry Morgenthau, Samuel Schulman, and Louis Marshall concurred. Magnes and Syrkin opposed postponement, arguing that it would delay the necessary preparations for the peace conference. After debate, the Executive Committee voted 72 to 31 in favor of postponement; the Congress would convene after the war ended.94

93Executive Committee Meeting, Minutes, 10/14/17, American Jewish Congress folder, William Edlin Mss, YIVO.

94Ibid., See also, The New York Times, 10/15/17, p. 13; The American Israelite, 10/18/17, p. 2; The Jewish Advocate, (Boston), 10/18/17, p. 8.
To maintain public interest and avoid a disastrous loss of membership during the postponement, many local Congress Committees organized welfare, relief, and local charity campaigns. Bernard G. Richards welcomed these activities for providing an interim sense of purpose and accomplishment, without which organizations inevitably die, but many Congressists feared that even these would not guarantee the Congress's survival over a really long postponement. Inevitably, some opposition to new activities arose, mostly on the grounds that they were a wasteful and inefficient duplication of the work of multiple philanthropic organizations already in existence.\(^9\)

The Congress survived its year of inactivity. As soon as the war was over, the Executive Committee summoned the Congress to convene in Philadelphia on December 15, 1918. Zionist Congressists adjured the delegates to adopt a strictly Zionist platform, urging that Zionism "must overshadow, and rule supremely, the agenda. . . . It must strive for having Palestine granted to us. It

\(^{9}\)Richards to Avner, 1/18/18, Maurice Avner folder, Bernard G. Richards Mss, Jewish Theological Seminary.
must concentrate all its forces on this one point.

Leon Sanders echoed this sentiment: "We want to rally the whole of American Jewry to the cause of Zionism."

Despite Zionist importuning, when the Congress finally met in Philadelphia the delegates were not adamant in their commitment to a Jewish state. It was not even the paramount topic of discussion. To be sure, the American Jewish Congress delegates to the Peace Conference were to "subordinate their efforts" to those of the World Zionist Organization; moreover, Rabbi Wise was to act as liaison officer between the American Peace Commission and the World Zionist Organization. But the resolution that the Congress adopted on Palestine was modest in its demands and mild in its tone. It asked the Peace Conference to recognize the aspirations and historic claims of the Jewish people in regard to Palestine, and declare that in accordance with the British Government's declaration of November 2, 1917 [the Balfour Declaration] there shall be established such political, administrative and economic conditions in Palestine as will assure under the trusteeship of Great

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96 The Jewish Advocate (Boston), 5/17/17, p. 5.

97 The American Israelite, 12/5/18, p. 4.
Britain, acting on behalf of such League of Nations as may be formed, the development of Palestine into a Jewish Commonwealth, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which shall prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.98

Julius Mack, who replaced Nathan Straus as permanent chairman of the Congress, dismissed independent statehood as an "impracticable and impossible dream." Even David Philipson, an ardent anti-Jewish state spokesman, agreed with Mack's evaluation of the situation.99

The more immediate problem, and the major topic of discussion at the Congress, was to rebuild the ruined Jewish communities of Eastern Europe, to rehabilitate them economically, and to secure for their inhabitants elementary human rights. A "Bill of Rights," written by Marshall, was presented to the delegates for their consideration.

98Nearprint file, Miscellaneous Section, American Jewish Congress, American Jewish Archives. The delegates were: Wise, Mack, Marshall, DeHaas, Harry Cutler, Rabbi B. L. Levinthal, Nahum Syrkin, Joseph Barondess, and Morris Winchevsky. The delegation represented a fairly accurate cross-section of the factions and groups composing the Congress.

99Nearprint file, Miscellaneous Section, American Jewish Congress, American Jewish Archives.
The Congress adopted the "Bill of Rights" as official policy, hoping that its provisions would be incorporated into the laws of existing and about-to-be-created nations at the Paris Peace Conference. The Jewish Congress peace delegation was to ask the plenipotentiaries to include these laws: (1) the right of refugees to return and to become citizens of their respective homelands or, if they preferred, to become citizens of one of the new states to be created; (2) equality of all citizens, i.e., "All citizens . . . shall enjoy equal civil, political, religious and national rights, and no law shall be enacted or enforced which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of or impose upon any person any discrimination, disability, or restriction whatsoever on account of race, nationality or religion, or deny to any person the equal protection of the laws"; (3) the guaranty of minority representation; (4) the guaranty to national and religious groups of autonomous management of their own communal institutions and the freedom to use their own language; (5) the prohibition of any discriminatory law against any religious belief. Even so great an antagonist of Marshall's as Isaac Hourwich supported this Bill of Rights, and commented favorably on the similarities between it and the views of the great
Russian-Jewish historian, Simon Dubnow, who stated:

Jewry in Russia must be recognized as a nation, . . . the Jews in Russia wanted no territorial autonomy but only 'personal' or communal autonomy, and . . . the right to the use of [their] mother tongue. . . .

The first meeting of the Congress refuted all the fearful (or hopeful) predictions of its detractors. Radical proposals were bottled up in the Resolutions Committee or voted down on the floor. Though tempers flared, the debate never degenerated into a shouting match; flamboyant rhetoric and frenzied acrimony were missing from the debates.101 But the real test of its strength would come only when the nine commissioners from the American Jewish Congress went to Paris to present their case before the Peace Conference.

100 The New York Times, 12/17/18, p. 11.

101 See David Philipson’s articles in The American Israelite, 12/19/18, p. 4; 12/26/18, p. 4. Radical proposals such as that of a "Tentative Constitution of American Jewry," written by Abraham Schomer, were never presented to the delegates for their consideration. Schomer envisioned an American Jewish Congress which would have sole power to represent and act for American Jewry in all matters pertaining to world Jewry. Executive power was to be vested in a President of American Jewry who would be elected by the Jewish Congress for a two year term. The President, with the advice and consent of the Jewish Congress, could appoint a Cabinet consisting of four officers: Secretary of Jewish Rights, Secretary of Jewish Relief, Secretary of Jewish Statistics, and Secretary of Jewish Culture. Schomer Reports and Memos folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, 1915-1973 folder, YIVO.
The issues which caused the most division within American Jewry and delayed the formation of the American Jewish Congress were those of nationalism and "national rights." More than the other problems confronting the American Jewish Congress's peace delegation to Paris, nationalism and "national rights" almost caused an irreparable schism among the various Jewish delegations. The very magnitude of the issues permeated almost every phase of both the formation of the Congress and its ensuing activities.

When the Jewish Congress Organization Committee and the Conference of National Jewish Organizations met in July, 1916, they tried to reach some compromise solution to the creation of an American Jewish Congress. Those in the Conference of National Jewish Organizations demanded "group
rights" for the Jews in those countries where such rights were recognized, if those Jews wished them. Many who preferred the phrase "group rights" to "national rights" maintained that there was a "theoretical" [practical?] difference. To the non-Jew, they argued, national rights meant that the Jews considered themselves a nationality and not solely a religious sect.¹

When the delegates to the Jewish Congress met in Philadelphia in December, 1918, the national rights issue caused much dissension and bitterness. The debate was juxtaposed to the resolution on Roumania. Opponents of national rights argued that the Jews of Roumania had no right to demand any special privileges for themselves as Jews; only those rights which were accorded every other person in Roumania could be claimed by the Jews. Proponents, on the other hand, contended that national rights were necessary for Roumanian Jews because the term denoted and connoted acceptance, i.e., "when people come to the United States, they become, by virtue of being inhabitants of this land, Americans." Joseph Barondess, a popular East-Side leader, stated that the only term upon which

¹Oscar Janowsky, Jews and Minority Rights, pp. 180-182.
Roumania would grant equal rights to the Jews was that the Jews would have to be assimilated into that society. Since this would never happen, he conjectured, the Jews would have to be given national rights as protection from the unwarranted demands of the native population. As Charles Cowen argued:

If it is a choice between surrendering our Jewish spiritual nationality and the acceptance of civil and other rights, and if our spiritual rights and spirtual nationality is to be lost, I would rather go forth again with the wanderer's staff and await the miracle of the coming of the Messiah, but surrender—never!

The resolution on Roumania included the demand for national rights.

The dispute about national rights in Roumania cannot be viewed as an isolated incident but rather as a continuation of an age-old problem that affected Jews in many countries. Prior to the French Revolution the ideal—Cujus regio, ejus religio—was widely held; the upheaval which unleashed the force of nationalism also freed men from the dictum that all must believe alike. Religion increasingly became a matter for the individual conscience. Too, the French Revolution sparked the idea that peoples could unite

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their kindred elements into a national whole. Thus, Poles, Germans, Italians, Belgians, Serbs, Greeks, and Bulgars sought their national freedom. The nationalist revolutions of the nineteenth century sought to emphasize the principle of Cujus regio, ejus natio--that all people in a state must be "nationalized." The Poles in Germany were to be Germanized, divergent tribes and groups in Russia were to become Russified, i.e., to become Great Russian.3

The first emancipation of the Jews dates back to the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars. At that time, the line was not as yet drawn between a "political nation," which united different peoples under one government, and a "cultural nation," under which people remained a separate unit, having no government or territory of their own. To be sure, the concepts of the "state" and "nation" were not clearly defined. At the time when the Jews received their citizenship rights in France and elsewhere, the granting of these rights came with the understanding that they were being given to those French and German people who were not

Catholic or Protestant, but Jewish. The French National Assembly of 1791 issued an Emancipation Decree which conferred upon Jews citizenship rights provided that the Jews relinquished their right to inner-autonomy. When Napoleon convoked an Assembly of Jewish Notables and a Rabbinical Council or Sanhedrin, he outlined his conception of what role the Jews were to play in French society; he reasoned that Jews were to be distinguished from their fellow citizens only by their religious beliefs. Napoleon also superimposed the authority of the state on Jewish affairs. Consistories created by Napoleon in each department were to oversee the general direction of Jewish affairs; each member of a consistory was personally appointed by Napoleon. Thus, Napoleon decreed a new status for Jews. Jews could now enjoy full civil and political rights. As the Empire spread, the rights of French Jews were extended to their brethren in subjugated lands.

During the European reaction (1815-1848) the Jewish communities in Germany and Austria fought for elementary human rights under the slogan "Citizen Rights for Jewish

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Germans." They contended that they were as loyal to the Fatherland as any other German and that the only difference between the Jew and the non-Jew was that the former prayed in a synagogue instead of a church. The Revolutions of 1848 did not substantially change the position of the Jews in Western Europe. It was generally accepted that the Jew would enjoy equal protection under the law as long as he relinquished the notion that he was of a separate nation. The great leader of the German Jews, Gabriel Rieser, declared before the Frankfurt Assembly "that it is absurd to consider the Jews as a separate nation, [we] have no other Fatherland except Germany. . . ." 5

Jews of Western Europe continually asserted that they were as loyal to the state as the non-Jews. Legally, they enjoyed the same rights as any other citizen; yet, legality and behavior are often separate. One critic of Western European Jewry noted: "They wore the mask of the ruling nationality as of old in Spain--the mask of the ruling religion." 6

5 "Draft of Chapter on National Rights," in possession of Mrs. Ruth Richards Eisenstein, New York City, Archives of the Jewish Information Bureau.

6 Stephen S. Wise quoted in Ibid.
The great majority of Jews, however, lived in lands whose rulers long resisted national aspirations. The Hapsburg and Romanov dynasties enacted legislation which deprived the Jews of basic human rights. Jews were made the scapegoats for the failures of these corrupt regimes. Assimilation of the Jewish populations in these lands was therefore not politically attractive to the governments. In this context many thoughtful Jews searched for some accommodation with the state. That Jews could not identify with the state was self-evident, for the state denied to them this privilege. To preserve their identity in the Diaspora, Jews could not rely on race, territory, or even common economic or political interests. Simon Dubnow, the great Russian-Jewish historian, elucidated a theory of Jewish nationalism which transcended these finite constructs. Dubnow asserted that the continued existence of the Jewish nation depended on how well it could maintain its great spiritual tradition—a universal religion, a language common to all Jews (Hebrew or Yiddish), and the common struggle to preserve that tradition. He reasoned that the loss of the Jewish homeland forced Jewry to seek an alternative to territorial nationalism; Jewry replaced that concrete loss with an intangible "national will" or "Law," i.e.,
the cultural milieu of Judaism. Thus, territory became superfluous to the survival of the Jewish nation, and, though Jewry was scattered throughout the world, it retained its national identity by preserving its cultural identity. Dubnow scoffed at the idea of assimilationism; he derisively called it "National Moronism." He chastized the assimilationists because they rejected the idea of Jewish nationality. He maintained that since some countries in Western Europe and the United States accepted Jews as co-equals, Jews should be looked upon as but one more nationality amongst the others. If other nationalities enjoyed cultural autonomy, then, so too, must the Jews have the right to communal self-government, freedom of language, and education. To Dubnow, a nationality did not mean a "State within the State" but, together with other nationalities, comprised the State.  

7 Koppel S. Pinson, ed., Nationalities and History: Essays on Old and New Judaism by Simon Dubnow, (Philadelphia, 1958), pp. 40-41, 76-99, 100-115, 131-142. Dubnow also took to task the Orthodox and Reform elements of Judaism. He argued that they mistakenly perceived the revelatory process which Judaism had undergone. Too, he criticized the Zionist movement because it relied so heavily on territory. Since Palestine could never accommodate the millions of Jews who might wish to emigrate there, the Zionists were relegating those unable to settle in the Jewish homeland to "spiritual-cultural sterility."
In Austria-Hungary, which contained a polyglot of nationalities, the idea of national rights was widely discussed. Dr. Karl Renner, under the pseudonym of Rudolf Springer, in his book, *The Struggle of the Austrian Nations for the State*, reasoned that since the various nationalities comprising the Empire did not conform to any logical geographic distribution, it was senseless to view nationality as a territorial attribute. Rather, Renner argued that nationality should be considered as a personal attribute. His plan of self-government, while based on the use of the Crown Lands, provided for the union of individuals of a particular nationality, even if only a fraction of that nationality lived in a district and the rest were scattered as minorities. Each nationality was to have a national Diet which would oversee such interests as worship, justice, emigration, education, literature and art. The power of the state would be circumvented by allowing the national Diet the right to tax its own people. In sum, Renner envisioned each Diet as a responsible ministry and the state would be no more than a federal union of nationalities. He, unlike Dubnow,
countenanced the establishment of an *imperium in imperio*.\(^8\)

As the nineteenth century drew to a close, the force of nationalism grew even stronger. The Hapsburg and Romanov dynasties were too weak and corrupt to control the alienated populations which rejected the authority of the monarchy and the State. Political and military action replaced theoretical discussion; thus, a long succession of brush-fire wars engulfed the Balkan Peninsula and fanned the fires of discontent. Continued political and cultural repression led to more hostility. No longer would the minorities of the two empires repress their desire for freedom. A new watchword—"national self-determination"—dominated the struggle.

Though many Jews in the Diaspora were without territorial ties, they also looked forward to the day when they could claim Palestine as their own. Theodore Herzl, the founder of political Zionism, convened a congress at Basle in 1897 to discuss how the objective of Palestine as a Jewish national home could be met. The World Zionist

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Organization was created to administer the daily activities of the Zionists and to serve as a clearinghouse for propaganda, political activism, and financial support. To be sure, the Zionists never claimed that all Jews could live in Palestine and, though Zionism served as a diversion for many alienated Jews, it did not meet the Jews' current problems. Jews dwelling in lands of oppression confronted a situation which was radically different from that faced by their more fortunate brethren in Western Europe and the United States. Since these Jews did not wish to be assimilated into the general population, they began to demand "national rights."

At the Conference of Nationalities held in Lausanne in July, 1916, Jewish representatives demanded that, since they had fulfilled their civic obligations to the State, they should enjoy equality of rights. To protect themselves, they asked that they be given guaranties against any state infringements on their use of language, culture, or customs. To this end, they argued that, wherever Jews lived in compact masses, e.g., Russia, Poland, Galicia, or Roumania, they should enjoy the right to maintain their own
schools and cultural institutions. Zionists actively supported the national rights issue. The World Zionist Organization issued instructions to its Copenhagen office to coordinate the activities of all the Jewish national bodies then forming for the peace conference in Paris. The Copenhagen office synthesized the demands of the various Jewish groups in Eastern Europe and on October 28, 1918, issued what became known as the "Copenhagen Manifesto."

Formally entitled "The Demands of the Jewish People," the Manifesto urged a national home in Palestine for the Jews; elsewhere, Jews were to be granted full equality in rights, including national rights. Moreover, the Jews should be admitted as fully accredited members of the "League of Free Nations." Zionists were exhorted to adopt these demands as their own and to work for their inclusion in the peace treaty. The various Jewish national councils accepted the points in the Manifesto; thus Jews from

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Eastern Europe were relatively united in their program. When the Paris Peace Conference convened, Jewish organizations from many countries sent delegations. The American Jewish Congress delegation consisted of people representing the various factions which constituted the Congress. Wise was ordered to London where he worked with the World Zionist Organization as liaison between it and the American Peace delegation. Jacob DeHaas, while a

10Oscar Janowsky, Jews and Minority Rights, pp. 272-273. Among advocates for the American Jewish Congress the following measures were recommended for presentation to the Peace Conference: (1) The rights of freedom of migration, which included the removal of all restrictions of residence; (2) The right to acquire and own property; (3) The right to pursue all trades and the reception of Jewish tradesmen into the special trade societies; (4) The removal of all special forms of taxes levied only on Jews; (5) The granting of suffrage on all representative bodies; (6) The admission of Jews into the civil services and the officer corps in the armed forces; (7) The freedom of worship in accordance with the state regulations applying to all other denominations; (8) The social and material equilization of all Jewish spiritual leaders, religious teachers, and ministers, with the spiritual and religious functionaries of other denominations; (9) The abolition of the special oath for Jews which was still required in some states; (10) The abolition of the requirement of all professionals of faith from all lists of rank, personal registries, judicial verdicts, and public documents. Bernard G. Richards, "A Congress for Jewish Rights," pp. 6, 7, 10, in possession of Mrs. Ruth Richards Eisenstein, New York City, Archives of the Jewish Information Bureau.
member of the Congress's peace delegation, also represented the Zionist Organization of America. Louis Marshall, the acknowledged leader of the Jewish Congress delegation, publicly stated that his sole purpose in going was to present to the Peace Conference the cause of Eastern European Jewry. Marshall also went to Paris to prevent the Zionists from making Palestine the main issue rather than the essential "question of Jewish rights in Eastern Europe. . . ."

French Jewry also sent a delegation to the Peace Conference. The Alliance Israelite Universelle, the largest French-Jewish organization, sent a delegation consisting of Eugene See, Chairman, Solomon Reinach, and Jacques Bigart, Secretary. The Alliance was well acquainted with French officialdom and had worked closely with the French government when it believed French Jewry's interests threatened. Yet, the Jews represented in the Alliance, and

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11 Marshall to M. Sulzberger, 12/21/18, in Charles Reznikoff, Louis Marshall, volume 2, p. 538. One observer noted that aside from Marshall, Wise, DeHaas, and Richards, the American Jewish Congress delegation to the Peace Conference consisted of a "flagrant ignoramous, a mountebank, a harmless dreamer and a gentleman who regrets that he has but two arms with which to shake hands and agree with everybody who manifests the slightest intention of disagreeing or of expressing an opinion of his own." Hertz to Richards, 1/21/19, Emmanuel Hertz folder, Bernard G. Richards Mss, Jewish Theological Seminary.
particularly the leaders of the organization, firmly believed that the word "Jew" presumed nothing more than a religious significance; they were diametrically opposed to East European Jewry's conception of Judaism both as a religion and nation, and feared that not only would "national rights" be dangerous to their brethren but would also jeopardize their position in French society.\(^\text{12}\) However, the Alliance did not represent all of French Jewry. French Jews of East European origin sent their own peace delegation to the conference. The Hafkine Committee, as this delegation came to be known, did not agree with the assimilationist doctrine of the Alliance, but at the same time did not concur in the demands of those Eastern European Jews who favored a full measure of national rights.\(^\text{13}\)

British Jewry at the Peace Conference was represented by the Joint Foreign Committee, acting for the Board of Deputies of British Jews and the Anglo-Jewish Association. The deputation from British Jewry consisted of the presidents of the cooperating organizations, Sir

\(^{12}\)Oscar Janowsky, Jews and Minority Rights, pp. 268-269.

\(^{13}\)"Draft of Chapter on National Rights," pp. 9-11, in possession of Mrs. Ruth Richards Eisenstein, New York City, Archives of the Jewish Information Bureau.
Stuart Samuel and Claude G. Montefiore and other leading British Jews. They were not as hostile to the "national rights" issue as their French counterparts. In a memorandum to Sir Arthur Balfour, the Joint Foreign Committee endorsed the securing of civil and political rights for Jews where such rights were denied them. Moreover, the British Jews enunciated a plan whereby Jews in Eastern Europe would be guaranteed the rights to control their own schools, language, and other elements of their culture. The memorandum specified the requirement for minorities:

All religious and cultural minorities in (name of country) shall be secured, on a footing of equality, in autonomous management of their religious, educational, charitable, and other cultural institutions, provided always that the (language of the country) shall be made an obligatory subject of instruction in their schools.  

Another group at the Peace Conference was the Agudath Israel, the organization representing Orthodox Jews in Eastern Europe, which stressed special rights for religious observances of the Jews. A group of Russian-Jewish intellectuals who called their dissident circle the Union Populaire urged the acceptance of minority

rights without claiming the Jews to be a nation. Another small group of Russian emigres, the League for Defense of Oppressed Jews, was represented at Paris as was a separatist group from Roumania which handed to the Peace Conference its own memorandum on special group rights.¹⁵

Though the American Jewish Congress delegation was sent to Paris in the name of American Jewry, dissident American Jewish groups also sent representatives to the Peace Conference. The American Jewish Committee, though technically a member of the American Jewish Congress, requested Cyrus Adler to represent it at Paris. The Congress delegation, except Marshall, viewed his presence as a contribution of the original understanding of October 2, 1916, between the American Jewish Committee and the Jewish Congress Organization Committee. Marshall stated, however, that the original agreement stipulated that an Executive Committee was to be elected by the Congress and that during its existence the Executive Committee would be regarded as having precedence over those of any other organization which was a participant in the Congress.

When the Congress met in Philadelphia, however, no such Executive Committee was elected and, therefore, according to Marshall, this "eliminated the idea of priority previously agreed upon and left the American Jewish Committee free to send a delegation to the Peace Conference. . . ." Adler served on one of the voluntary groups which tried to mediate the conflict between the Eastern European and Western European Jewish organizations over the issue of national rights.

Another dissident American-Jewish group which came to the Peace Conference were the anti-Zionists. Though haphazardly organized, the anti-Zionists wished to prevent the creation of a Jewish political state. Max Senior of Cincinnati, Morris Jastrow of Baltimore, Rabbi Henry Berkowitz of Cincinnati, and Rabbi Isaac Landman of Brooklyn, New York, took the initiative in organizing the anti-Zionist elements in the United States. The anti-Zionists took the position that if the American Jewish Congress had declared for Palestine, to be administered as a British mandate, open to Jewish immigration, and "enjoying the

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16 Richards to Mack, 6/24/37, Julian W. Mack folder #3, Bernard G. Richards Mss, Jewish Theological Seminary.
blessings of civil, religious and economic rights without regard to race or creed . . .;" they would have heartily endorsed it. They disagreed, however, with the Zionists' determination to make Palestine a Jewish political state, and consequently, began to petition the State Department to hear their case.17

Their petition rested on the argument that Jews should not be recognized as a national unit to whom territorial sovereignty in Palestine would be committed. They supported their thesis by stating that most of oppressed Jewry could not hope to emigrate to that land, and mistakenly claimed that the Zionists viewed Palestine as a home for all Jews.18 They maintained, moreover, that since all Jews could not possibly emigrate to Palestine, those remaining in the Diaspora would face a more precarious position if they were classified by the native populations as a political unit with a dual allegiance. Indeed, Palestine was not only the homeland of Jews, but also of the native populations. To unite church and state in any

17Rabbi M. J. Merritt to Philipson, 2/2/19, Henry Berkowitz Mss, Box 1893, American Jewish Archives.

18Ibid., "Anti-Zionist Statement to the Paris Peace Conference."
form, as under the old Jewish hierarchy, "would be a leap backward of two thousand years."\(^\text{19}\) Morris Jastrow succinctly stated the anti-Zionist position:

The Paris Peace Conference would be glad to have such a statement before it in order to justify its action in not granting the desires of the ardent Zionists. . . . The Jewish question must be solved in the countries where it arose, and that eventually the only solution is to granting to Jews exactly the same civic rights as the other inhabitants and to make them a part of the national life.\(^\text{20}\)

The anti-Zionists chose Congressman Julius Kahn (R. Calif.), who had managed a military appropriations bill through the House of Representatives for President Wilson, to carry their petition to the State Department and the chief executive. Kahn claimed to be an ardent anti-Zionist.

I do not believe in Zionism. I think it would be harmful rather than beneficial if a Jewish state were to be organized. . . .\(^\text{21}\)

However, such had not always been the case with Kahn for he had previously championed the Zionist cause and had once insisted that a pro-Zionist speech be inserted in the

\(^{19}\) Ibid.

\(^{20}\) Ibid., Jastrow to Morgenstern, 1/21/19.

\(^{21}\) Ibid., Kahn to Berkowitz, 1/11/19.
Congressional Record so that those "who had an oppor-
tunity of studying the question as he studied it might
get the benefit of his research and complications [sic]." Kahn presented the statement to Wilson and the President assured him that he would read it.

Though Wilson tried to assuage Kahn and the other anti-Zionists, there was never any doubt as to what position he would take at the Peace Conference. He publicly committed himself to the Zionist cause when he wrote Rabbi Stephen Wise that he welcomed an opportunity to express the satisfaction I have felt in the progress of the Zionist movement in the United States and in the Allied countries since the declaration by Mr. Balfour . . . of Great Britain's approval of the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people. . . .

Even the ardent anti-Zionists came to the conclusion that their petition was a quixotic gesture. "To me," wrote Leo M. Franklin to Rabbi Berkowitz, it would seem rather foolish at this time for twenty-five men--no matter how prominent their positions--to go before the President pleading our cause as against an equal number of equally prominent individuals

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22 The Jewish Advocate (Boston), 3/27/19, p. 6; 4/10/19, p. 8.
backed by their personal relationships to the President and with a petition signed by more than one-half million names. . . . I regard as futile any efforts to change the situation without a great organization behind us. . . .

Despite the efforts of such men as Kahn, Henry Morgenthau, and Oscar Straus, Stephen Wise was able to report that the President "seems to have no doubt that Palestine is to be ours. . . . I may say that the President and Colonel House will fight for everything we want. . . ."^25

The irreconcilable anti-Zionists were opposed to anything that suggested that the Jews were anything more than a religious sect. However, the American Jewish Congress resolution on Palestine did not ask for a Jewish political state; indeed, as Felix Warburg, no friend of the Zionist movement, stated, the Zionists were asking for nothing more than that the Jews should have the same

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^24 Leo M. Franklin to Berkowitz, 2/26/19, Henry Berkowitz Mss, Box 1893, American Jewish Archives.

rights in Palestine as they have in the United States. 26 Chaim Weizmann, President of the English Zionist Federation, publicly stated that it would be unfair to ask the Peace Conference to help in establishing an autonomous Jewish state in Palestine, and even if the Zionists received everything they demanded, the World Zionist Organization was too small for such an immense task as the enlargement of the Jewish population in Palestine. Weizmann and Rabbi Wise claimed that only when the Jews were a majority of the population could Palestine become the "Jewish National Home." 27 To be sure, this proviso further postponed the day when Jews could call Palestine their own for, while the Jewish population would be increasing, so, too, would the populations of the other minorities. Weizmann told Secretary of State Robert Lansing that he hoped Palestine would ultimately become as Jewish as England was English but, he quickly added, "the

26 Warburg to Senior, 1/17/19, Henry Berkowitz Mss, Box 1893, American Jewish Archives.

27 The American Israelite, 1/2/19, p. 4; 1/16/19, p. 4.
question [is] not whether Zionism [is] difficult, but whether it was possible.\textsuperscript{28}

While the Palestine issue was important to the American Jewish Congress's peace delegation, it did not supersede the issue of protecting the rights of the Jewish minorities in Eastern Europe. The Peace Conference was not without precedent in its quest to protect the rights of a minority from a tyrannical majority. When Greece was first admitted into the family of nations in 1832, the Conference of London prescribed the form of her government; moreover, when that country gained sovereignty over the Ionian Islands in 1864, the European powers

\textsuperscript{28}"Draft of Chapter on National Rights," pp. 17-18, in possession of Mrs. Ruth Richards Eisenstein, New York City, The Archives of the Jewish Information Bureau. Weizmann also met President Wilson and presumably told him what he was going to tell Lansing. See, "Meeting of American Jewish Congress Representatives with President Wilson," Julian W. Mack folder #2, Bernard G. Richards Mss, Jewish Theological Seminary. Lansing had some reservations about the Zionist platform. He maintained that "self-determination" and the Zionist cause were contradictory terms, and that the creation of a Jewish national home might lead to rebellion by the native populations. However, he was overruled by the President and Colonel House. See Robert Lansing, The Peace Negotiations, A Personal Narrative, (New York, 1921), pp. 96-105, 196. James T. Shotwell, a member of the American Peace Commission, claimed that there was little for the Peace Conference to do but register the decree. See, James T. Shotwell, At the Paris Peace Conference, (New York, 1937), pp. 167-170.
guaranteed the Islands' inhabitants freedom of worship.

In 1878, the Congress of Berlin included provisions on religious freedom and political equality in the organic laws of Bulgaria, Montenegro, Serbia, and Roumania. The treaty of peace between Turkey and Greece in November, 1913, also contained religious guaranties to minority populations. When Roumania signed the abortive Treaty of Bucharest with the Central Powers in May, 1918, the Central Powers established "equal" freedom of religion in Roumania and extended to the Jews Roumanian citizenship. Yet in all of these instances, the guarantees extended to the minority populations were not enforced by the European powers. In effect, all that was guaranteed was a declaration of intent; for over forty years Roumania disregarded the provisions of the Congress of Berlin edict and defined "citizenship" in such a way that the Jews were excluded from enjoying equal protection under the law. 29


"Article Thirteen: The High Contracting Parties recognize the independence of Roumania, subject to the conditions set forth in the following two articles:
Roumania formulated its constitution so as to evade the provisions of the treaty. Article Seven of the Constitution, adopted in 1880, stipulated that anyone could become naturalized under the following conditions:

1. By addressing to the Government an application for naturalization, in which must be declared the capital he possesses, his profession, and his wish to establish his domicile in Roumania;
2. By residing in this country for ten years after having made this application, and by proving by his acts that he is useful to the country . . . ;
3. Naturalization can only be granted by a law and individually;
4. A special law will determine the manner in which foreigners can establish their domicile in Roumanian territory. . . .

Article Fourteen: In Roumania the difference of religious creed and confessions shall not be alleged against any person as a ground for exclusion or incapacity in matters relating to the enjoyment of civil and political rights, admission to public employments, functions and honors, or the exercise of the various professions and industries in any locality whatsoever. "The freedom and outward exercise of all forms of worship shall be assured to all persons belonging to the Roumanian State, as well as to foreigners, and no hindrance shall be offered either to the hierarchical organization of the different communions, or to these relatives with their spiritual chief. "The subjects and citizens of all the Powers, traders or others shall be treated in Roumania, without distinction of creed, on a footing of perfect equality."

Ibid.
Roumania did not enact the naturalization law which she had promised the signatory powers to do. Thus, Jews, as before, were totally excluded from enjoying civil and political rights.

In the areas of large Jewish populations—Roumania, Russia, and Galicia—the Jews suffered religious intolerance, economic boycott, and inequality before the law. In Roumania, approximately 300,000 Jews lived a miserable existence. Since 1878 that country had enacted 220 statutes operating exclusively against the Jews. If Roumania were to be given Bessarabia and Transylvania some 500,000 more Jews would be deprived of their citizenship rights which they had enjoyed while under the protection of other governments. They could not own land and were prohibited from pursuing agricultural employment. They were hounded by the police, persecuted by the Black Hundreds, and special taxes were imposed upon them. "Statutes, ordinances, edicts, and judicial decisions directed against them ran into the thousands. . . ." The Provisional Government rescinded all discriminatory legislation.

31 American Jewish Congress, Memorial Presented to President Woodrow Wilson, (New York, 1919), passim.
directed against the Jews and granted them full equality; however, the Bolshevik Revolution intervened and the ensuing chaos left the decree of emancipation in a state of flux.

Since Poland had not existed for more than a century, it was difficult to determine the official and unofficial attitudes of the Poles toward the Jews. The new Poland, to be resurrected from the ashes of the Austrian and Russian Empires, was to include what was formerly Russian Poland, Galicia, and parts of Silesia and Prussia. Those Jews residing in Russian Poland, particularly, suffered at the hands of their Russian oppressors. Since the "new" Poland would contain some three million Jews, it was necessary that the Peace Conference guarantee those people their rights.

From past history, the American Jewish Congress peace delegation did not think Polish leaders would voluntarily grant the Jews equal rights. The Polish National Committee still regarded the proposed Constitution resulting from the abortive revolution of 1862-1863 as being in full force. That Constitution supposedly granted Jews equal rights; however, it did so only on three conditions:
In consideration for their admission to the enjoyment of equal rights the Jews shall renounce the use of a language of their own in speech as well as in writing. . . . After the promulgation of this act, no legal act, no will, no contract, no guaranty, no obligation of any sort, no accounts or bills, no commercial correspondence shall be written or signed in Hebrew or Yiddish. All such documents shall in that case be invalid.32

Roman Dmowski, President of the Polish National Committee, admitted to Louis Marshall that it was his desire to see the Jews leave Poland and that he fully supported the economic boycott directed against the Jews since 1912. An editorial in a Polish newspaper owned by Dmowski stated:

The weal of the country demands above all to be relieved of the awful burden of the Jewish mass of two millions, which, owing to its excessive concentration and shop-keeping mode of life, is regularly poisoning itself and the Polish milieu.33

Though the Polish National Committee declared that the proposed Constitution of the new Poland would guarantee equality before the law for all Polish citizens, it did not clearly define the term "citizen"; thus, they provided themselves with the same loophole which enabled the Roumanians to default on their obligations.34

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32 Ibid.
33 Quoted in Ibid.
34 Ibid.
Owing to serious differences in points of view, the various Jewish delegations at Paris were unable to achieve that unity of action which was so desperately needed. The first attempt at unity was made when only a few of the delegations were present. Lucien Wolf urged Eugene See to meet Nahum Sokolow of the World Zionist Organization to arrange some type of organization. The two met on January 18, 1919, and they agreed to create a "Central Bureau of Delegation Secretaries with certain executive functions, and a Deliberative Committee of Representatives" of the various delegations. A decision about the form which the Central Bureau was to take was postponed until the arrival of the other delegations. The British and French Jewish delegations had already submitted memoranda to their respective governments, and Wolf, particularly, urged that if the Jewish case was to be heard and acted upon by the Peace Conference, a joint memorandum would soon have to be submitted. It was not until February 18, 1919 that most of the deputations assembled in Paris and even then the East European Jewish delegations refused to commit

35Oscar Janowsky, Jews and Minority Rights, pp. 284-287; National Executive Committee Meering, 6/1/19, Julian W. Mack folder #3, Bernard G. Richards Mss, Jewish Theological Seminary.
themselves to the Central Bureau until the form of the organization was agreed upon. Wolf and the Alliance could not agree to this stipulation. The East European Jews then countered with a proposal which would have created a united committee with a secretariat of about five men. The Alliance rejected this plan also, because it feared that it might be outvoted by the delegations from Eastern Europe. Thus, negotiations broke off until the entire American Jewish Congress delegation arrived.\(^{36}\)

Julian Mack and Richards arrived on March 16, 1919 and immediately set out to achieve unity. Mack quickly alienated himself from the Western European Jewish delegations when he called their filing separate petitions with the Peace Conference a "breach of faith." The Americans thus aligned themselves with the Eastern Europeans, and the British were further alienated by Mack's "truculence."\(^{37}\)

The two American Jewish delegates then tried to organize the Eastern European deputations into a Committee of Jewish Delegations. With the aid of some Eastern European Jews, they achieved some semblance of unity and

\(^{36}\) Oscar Janowsky, Jews and Minority Rights, pp. 286-287.

\(^{37}\) Naomi Cohen, Not Free to Desist, pp. 115-118.
began the preparatory work of drafting a petition to the Peace Conference. When Marshall arrived in Paris he was very much put out to find that the Committee was already functioning. He thought that by organizing the Committee, the Alliance and the Joint Foreign Committee would not consent to any unity plan and he chastized Mack and Richards for their actions. Marshall then tried to undo their work. He convinced Mack that only those Jewish delegations from the great powers would have any influence over the outcome of the deliberations and that it was naive to think that the Jewish organizations from Eastern Europe could persuade the French, British, Italian, and American peace commissioners. Many delegates, moreover, were tired of the constant bickering and arguments; finally, the American and Eastern European Jewish delegations appointed a committee to seek a compromise with the Alliance.

The Committee met with representatives of the Alliance; Cyrus Adler, representing the American Jewish Committee, also attended. Marshall insisted that the

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substance of national rights was more important than the name given it. Though the Alliance did not wholly concur with Marshall's analysis, they were still unalterably opposed to the term "national." See explained that the "question of national rights presumed the right of national sovereignty. As a basis of national rights, no nation existed or could be conceived to exist except the Palestinian state. . . ." The business of the Peace Conference, he asserted, was to create a sovereign state for distinct nationalities, not for the Jews. \[40\] Unable to persuade each other, the opposing groups decided to hold another conference in the hope that cooler heads would prevail.

Another meeting took place on April 5, 1919. Nahum Sokolow and Claude Montefiore outlined a proposal which, they believed, would circumvent the troublesome issue of national rights. Sokolow stated that the dissolution of the Russian and Austro-Hungarian empires had forced the Jews living there to proclaim themselves a nationality. He reasoned that the Jews should not have to choose sides

\[40\]"Draft of Chapter on National Rights," in possession of Mrs. Ruth Richards Eisenstein, New York City, Archives of the Jewish Information Bureau.
to proclaim to what state they would give their allegiance; if they were forced to do so, they would become pawns in a fight between the warring populations. He went on to say that since the Jews already possessed functioning educational, social, and religious institutions, it would be foolish for them to give these up and destroy their communal life—the very essence of their existence. As Janowsky states: "Sokolow wanted for the Eastern Jews educational and linguistic autonomy, proportional representation on a national basis and an untrammeled communal life." 41 Sokolow conceded that his demands need not be called "national rights" so long "as the thing was secured." 42 Montefiore took the position that since the Joint Foreign Committee had already accepted religious and cultural rights, it would not oppose the Easterners' attempt to organize on a national basis. Adler went so far as to say that if the Jews of Eastern Europe insisted on securing special cultural autonomy and that, if they were willing to assume the responsibility for such things,

41 Oscar Janowsky, Jews and Minority Rights, pp. 299-300.

42 Quoted in Ibid.
he was willing to help them. The conference decided to adjourn until the next day when it was expected that a final compromise would be reached.

On April 6, 1919, Sokolow completely reversed his position; he declared that the word "national" could under no circumstances be eliminated. Between Saturday and Sunday evening, the uncompromising Eastern European Jewish nationalists—particularly, Ussischkin and Thon—made a strong appeal to him. Thon further alienated the Westerners when he shouted that the "Jews are a nation, not a religious sect and we wish the world to know it." Herbert Bentwich, representing the B'nai Brith Lodge of London, exclaimed

Only we are afraid of the term nation. Non-Jews are accustomed to it. They will not be surprised if we ask the rights of an 'Am segullah,' a peculiar nation. The claims of representation in government and parliament is strange to Westerners, with one hundred years of emancipation behind them; in one hundred years the East may no longer need it either. . . . Do not put them in greater danger by whittling down their claims. . . .

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43 Richards to Wise, 4/12/19, Correspondence--American Jewish Congress folder #1, Bernard G. Richards Mss, Jewish Theological Seminary.

44 "Draft of Chapter on National Rights," in possession of Mrs. Ruth Richards Eisenstein, New York City, Archives of the Jewish Information Bureau.
Dr. Leon Reich, representative of the Jewish National Council of Lemburg, asserted that the Jews could not consider anything but national rights; he went on to say that in their desire to be considered a nationality and remain neutral, they had suffered a pogrom at the hands of the warring Poles and Ukrainians. Anything less than the acceptance of national rights "would condemn ... Jews and expose all Jews of the East to the danger of being used as political instruments, political slaves, for the sake of the others."45

The Easterners' demands came as a complete surprise to the others and produced shock waves amongst the delegations. To salvage whatever chance of unity remained, a Committee of Seven was appointed by both sides to reach some compromise. Nothing came of the Committee's deliberations; yet, the Committee of Jewish Delegations was able to conclude a modus vivendi with the Alliance and the Joint Foreign Committee whereby differing groups agreed not to do anything antagonistic to each others' proposals.46

45Ibid.

46The Jewish Advocate (Boston), 7/29/20, p. 6; National Executive Committee Meeting, 6/1/19, Julian W. Mack folder #3, Bernard G. Richards Mss, Jewish Theological Seminary.
On April 2, 1919 the delegation from the American Jewish Congress was received by Secretary of State Robert Lansing, General Tasker H. Bliss, and Henry White of the American Peace Commission. The American Commission to Negotiate Peace favored the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the creation of independent states which would be able to withstand future German aggressions as well as to prevent the cancer of Bolshevism from moving westward. Yet, as Lansing had earlier warned, the disintegration of the newly created states was a distinct possibility because of economic instability, social unrest, and political turmoil. In its Outline of Tentative Recommendations of January, 1919, the "Inquiry," a group of American specialists on European and Near Eastern affairs, strongly supported the territorial claims of the newly created states. The recommendations were based upon the principle of "self-determination;" however, the Inquiry recognized the fact that a large number of minorities would be under the protection of governments whose past practices included discrimination, economic boycott,

and social ostracism.  

Mack and Marshall spoke for the Jewish Congress delegation. They reviewed the contents of the "Bill of Rights" which they had given President Wilson in March, 1919. The American Peace Commissioners were wary of the possible workings of "special rights for minority groups," and inquired whether the demands of the American Jewish Congress would not rouse resentment and anger among the native population. Mack stressed the point that without such guarantees, the Jews in Roumania and Poland would continue to be second-class citizens; moreover, he cited numerous examples of mixed populations in various parts of Eastern Europe where special religious and cultural rights were previously given consideration. Lansing was still a bit skeptical. He thought that the Jews in Poland and Roumania would come perilously close to declaring themselves a national political party, and that they would further alienate themselves from the native populations.  

Mack assured the Secretary of State that no

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48 Ibid., p. 220.

such thing would occur and that the Jews of these countries were asking only for that which was enjoyed by other minority groups. Lansing finally consented.50

As presented to Lansing and the other peace commissioners, the Jewish Congress's request went much further than Wilson had originally anticipated. Wilson's first proposal for protecting minorities in the new states provided for religious freedom in terms not unlike those found in the Treaty of Berlin of 1878. His proposal went further, however, in that it provided for political equality among the various races and nationalities in the states which might be asked to give their guaranty.51

Much of Wilson's proposal was based on the work of Professor Archibald C. Coolidge. Coolidge had been "loaned" to the American Peace Commission as head of a committee of experts which visited the bi-lingual and multi-national regions of Eastern Europe during the months following the cessation of hostilities. Coolidge became

50Ibid. See also, Richards to Rubinsohn, 4/8/19, quoted in "Leo Motzkin and American Jewry," p. 7, in possession of Mrs. Ruth Richards Eisenstein, New York City, Archives of the Jewish Information Bureau.

convinced of the need for protection of the minorities and urged Wilson to meet the problem. He espoused the thesis that "the rights of nationalities include those of minorities as well as of majorities," and stated that there was an urgent need for the Peace Conference to declare just what constituted the minimum of these rights—political, religious, linguistic. He and Manley O. Hudson, a colleague, were well aware of the naive assumption that native governments and peoples would greet the minorities with open arms. They cautioned that even the most solemn assurances from the native governments would not suffice. Only a strongly worded declaration by the Allied and Associated Powers could quiet the "excited masses" and contribute to a lasting peace. Details for enforcement of the guarantees were to be formulated by the League of Nations at a later date.  

Mack and Marshall met with Colonel House approximately one week after their meeting with Lansing and the others. House asked that a brief be written, and the two Jewish Congress delegates, together with Hudson, prepared the Jewish case. Mack and Marshall used the Bill of

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Rights, adopted by the American Jewish Congress in Philadelphia, as the basis of their brief. With some adjustments, they prepared a document which included demands for minority representation and autonomy. Each national minority which constituted at least 1 per cent of the population was to be considered an autonomous body with the right to maintain its own national, religious, educational, charitable, and social institutions. Moreover, each national minority would have the right to elect representatives to all publicly elected bodies; the vehicle for such elections would be independent electoral colleges so as to ensure proportional representation. Too, the minorities would be assured a proportional share of the public funds expended for "such of the foregoing objects. . . ." The Jews were to be specifically designated a national minority. To ensure the execution of these privileges, any of the signatory powers and "any group that may be affected by the failure to observe or to effectuate any of the provisions of the article" were given the right to submit complaints to the League of Nations or its delegated agent.

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53 Ibid.
The two men presented the draft report to David Hunter Miller, legal advisor to the American Peace Commission. While he agreed with almost all of the draft, he weakened the document to a great extent. He omitted in his revision the carefully phrased passage defining citizenship, which Marshall and Mack believed was the reason for Roumania's non-compliance with the Treaty of Berlin. He also deleted the stipulations regarding the observance of the Sabbath and the method of enforcement by appeal to the League. He eliminated, moreover, all references to "national rights," "national minorities," and "national institutions."^4

Miller met with Mack, Marshall, and Hudson to iron out their differences. Some of the language problems were settled by the conferees while others were redrafted by Mack and Marshall and resubmitted to Miller on April 22, 1919. Miller also conferred with members of the Committee of Jewish Delegations who convinced him that in some cases, particularly Poland and Roumania, it was imperative that the Jews be classified as a national minority and, thus, be able to maintain, with support

^4Ibid.
from the State, their own cultural institutions. He was also convinced that the Jews should have minority representation, though he disapproved of the "electoral college plan" formulated by Mack and Marshall. He deleted the appeal to the League as a method of enforcement; instead, Poland "would be required to recognize the provisions as a bill of rights which could not be amended except with the consent of the League of Nations." Miller submitted the revised draft to Colonel House on April 29, stating that the new states should be compelled to adopt the clauses.

Others in the American Peace Commission were not as happy with the compromise as Miller. Herbert Hoover told Cyrus Adler in late April, 1919 that there was not the slightest chance that a national minority clause would be inserted into the peace treaty. Secretary of State Lansing had misgivings about the Jewish proposals and Wise stated that Lansing's resignation was no great loss

55Ibid. See also, United States Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States, Paris Peace Conference, 1919, volume 5, pp. 393-399.

as far as Jewish affairs were concerned. Moreover, owing to the late date that Miller submitted the revised draft, and with the presentation of conditions of peace to the Germans set for May 7, 1919, the Big Four decided that the Jewish question should be dealt with not in the treaty with Germany, but in separate treaties between the Great Powers and the new or enlarged states. The treaties were to include such clauses as the Great Powers deemed proper for the protection "of the minorities within the state, differing from the majority in race, language, or religion."

Aside from the skepticism shown by some in the American Peace Commission toward the Jewish Congress proposals, others were also trying to persuade the President not to press for political autonomy for the Jews of Eastern Europe. Henry Morgenthau, President Wilson's former ambassador to Turkey, and other prominent anti-Zionists were among those who contacted Wilson.


58National Executive Committee Meeting, 6/1/19, Julian W. Mack folder #3, Bernard G. Richards Mss, Jewish Theological Seminary.
Morgenthau came to Paris to fight against the Zionist platform but, philosophically, the fight over national rights was just as important to him. Any clause in the peace treaty which denoted or connoted the Jews as anything other than a religious sect was anathema to him. Morgenthau was insistent that the Jews of Poland, however, would be able to reap the benefits of Polish and Roumanian citizenship if they worked with "their fellow countrymen in bettering for all its inhabitants the land of their common citizenship." Although he admitted that the native populations were guilty of excesses against their Jewish citizens, he also blamed the "Nationalist-Zionist" groups in those countries for continuous "agitation" for their separatist cause.

Wilson was convinced that Morgenthau was correct but for the wrong reasons. The President was sympathetic to granting the Jews of Eastern Europe racial, religious, and linguistic rights, but he feared that if they were proclaimed a separate national minority, it would make them only more liable to oppression and persecution.

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60 Ibid., pp. 383-384.
also wished to grant Jews the right of Sabbath observance. The right of Sabbath observance raised two questions: (1) should a man be compelled to do work on the Sabbath? (2) should those who observed the Sabbath on Saturday be allowed to work on Sunday? Wilson essentially dodged the issue, for he relied on the opinions of his advisors who told him that the question should be decided by the state and not by an international conference. Wilson changed his mind, however, after he met with Marshall and Adler on May 26, 1919, and agreed to fight for inclusion of the Sabbath day clauses in the Polish treaty. However, he did not rush to grant the Jews the right to appeal to the League of Nations in case of infraction of their treaty rights. He believed that the Jews would be recognized as a separate corporate body if they had the right to appeal to the League, and he thought this inadvisable. Moreover, the Jews of the United States and Great Britain could well take care of any difficulties that might arise and appeals

to their respective governments would bring prompt 
action.62

Wilson did not wish the Jews of Eastern Europe to 
be branded as "separatists" as Morgenthau had warned him 
they would be. Yet, without granting and guaranteeing to 
the Jews the rights held by other minorities, Wilson 
realized that they would forever be subjected to oppres­ 
sion, repression, and second-class citizenship. He indi­ 
cated that the Jews be given those rights. "Nothing," 
said Wilson, "is more likely to disturb the peace of the 
world than the treatment which might in certain circum­ 
stances be meted out to minorities."63 If the "Great 
Powers" were to guarantee the peace of the world, then 
they had the right to be satisfied that the proper and 
necessary guarantees had been given.64

The new and enlarged states were very much opposed 
to granting minority rights. The Poles and Roumanians 
were vehement in their fight against the inclusion of 

62Cyrus Adler, I Have Considered the Days, pp. 
313-315.

63United States Department of State, Foreign Rela­ 
tions of the United States, Paris Peace Conference, 1919, 

64Ibid., pp. 406-408.
these rights in their peace treaties. The Polish dele-
gates thought that the inclusion of national rights was
an affront to Polish sovereignty and an undue interfer-
ence in its domestic affairs. Ignacz Paderewski, repre-
sentative of the Polish National Committee in the United
States, objected to the treaty guaranties on the grounds
that where Poles were a minority, as in Germany, they
would not enjoy the same rights as the Jews in Poland and
that to attempt to separate the Jews from the rest of the
Polish population would only result in increased tensions.
Instead of solving the Jewish problem, minority rights
would, he predicted, only exacerbate it.

The Roumanians tried to circumvent the guaranties
that they would be forced to accept at the peace table by
issuing a Decree Law in late May, 1919. The Prime Minis-
ter of Roumania righteously declared that the Jewish
problem in Roumania no longer existed. The new decree
did not give all Jews in Roumania citizenship. Those
Jews who wished to become naturalized would have to
declare their intention, within a period of two to four
months, and prove that they had never lived under the
protection of a foreign power. Moreover, if the authori-
ties found that the petitioner's evidence of citizenship
was false or if "concerned citizens" submitted evidence against the petitioner, the petitioner would be penalized. After much opposition and rancor, the Poles finally signed a peace treaty after being prodded by the French, who were already trying to sign a mutual defense treaty with Poland against Germany. Roumania proved to be more stubborn. The Supreme Council received the report on Roumania, written by Manley O. Hudson, in July, 1919. It called for special guaranties to be given the Jews since Roumania had such a long history of non-compliance with other international obligations. Though the Supreme Council accepted the report, the Roumanians rejected it and were not allowed to sign the Treaty of St. Germain; they still refused to sign even after being threatened that they would not be permitted to sign the Treaty of Neuilly. They finally signed after extracting two concessions from the Allied Powers: (1) that no mention of the Treaty of Berlin of 1878 was to be included in the preamble to the treaty and; (2) that the "Jewish articles" be eliminated. Despite the objections of the American representative, the Supreme Council was in no mood to continue the

struggle and approved the two concessions. However, the Supreme Council did order that a new article be incorporated into the Treaty stating that all Jews inhabiting the territory of that state should be recognized as Romanian citizens with full rights.66

Treaties with Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Hungary and Turkey contained protection of minorities clauses which assured to all inhabitants of those states full and complete protection under the law without regard to birth, nationality, race, or religion. The Polish Treaty served as a model for the others and included the following provisions:

(1) the recognition of the obligations as fundamental laws;

(2) equality before the law and enjoyment of civil and political rights such as admission to public employments, functions, honors, or exercise of professions or industries;

(3) freedom in the use of any language in private intercourse, commerce, religion, press, publications, and public meetings, and reasonable facilities for the use of minority language before courts of law;

(4) the right to establish, manage, and control at their own expense, charitable, religious, social institutions, and schools and educational establishments in which they may use their own language and exercise their religion freely;

(5) adequate facilities by the State for instruction in minority language, in addition to the obligatory teaching of the official language and the allocation of public funds for educational, religious, and charitable purposes;

(6) full rights of Sabbath observance, including the right of refusal to attend courts or to perform legal business and the corresponding obligations of the State to refrain from ordering or permitting local or general elections or registrations for electoral or other purposes on Saturday.67

The League of Nations was to have jurisdiction over the enforcement of the rights that were conferred upon the Jews and other minority nationalities. It was widely believed in the euphoria surrounding the League that no longer would states be able to flaunt their international obligations. Though the minorities could not appeal directly to the League, many Jews believed that international public opinion and the fact that any of the signatories to the treaty could demand enforcement would prevent or solve any problem.68


68National Executive Committee Meeting, 6/1/19, Julian W. Mack folder #3, Bernard G. Richards Mss, Jewish Theological Seminary. As to why minority rights were not put into the League Covenant, see Oscar Janowsky, Jews and Minority Rights, pp. 321-323. It must be noted that only members of the League Council could bring to the attention of that body "any infraction, or danger of
It alone is capable of affording protection. It alone can bring order and stability where men are now gnawing at each other's throats as they did in prehistoric days. Without a League of Nations the minorities of Eastern Europe... will be at the mercy of the tyrannous majority. Without it war will never cease and industry, commerce, and the arts of civilization cannot flourish,

stated Marshall, who was at first skeptical about the League's effectiveness.\(^6^9\) Without the League, cautioned Marshall, the Jews would have gained only paper rights.\(^7^0\) Rabbi Wise and other prominent Jews campaigned actively for American acceptance of the League Covenant. He, William H. Taft, and others in the League of Nations State Conventions criss-crossed the country to convince the populace that without the League, there would be no peace.\(^7^1\)

Not all observers of the Peace Conference believed that the League would be the panacea for the Jews of Eastern Europe. Leo Wolfson, a leading advocate of the infraction" of minority rights. The Permanent Court of International Justice was to have final authority if the League Council and the alleged offending state disagreed over interpretations of law.


\(^7^0\)Ibid., Marshall to Zangwill, 10/10/19, volume 2, p. 677.
Congress and President of the Federation of Roumanian Jews of America, viewed the work of the Peace Conference in less than glowing terms. He argued that the guaranties given to the Jews were nothing more than "paper rights, and they are practically worthless. . . ." He reasoned that the rights given the Jews of Eastern Europe, even though recognized by the various nations as part of their organic laws, were nothing more than legal terms.

They exist only in the voluntary recognition of the people themselves, and of their governments. Rights depend on the spirit in which they are conferred. Were the emancipation of the Jews to proceed from the will of the people . . ., then Jewish emancipation would be genuine. . . .

Grudging acceptance was the hallmark of the governments whose duty was to enforce these rights. Laws that were looked upon as a "Diktat" were interpreted in a manner least likely to benefit the Jews. To Wolfson, the observance of the spirit of the law was far more important than a compulsory observance of the letter of the law.

Those nations which were to protect Jewish rights did not accept their responsibility. France did not wish to alienate Poland, the bulwark of her post-war alliance

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72 The Jewish Advocate (Boston), 1/23/19, pp. 1, 6.
73 Ibid.
system. The United States failed to ratify the Peace Treaty and was not bound to any pledges contained therein. The League of Nations proved to be ineffectual in this area. The League Council was entrusted with the protection of minorities. Since the Council's duty was primarily political in nature, care was taken not to give the appearance of placing the government of a state and one of its minorities in a position analogous to that of opposing parties in a court of law. Only a League Council member could bring a "minority question" to the attention of that body. Moreover, the League outlined detailed rules governing the procedure by which minority matters could come to its attention.

If a League Council member brought before that body a complaint regarding minorities, it would be referred to the Secretary General of the League who performed a preliminary investigation. In order to be receivable, the complaint had to have in view the protection of the minorities in accordance with the treaties; it could not be submitted in the form of a request for the severance of political relations between the minority and the state of which it formed a part; it could not be presented by an anonymous or "unauthenticated" source; it
could not contain "violent" language, and had to contain information which hitherto had been unknown or not previously submitted to the League. If a petition met these criteria, the Secretary General approved it; however, of the 750 petitions received by the League in a fifteen year period, the Secretary General declared over 400 non-receivable.74

If a petition was declared to be receivable, a Committee of Three—the acting President of the Council and two of his colleagues—determined if and/or when the matter would be placed on the Council agenda. The difficulties involved in even having the League Council hear a case were almost insurmountable. Too, unless satisfaction was given, the complaining minority was kept in ignorance of the action or lack of action taken on its complaint.75 Procedural difficulties were not all with which minorities had to contend. Many in the League viewed the Minority Treaties, as framed by the Allied

74Isaacs to ?, n.d., Nathan Isaacs Mss, Box 2786, American Jewish Archives.

75Administrative Committee Meeting, 6/26/29, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1929 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society.
Powers, as little better than the Versailles Diktat. Julian W. Mack reported to the Jewish Congress's Executive Committee that the Chief of the Minority Rights Division of the League believed that the Allied Powers dealt with the new and enlarged states as if they were the defeated nations. In view of this, he excused some of the excesses against Jews because these states "were told to sign the document and to accept it as it was, not as in the light of its history it might be interpreted."

The American Jewish Congress's peace delegation had done its work well. Yet, the almost prophetic words of Leo Wolfson best describe the situation that confronted American Jewry and their unfortunate brethren overseas: "We will be compelled to fight for every shred of rights that we get in every country. . . . No guaranties can make philo-Semites of the enemies of Israel. . . ."

76 Executive Committee Meeting, 10/26/24, Executive Committee Minutes, 1924 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 6, Executive Committee, 1916-1949, American Jewish Historical Society.

77 The Jewish Advocate (Boston), 1/23/19, p. 6.
Chapter III

Jewish Goals in American Context: The Movement Toward a Permanent Congress

The American Jewish Congress that sent a delegation to the Paris Peace Conference intended to reconvene to hear the report of its returned delegation, and then, the Congress's purposes accomplished, to disband.

Many Jewish Congress delegates, however, disagreed with the idea that the Congress was only a temporary, war-born institution, of no use once peace had been accomplished. Indeed, the idea of a permanent Jewish Congress with executive offices to represent and act for the Jewish people was broached at the Philadelphia Conference in December, 1918. Several organizations endorsed the idea of a permanent Jewish Congress. The Zionist

1 "Abstract of Minutes of Sessions of the American Jewish Congress," 12/16/18, Nearprint file, Miscellaneous Section, American Jewish Congress Mss, American Jewish Archives.
Organization of America, as early as March, 1919, passed a resolution favoring any practical movement that may arise subsequent to the final adjournment of the . . . Congress for the creation of a permanent, all-inclusive, popularly supported organization or agency, to speak and act for the common interests of the Jews of America.  

Agitation for a permanent Congress was centered in the large fraternal orders. A large number of members of the fraternal orders still had relatives in the former war-zones, and they feared that if the Jewish Congress disbanded, there would be little hope for their brethren overseas. The convention of the Ukrainian Jews in session at Philadelphia in 1919 adopted a resolution in favor of establishing the Jewish Congress as a permanent body; the Independent Order Brith Shalom declared its intention to cooperate in the establishment of the Congress as a permanent institution, as did the Congress Committee of Philadelphia. The Philadelphia Congress Committee communicated with Congress committees in other cities to ask their cooperation in making the American

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Jewish Congress a permanent institution.\(^3\)

The Congress, however, did not reconvene even to receive the report from the Peace Conference for more than a year after the Germans signed the Treaty of Versailles. The peace conferees decided to wait to give their report until all of the defeated nations had negotiated peace terms. Nevertheless, many Congress members vehemently protested the delay. With the members becoming increasingly restless, the Executive Committee of the Congress announced that the second session would convene on May 30, 1920. To raise funds to defray the costs of the Congress, the Executive Committee called a meeting with the object of forming a campaign committee. The appeal for funds and the attendant publicity given the campaign by the Yiddish press gave further stimulus to the idea of reorganizing the Congress on a permanent basis.\(^4\)

\(^3\)Richards to Mack, 3/2/20, 3/25/20, Julian W. Mack folder #3, Bernard G. Richards Mss, Jewish Theological Seminary, See also, The Jewish Advocate (Boston), 7/15/20, p. 7.

\(^4\)Richards to Cutler, 3/7/20, Harry Cutler folder, Bernard G. Richards Mss, Jewish Theological Seminary. The Jewish Exponent criticized the reconvening of the Congress; "But those who . . . are insistent in their desire to make the Congress the authoritative representative of American Jewry are persistent in their demands, although there is no need for a permanent Congress, and nothing for it to do which cannot be done as well by other permanent organizations now in existence." Quoted in The American Israelite, 5/6/20, p. 1.
Delegates to the Congress assembled in Philadelphia to hear Louis Marshall report on the activities of the Congress's peace delegation. No sooner had the welcoming speeches been made, the benediction recited, and the delegates seated, than Baruch Zuckerman of New York shouted that the delegation to the Paris Peace Conference "betrayed the Jewish race and misrepresented the Congress," by refusing to press for all that the Eastern European Jewish delegations had demanded. By action from the floor, passed by voice vote, Zuckerman's remarks were expunged from the record. Chaos on the floor reigned and a number of former soldiers from the Jewish Legion, who happened to be at the hall, were called to keep order.

Judge Julian Mack, President of the Congress, then asked Marshall, First Vice-President, to read his report. Before Marshall could step to the podium, Judge Gustave Hartman, Grand Master of the Independent Order Brith Abraham, jumped to his feet with a point of order. Hartman introduced a resolution calling upon the Congress to constitute itself a permanent body, in view of the "existing emergency in Jewish life throughout the world", i.e., with respect to the Jews

in Poland, Roumania, and the Soviet Union. Supporters of the resolution began to demonstrate in the aisles. Judge Mack, shouting to be heard over the din, ruled the motion out of order because the agenda called for the peace delegation's report and because the resolution violated the organic principle upon which the Congress had been founded, namely that the Congress was only to be temporary. Mack then threatened to resign if the resolution passed. Rabbi Stephen Wise took the podium and threatened to adjourn the Congress if order was not restored. Again, Jewish veterans of the Palestine campaign roamed the hall, pushing standing delegates back toward their seats. Several delegates attempted to fight back, but they were overpowered and carried out bodily from the meeting. After order was restored, Mack's position was sustained, 142 to 66. Marshall then read his report, and the Congress adjourned sine die.

Though the Jewish Congress was adjourned sine die, many delegates wished to see the Congress as a permanent institution. On May 31, 1920, a number of Congress delegates

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6 The American Insraelite, 6/3/20, p. 3; American Jewish Congress, Proceedings of Adjourned Session of American Jewish Congress, p. 11.

7 American Jewish Congress, Proceedings of Adjourned Session of American Jewish Congress, p. 11; The Jewish Advocate, (Boston), 6/30/20, pp. 1, 8.
met to constitute the Congress a permanent organization. Nathan Straus was elected President of a Provisional Organization for the Creation of an American Jewish Congress; seventy-one members were chosen to arrange for the establishment of the Congress. This Executive Committee was empowered to add twenty members and to create, subject to its control and authority, from its membership, an Administrative Committee of nine.

Though the delegates to the May 31 meeting seemed the vanguard of a powerful movement, their support was minimal. American Jews, like their fellow-citizens, were suffering from a post-war "spiritual slump." The enthusiasm that had sustained the Congress movement during the war subsided. Exhausted by the war effort, the call for democracy within American Jewry failed to arouse the masses as it once had. Many American Jews, like their non-Jewish counterparts, tried to forget the anguish and torment of the past three years, and only wished to return to what they perceived as the "peaceful


9The Jewish Advocate (Boston), 7/22/20, p. 5; The American Israelite, 7/8/20, p. 4. See also, "The Case of the Jewish People: Addresses Delivered Before the American Jewish Congress by Dr. Stephen S. Wise," passim, American Jewish Congress Mss, Zionist Archives and Library.
days" of pre-war America. A return "to normalcy" was the watchword of most Americans. The leaders of the new Executive Committee and Administrative Committee were considerably dismayed at the uphill task they faced. Wise wrote Richards that he was not yet convinced that "we have . . . the elements of a Congress. We may have a Congress in time, but it is not yet at hand." He disparaged the groups that were supporting the movement for a permanent Congress. The Zionists were members only in name, and the delegates from the fraternal orders were creatures . . . who gave a fine exhibition of what their real purpose is—the purpose of magnifying themselves and themselves alone, creatures who have to real desire to serve the Jewish people but only to magnify themselves. . . .

He spoke of the paucity of financial support for a Congress and of the almost total lack even of lip-service to such an organization. "I have come to feel," said Wise, that I would not want any Congress unless at the election we should have at least as many voters as we had three years ago.

Richards felt less forlorn than Wise about the new organization's prospects. He admitted that the fraternal

10 Wise to Richards, 6/13/20, Stephen S. Wise folder #7, Barnard G. Richards Mss, Jewish Theological Seminary.

11 Ibid.
orders were practically useless, that they owed their prominence in the Congress movement to their large memberships.

We always had to use these Orders as stalking horses in the early stages of the activities. With their large numbers, they are always ready and handy for display. Intelligence and political education does not reside within them and their leadership has, with few exceptions, been nondescript. . . .

He thought that the fraternal orders were losing their strength and prestige and that in the near future other Jewish groups would eclipse and submerge them. Richards believed that the Congress would find advocates and supporters among the more "cultivated Jewish elements outside of the Orders in New York and especially in the interior of the country . . ." and that new forces in Jewry would rally to the Congress banner, though he did not specify who might constitute these new forces.

Richards' optimism was perhaps commendable but certainly unfounded. The new forces in which he placed such hope were non-existent. Wise travelled the country campaigning for a Congress; he aroused little enthusiasm for it, but

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13 Ibid. See also, Richards to Sokolow, 11/24/20, Nahum Sokolow folder #2, Bernard G. Richards Mss, Jewish Theological Seminary.
at least returned with a realistic estimate of the extent of public indifference.

I have been through the South and am not altogether encouraged. There is a great deal of Jewish goodwill, but an abysmal amount of ignorance and lack of understanding of Jewish problems and the possibility of their solution. There is an immense amount of educational work to be done before the rest of the country knows what we want and ought to do.\textsuperscript{14}

The response in the Middle West was identical.

Nathan Kaplan, a Congress organizer in Chicago, had no success with Chicago Jews:

I have been unable to secure any assistance or cooperation from anyone in interesting the Jewish public here in the Congress. . . . At a Zionist gathering . . . I . . . spoke for the Congress and to ask for some expression of sentiment in regard to it. . . . The response was nil. A cold silence prevailed and not a single person responded with the slightest interest.\textsuperscript{15}

In Cleveland, much the same situation existed. Aaron Garber, a Congress advocate, wrote Joseph Barondess that the Jewish Congress movement "is absolutely dead in Cleveland." He did not know what could restore it to life.\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{14}Wise to Richards, 2/19/20, in possession of Mrs. Ruth Richards Eisenstein, New York City, Archives of the Jewish Information Bureau.

\textsuperscript{15}Kaplan to Richards, 5/13/21, Nathan Kaplan folder, Bernard G. Richards MSS, Jewish Theological Seminary.

\textsuperscript{16}Garber to Barondess, 7/21/24, Joseph Bardondess folder, Bernard G. Richards MSS, Jewish Theological Seminary.
Cincinnati Jewry, a center of Reform, opposed the resurrection of the Congress. The American Israelite frequently published a guest editorial ridiculing the resurrection of the Jewish Congress. The Jewish Times opined:

There isn't the slightest reason in this world for such a Congress except to help promote the ideas of certain Jews whose ideas could very well be kept within the heads that contain them.17

The Jewish Chronicle editorialized that

the Congress will be in form practically a replica of the American Jewish Committee, and that we shall have a duplication of effort and a consequent impairment of efficiency, 'the Jewish way of doing things.' We have opposed this idea of a Jewish Congress from its very inception. We don't need Jewish Congresses.18

Leo Wise, a leader of Cincinnati Jewry, proposed a plan for a general committee comprising the heads of all Jewish organizations "that amount to anything" (meaning the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the Union of Orthodox Congregations, the United Synagogues of America, the Association of Orthodox Rabbis, the Independent Order Brith Abraham, and the Independent Order of B'nai Brith) to elect a small committee that would speak for the Jews of America when necessary.19 To be

19Leo Wise to Wise, 12/16/20, Correspondence--American Jewish Congress folder #1, Bernard G. Richards Mss, Jewish Theological Seminary.
sure, Wise's plan was nothing more than a continuation of past practice; Rabbi Stephen Wise rejected the proposal as undemocratic and a reversion to the "shtadlan" philosophy so prevalent among the assimilationists. ²⁰

Despite popular apathy and continued active opposition of the assimilationists, and despite the Provisional Committee's total lack of political organization, its leaders called for a preliminary conference to plan for a permanent American Jewish Congress; about 200 delegates from national Jewish organizations assembled in late March, 1921, at the Hotel Astor in New York. A majority of these voted that officers of the permanent Congress should be elected by direct suffrage of the Jewish community. Some of the delegates recognized the difficulties involved in such an election. Richards thought direct suffrage an impractical and extremist *reductio ad absurdum* of the democratic idea. He thought the plan to eliminate special representation from national organizations extremely unfortunate and hoped it would be changed. ²¹

²⁰Ibid., Wise to Leo Wise, 12/??/20.
At a meeting of the Administrative Committee, several of the moderate members pointed out the difficulty of holding an election based on universal suffrage for an organization with so little public support. Morris Rothenberg, Chairman of the Executive Committee, stated that if the extremist delegates to the preliminary conference had accepted a modified plan by which the officers of the permanent Congress would be elected by delegates chosen at conventions of organizations, a permanent Congress would already have been functioning. Richards then suggested that the Executive Committee use its power to modify the mode of election, thus ensuring that some form of a Congress would be established.22

A committee was appointed to seek alternative methods to direct suffrage. Louis Lipsky stated that since it was not practical to elect officers of a Congress by direct individual voting, he proposed a new mode of elections: conventions of delegates from Jewish organizations in every city with a Jewish population of 1,000 or more would nominate and elect from amongst themselves delegates to the American Jewish Congress in accordance with the plan of allotment used

22 Richards to Wise, 10/9/21, Correspondence--American Jewish Congress folder #1, Bernard G. Richards Mss, Jewish Theological Seminary.
in the election of June, 1917. Every Jewish organization had a right to send at least one delegate to its convention.23

Lipsky urged that now, more than ever, the Congress was needed to speak for American Jewry, and since neither the sentiment nor enthusiasm of the war years now existed, it was foolish to think in terms of direct suffrage. He further argued that since the Provisional Committee had no money to campaign for a Jewish Congress, the only way "we can reach the Jewish masses" was through the modified proposal. Lastly, he cautioned that further delay in holding elections would dissipate what public support had been achieved and jeopardize the creation of the Jewish Congress. His modified plan was adopted.24

The Congress met in May, 1922, in Philadelphia. In his keynote speech Rabbi Stephen S. Wise declared that the function of the organization was to

speak and to act on behalf of Jews in all matters affecting the welfare of Jews as Jews. . . . No question which is not strictly Jewish may come before the American Jewish Congress.25

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23"Referendum on Plan of Elections," 11/7/21, American Jewish Congress folder, William Edlin Mss, YIVO; The Index, volume 1, #1, (March, 1922), passim.

24Ibid. See also, Bernard G. Richards Transcript, p. 107, Columbia University Oral History Project.

25"The Case of the Jewish People: Addresses Delivered before the American Jewish Congress by Dr. Stephen S. Wise,"
He stated that the uninterrupted vigilance of such a Congress would *ipso facto* diminish the number of occasions on which it would need to act. The Jews of Roumania, for example, would have been in far better ease had such an organization existed to require that the Treaty of Berlin of 1878 be observed.

Indeed, American Jewish Congress advocates had always felt the need for a permanent institution, although they compromised on this issue in 1916 in order to win the support of a majority of the American Jewish Committee.26

We need . . . a permanent organization in order to render permanent through constant vigilant work whatever equal rights the nations may give us . . . . The need here is the same as in all political societies: that of making the laws on the books, law in action. Aside from conserving rights granted to us we must have a permanent organization in order to keep up the struggle to remove outstanding Jewish disabilities that will remain. . . .27

Proponents of the Congress never argued that its mere existence would achieve miracles. Brandeis stated: "As a people we must achieve success by . . . persistent effort. . . ."28

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26 Richards to Cameron, 8/29/28, in possession of Mrs. Ruth Richards Eisenstein, New York City, Archives of the Jewish Information Bureau.

27 *The Jewish Advocate* (Boston), 7/27/16, p. 8.

28 *The Jewish Advocate* (Boston), 1/20/16, p. 1.
And Rabbi Wise warned that the Congress would be needed for a long time: "Patience, patience and patience are needed, and more than patience. Patience in hope must be matched by energy in action." Jacob Schiff, no advocate of the Congress, unwittingly summed up its purpose:

It is better all around to take preventative [sic] measures than to have later on, when the threatened mischief has been done, to endeavor to take curative action."

Post-war leaders of the American Jewish Congress were also involved in other organizations and areas of endeavor in which they were influenced by people whose theories of society and politics transcended differences in religion. The originators of the idea of a Jewish Congress were men ill acquainted with American society, but they had soon lost their authority and leadership in the Congress movement to individuals better acquainted with American society and thought and able to adapt their knowledge to Jewish life. The agitation for a permanent Jewish Congress must be seen in a wider light than heretofore assumed.

29 "The Case of the Jewish People: Addresses Delivered before the American Jewish Congress by Dr. Stephen S. Wise," pp. 6-7, American Jewish Congress Mss, Zionist Archives and Library.

30 Quoted in Naomi Cohen, Not Free to Desist, p. 130.
The acknowledged leader of the American Jewish Congress was Rabbi Stephen Samuel Wise. He was born in 1874, in Budapest, Hungary, but came to the United States with his parents when he was one year old. He studied for the rabbinate, and, once ordained, his sermons on political and social justice quickly gained him national attention. Wise realized that American society was in the process of rapid and radical transformation from a rural, agricultural milieu to a dynamic, urban, and industrial state. His response to these changes was that of a Wilsonian progressive.  

Together with such progressive leaders and champions of the poor, oppressed, and helpless as Florence Kelley, Lillian Wald, Samuel McCune Lindsay, and Jane Addams, Wise recognized that the most commendable legislation could not change people's lives unless there existed a means to enforce it; laws were but a guideline for the management of a complex society; institutions were the indispensable means.  

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Acting on these convictions, Wise was instrumental in compelling the enactment in Oregon of a child-labor law that established a Child-Labor Commission of which he was appointed a member. His service on this commission and his efforts to establish a Commission on Industrial Relations after the Los Angeles Times building was bombed by alleged labor radicals led him to conclude that American society would have to be regulated to a much greater extent than heretofore. He helped persuade President Taft to appoint the Commission on Industrial Relations—the first formal recognition by the Federal government that the field of industrial relations contained present and potential dangers to the American social fabric and was a legitimate concern of government. He thought the synagogue's proper place was in the vanguard of the fight for social justice, and his report to the Central Conference of American Rabbis, on "The Synagogue and Industrial Relations," urged the endorsement of such proposals as the minimum wage, industrial insurance, workmen's compensation, old-age pensions,

the prohibition of child-labor, and the right to organize and have unions. When the Conference refused its support, he excoriated his fellow delegates fiercely.

Observation and experience led Wise to discard nineteenth century theories of society as the embodiment of apparently disparate elements and interests which inevitably interacted to produce social harmony and the greatest good for the greatest number. Wise believed that the change in scale, nature, and complexity of American society had rendered private charity obsolete as an instrument of social justice. American life had become much too complicated for small-scale, piece-meal, hap-hazard attempts to remedy injustice or catastrophe. He rejected the idea of single causation and its corollary conception of what a society should do to eradicate evil. He accepted that the evils of society should not be exorcised from the body politic by a quick, neat, and not too painful legislative or moral operation and concluded that only the national government had the resources to cope with an ever-changing, heterogeneous society, composed of many conflicting factions, in a specialized, continuous,

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\textsuperscript{34}The American Israelite, 7/9/14, p. 3.
and adaptive fashion. In other words, not only institutions, but institutions on a national scale, were required to cope with modern life. Corruption and bureaucratic elitism or insularity would be prevented by the watchfulness of an informed and vigilant citizenry; "I know the price of decent . . . government is eternal vigilence . . .;" he once remarked.35

Wise, like Herbert Croly, tried to adapt and combine Jeffersonian and Hamiltonian theories of society and government to meet the problems of his day. If Jeffersonian democracy could employ the order and efficiency of Hamiltonian Federalism, the American tradition and experience could be preserved. The method that he saw resulting from a Jeffersonian-Hamiltonian synthesis was planning. "The disease, the crime, the tragedy have come to pass because of planlessness. Men are planless because they are purposeless," he once wrote.36 He advocated the complete and planned revision of the technological side of industry so as to avert the disasters of an unplanned and free market society. He urged that there be

35 Stephen S. Wise, Challenging Years, p. 18.
36 Ibid., pp. 115-117.
"scientific engineering of the human intake of industry as well as in the regulation of output. . . ."37 Wise's philosophy was almost identical to that of the conscience of the Progressive movement, Walter Lippmann. Mr. Lippmann thought that the only way to avoid the "thoughtlessness and drift of . . . national life" was to recognize the almost limitless resources of the federal government.38 Only then, Lippmann stated, would the United States Congress enact "comprehensive, nation-wide systems of health, accident, maternity, old-age and unemployment insurance."39 Indeed, Lippmann eloquently summed up Stephen Wise's observation:

We can no longer treat life as something that has trickled down to us. We have to deal with it deliberately, devise its social organization, alter its tools, formulate its method, educate and control it. . . . Civilization . . . is just this constant effort to introduce plan where there has been clash, and purpose into the jungles of disordered growth. . . . You cannot throw yourself blindly against the unknown facts and trust to luck that the result will be satisfactory. . . .40

37Ibid.


39Ibid.

Wise saw no conflict between his reliance on planning and the regulation of the planners. True democracy meant public awareness and control; political bossism, corruption, waste, mismanagement, and inefficiency were not to be part of the American dream. Indeed, planning ensured the continuation of democracy, as Carl Schurz succinctly stated:

As the functions of government grow in extent, importance and complexity, the necessity grows of their being administered not only with honesty, but also with trained ability and knowledge; and that in the same measure as this necessity is disregarded in a democratic government, the success and stability of democratic institutions will be impaired.41

The more democratic the government, the more efficient it would be in responding to the needs of the people. To Wise, planning involved the separation of means from ends; the planners constructed models of means and predicted the results, direct and indirect, of alternative choices, but the people retained democratic control over the choice of ends.

Wise's conception of American-Jewish society corresponded closely to his conception of American society. He viewed the American Jewish Congress as the institution

which would bring order out of chaos in the American-Jewish community. The bossism so characteristic of American politics he equated with the autocrats and oligarchs of the American Jewish Committee; democracy in the ranks of American Jewry was a prerequisite for the efficient handling of Jewish concerns and wants. "In this end," he declared, "it is the bounden duty of Jews to order their affairs in a truly democratic fashion." 42

The planners within the Congress would always be responsible to the Jewish body politic. The essential nature of planning was such that it released human energies and broadened the range of human choices; in this way it increased freedom—the freedom of Jews no less than the freedom of other people. Planning the needs of American Jewry was not the same as dictating its choices from above; rather, it was a cooperative enterprise characterized by frank and open discussion and truly expressive of the Jewish community's true needs and priorities. As long as planning remained subject to public scrutiny, the planners could neither escape accountability nor use their positions as personal power bases. Of those who

rejected the Jewish Congress because it would serve as a forum for public discussion, Wise said:

Two groups or kinds of Jews choose or have chosen to stay outside of the American Jewish Congress. There are those who deem themselves too good to be bracketed with any other Jew, and there are those who think ordinary Jews are not good enough and too inferior to take counsel with them. They first place themselves beyond and outside of all Jewry.43

Perhaps the one man who knew more than anyone about the Congress and its daily activities was Bernard Gershon Richards, Executive Secretary of the American Jewish Congress. Born in Keidan, Lithuania, Richards emigrated to the United States as a young child. He attended the public schools of New York and later became a reporter and columnist for a Boston newspaper. An avowed Zionist, he quickly aligned himself with Louis Brandeis, and was one of the most ardent advocates of the Congress. Yet, unlike Brandeis, Richards did not view the Jewish Congress as the vehicle by which the Zionist Organization of America would become the all-encompassing Jewish organization in the United States. Rather, he believed that the Congress would serve as a clearing-house for the exchange of ideas; not a Sanhedrin of the

Western world, but an institution which would be a structure for the orderly and effective expression and advancement of Jewish interests.

Richards believed that the many organizations in Jewish life—each devoted to its own continued existence—prevented American Jews from effectively dealing with their problems. The fraternal lodges were narrow and self-seeking in their outlook, and their conception of the "public interest" almost always corresponded to their conception of their own best interests. Moreover, each organization jealously guarded its independence and was not willing to surrender one iota of its autonomy. Thus, when Richards suggested that a Jewish forum be created for the discussion of vital Jewish questions, the idea was universally rejected by organizational leaders.

The Executive Secretary of the Congress reasoned that in view of the many competing organizations in Jewish life, there should be some central organization with authority to determine the "proper balance and proportion" amongst them. This central authority would apportion tasks to each constituent group in order to avoid conflict and duplication of effort—in other words, to increase efficiency. Such an authority would eliminate
competition for the contributions that are the lifeblood of voluntary organizations, thereby eliminating hyperbole and distortion from their public pronouncements and discussions. This in turn would also promote democracy in Jewish life, for policies and programs could now be reasonably and soberly judged by the Jewish populace. The central organization with authority to accomplish all this would be, naturally, the American Jewish Congress.

Richards saw the dangers of centralized and exclusive leadership, unchecked by the people for whose welfare they supposedly were to administer.

We will never have sufficient and more competent workers unless we will invite more . . . people to voice their opinions, to consider the questions. . . . That is the central idea of the American Jewish Congress, and it is one of the fundamental motives of democracy. 44

In addition, Richards thought that existing Jewish organizations all defined their objectives in negative and somewhat anachronistic terms. They conceived of themselves as

44"Democratic Control versus Centralized Leadership," in possession of Mrs. Ruth Richards Eisenstein, New York City, Archives of the Jewish Information Bureau. Richards also stated: "There is above all sadly lacking a medium for crystallizing Jewish public opinion in such a way that definite policies would be worked out for the whole of Jewry, and the different national, fraternal, central, and other leading Jewish organizations would be enabled to have a better understanding . . . and to coordinate . . . activities." See Ibid., Richards to ?, 2/10/20.
guardians of Jewish rights and defenders of the status quo. Though he granted that their perceptions were not without foundation in reality, Richards felt that they failed even to conceive of the possibility of a "positive" program for American Jewry. He saw the Jewish Congress as the institution that could reverse this negative trend in Jewish life and envision an educational, cultural, and social program which would instill in American Jewry a positive self-image. In other words, trying to justify and protect their presence in alien environments was not enough; it was time to convince their fellow-Americans of Jewish worth.  

Louis Brandeis, another leader in the Congress movement, was born in Louisville, Kentucky in 1856, to Jewish immigrant parents from Bohemia. After graduating from Harvard Law School, Brandeis amassed a personal fortune as a corporation lawyer, but toward the end of the nineteenth century, he turned his energies to the progressive movement and became known as the "people's lawyer." He led and won the fight in Boston for cheaper gas; he drafted the Massachusetts law for combining savings and insurance banks. His causes included the successful battle in

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45Ibid.
Oregon and Illinois to limit the work-day for employed women to ten hours. His greatest victory was the Interstate Commerce Commission's refusal to sanction freight rate increases for western and southern railroads. Brandeis argued that the railroad industry could save as much as $1,000,000 a day by applying the principles of scientific management to their property and personnel.

Brandeis became interested in Zionism prior to World War I and in the Jewish Congress just after war erupted. His intense desire to see democracy permeate the ranks of American Jewry paralleled Stephen Wise's conception of democracy in an industrial state. Brandeis was the architect of Woodrow Wilson's "New Freedom." Brandeis's blueprint revolved around specific measures to regulate competition.

To Brandeis, the "New Freedom" meant the restoration of a truly free competitive economy in which everyone had an equal chance to succeed in business endeavors, limited only by his ability and diligence. He envisioned the federal government's role as that of being the protector of business competition, not the regulator of monopoly.46

American economy had become one where small groups of men directed the affairs of great corporations whose decisions, according to Woodrow Wilson, were "autocratic." The resources, the choices, and the opportunities were vested in these oligarchs. The decision-making process in American business had to encompass a wider spectrum of people and thought.

The issue of the American Jewish Congress has been described by historians of American-Jewish affairs as being an exclusively Jewish conflict between competing factions within the Jewish community as to which one would speak for American Jewry. Though historians of American Jewry address the question of power relationships within the Jewish community, they do not adequately explain why the issue of an "American Jewish Congress" caused such bitterness, animosity, and agony within the American-Jewish community. The issue of the American Jewish Congress reflects events and philosophies that affected all of America, and were in no way peculiar to Jewish life or the Congress.

Naomi Cohen in her book, *Not Free to Desist: The American Jewish Committee, 1906-1966*, states that the Congress filled "deep needs" of the American Jewish community. She argues that Jews as individuals could identify "more closely with the fight for Jewish freedom"; that since Jewish sacrifices were as great as that of any other segment of society, the Jews had a right to demand equality for their brethren at the Peace Conference; and that "democracy" became a moral issue.\(^48\) Cohen, however, fails to explain why "democracy" became "a moral issue." Indeed, the issue of "democracy" within the ranks of American Jewry transcended morality; democracy, as the advocates of the Jewish Congress defined the term, was the *sine qua non* of the Jewish experience in twentieth century America. Democracy within the ranks of American Jewry meant that the Jews of America had been truly able to identify with and practice the American ideal.\(^49\)

\(^48\) Naomi Cohen, *Not Free to Desist*, pp. 92-93.

\(^49\) Speech delivered by Bernard G. Richards to Independent Order Brith Shalom, June, 1918, in possession of Mrs. Ruth Richards Eisenstein, New York City, Archives of the Jewish Information Bureau.
Yonathan Shapiro states that the Congress movement was an attempt by Zionists in the United States to become the spokesman for American Jewry. He claims that the Zionists used the Congress issue as the vehicle for their rise to power. Melvin Urofsky agrees with Shapiro's analysis to the extent that the Zionist Organization of America did attempt to ride the Congress issue to power; however, he implies that the Zionists were in actuality digging their own grave over the Congress issue. He reasons that the American Jewish Congress would have become the pre-eminent spokesman for American Jewry when it had returned from the Paris Peace Conference, and that the Zionists would have become an organization ancillary to the Congress. The Congress would have been the guardian of Jewish rights in the Diaspora, not the Z.O.A.; the respect and reverence of the Jewish public for the Congress after the war would have been so great that the Zionists


51Melvin Urofsky, American Zionism from Herzl to the Holocaust, (Garden City, 1975), pp. 150ff.

52Ibid., pp. 180-181.
would have been cast as a one-issue organization.\textsuperscript{53}

Oscar Janowsky\textsuperscript{54} claims that the issue of nationalism was the basic question upon which the proponents and opponents of a congress divided. . . . Behind all [the] maneuvers lurked Jewish nationalism or the characterization of the Jews as a national group. The real issues were Zionism, Jewish national rights and the question of a permanent Jewish Congress.\textsuperscript{55}

Janowsky dismisses the issue of "democracy" in American Jewry as an off-shoot of excessive rhetoric and hyperbole.\textsuperscript{56} This it definitely was not. Democracy, as Arthur Goren rightly states, meant to those advocating an American Jewish Congress "the marshaling of the people's best talents."\textsuperscript{57} Indeed, the question of the American Jewish Congress did involve which group was to speak for American Jewry; but an analysis of the election of June, 1917 shows that many anti-Zionists and anti-nationalists were elected; to wit: Henry Morgenthau, Louis Marshall, Jacob Schiff,

\begin{itemize}
  \item\textsuperscript{53}Ibid.
  \item\textsuperscript{54}Oscar Janowsky, Jews and Minority Rights, 1898-1918, (New York, 1933), passim.
  \item\textsuperscript{55}Ibid., p. 172.
  \item\textsuperscript{56}Ibid.
\end{itemize}
and Cyrus Adler. Proponents of the Congress used the vehicle of democracy to ensure the fact that their voices would be heard in the decision-making process. It was not for them a cynically used slogan.

Brandeis in particular conceived of Jewish affairs *sub specie mundi*; his testimony before Congressional committees on non-Jewish matters and his speeches delivered before non-Jewish groups reveal the same political and social philosophy as his utterances on Jewish affairs. Indeed, Brandeis conceived of Jewish affairs in relation to world affairs, and the American Jewish Congress in particular was to Brandeis an outgrowth of progressive thought.

Testifying before the United States Commission on Industrial Relations under the chairmanship of Senator Thomas J. Walsh of Montana, Brandeis outlined the reasons for industrial unrest and proposed solutions to alleviate the situation:

But we have the situation of an employer so potent, so well organized, with such concentrated forces and with such extraordinary powers of reserve ... that the relatively loosely organized masses ... are unable to cope with the situation. ... Such contests ... lead to absolutism. The result ... may be to develop a benevolent absolutism, but it is absolutism all the same. ...

The social justice for which we are striving is an incident of our democracy, not the main end. It is rather the result of democracy ... but it rests upon
democracy, which implies the rule by people. And therefore the end for which we must strive is the attainment of rule by the people, and that involves industrial democracy as well as political democracy. That means that the problem of a trade should be no longer the problems of the employer alone. The problems of his business, and it is not the employer's business alone, are the problems of all in it.

There must be a division . . . of responsibilities. The employees must have the opportunity to participate in the decisions as to what shall be their condition and how the business shall be run.

It is in the . . . absolutism that you will find the fundamental cause of prevailing unrest; no matter how it may be improved . . ., unless we eradicate that fundamental difficulty, unrest will not only continue, but . . . will grow worse. . . .

Brandeis on industrial democracy sounds very similar to Brandeis on democracy in American Jewry. When the reader substitutes "the American Jewish Committee" for the word "employer," the above quotation becomes relevant in explaining the true nature of the Jewish Congress movement as Brandeis conceived it.

The early debate between Brandeis and Cyrus Adler over whether there was to be a "conference" or "congress" reflects Brandeis's attitude toward Jewish affairs. Writing to Adler in July, 1915, the future Supreme Court

justice stated that democracy demands that those representatives of the Jews of America . . . shall have some voice in determining the conditions under which the conference shall convene. . . . Your Committee's conference plan is not cooperative. Cooperation demands that those who are to work together shall all have the opportunity, as well as the responsibility, of sharing in important fundamental determinations.59

Brandeis did not consider the Congress an end in itself. It is an incident of the organization of the Jewish people. . . . It is to be the effective instrument of organized Jewry of America. . . . Such being the function of the Congress, it must be clear that there can be no substitute for it.60

The Jewish Congress would be the vehicle that would deal with the problems of Jewry as they arose; its permanence would make possible continuity and long-range perspective, and its democratic philosophy and structure would make possible maximum participation by the general Jewish population.

Much of the philosophy behind the creation of the American Jewish Congress can be traced to the American Jewish Congress Organization Committee, To the Jews of America: The Jewish Congress versus the American Jewish Committee: A Complete Statement with the Correspondence between Louis D. Brandeis and Cyrus Adler, (New York, 1915), passim.

progressive movement. Jewry no longer could or wished to live by "backstairs diplomacy," for the political form of the world in which the Jews lived had changed from personal government by a few gentlemen power brokers to an ever-expanding bureaucracy. Accordingly, the fulfillment of Jewish aspirations must come through organization:

Organize . . . so that our resources may become known and be made available. . . . Organization, thorough and complete, can alone develop . . . the necessary support.61

The Congress movement arrived at a critical hour which at last finds the people resolved to rise to the dignity of self-mastery and self-determination. The beginning of the end of the old regime of . . . autocratic of the few over the affairs of the multitudes is at hand.62

61 The Jewish Advocate (Boston), 6/18/15, p. 8.

62 "The Case of the Jewish People: Addresses Delivered before the American Jewish Congress by Dr. Stephen S. Wise," p. 18, American Jewish Congress Mss, Zionist Archives and Library.
The aftermath of World War I left the Jews of Eastern Europe and Russia in a pitiful state. Though civil, political, and religious freedoms had been granted the Jews of these countries by the Paris Peace Conference, their economic condition was extremely grave. Leaders of the American Jewish Congress recognized the plight of these people and sought ways to help in the reconstruction of their co-religionists in Eastern Europe. The ultimate aim of the Congress was to establish "a representative and adequate relief agency" in which all other relief agencies were to be merged. To be sure, this relief organization was to be under the supervision and control of the American Jewish Congress.  

1Lipsky to The Administrative Committee of the American Jewish Congress, 8/7/19, in possession of Mrs. Ruth Richards Eisenstein, New York City, Archives of the Jewish Information Bureau.
Louis Lipsky, a leader of the Jewish Congress and a power in the Zionist Organization of America, reasoned that if the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee was given a free hand to supervise relief activities, and if the Joint Committee was to carry on, as was expected, relief operations in Palestine, then the Congress would find "itself face to face with an independent operating committee in Palestine which in the course of time is bound to become . . . antagonistic to the Zionist plans. . . ." Moreover, since the Joint Committee was actually a "holding company" which acted on behalf of three separate collecting agencies and was controlled by an intricate system of interlocking directorates, the Congress would have little, if any, power to influence the decision-making process. The Jewish Congress was unable to dislodge the leadership of the Joint Distribution Committee because it could not effectively charge them with incompetence; indeed, the J.D.C. did yeoman work in aiding the homeless, economically ruined, and alienated Jewish populations in Eastern Europe.

Ibid.
To counter the influence of the Joint Distribution Committee, Leon Motzkin, in association with the American Jewish Congress, organized the Welt Helfs Committat (World Relief Committee). The goal of the Committee was to give aid to Jews who had not been reached by other relief organizations, with particular attention to be given to the educational and cultural needs of scholars, teachers and communal workers in Eastern Europe. The Committee was hindered in its work because of insufficient funds. Another attempt to aid in the rehabilitation of East European Jewry was made in early 1920 by the Committee of Jewish Delegations, which had continued its existence after the Paris Peace Conference, to safeguard Jewish rights in Eastern Europe. The leaders of this organization, representing East European Jewish communities, proposed a Council of Jewish Delegations, which among other duties, would assist in the coordination of the relief work and substantially aid in the rehabilitation of Jewish sources of livelihood destroyed by the war and the resultant political

upheaval. This attempt also failed because of a lack of sufficient funds to carry on the necessary work.

While the rehabilitation of East European Jewry received the attention of the Jewish Congress, the more immediate problem of the Congress was to ensure the survival of the Jews in the former war zones. Jews in Roumania, Poland, and the Soviet Union faced annihilation in the inter-war period.

Roumania's reluctance to sign the peace covenants was signalled by an anti-Semitic press campaign, and the government wished to continue its reactionary policy toward the Jews and other minorities. Thus, an electoral law for Bukovina was altered so as to disenfranchise more than 40,000 Jews, and the Roumanian government threatened the Jews with expulsion under the pretext that they were foreigners. In Transylvania, a proclamation issued by

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5 In actuality, Jews had lived in Roumania for many years and even had suffrage rights under the old monarchy. See American Committee on the Rights of Religious Minorities, Roumania: Ten Years Later, (Boston, 1928), pp. 34, 40-47.
the Government promised proportional representation for institutional minorities; however, an electoral law was enacted, despite official protests from some Roumanian legislators, which forbade proportional representation not only for minorities, but also for political parties.6

The economic situation of Roumanian Jewry was "most threatening." The quasi-official newspaper of Prime Minister Bratiano's government, Le Vittoral, urged Roumanian citizens not to sell anything to foreigners (translated Jews). Le Glas de la Bukovine (The Knell of Bukovina) exhorted peasants to form themselves into a society to open "Roumanian" shops in every village and to buy only from Roumanian citizens.

Only the Roumanians should benefit by Roumanian labor; as to the Jews, we ought to give them that which they brought to this country some dozens of years ago; that is--nothing. This will make them leave Bukovina.

Continued anti-Semitic agitation led to the promulgation in 1923 of an Expulsion Law, whereby the Jews of Roumania were to be expelled from the country. The Jewish

7Ibid.
Congress could do nothing about the promulgation of the law; leaders of the Jewish Congress believed, moreover, that a viable Jewish community in that country was not a realistic option in view of the historical, political and social antipathy shown their co-religionists by the native population. Thus, Wise and the Jewish Congress Administrative Committee concentrated their efforts in cooperating with the Jewish Colonization Association to make the expulsion as painless as possible. Wise and Jewish Congress leaders learned from Roumanian-Jewish refugees of the terrible situation facing the Jewish community in that country. Negotiations involving the Jewish Congress, the Jewish Colonization Association, the Joint Distribution Committee, and the Joint Foreign Committee (representing British Jewry), and representatives of the Roumanian Government ensued. The Jewish organizations persuaded the Roumanian Government to extend the expulsion deadline; in return, the Jewish representatives agreed to evacuate all of the refugees by July, 1925.8

8Administrative Committee Meeting, 4/28/24, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1924 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box #2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society.
In spite of the pledge made by the Jewish organizations, the Jews of Roumania continued to be harassed, attacked and beaten by organized anti-Semitic gangs. The Committee of Jewish Delegations notified the Jewish Congress of continued violations of the minority rights clauses by Roumania. Physical abuse of Jews occurred in the provinces even though Roumanian Foreign Minister Ducă assured Lucien Wolf of the Joint Foreign Committee that "perfect order reigns in Roumania... No cause for anxiety." The Jewish Congress Administrative Committee debated its response. A suggestion made by representatives of the American Committee on the Rights of Religious Minorities to ask the United States Government to make representations to the League of Nations was rejected because the United States was not a member of that body, and despite precedents to the contrary, it was believed that the State Department would be most reluctant to intervene in a foreign country's internal affairs. After considerable discussion, it was decided that Rabbi Wise would cable Roumanian officials in Washington to protest the outrages. Count Bibesco, Roumanian Ambassador to the United

\[9\]Ibid.
States, replied:

Nobody has the welfare of the Jews of Roumania more at heart than myself and I must draw your attention that many of the reports . . . are pure fabrication. . . . These inaccurate statements hurt the interests they mean to serve. . . .¹⁰

Unable to secure any redress of grievances from Roumanian officialdom, the Jewish Congress decided that some other tactic be employed. Dr. Louis Cornish, Secretary of the American Unitarian Association, suggested to Bernard Richards that the American Committee on the Rights of Religious Minorities send a fact-finding commission to Roumania with reference to the Jewish question. Manley O. Hudson believed that the Roumanians would cease their anti-Semitic activities if they found out that a fact-finding commission was even contemplated.¹¹ Wise, having returned from a European vacation, endorsed the idea. He learned from Marvin Lowenthal, a Jewish Congress representative in

¹⁰Administrative Committee Meeting, 7/17/24, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1924 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box #2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society.

¹¹Administrative Committee Meeting, 6/10/25, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1925 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box #2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society; Wise to Richards, n.d., Stephen S. Wise folder #7, Bernard G. Richards Mss, Jewish Theological Seminary.
Europe, that the Roumanian Government was extremely sensitive to "foreign criticism and to unfavorable publicity abroad." Moreover, Lowenthal reported that the Roumanian Jews were being indemnified by their government for the destruction of Jewish public property; it did so only after William Fildermann, leader of Roumanian Jewry, threatened to appeal to the Jews of the world for funds to cover their losses. Roumania's decision to quietly indemnify its Jewish population was based on the fact that any adverse publicity at that time might have jeopardized her chances to negotiate a currency stabilization loan in the United States. Thus, Wise and the Administrative Committee decided upon a commission to Roumania.12

American-Roumanian relations at the time were very strained. Roumania had passed a mining bill which contained "antagonistic provisions objectionable to foreign oil interests [Standard Oil of New Jersey through its wholly owned subsidiary Roman-Americana]."13 The American

12Administrative Committee Meeting, 6/10/25, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1925 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box #2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society.

Ambassador to Roumania objected to two provisions of the bill: (1) The bill required foreign oil companies operating in Roumania in order to obtain new oil lands, to convert, within a period of five years, all their capital stock into shares, 60 per cent of which had to be owned and controlled by Roumanian subjects; (2) rights to oil producing properties already acquired by foreign oil companies had to be submitted to the appropriate Roumanian authorities for registration and validation.¹⁴

The proposed mining law made no provisions for the payment of adequate compensation for the 60 per cent of stock to be assigned to Roumanian nationals and it was not clear how the foreign oil companies would be guaranteed against the confiscation of their property without just compensation. The American Secretary of State, Charles Evans Hughes, saw the proposed mining law as but one more incident in Roumania's belligerent attitude toward the United States. Roumania had failed, in his opinion, to give proper consideration to claims of the Baldwin Locomotive Company and the International Harvester Company, the case of Aladar Nagy, a naturalized American whose property

¹⁴Ibid., p. 601. See also, Wellman to Secretary of State, pp. 602-604.
was confiscated by Roumania on the charge that he was an enemy alien, and the refusal by Roumania to honor the presentation of bonds and notes by the Chase National Bank and the Equitable Trust Company of New York. Though Roumania tried to assuage the State Department by not enforcing the mining law, by indemnifying some of its Jewish citizens, and paying 10 per cent of its debt to the Baldwin Locomotive Company, it soon returned to its policy of "belligerence." In view of this, Hughes cabled Ambassador Peter Jay that the continued failure on the part of Roumania to protect American interests would force him to warn American businessmen that conditions in that country were not very good for business investment, and that, until conditions improved, the State Department would oppose "any attempt to float a Roumanian loan in this country."

Wise read of these developments, and gave his approval to the commission scheme despite the advice of Fildermann. Fildermann was opposed to the idea because the Jewish victims in Roumania would have been extremely reluctant to talk to any foreigners for fear that there

15Ibid., Hughes to Jay, 11/7/24, pp. 637-642.
would be reprisals against them once the commission left. He also questioned the necessity of such a commission, for the facts were already gathered and available; he offered the Jewish Congress newspaper material, government reports, and official statistics to substantiate any allegations. Too, Fildermann stated that if such a commission were sent, it would spend too much precious time at government-sponsored receptions and not enough time in the field.  

Instead of a commission, Fildermann proposed that the materials already available be incorporated into a "cold, unemotional, impressive brief" and that it be presented to the Roumanian ministers in the leading Western countries. Fildermann stated that the Roumanian delegations should be informed that if, in view of the facts, nothing was done to alleviate the condition of Roumanian Jewry, the brief would be given the widest publicity. He believed that such a threat would force the home government to ameliorate the situation. He cautioned the Jewish Congress not to appeal to the League of Nations, for fear that if the League did not act, its inaction would be a sign for anti-Semites of all nations to take the offensive. He also

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16Lowenthal to Wise, 9/1/25, Stephen S. Wise folder #6, Bernard G. Richards Mss, Jewish Theological Seminary.
warned his co-religionists not to make the confrontation with Roumania a strictly Jewish-Roumanian affair; rather, he advised the Congress to ally itself with prominent Christian groups in Great Britain, France, and the United States, and concentrate on the anti-Christian aspect of Roumania's repression of her citizens.¹⁷

Wise's refusal to heed Fildermann's advice not to send a commission to Roumania was due to reasons which lie totally outside of the situation in Roumania. Though he only met Fildermann twice--at the Paris Peace Conference--he thought him to be a foggy-eyed intellectual who could not distinguish fantasy from reality. Fildermann had sided with the ardent national-rights advocates at the Peace Conference, and also wished the Jews to have representation at the League of Nations. Too, Lowenthal's reports to Wise on the Roumanian situation and Fildermann's

¹⁷A. C. Cuza, a leader of the Roumanian anti-Semites, published a scurrilous pamphlet against Judaism, comprising a series of cartoons deriding Jehovah, Moses, etc. Fildermann suggested that while it attacked the Jews, it was an equally vile attack on the Christian tradition; to wit: Cuza called Jehovah--the father of Jesus--a whore-master. Fildermann proposed that copies of these cartoons be distributed to leading churchmen in the West and that they be asked to protest to the head of the Roumanian Church. Ibid.
suggestions on how to deal with it were written in a manner which implied that his advice was not to be taken seriously. For example, the phrase "so much for Fildermann" appears in many reports. While Lowenthal's impressions of Fildermann reinforced Wise's beliefs, the decision to organize a fact-finding commission was based on the primary need of the Congress to raise money to continue its existence.18

The scarcity of funds hindered all Jewish Congress programs and activities. Various schemes to raise operating capital were suggested by Carl Sherman, former New York State Attorney General, and George Fox, Treasurer of the American Jewish Congress. Plans to form a New York Advisory Committee of One Hundred of the American Jewish Congress were discussed where Rabbi Wise would urge influential Jews to contribute. George Fox suggested that every community should be required to contribute to the Congress on a per capita basis, and, to this end, he suggested that a plan be adopted whereby a certain number of men in every community would be asked to be responsible for a number of memberships to the Congress. A field secretary was hired

18Barondess to Richards, 7/5/24, Joseph Barondess folder #2, Bernard G. Richards Mss, Jewish Theological Seminary.
to raise money and be responsible for the organization of new chapters. He drew up a list of tentative quotas for all cities in the United States having a Jewish population of 1,000 or more. Based on a 5 per cent capita allotment, he estimated that almost $165,000 could be raised. However, the Congress fell far short of its goal, and at one point in late 1925, Wise told Richards that the Jewish Congress could no longer function and plans would have to be made to dissolve the organization. Wise's despair was heightened when he learned of the Jewish Congress elections of 1926. Only thirty communities outside of the metropolitan New York area held nominating and election conventions and even in these cities, indifference and lack of interest were manifest. Deficits continued to mount; in 1926, the deficit was $13,259; in 1927 it reached $19,656. Though

19 Margolies to Wise, 10/10/24, Stephen S. Wise folder #8, Bernard G. Richards Mss, Jewish Theological Seminary; Administrative Committee Meetings, 12/3/25, 12/17/25, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1925 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society; Administrative Committee Meeting, 3/31/26, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1926 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society.

the Congress barely continued to function, the Administrative Committee searched for ways to arouse interest in the organization.

Baruch Zuckerman suggested an intensive educational program to include not only newspaper and printed propaganda, but a series of lectures which would keep the Jewish public informed on matters of general Jewish interest. He reasoned that this method would put the Jewish Congress in the limelight, and thus be of great aid in securing financial support and public participation. Leo Wolfson, President of the United Roumanian Jews of America, declared that if "real live issues could be created for the Congress, we would be able to get the necessary interest and support." By July, 1928, the deficit had reached $22,233.

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21 Administrative Committee Meetings, 6/3/26, 9/16/26, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1926 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society; Administrative Committee Meeting, 12/31/27, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1927 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society.

22 Administrative Committee Meeting, 6/3/26, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1926 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society; Administrative Committee Meeting, 5/21/28, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1928 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society.
Since funds were not available to mount an educational campaign, Wise decided that the commission to Roumania would arouse the passions of the Jewish masses, and, he hoped, attract attention to the Congress; moreover, the commission would cost very little in comparison to Zuckerman's plan and possibly achieve the same result as well as ameliorate the situation in Roumania.

While preparations for the fact-finding commission to Roumania continued, Wise cooperated with the American Committee on the Rights of Religious Minorities in preparing a statement on the situation in Roumania to be presented to Nicholas Titulescu, head of the Roumanian Debt Commission to the United States. However, the Jewish Congress was undercut in its negotiations by one of its own constituent organizations--the Union of Roumanian Jews of America--which had arranged for a private meeting with Titulescu, at which only Roumanian-American Jews would be present. When Leo Wolfson told the Jewish Congress Administrative Committee of the proposed meeting, Wise became very distraught, for a constituent body might steal the thunder from the Jewish Congress. 23

23 Administrative Committee Meeting, 11/22/25, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1925 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society.
Nothing came of Titulescu's meeting with the Wolfson group. Titulescu contacted representatives of the American Committee on the Rights of Religious Minorities and promised them an audience. He did not keep his promise.24

Conditions in Roumania continued to deteriorate. Wise and leaders of the Zionist Organization of America met with William Fildermann in late April, 1926, while he was visiting the United States. Fildermann again cautioned Wise not to send a commission to Roumania. He contended that Roumanian Jewry would have to reach some modus vivendi with the home government and that for foreign Jews to interfere in the domestic affairs of another country would only cause increased resentment among the native population. He outlined the course of action which he hoped would "break the back" of the anti-Semitic movement in Roumania.

24Administrative Committee Meeting, 1/7/26, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1926 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society. For a copy of the memorandum presented to Titulescu, see, Marshall to Titulescu, 1/5/26, in Reznikoff, Louis Marshall, volume 2, pp. 651-655.
He reasoned that in the up-coming general elections in Roumania, scheduled for November or December, 1926, Jews should not put up any candidates of their own, but work against all anti-Jewish candidates, thus inviting the solicitation of all parties opposed to the government. If, in addition to votes, the various parties could be assured of campaign funds, Fildermann believed the anti-Semites would lose the election. To throttle economically the anti-Semites, Fildermann espoused a plan to support with loans, the non-Bratianu (the Prime Minister's) banks, and thereby give the "democratic" elements a chance to come to power. The annexed regions of Roumania previously depended on Vienna, Berlin, and St. Petersburg banking houses for credit. Now, these regions were without credit or beholden to the Bratianu banks, and this resulted in the domination of Bratianu and his followers.  

Fildermann's proposals did help to defeat some anti-Semitic candidates; however, his funding scheme was not fruitful because no foreign

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investors were willing to risk precious capital in a
country whose economy was in turmoil.

During the latter half of 1926, the situation only
grew worse for the Jews of Roumania. When Queen Marie of
Roumania visited the United States in October, 1926, the
Jewish Congress called upon her to repudiate the anti-
Semitic. A petition signed by Wise and numerous Christian
leaders called on the Queen to intervene; the Queen did
nothing. As she travelled about the United States, new
outbreaks of violence against the Jews erupted.

Anti-Semitic demonstrations among Roumanian stu-
dents were particularly pronounced. A Jewish student was
murdered while attending the trial in Czernovitz of a num-
ber of students arrested for taking part in anti-Jewish
disturbances. Meyer Ebner, a deputy in the Roumanian Par-
liament, brought the attention of this incident to his
colleagues. The anti-Semites in Parliament claimed that
the Jews were provoking Roumanian students to commit
excesses. At the same time, Senator Karl Kluger intro-
duced the matter in the Roumanian Senate. The Minister of
the Interior, Vincent Goga, blamed the "foreigners," i.e.,
the Jews. The official newspaper of the Union of Roumanian
Jews was confiscated and Jewish students were attacked by
roving bands of students on the streets of Czernovitz and Lipova. On November 29, 1926, 5,000 delegates representing student organizations throughout the country assembled in Jassy. Jewish passengers in railroad cars were literally thrown out of the windows from the moving trains by the students; in Bucharest, a number of Jews were hospitalized after being mugged and beaten by students. The Metropolitan of Moldavia further enraged the students when he issued a statement declaring that practically all of Moldavia was under Jewish control and he urged the students to "throw off the Jewish yoke." After the student conference adjourned, the students, homeward bound, rampaged through Kishineff and Kalarash, destroying three synagogues in Kishineff. 26

The response of the Roumanian Government to these incidents was threefold: first, it periodically announced that strict orders were issued to prevent any further disturbances; second, it blamed the Jews for the offenses. To

wit: the Minister of the Interior on December 4, 1926, blamed the Jewish students of Czernovitz, and endorsed the students' response which he characterized as "an organic movement of the people . . . and an occupation of the trenches." The Roumanian Ambassador to Poland blamed the Jews and "their allies in the Soviet Union." Thirdly, once the rioting occurred, the Roumanian authorities denied or belittled their importance. In a speech delivered to Parliament, the Minister of the Interior exclaimed: "The Jews are complaining. They talk of tears. What are their tears? Their businesses are doing well. Their tears are for their meetings. . . ."27 The Roumanian Minister to the United States responded to the riots thusly:

As you . . . see . . . the real events were not only greatly exaggerated, but partly invented and put in false light by agents of propaganda, whose purpose is to render my country odious to American public opinion. . . . I cannot understand how Jews, clever as they generally are, do not see that, and am afraid there may be a secret desire to provoke more serious disturbances, with some bad political intent against Roumania.28


28Cretziano to Cadman, 1/3/27, George Cretziano folder, Bernard G. Richards Mss, Jewish Theological Seminary.
Upon the receipt of Lowenthal's reports, Wise called a special conference to deal with the situation. The conference met on December 19, 1926, in New York and adopted a resolution authorizing the Jewish Congress Administrative Committee to call protest meetings throughout the United States. Max D. Steuer of the American Jewish Congress urged that the United States government be contacted to protest the treatment of the Jews and other minorities in Roumania. His plan was opposed by Jewish members of the United States House of Representatives who were in attendance. Representative Adolph Sabath of Chicago insisted that this course of action should not be followed unless absolutely necessary. "The policy of Congress," he declared,

is not overfriendliness toward interference with conditions abroad and I am afraid that if we were, at this time, to make any move it might not meet with success. I'd rather wait until the time is ripe to make such a protest.

Sabath was also optimistic that conditions in Roumania would improve in the near future. Representative Meyer Jacobstein of Rochester said:

As Jews in the American Congress, it would not only be improper but harmful to our Jewish cause to make a protest against the atrocities in Roumania.

Judge Julian Mack supported the protest action, but
thought it more advisable if prominent Christians were in the forefront. Jacobstein predicted that nothing would be accomplished as the American people were "rather out of patience with minorities..." The Conference rejected Steuer's proposal but authorized the planning of a protest meeting to be held on January 2, 1927.29

The mass protest meeting was attended by 3,500 delegates at the Hotel Astor in New York. A resolution, written by Max J. Kohler of the B'nai Brith was adopted which urged the State Department to make representations to Roumania on behalf of all the minorities in that country.30 Other meetings took place in Cleveland, New Haven, Detroit, San Francisco, Rochester, and Camden, New Jersey.

A delegation from the American Jewish Congress, led by Rabbi Wise, met with Secretary of State Kellogg on January 13, 1927, and presented the Secretary with

29 The New York Times, 12/20/26, p. 10; The American Israelite, 12/30/26, p. 4.

30 The New York Times, 1/3/27, p. 10; The Jewish Advocate (Boston), 1/6/27, p. 5; Administrative Committee Meeting, 1/6/27, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1927 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society.
resolutions from the January 2 mass protest meeting. Wise urged Kellogg to take such action, "compatible with diplomatic dignity," to impress upon the Roumanian government the seriousness of the situation. Kellogg promised Wise that he would give the matter serious attention, and that after a careful study had been made, he would act. Wise again conferred with State Department officials on February 12, and urged them to act with all deliberate speed. The Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs, G. Howland Shaw, later reported that Kellogg refused to do anything about the situation because

formal representations addressed by us to a foreign government concerning the internal affairs of that foreign government were entirely inadmissible and would doubtless do more harm than good in any event. The Secretary stressed the fact that international practice in such matters was perfectly clear. We could not send a note to Roumania regarding the treatment of the Jews in that country.32

Kellogg did promise Wise that he would call in the Roumanian Minister and show him the Jewish Congress.


resolution of January 2, and explain its significance. Kellogg did as he promised; however, he "made it perfectly clear that he was not making official representations either to the Roumanian Government or to Mr. Cretziano." Cretziano retorted that the American Minister in Bucharest could contradict the "exaggerated stories" which were being circulated. Kellogg then showed him the Jewish Congress resolution and the Minister left.

Rebuffed by the State Department, Jewish Congress leaders continued to seek a solution. Marvin Lowenthal reported that Lucien Wolf of the Joint Foreign Committee was contemplating an appeal to the League of Nations as well as a strong protest to the Roumanian authorities. Leon Motzkin and Nahum Sokolow of the Committee of Jewish Delegations wrote a separate memorandum to the League asking that body to intervene with the Roumanian government on behalf of the Jewish minority. Wolf later wrote Wise that the case "is not good enough--of course in a purely legal sense." He also believed that the Motzkin memorandum

\[^{33}\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 640}.\]

\[^{34}\text{Lowenthal to American Jewish Congress, 1/8/27, 1/17/27, Marvin Lowenthal folder, Stephen S. Wise Mss, American Jewish Congregation file, section 7, American Jewish Historical Society.}\]
to the League would have no effect, and, moreover, would do great harm if rejected. "Our credit in Geneva will get a bad slump... [When] you appeal to Geneva, you burn your boats and leave yourself the chance of a possible 'Pyrrhic' victory and nothing more..." Wolf did endorse the mass protest meetings held throughout the United States under the auspices of the American Jewish Congress.

Louis Marshall, President of the American Jewish Committee, deplored the tactics of the American Jewish Congress. He believed that shaking your fist "under the nose of your opponent," and holding mass meetings in "denunciation of him" only injured the cause "which we are seeking to further." He chastized those in the Congress who wished to lay the matter before President Coolidge or Senator William Borah, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee; he reminded them that the American government could do little, if anything, to pressure the Roumanian authorities, since the United States chose not to be a

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35 Wolf to Wise, Julian W. Mack folder #3, Bernard G. Richards Mss, Jewish Theological Seminary.

guarantor of minority rights. Moreover, no violations of any existing treaty between the two countries had occurred.\textsuperscript{37}

The President of the American Jewish Committee thought it wise to arrange some \textit{quid pro quo} with Roumania. In return for currency stabilization loans and preferred credit in American banks, Marshall expected Roumania to curb the student organizations and libelous press attacks against the Jews. At a conference with the Roumanian Minister to the United States, at which Max Steuer of the Jewish Congress and William Nelson Cromwell, President of Friends of Roumania, also attended, Marshall protested the persecutions of his co-religionists. He told Cretziano that if Roumania was ever to stabilize her economy, it had to have the necessary capital, and American investors would not risk substantial amounts of money in a country where civil disturbances were everyday occurrences.\textsuperscript{38} The Roumanian Minister assured Marshall and the others that all preventive steps were being implemented, and that all offenders would be punished severely.

\textsuperscript{37}\textit{Ibid.}

Steuer related Marshall's beliefs to Wise. The Rabbi rejected Marshall's thesis and Cretziano's promises. At the Jewish Congress convention held in Washington, D.C., Wise told the assembled delegates that the life of the Jews in Roumania had become one of "misery and calumny, of oppression and shame." The Jewish Congress, he stated, would continue to protest publicly, and that the long-awaited fact-finding commission to Roumania would soon be leaving.

Fildermann still opposed the commission's coming; if one was to be sent, he did not think it wise for it to include any Jews since it would constitute an additional embarrassment to the home government and an embarrassment to the Roumanian Jews if the results of the investigation did not bear out the allegations. The deputation consisted of prominent American Christians—Dr. Henry A. Atkinson of the World Alliance for International Friendship through the Churches, the Reverend R. A. McGowan of the Social Action Department of the National Catholic


40 Lowenthal to Wise, 5/24/27, in possession of Mrs. Ruth Richards Eisenstein, New York City, Archives of the Jewish Information Bureau.
Welfare Conference, the Reverend John B. Lathrop, a Unitarian minister of New York, Dr. Graham Hunter, a Presbyterian minister from Fullerton, California, and Jules Jezequel, Paris representative of the Church Peace Union. The Commission entered Roumania at the invitation of a group of Roumanian prelates to investigate the general situation. They proceeded with absolutely no publicity and completed their work in two months.

Atkinson, whose sympathy lay with Roumania, found conditions better than he had expected. "But measured by ordinary standards of justice and fair dealing, they are bad even now." Though hindered in their investigation because they did not speak the native language, the commissioners were surprised that the world should have "tolerated such conditions." They found the Jews of Roumania enough united and alive to the problems to handle them; persecution of the Jews in the provinces was worse than in the major cities. Violence toward the Jews was only sporadic, and the investigators opined that with the fall of the Averescu government and the elimination of the

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41 Atkinson to Lowenthal, 7/1/27, in possession of Mrs. Ruth Richards Eisenstein, New York City, Archives of the Jewish Information Bureau.
Cuza and Goga groups, it would be steadily less. They attributed the decline in violence to three factors:

(1) the systematic campaign carried on for several years against the Jews have so intimidated them that they absent themselves in large part from the universities and public life;

(2) the virulence of the campaign has reacted unfavorably on Roumanian prestige abroad;

(3) the promises of the Liberal Party to certain groups of Jewish voters in the summer of 1927 have brought some cessation of anti-Jewish excesses.42

Less than four months had passed since the return of the fact-finding commission to the United States when new attacks upon Jews occurred in Cradea, Mare, Kluj, Jassy, and other cities. The Jewish Congress Administrative Committee decided to meet the new attacks by again

42 Baldwin to Lowenthal, 6/11/27, Richards to Wise, 7/20/27, in possession of Mrs. Ruth Richards Eisenstein, New York City, Archives of the Jewish Information Bureau. For a complete report, consult, The American Committee on the Rights of Religious Minorities, Roumania: Ten Years Later, (Boston, 1928), passim; "The Index," (March-April, 1928), passim. The Roumanian embassy in the United States issued an answer to the report of the American Committee on the Rights of Religious Minorities. It emphasized that the deputation only talked to representatives of minority groups whose land had been expropriated; moreover, it did not confer with others who had investigated conditions in Roumania and found them to be satisfactory, particularly, Sir Edward Drummond of the League of Nations. See Administrative Committee Meeting, 12/7/27, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1927 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society.
arousing public opinion. Moreover, since now an American citizen had been attacked, it was believed that the State Department would be more responsive to make official representations to the Roumanian government. Max Eckmann suggested that the members of the American Committee on the Rights of Religious Minorities who had served on the fact-finding commission accompany Jewish Congress leaders to the State Department.43 Eckmann's suggestions fell on deaf ears. The Jewish Congress decided that more visits to the State Department would accomplish nothing; rather, the Jewish Congress must stress mass protest rallies such as that held at Town Hall to condemn the Roumanians. Simultaneously with the rally at Town Hall, a protest meeting was taking place at Cooper Union Hall, at which Louis Marshall urged moderation.

To a very great extent, all we can do is to indicate to the world . . . where the enlightened opinion of the American people stands. . . . We must never fail to be on the alert, but at the same time we must be moderate in our speech. . . . The most courageous man is not the one who fights. He is the one who faces the facts and meets them intelligently.44

43Administrative Committee Meeting, 12/13/27, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1927 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society.

When a joint resolution was introduced in the House of Representatives on December 12, 1927, condemning the new disturbances and the lack of government response, Marshall urged its sponsor, Congressman Sirovich, to withdraw it. He told Sirovich that such resolutions were futile, and informed him of his correspondence with Cretziano in which Cretziano outlined his government's proposals to stop the disturbances. Sirovich, not willing to appear as Marshall's lackey, refused to withdraw the resolution; however, he watered down its tone. The resolution was of no importance in alleviating the condition of Roumanian Jewry.45

Differences between the American Jewish Committee and the American Jewish Congress were skillfully exploited by the Roumanian ambassador, George Cretziano. He lulled Marshall into thinking that at last the home government would curb the students' excesses; Marshall wrote Cretziano:

\[\text{It seems to me that a great opportunity is now presented to the Roumanian Government to set itself right}\]

\footnote{45 Marshall to Cretziano, 12/19/27, in Reznikoff, Louis Marshall, volume 2, pp. 665-666; Richards to Sherman, 1/11/28, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1928 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society.}
in the eyes of the world and to bring about a real union of hearts and minds between the Jews and non-Jews of Roumania.\(^\text{46}\)

Having calmed Marshall, Cretziano turned his attention to the American Jewish Congress. He invited the officers of the United Roumanian Jews of America to come to Washington to confer with him. When its President, Leo Wolfson, told the Jewish Congress Administrative Committee of the invitation, the Committee was opposed to its acceptance because of the "consistent attitude of protest which was previously taken against the Roumanian Government, and . . . the offensive references to the Jews which were made in letters written by Cretziano. . . ."\(^\text{47}\) Wolfson was determined, however, to meet with Cretziano, and Wise finally gave grudging acceptance. Wise did exact a promise from Wolfson that the Jewish Congress would help to formulate the demands to be given to Cretziano.\(^\text{48}\)


\(^{47}\)Administrative Committee Meeting, 3/1/22, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1928 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society.

\(^{48}\)\textit{Ibid.}
On March 14, 1928, Wolfson presented a series of demands to the Roumanian Ambassador which conformed to previous demands made by the Jewish Congress to Roumanian officials. They were:

(1) Dissolution of the Christian Students National Union, "whose sole raison d'etre is to propropogate anti-Semitism";
(2) An open door to the universities and trade schools in Roumania and protection while in attendance to the Jewish students;
(3) Abolition of the Christian Students National Day, December 10, because this holiday [celebration] in the past, "has been converted into criminal acts of violence against unoffending Jewish students. . . .";
(4) The adoption of a moderate attitude on the parts of the representatives of the Churches toward the Jews;
(5) The Roumanian Government should grant its Jewish inhabitants at all times the "fullest administrative protection. . . ."49

Cretziano assured the delegation that its demands would be met. In return, he asked the representatives of Roumanian-American Jewry to express themselves in favor of the currency stabilization loan which Roumania was negotiating.

In a statement released to the press, leaders of the United Roumanian Jews of America expressed their approval of the loan. The Jewish Congress, despite denials by Wise,

approved the purposes of the loan, as did Louis Marshall of the American Jewish Committee. 50

Not all in the American Jewish Congress approved of the negotiations with Cretziano. Bernard G. Richards expressed doubt as to how much the Roumanians could be trusted, and warned that the Jews of America should be wary of being used as pawns by the Roumanians. Zvi Aber-son of the Jewish Congress's Geneva Bureau was adamantly opposed to the whole episode. He noted that the United Roumanian Jews of America inferred "that there are no treaty obligations and legal guarantees previously entered into and established." Moreover, this entente cordiale did not take into consideration "the uneven interests of the Jewish citizens of the old country and the newly acquired territory like Transylvania and Bessarabia." 51

Irving Fineman, a Jewish Congress member


51 Administrative Committee Meeting, 9/27/28, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1928 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933,
who had just returned from Roumania, warned the Administrative Committee that the authorities "would not scruple again to use anti-Semitism . . . for their own vile ends should a political situation call for it."^52

The situation in Roumania did improve for a short while; however, a disastrous famine overtook the country in early 1929, and, just as Fineman predicted, the Roumanian Government did nothing to quell anti-Jewish disturbances which followed. Rumors ran rampant that Jews were hoarding grain and other foodstuffs until prices rose.

The Jewish Congress and Roumanian-American Jewish groups organized the United Emergency Relief Committee for the Famine Stricken Jews in Bessarabia to raise $500,000 to assist the suffering Jews. In May, 1929, Wise conferred with Cretziano and demanded that the Roumanian Government adhere to its agreement with the United Roumanian Jews of America. Cretziano again assured Wise that

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^52 Administrative Committee Meeting, 7/17/28, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1928 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society.
Roumania intended to do all that she had promised; yet, the effects of the famine and the unstable economic conditions led the Maniu regime to foster anti-Jewish excesses in the hope of relieving the political pressure on the government. Anti-Semitic disturbances occurred in Bucharest and Klaussenberg, and Roumanian students attending a convention in Craiova, stormed and demolished a Jewish newspaper office and Jewish shops, and mugged Jewish deputies of the Roumanian Parliament. In the forefront of these attacks was the Christian Students National Union, under the leadership of Professor Cuza, which had supposedly been dissolved by the previous regime. The Government aided and abetted the students; it provided free transportation and lodging for the students. Moreover, the Minister of Education added to the bitterness and hostile feeling by claiming that the Jews used such occasions "for spreading derogatory rumors in foreign countries."

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53Report of the Administrative Committee of the American Jewish Congress, 1930 folder, pp. 5-6, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society.
A new Cults Law was enacted in late Spring, 1929, despite the protests of Jewish deputies in the Roumanian Parliament. The teaching of the Hebrew and Yiddish language was forbidden in schools wholly supported by Jewish funds, because the authorities believed that a knowledge of these languages somehow detracted from one's love of country. Too, the Roumanian government refused to increase its subsidy to Jewish schools and religious institutions.54

Jewish Congress leaders met in late July, 1930 to consider the new situation. They discussed two plans: (1) making representations to the State Department; and (2) conferring with the Roumanian Ambassador to the United States, Carol A. Davila. After considerable debate, the Administrative Committee opted for the second plan. Representations to the State Department, many believed, would

54 Administrative Committee Meetings, 5/21/30, 6/16/30, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1930 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society; Report of the Administrative Committee of the American Jewish Congress, 1930 folder, pp. 14, 44-45, American Jewish Historical Society; Bernstein to Wise, 9/11/30, Microfilm #886, Philip B. Bernstein Mss, American Jewish Archives.
accomplish nothing. A delegation of Jewish Congress leaders arranged a meeting with Davila on August 13, 1930, and was to present him with a detailed memorandum on conditions in Roumania. They sent Salo Baron, Professor of History at Columbia University and the Jewish Institute of Religion in New York, to Roumania to investigate conditions in that country.

Baron reported that the Jews of Roumania were economically ruined. The Jewish merchant had depended on the agricultural population to buy his wares; since these people were charged usurious interest rates of up to 40 per cent on loans and mortgages, the prices for their produce fell on the world market, and the value of their land declined from an average of $80 to $100 to only $16 to $18 an acre. They could not afford to buy the more expensive products produced by the Jewish artisan. The Jewish artisans were losing ground to the large industries.

55 Some did not agree with this assessment. Israel Thurman, Vice-Chairman of the Executive Committee of the American Jewish Congress, believed that another meeting with the Roumanian Ambassador would prove even less fruitful than representations to the State Department. However, Wise disagreed, and so the Committee opted for another meeting with Davila. See Blitz to Richards, 8/1/30, in possession of Mrs. Ruth Richards Eisenstein, New York City, Archives of the Jewish Information Bureau.
as well as to the number of skilled non-Jewish craftsmen whose number was steadily rising. Roumania in a twelve-year period almost quadrupled the number of trade schools; yet, the Jews were almost totally excluded from them. To make matters worse, the anti-Semitic propaganda of the Cuza strain was now giving way to the more "romantic," racial anti-Semitism of Adolf Hitler. In spite of all that faced them, the Jews of Roumania were divided into numerous factions and could not agree on any concerted plan of action. Baron stated that the Roumanian-Jewish leaders suggested that if the American Jewish Congress and the American Jewish Committee were to issue an appeal for Jewish unity in Roumania, a united front could be effected. It was decided by the Administrative Committee of the Jewish Congress that the American Jewish Committee be contacted; Richards opposed the move because he believed that "such joint action was not desirable at this time and that the various Jewish elements in Roumania might resent

56 Administrative Committee Meeting, 9/LO/30, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1930 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society. See also, Salo Baron, The Jews in Roumania, (New York, 1930), passim.
any effort to intervene in their local affairs."

The meeting with Davila took place as scheduled. The Roumanian Ambassador expressed regret at the recent occurrences and assured the deputation that his government was taking "energetic measures" to prevent further disturbances. Wise presented a memorandum to Davila demanding the immediate liquidation of anti-Semitic organizations such as the Iron Guard, the Archangel Michael League, and the Christian Students National Union; the immediate suppression of anti-Jewish propaganda; adequate compensation to Jewish victims; and a declaration from Roumanian authorities that the government would ensure the safety of its Jewish citizens. The Jewish Congress's demands fell on deaf ears. In an interview with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency less than a week after his meeting with Wise, Richards was reluctant to broach the subject with the American Jewish Committee because he feared that such an overture would disrupt the up-coming American Jewish Congress convention.

57Administrative Committee Meeting, 10/9/30, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1930 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society. Richards was reluctant to broach the subject with the American Jewish Committee because he feared that such an overture would disrupt the up-coming American Jewish Congress convention.

58Report of the Administrative Committee to the American Jewish Congress, 1930 folder, pp. 11-12, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society; The New York Times, 8/14/30, p. 40; The Jewish Advocate (Boston), 8/19/30, pp. 1, 4.
Davila stated: "We cannot sacrifice the lives of all the members of the Roumanian Government in order to protect the Jews." He declared that attempts on the lives of Roumanian officials had been made by Roumanian nationalists. He continued: "I cannot advise the Roumanian Government to take such measures against the anti-Semitic riots as would endanger the lives of some cabinet members. . . ." 59

Continued protests were of no avail. The Roumanian Government enacted legislation detrimental to the welfare of its Jewish citizens. Even Prime Minister Nicholas Gorga, who was tolerant of the Jews, was unable to prevent rampages by university students, though he did compensate the victims. The Jewish Congress was helpless to do anything; further representations to Roumanian officials by Jewish Congress leaders brought no relief. 60

59 The Jewish Advocate (Boston), 8/19/30, p. 1.

60 Report of the Administrative Committee to the American Jewish Congress, 1932 folder, pp. 4-5, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Zionist Archives and Library; Administrative Committee Meeting, 4/12/32, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1932 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society.
The root of the Jewish misery in Poland lay in the economic circumstances of the newly created state. Former markets, particularly those in Russia, for Polish industrial goods and agricultural surplus commodities no longer existed due to the policies established by the Soviet Government; moreover, the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the economic nationalism of the new or enlarged states left Poland in a very precarious economic position. The Jews of Poland, who had been engaged in commerce and industry, suffered the most from the new economic conditions. Unable to sell their products, the Jews were also in competition with a new class of Polish bourgeoisie which hoped to supplant them.61

About 14 per cent of the Polish population was Jewish, and Polish officials sought to lower that percentage. Thus, the Jews of the Ukraine and other provinces were forcibly expelled from the country. Though the American

Jewish Congress protested these actions and was given assurances by Polish officials that a delay in the target date would be forthcoming, the mass expulsion was carried out as of March 1, 1923. Jewish Congress protests did serve to alert the American banking community to the unstable conditions existing in that country.\textsuperscript{62}

Poland, like Roumania, experienced a terrible inflation and tried to negotiate a currency stabilization loan in the United States. To satisfy American bankers that conditions in Poland were indeed improving, an agreement between the Polish Government and representatives of Polish Jewry was reached in June, 1925, whereby the Government reaffirmed its previous pledge to guarantee the rights and safety of its Jewish citizens. Moreover, the Grabski regime promised to end the \textit{numerus clausus} in education; the tax system which placed on the Jews a disproportionate share of the tax burden was to be restructured; and more state subsidies would be given to Jewish

\textsuperscript{62} Administrative Committee Meeting, 2/7/23, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1923 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society; Executive Committee Meeting, 2/11/23, Executive Committee Minutes, 1923 folder, American Jewish Congress, Box 6, Executive Committee, 1916-1949, American Jewish Historical Society.
The Jewish Congress welcomed the agreement, and, upon the arrival of a new Polish ambassador to the United States, it gave a reception in his honor to congratulate the Polish Government for its enlightened policy. Said Joseph Barondess: "We are happy to note that the Polish Government has at least felt the incongruity of the previous policy toward the Jews and we welcome with gratification the agreement which has . . . been entered into."64

Gratification turned to disappointment. Violations of the agreement were reported to the Jewish Congress as early as July, 1925. Barondess proposed another meeting with the Polish Ambassador, but the other members of the Administrative Committee opposed this course of action because they believed that not enough time had elapsed to make a definite determination of the viability of the

63 For a complete text of the Polish-Jewish agreement, see The American Israelite, 11/19/25, p. 3.

64 The American Israelite, 8/13/25, p. 3; Administrative Committee Meetings, 7/2/25, 7/16/25, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1925 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society; The Jewish Advocate (Boston), 7/23/25, p. 1; The New York Times, 7/23/25, p. 8; Richards to Wise, 7/24/25, Stephen S. Wise folder #9, Bernard G. Richards Mss, Jewish Theological Seminary.
agreement. However, by October, 1925, reports of non-compliance by the Polish Government appeared in American-Jewish newspapers. The Grabski Government was unable to continue in power without the support of the Jewish deputies in the Sejm. A coup d'etat in 1926 brought Marshall Joseph Pilsudski to power, though he declined to accept the presidency. 

Pilsudski was tolerant of the Jews. Under his administration, many of the old czarist laws and ukazes directed against the Jews were annulled; the Hebrew and Yiddish languages were given full recognition as lawful for use in public speeches and the press; the forced "polonization" of Jews abated somewhat; and Jews were not discriminated against in the issuance of trade licenses. However, the numerus clausus in education remained. While anti-Semitic agitation continued, the Pilsudski regime was quick to suppress acts of violence and arrest the offenders. Actually, many of the attacks on the Jews were

directed against the Pilsudski regime. Though Pilsudski was able to make the life of the Jew tolerable in Poland, he was in ill-health for a long time and finally died in 1935.

Pilsudski's death opened the doors of power to the openly anti-Semitic parties of the right. The National Radical Party, known as the Naras, used anti-Semitism as a political weapon; as in Roumania, the fascist and anti-Jewish elements aroused the ultra-nationalist student groups to acts of violence. Indeed, the outlook for the Jews of Poland was bleak.

The world-wide depression also had its effect. As the economic situation in Poland became more acute, so too did the situation of Polish Jewry. Throughout 1932, anti-Jewish outbreaks occurred with increasing frequency and intensity. The ferocity of the new attacks had a galvanizing effect on American Jews; a Joint Committee on

66 Administrative Committee Meeting, 6/26/29, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1929 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society. See also, Horace M. Kallen, Frontiers of Hope, (New York, 1929), pp. 145ff; Raymond Buell, Poland: Key to Europe, pp. 297-298; Rabinowicz, The Legacy of Polish Jewry, pp. 50-52.

Poland was created, consisting of the American Jewish Congress, the American Jewish Committee, the Federation of Polish Jews in America, and the B'nai Brith. The American Jewish Committee was somewhat hesitant about joining because it feared that the other organizations wanted its prestige without its opinions; Morris Waldman, Executive Secretary of the Committee, believed that the Committee's participation was warranted so as to present a united front as well as prevent "sensational and irresponsible action on the part of the Jewish bodies in this country." 68

The Joint Committee debated its response to the new anti-Jewish disturbances. Rabbi Wise suggested that Senator Borah, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, be urged to speak with Secretary of State Henry Stimson and ask the Secretary to confer with the Polish Ambassador to the United States, Tytus Filipowicz. Wise stated that this course of action had been successful in the past, and urged its adoption. 69 Waldman agreed, and

68 Waldman to Adler, 12/1/32, American Jewish Committee/Poland/1931-1932.

69 Wise was referring to his meeting with Secretary of State Kellogg in 1927 at which he urged Kellogg to use his influence with the Roumanian Ambassador to make him stop the attacks on Roumanian Jews.
Wise contacted Borah. It was also agreed that a press release would be issued to inform the Jewish public that the situation was being looked after; moreover, the American Jewish Committee decided that now was the time to present a joint memorandum to Filipowicz.

Meetings with Borah proved to be ineffectual. The Secretary of State was much too busy with Japanese aggression in Manchuria; the memorandum to Filipowicz had no effect whatsoever. Jewish Congress members wished to have more mass protest meetings. Wise was of the opinion, however, that mass protest meetings would only serve to embarrass those "liberal" elements in Poland who, he believed, were the real targets of the student riots.70

The inability of the American Jewish Congress to effect any noticeable change in the condition of Eastern European Jewry can be laid to many factors. The Jewish Congress was unable to secure the support of the State Department because, in almost all instances, no United States citizens were attacked. Too, the State Department was wary of interfering in the internal affairs of another country unless it deemed such action to be in the interest

70Joint Letter to the Polish Ambassador, 12/7/32, American Jewish Committee/Poland/1931-1932.
of American foreign relations. Thus, though not making any formal representations to Roumania, Ambassador Peter Jay was able to tell Roumanian officials that no currency stabilization loan could be negotiated unless the condition of Roumanian Jewry became more tolerable.

Jewish Congress leaders must also take some responsibility for the Congress's inability to effectuate change. Lack of financial support often forced members of the Administrative Committee to react to conditions in Eastern Europe in a way that would benefit the Congress at home as well as their co-religionists abroad. Indeed, the fact-finding commission to Roumania was seized upon as a method to gain public recognition and to relieve Rabbi Wise of the odious task of fund-raising. Unable to secure funds from wealthy American Jews, the Congress was forced to emphasize "dynamic" actions to gain public notice. The Committee of Jewish Delegations was created as a temporary body, and the American Jewish Congress sought to transform it into a permanent institution. From 1925 to 1927, plans were made to link the American Jewish Congress with the Jews of all lands. Since most Jews were apprehensive about convoking a World Jewish Congress, a reorganized Committee of Jewish Delegations was the next best thing.
Jewish Congress leaders believed that the reorganized Committee would serve as the instrument by which it could cooperate in confronting the problems of European Jewry. Once functioning, the new organization would attract money and interest in the American Jewish Congress. The Council of Jewish Rights, as it came to be called, was but an adjunct of the American Jewish Congress; twenty-one of the fifty-one members elected to the praesidium of the Council were Jewish Congress leaders. Said Wise: "I confidently look forward to American Jewry giving its fullest moral and material support to the Council and to the American Jewish Congress. . . ." 72

71 Lowenthal to the American Jewish Congress, 8/7/26, Marvin Lowenthal folder, Stephen S. Wise Mss, American Jewish Congress file, section 7, American Jewish Historical Society.

CHAPTER V

AIDING OPPRESSED JEWRY IN THE SOVIET UNION, 1919-1933

Russian Jewry suffered great hardships during and after World War I. Pogroms of untold violence were common; the Eastern front fluctuated every time the Germans or Russians generated an offensive, and caught in the middle of the killing, disease, and ruin were the Jews. Political and religious repression were everyday occurrences in pre-War Russia. The Czar and his supporters actively sought to use the Jews as scapegoats; yet the terror of the Black Hundreds never equalled the sustained misery of the War and its aftermath.¹

During the first two years of the Russian Revolution, whatever violence was directed against the Jews was

sporadic and disorganized. The Provisional Government had
annulled the Czarist laws directed against the Jews; howev-
er, 300 years of intolerance were not erased by the nullifi-
cation of laws. German occupation of the Ukraine left
the Jews in a tolerable situation, for the German occupa-
tion forces declared null and void many of the Czar's
ukazes (directives); it was only after the downfall of the
German Empire and its Ukrainian allies that the Jews again suffered.

The civil war in the Ukraine began with a victori-
ous revolt by a Directorate led by General Petlura against
General Skoropadski, an appointee of the Germans, followed
by a violent and successful revolt of the Bolsheviks.
Defeated by the Bolsheviks, the troops of General Petlura
disbanded into small groups of freebooters and rebels, and
they roamed the countryside which was supposedly controlled
by the Bolsheviks. Civil war erupted when the Ukrainian
allies of the Bolsheviks broke with the latter. The com-
munists sought to break up these roving bands, and the more
decisively the troops of Petlura were defeated, the more
often they began to revenge their losses on innocent
bystanders. Most often, the innocents were Jews. Because
many of the leading Bolsheviks were Jews, the Petlura
forces thought that all Jews were supporters of the Bolsheviks, and vented their rage on the innocent civilians. The following describes the thoroughness of the acts of violence, the barbarism of the participants, and the hardship of the victims:

The gang breaks into the township, spreads all over the streets, separate groups break into the Jewish houses, killing without distinction of age and sex everybody they meet, with the exception of women, who are bestially violated before they are murdered, and men are forced to give up all there is in the house before they are killed. . . . Everything that can be removed is taken away, the rest is destroyed, the walls, doors, and windows are broken in search of money. On one group departing comes another, and then a third, until absolutely nothing is left that could be taken away. . . .

Reports of the deteriorating conditions in the Ukraine and the rest of Poland reached the plenipotentiaries at the Paris Peace Conference. At the request of Ignacz Paderewski of Poland, President Wilson appointed a commission to investigate the relations between the Jewish

2United States Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1919, Russia, Polk to Secretary of State, 10/26/19, pp. 782-783; Elias Heifetz, The Slaughter of the Jews in the Ukraine in 1919, (New York, 1921), passim; American Jewish Congress and the Committee on Protest Against the Massacre of Jews in Ukrainia and Other Lands, The Massacres and Other Atrocities Committed Against the Jews in Southern Russia: A Record Including Official Reports, Sworn Statements and Other Documentary Proof, (New York, 1920), pp. 13-14.
and non-Jewish populations in the area. The commission delegates were Henry Morgenthau, Brigadier General Edgar Jadwin, and Homer H. Johnson.\(^3\)

Morgenthau's report affirmed the occurrence of the pogroms, as did Jadwin's and Johnson's. All agreed that the wrong-doers had gone unpunished. The commissioners, however, disagreed on the causes of the pogroms. Morgenthau attributed the anti-Semitic outrages to Polish nationalists, economic turmoil, and a long history of economic, social, and religious discrimination. Jadwin and Johnson indulged in generalizations and patently anti-Semitic conclusions. To wit:

Polish circles have felt that some of the difficulties experienced by the Jews have resulted particularly from their own actions and from certain teachings of the Old Testament and other Jewish writings concerning Jewish relations with other peoples. . . .

They intimated, moreover, that the "religious separatism of the Jews" was a reason for their maltreatment. They cited the Jews' close connection to the synagogue as giving further impetus to the spirit of "separatism and cleavage from the rest of the population." Commercial competition and

\(^3\)Cyrus Adler asked Morgenthau not to participate in the investigation for fear that his being a Jew would somehow distort his objectivity. See Cyrus Adler, I Have Considered the Days, p. 319.
"acquisitiveness" aroused a certain irritation amongst the Polish masses.

Jadwin and Johnson completely ignored the economic boycott of the Jews by the Polish and Ukrainian populations. They asserted that the Jews of Poland and their co-religionists in other lands attempted to keep Poland in the spotlight of international concern so that Poland would afford the Jews better treatment. Too, the two commissioners continually repeated the claim that the Jews were allies of the Bolsheviks and friendly to Germany; yet, they did not bother to incorporate in their report evidence which invalidated these claims.  

In response to the pogroms, a Committee of Protest Against the Massacre of Jews in Ukrainia, composed of various federations of Polish and Russian-American Jews, was organized. The Committee's purpose was to publicize the outrages, and, thus, put pressure on the Polish government to put an end to them. It planned to hold a large protest rally at Madison Square Garden even though Marshall, Richards and Wise advised against it. The latter three believed that representations to the State Department and

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the American representatives to the Paris Peace Conference would be more effective because the American Government would be able to exert pressure on the Polish leadership. Moreover, Marshall reported that the State Department granted permission for a Jewish commission to go to the Ukraine for the purpose of investigation and relief. Marshall and Wise decided to confer with the Committee of Protest to try to persuade it to abandon the mass meeting and accept, instead, the plan of the Jewish commission to the Ukraine. The two finally convinced the Committee to postpone the protest rally.

When a delegation of the American Jewish Congress protested to Secretary of State Lansing in December, 1919, about the continued attacks upon the Jews, Lansing replied that the United States could do very little.

These outrages have been known to us, though indirectly. We have constantly sought ways in which to suppress them if it were possible. The difficulty lies in the fact that Western Russia, particularly Southwestern Russia, is in such a state of turmoil and anarchy that we have been unable even to send a representative there, because there has been no stable government with which to deal.

He went on to say that until the political situation in the

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5 Richards to Cutler, 10/29/19, Harry Cutler folder, Bernard G. Richards Mss, Jewish Theological Seminary.
Ukraine changed, the United States was powerless to do anything; it could not reason with the heads of the warring factions as they were of the "medieval" type, nor did it deem it advisable to send an independent commission to ascertain the facts.6

After Lansing's meeting with the Jewish Congress delegation, the Jewish Congress decided to go forward with its plan to send a Jewish Commission to the Ukraine. Congress leaders met in late December, 1919, with representatives of the Ukrainian Federation of Jews in America and the Joint Distribution Committee, whose agents were already in the Ukraine, to discuss the composition of the commission. The Ukrainian Federation wanted men who were known and trusted by the Jewish masses to be appointed, and it offered the names of men affiliated with its organization. Marshall, Wise, DeHaas, and Boris Bogen of the Joint Distribution Committee emphasized the importance of sending "outstanding personalities and men," who could command the respect of the authorities under such difficult conditions. Wise took the representative of the Ukrainian Federation to task for insisting on sending Jews of Ukrainian ancestry.

Abraham Coralnick of the Congress agreed with Wise, and the Ukrainian Federation dropped the matter. The meeting then bandied about the names of several distinguished Jews; much haggling ensued, and it was finally decided to appoint a committee of three—Marshall, Wise, and Warburg—to come up with a list of names. 7

The three could not agree and they finally decided to let the Joint Distribution Committee members, already on the scene, conduct the investigation. The Commission to the Ukraine met with great resistance from the native population. One of the Commissioners was murdered. Despite the hardships endured, the group reached an agreement with the Soviet Government which permitted Jewish organizations to send relief to their stricken brethren. Jewish organizations merged their relief efforts with those of the American Relief Administration under the leadership of Herbert Hoover. The joint project prevented mass starvation; yet it was only with the end of the civil war, the Soviet consolidation of power, and increased productivity

7 Richards to Mack, 12/22/19, Julian W. Mack folder #1, Bernard G. Richards Mss, Jewish Theological Seminary.
that the conditions of the Jews improved somewhat.\footnote{For more detailed account of relief activities in post-World War I Europe, see: Herbert Agar, The Saving Remnant: An Account of Jewish Survival, (New York, 1960); Oscar Handlin, Continuing Task, (New York, 1965); Joseph Hyman, Twenty-Five Years of American Aid to Jews Overseas, (New York, 1939). Jewish agencies provided only temporary relief. In a letter to The New York Times, Herbert Lehman of the Joint Distribution Committee wrote: We thought a year or two ago that our task was ended, but unfortunately the situation in Eastern . . . Europe is worse today than it ever has been since the armistice. . . . [Men] and women are ruined and without either resources or means of employment. . . ." The New York Times, 3/14/26.}

Though the chaos of the civil war subsided, the Jews of Soviet Russia stood in urgent need of relief. At the Jewish World Relief Conference held in Carlsbad in August, 1924, Russian-Jewish delegates urged their colleagues to send aid as quickly as possible. Jewish Congress representatives to the Carlsbad meeting endorsed the idea of inviting a delegation of Jewish communal workers from the Soviet Union to the United States to further emphasize the need for relief. Wise wrote Louis Marshall of the J.D.C. asking that he meet with the delegation, and sought cooperation with the J.D.C. to provide relief to Russian Jewry. Marshall replied that the relief work in Europe and Palestine was to be shortly terminated. He cited the increasing difficulty of raising funds; the Jews of America, he
continued, were absorbed in local problems on which action had been deferred due to the war relief campaigns. Moreover, he believed it was not the duty of American Jewry continually to provide aid to their European brethren when the rich Jews of Great Britain and Germany refused to do so. Too, relief bred pauperism; "we would breed schnorrers where otherwise they would continue to be non-existent."^9

He was of the opinion that the situation in Eastern Europe was vastly improved and that while poverty was chronic, no catastrophe occurred. No amount of money, he thought, could alleviate the poverty of Jews in such a situation.

Yet, the condition of Soviet Jewry continued to deteriorate. The Jewish merchant had been destroyed. ^10 He was required to seek his livelihood in other fields. If he had the necessary capital to start a new shop or trade, it was confiscated by the Soviet authorities, and oftentimes the would-be merchant or tradesman would be sent to jail. Since the Jews had traditionally been barred from owning land and could not seek employment in the agricultural

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^9 Marshall to Wise, 10/24/24, Miscellaneous folder, Bernard G. Richards Mss, Jewish Theological Seminary.

sphere, it was foolish to think that the Jews of Russia could become farmers. Given the lack of governmental support and necessary farm machinery, the Jews faced a precarious existence. Though officially any manifestation of anti-Semitism was outlawed, the Soviets could not erase almost 300 years of religious bigotry and racial violence. As Louis Marshall noted: "It would be difficult to remedy existing conditions of the Jews in Russia by any practical method."\(^{11}\)

In 1924, the Soviets attempted to resolve the plight of their Jewish citizens by launching with great fanfare a Crimean Colonization Program. The Soviets announced that those Jews who were desirous of living on the land and pursuing agricultural careers would be supported by the Soviet Government and given the necessary farm machinery. Those foreign Jews who wished to see their co-religionists prosper were more than welcome to contribute toward the realization of the project.

It was in this atmosphere that the delegates from the Jewish World Relief Conference arrived in New York in

March, 1925. The delegation met with the Jewish Congress Administrative Committee and Louis Marshall. The delegates stated that the Joint Distribution Committee had refused to cooperate with the Jewish World Relief Conference's attempts to aid the stricken Russian Jews, and that it was the Jewish Congress's responsibility to come forth and aid their brethren.

The Jewish Congress decided to issue a call for a conference of national Jewish organizations to consider the problems presented by the visiting delegation. In the interim, a Provisional American Committee for Jewish Relief in Eastern Europe was established to oversee preparations for the conference; the Provisional American Committee was nothing more than a dummy organization created by the Jewish Congress so as to give the appearance that all factions of American Jewry were represented. The Conference was to be held on May 24, 1925. Though publicly the Conference was to consider the problem of Jewish relief, in reality, it was an attempt to prevent the barons of the Joint Distribution Committee from allocating huge sums of money to

12 The leadership of the Provisional Committee consisted of ranking members of the Jewish Congress--Mack, Lipsky, Barondess, Judge Hugo Pam, Rabbi B. L. Levinthal, Gustave Hartman, and Adolph Stern.
the Crimean Colonization project, and, thus, neglect the development of Palestine.\(^{13}\)

As early as March, 1925, the Joint Distribution Committee started fund-raising drives to save Russian Jewry by putting them "on the land." David A. Brown, a leader of the Joint, publicly stated that the Crimean project was the only alternative open to Russian Jewry. He noted that those Jews who had forsaken city life and had moved to the Crimean had "adjusted to the life of pioneers," and that more than 25,000 Jewish families had made application for land. Brown indicated that there had been a noticeable increase in the number of Jewish families moving away from urban centers and that the Crimean Colonization project reflected that trend. Brown was positive that the Soviets would do all that they had promised; yet, there remained some doubt in his mind that the new colonists would prosper due to the lack of transportation by which the Jewish farmers could get their produce to market. Brown believed, however, that the resulting decrease in anti-Semitism would overshadow these logistical difficulties.\(^{14}\)

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\(^{14}\) The Jewish Advocate (Boston), 7/30/25, section 2, p. 3.
Agitation against the Crimean project by the American Jewish Congress was partially successful. Several days prior to the May 24 conference of national Jewish organizations, the Executive Committee of the Joint announced that it had decided to issue an appeal for an Overseas Chest of $15,000,000 to be used for relief in Eastern Europe. Once the Joint's decision was made public, Wise and others of the Jewish Congress Administrative Committee came to the conclusion that the conference should be postponed and that a statement should be issued declaring that the delegates, by coming to New York, had achieved their purpose. Richards was opposed to this plan. He believed that, if the Conference was held, it would result in much needed free publicity for the Congress and force the Joint to carry out its promise to provide relief. Richards' opinion prevailed and the Conference was held. 15 The Conference adopted a resolution which called for the continuation of relief and consultation with European Jewry to determine how much money was actually needed and how it was to be spent; a conference of all relief agencies should be held to

15 Administrative Committee Meeting, 5/20/25, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1925 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society.
determine the instrumentalities for carrying out the relief projects, and the Joint should cooperate with the proposed conference in relief endeavors.16

Opposition to the J.D.C. Crimean Colonization scheme was manifested by the Congress. Several members believed there were dangers to which the Jewish people might be exposed if the plan, involving huge expenditures of money, was instituted in cooperation with the Soviet government and the Jewish Communists (the Yevsektsia). Rongy believed that cooperation with the Soviet Union in any way would be construed by those not friendly to the Jewish cause as giving recognition to the U.S.S.R., and, thus, not supporting the official position of the United States Government.17 Rongy's arguments were very similar to those advanced by Louis Marshall several months earlier. Said Marshall:

The great difficulty . . . of doing anything in Russia lies not only in the attitude of the government, but of the Jewish Communists, who are constantly playing politics and who seem to be anxious to get their hands


17Administrative Committee Meeting, 6/10/25, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1925 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society.
on American money, in order to give themselves an appearance of importance. . . . We do not propose to play into their hands, nor do we feel justified in asking funds from American Jewry for use in Russia, so long as there exists this chaotic condition and the danger of being misinterpreted and misunderstood by the general public. Our benevolent objectives are likely to be distorted. . . .

A debate ensued over what the official policy of the Jewish Congress was to be; upon the suggestion of Barondess, the Congress decided to confer with the Zionist Organization of America. The Zionist Organization opposed the Crimean project because of its possible harmful effect on the development of Palestine.

Wise then went to Europe for the World Zionist Congress. He learned to his great surprise from Temkin Bernstein that there was not as much objection in Russia to the colonization plan as he had originally thought. Wise believed that if colonization was what the Russian Jews really wanted, he would support them. However, what he did object to was the expenditure of millions for colonization

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18 Marshall to Wise, 10/24/24, Miscellaneous folder, Bernard G. Richards Mss, Jewish Theological Seminary.

19 Administrative Committee Meeting, 7/2/25, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1925 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society.
when other emergency needs had not been met.  At the Zionist Congress in Vienna, Wise attacked the J.D.C. plan as wasteful, inappropriate, and undemocratic. Jacob DeHaas asked why American Jewry should invest money in a country which he characterized as a "blood-drenched morass."  

The controversy over the Crimean Colonization project reached its climax at a relief conference called by the Joint Distribution Committee on September 13, 1925, in Philadelphia. Zionist delegates fought against the idea of submerging Palestine colonization in favor of a scheme which they believed held out no prospect of success. If the Russian colonization scheme was to be implemented as the Joint envisioned, funds for Palestine development would have disappeared, and, hence, the Zionist dream vanish. Proponents of Crimean colonization never argued that funds for Palestine would be spent in the Soviet Union; rather, as Jacob Billikopf stressed, the Joint Distribution Committee only wished to postpone the development of Palestine in favor of the more urgent needs of refugee work, child care,  

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20Wise to Richards, 7/12/-13/25, To be Refiled Folder, Bernard G. Richards Mss, Jewish Theological Seminary.  

medical assistance, and cultural activities. Indeed, the J.D.C. wished to incorporate the numerous fund-raising campaigns into one fund drive to be used as a revolving fund to promote industry and settlement in Palestine.²²

By such arguments, the J.D.C. completely frustrated the Zionists and the Jewish Congress delegates. To prevent a complete defeat, the Jewish Congress delegates proposed that a commission be appointed to study the political, economic, social, and religious ramifications of Crimean colonization. Louis Marshall then rose and told the assembled delegates that the Jewish Congress had already made such an investigation of conditions in Russia, and he proceeded to take from his coat pocket a copy of a report by a journalist, Louis Fischer, whom the Congress had commissioned in 1924.²³


²³Fischer's report was not used by the Congress because in the words of Richards, "His conclusions, reached from a partisan point of view, could not be of any aid to us in determining the question of the different factors involved in the problem." Report of the Executive Committee, 10/25-26/25, Philadelphia folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 6, Executive Committee, 1919-1949, American Jewish Historical Society. The author was not able to find a copy of the Fischer report in any of the manuscript collections.
Wise rose from his seat, and in the tense atmosphere, gave his word of honor that he had never seen or heard of such a report. Richards, who had commissioned Fischer, refused to answer any questions put to him by Wise. The stunned delegates adjourned for the day. The damage had been done; the report served to weaken the opposition's position. The next day, Joseph Barondess, Vice-President of the Jewish Congress, without consulting any of his colleagues on the Administrative Committee, interrupted Wise and made a motion for "Shalom!" Opponents of the Congress inferred from Barondess's motion that the Zionist forces wanted a compromise, and that Barondess was pulling Wise "out of a hole." Congress delegates were amazed and dismayed by the motion; Marshall seized upon the faux pas and moved that negotiations commence immediately to offer the Conference a compromise resolution. Disorganized and disheartened, opponents of Crimean Colonization accepted a weak resolution about the claims of Palestine in the consideration of all Jewish reconstruction plans. While the Conference did not endorse "any new or untried task in the field of social amelioration and reconstruction," it believed it "necessary and inevitable to continue the work initiated by the Joint Distribution Committee four years
ago in the field of industry and resettlement." In a letter to Chaim Weizmann, Wise stated: "I think we have made the very best of a bad bargain, or putting it differently, that we have gotten out of the situation as honorably as could be done."25

The leaders of the Joint Distribution Committee's $15,000,000 fund-raising campaign made little, if any, mention of the compromise resolution which dealt with Palestine development. Reform Rabbis affiliated with the Central Conference of American Rabbis voted down an endorsement of the Palestine aid plank, while giving their approval to Crimean Colonization. Jewish Congress leaders insisted that the J.D.C. publish a budgetary statement indicating how the money collected was to be allocated and what percentage of the fund was to go toward Palestine development projects. Louis Marshall explained: "It is not claimed that the fund to be collected was to be expended otherwise than in Europe."26 The J.D.C. Executive Committee finally released a detailed statement of the amounts to be spent in the

24 Ibid.
25 Wise to Weizmann, 9/14/25, Stephen S. Wise Mss, Box 1001, American Jewish Archives.
Crimea. Agricultural and reconstruction projects in Russia were to cost approximately $4,500,000 for a three year period and $1,500,000 was to be invested in the Palestine Economic Corporation. The J.D.C. reduced the amount targeted for the Crimea by almost 50 per cent. It is not known why such cuts were made; however, the J.D.C. had always been suspicious of the Soviets and their treatment of Russian Jews. One observer thought that the reduced allocation was a deliberate attempt to foster on the Zionists what he believed to be the ultimate failure of the Crimean Colonization scheme. "They will say, and the Soviet people will certainly say, that it was due to the Zionist agitation that the scheme was not adequately financed." 27

Crimean colonization fell far short of Soviet and American Jewry's expectations. The millions invested brought very meagre results. The Soviets in 1929 began their drive to industrialize, and agricultural pursuits were deemphasized. 28 Stalin's economic volte face was combined with a drive to erase the vestiges of Old Russian life. Insofar as

27 Agronsky to Richards, 12/1/25, Gershon Agronsky folder, Bernard G. Richards Mss, Jewish Theological Seminary.

this policy concerned the Jews, Soviet authorities proscribed the use of the Hebrew language, the Jewish religion, and Zionist agitation. The plight of the Jews in Soviet Russia was further complicated by the activities of the Yevsektsia, the Jewish branch of the Communist Party, which sought to demonstrate its loyalty to Stalin by persecuting the Jews.29

In May, 1929, Wise suggested to the Jewish Congress Administrative Committee that something be done to arouse Jewish public opinion about the plight of their brethren in the Soviet Union. A large mass meeting was suggested by some, but was rejected in favor of the appointment of a special committee to further investigate the alleged persecutions. The special committee investigated and suggested that Wise, Richards, and Bernard Deutsch confer with Senator William Borah to ascertain his views of the situation.30

29Report of the Administrative Committee to the American Jewish Congress, 1930 folder, pp. 16-17, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society.

30Administrative Committee Meetings, 5/29/29, 6/10/29, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1929 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society.
Borah met with Wise and Richards. The Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee sympathized with the plight of Russian Jewry, but did not offer any suggestions as to how the American Jewish Congress could alleviate the situation.

At an Administrative Committee meeting held on October 31, 1929, Rabbi Wise thought that conditions in Russia warranted protest action. However, he believed that the time was not right for such action because Palestine's situation was uppermost in the minds of American Jewry. Until the situation in the Holy Land calmed, he did not think it appropriate to tackle the Russian-Jewish situation. Joseph Tenenbaum disagreed with the Rabbi's assessment. He believed that the "urgent situation in Russia could [not] wait for developments with regard to Palestine." He urged the issues be handled separately but concurrently.  

31 Administrative Committee Meeting, 10/31/29, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1929 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society. The Committee also corresponded with Jewish organizations in countries whose governments had formal diplomatic relations with the U.S.S.R.; moreover, Rabbi Isaac J. Scheursohn of the U.S.S.R. was interviewed while on a visit to the United States.
On the basis of the special committee's investigations and new reports emanating from the U.S.S.R., the American Jewish Congress issued a call for a conference of national Jewish organizations to be held in New York on December 8, 1929. Yet, there was still much apprehension as to how effective protest action would be. The President of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations, Rabbi Herbert Goldstein, informed the Jewish Congress that his organization would not be represented at the conference, and that the best way to handle the situation was certainly not by public protest. The Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the United Synagogue of America, and the Central Jewish Conference also declined invitations.

Dr. Julian Morgenstern of the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati was most adamant in his opposition to public demonstrations. In a letter to Bernard Richards, Morgenstern did not find the situation of Russian Jewry comprehensible. He regarded their plight in much the same light as the experience of the Jews of Central Europe nearly a

32 Administrative Committee Meeting, 12/4/29, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1929 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society. Rabbi Goldstein made no suggestion as to what other method should be used.
century before. Then as now, the Jew and Jewish life had stood still because of their forced existence in the ghetto. He attributed, therefore, the turmoil in Russia to the Soviets' attempt "to catch up with the rest of the world." He naively believed that the solution to the Jews' problems in the Soviet Union was their acceptance of Reform Judaism.

The soul of Judaism and the soul of the Jewish people with it can find true self-expression only in spiritual progress and even in spiritual leadership. We must realize that the Yevsektsia are striving for this, even though we must condemn their methods and their goals.33

The Conference took place on schedule. Delegates heard reports on conditions in Russia from Professor M. Kroll, a Russian emigre residing in Paris, and Leo M. Glassman, the Moscow correspondent for the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. The delegates authorized the President of the American Jewish Congress to name a Committee on the Repression of Judaism in Soviet Russia to replace the investigatory committee which had functioned since May 29. The delegates also gave their approval to a national protest day to be

33 Morgenstern to Richards, 1/3/30, in possession of Mrs. Ruth Richards Eisenstein, New York City, Archives of the Jewish Information Bureau. Richards's response may be found in a letter to the editor of the Jewish Daily Bulletin, 4/4/30.
Mass protest meetings were held in many cities across the country. So as not to represent the issue as one of Jew versus the Soviet Union, the Jewish Congress sought the support of leading Christian organizations. On January 2, 1930, Richards met with a sub-committee of the American Committee on the Rights of Religious Minorities, whose function was to survey conditions in the Soviet Union. Richards asked them to co-sponsor a Carnegie Hall mass meeting. While the sub-committee was anxious to cooperate, they deferred action until they could consult Senator Borah. By late February, Borah assured the representatives that protest rallies would not be detrimental to Russian Jewry; indeed, he thought it might be of some benefit, and offered to address the gathering. The sub-committee decided to schedule the mass meeting for March 19. However, Wise said that Jews should not gather on that date as it had been set aside by Catholics to protest. It was finally decided that definite plans would be finalized at the Conference of Organizations to be held on February 26. At the Conference,  

the delegates designated March 16, 1930, as the Jewish protest day.35

Many Jews in the United States were opposed to the Jewish Congress's protest action. Elliot Cohen of the Menorah Journal told the Jewish Congress Administrative Committee that while protest action was necessary, the Jewish Congress should not ally itself with the enemies of the Soviet Union; he did not specify who were the "enemies." He also accused the Congress of failing to consider the consequences of its actions which, he stated, were taken "on the spur of the moment." Richards replied that the protest was not against any particular social, economic, or political philosophy, but against the denial of fundamental human rights.36 Indeed, Wise, speaking before a public meeting at Town Hall, advocated the recognition of the Soviet Union, though he said that the Soviet Union would never be recognized by the United States as long as it practiced religious persecution. He discounted official representations from the United States government because it had no right to

35 Administrative Committee Meetings, 1/8/30, 2/6/30, 2/25/30, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1930 folder. American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society.

36 Ibid.
protest against any internal affairs in "one of the most powerful governments in the world because we have denied ourselves that right by our non-recognition policy."^{37}

The Committee on the Suppression of Judaism in Soviet Russia realized that public pressure would not alone relieve the plight of their co-religionists. At a meeting on April 7, it recommended that an effort be made to secure Canadian visas for the persecuted Russian Zionists; that the Jewish Congress and other Jewish organizations use their influence in Congress to obtain special immigration privileges for the victims of religious persecution; to meet and discuss with representatives of the Amtorg (American Trade Organization, a quasi-private corporation created by the Soviets to foster better trade relations with the United States) the question of permitting certain rabbis and Jewish scholars to emigrate from the U.S.S.R.^{38}

Canadian officials were reluctant to discuss immigration waivers as was the United States Congress. Discussions with Amtorg officials proved fruitless. Jewish Congress

^{38}Administrative Committee Meeting, 4/23/30, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1930 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society.
leaders agreed to work in conjunction with the American Jewish Committee and the Joint Distribution Committee in the matter of rabbinical emigration. The Secretary of the J.D.C., Joseph C. Hyman, informed Richards that he had referred the problem to the European director of the J.D.C. However, the Moscow office of the J.D.C. later wrote Richards that it was not engaged in this type of work and referred him to another organization, the Ezras Torah "which organization, should some general ruling be obtained from the Soviet Government, would be in a position to advise." 39

It is not certain to what extent the Jewish Congress protest movement influenced Josef Stalin. Dr. John Morehead told Richards of a conversation he had had with Paul Schaffer of the Berliner Tageblatt during which Schaffer told him that the Jewish Congress protest movement was quite effective. One indication of a relaxed atmosphere within the Soviet Union was the liquidation of the Yevsektsia as an organized group. To be sure, Stalin did not alleviate the pressure on the Jews or any other part of the population until forced

collectivization was achieved.  

Russian Jews still suffered economic hardships. The heralded Five Year Plan forced Jews into occupations which were unfamiliar to them. Though theoretically the Jews of the Soviet Union enjoyed all the rights and privileges of Soviet citizenship, three centuries of discrimination and prejudice could not be dispelled by administrative decree. Jews, particularly in the provinces, continued to be harassed by non-Jews. The Hebrew language and Zionist agitation were still regarded by Soviet authorities as counter-revolutionary; those suspected of Zionist activity were "outlawed" and sent into exile in one of the many prison camps of the G.P.U. Moreover, social pressure against any form of religious expression and the prohibition of teaching in the schools the customs and traditions of Judaism meant the eventual extinction of the Jewish community in the Soviet Union.


41 Ibid., pp. 256-259.


43 Ibid., pp. 158-171.
About mid-January, 1932, Ben Zion Katz, correspondent for the Jewish Morning Journal, cabled the Jewish Congress alleging that large numbers of Jews were being arrested and incarcerated. The imprisoned Jews were not released until a ransom of foreign exchange or gold was paid by relatives. The Jewish Congress Administrative Committee appointed a special committee to investigate Katz's allegations. Tygel reported that he was "not yet convinced that this action on the part of the secret police is particularly aimed at the Jews." He stated that Soviet policy had always been geared to the confiscation of private wealth and to stop foreign exchange speculation; thus, Soviet bureaucrats traced all foreign exchange entering the country. The G.P.U. maintained a list of all those who received American dollars, and when the recipient was asked to give a complete accounting and could not do so, since he had acquired the exchange in an illegal way, the authorities arrested him. Tygel, however, recommended that the Jewish Congress protest to the Soviet government. Others on the Administrative Committee opposed this course of action as they

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44 Administrative Committee Meeting, 2/17/32, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1932 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2. Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society.
believed that not enough information was available to warrant such a move.\textsuperscript{45}

By mid-March, 1932, the Jewish Congress received additional evidence about the "Valuta Terror." Communications from Palestine corroborated earlier reports, and such notables as Chaim Bialik and Dr. M. Glucksohn urged a world-wide protest. "Every moment of silence is really sinful...," Bialik declared.\textsuperscript{46} Despite Bialik's plea, the Jewish Congress refused to take action. Instead, it directed a communication to the Joint Foreign Committee in London requesting it to take the matter up with the Soviet Ambassador to Great Britain, and to inform him that "we are awaiting word from you before we make public the mass of documentary evidence...we have on hand." Lucien Wolf of the Joint Foreign Committee replied that upon investigation, there was no substance to the allegations; in view of this, he did not recommend any action be taken.\textsuperscript{47} The conflicting reports left the

\textsuperscript{45}\textit{Ibid.}


\textsuperscript{47}\textit{Minutes of American Jewish Congress Committee on Problems in Foreign Lands, 5/4/32, in possession of Mrs. Ruth Richards Eisenstein, New York City, Archives of the Jewish Information Bureau.}
Jewish Congress in a quandary.

Rabbi Wise referred to the fact that Rabbi Wohl of Cincinnati expected to visit the Soviet Union in the near future, and, as he told Wise, was willing to negotiate with the Soviets to facilitate emigration and alleviate the Valuta Terror. Wise doubted the wisdom of doing this through Wohl, because he did not think him of enough influence and stature to make the Soviets listen. Charles Cowen then suggested that the Soviet representative in Washington be contacted. Though a memorandum on the Valuta Terror was presented to the Soviet liaison in Washington through an intermediary, arrests of Jews continued.

Jewish Congress leaders were being urged to protest the Valuta Terror by its constituent organizations. They wished a definite promise from the Soviet Government that it would end the outrages; if it refused to do so, the Jewish Congress "will be forced against its will to commence a series to protest meetings throughout the country, directing the attention of the public to the inhuman conduct of the Soviet authorities in this matter."48 The Congress, however,

48 Administrative Committee Meeting, 3/29/32, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1932 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society.
did not carry out its threat. By December, 1932, Wise, Richards, and other leaders in the Congress decided not to protest at all because it was hoped that with the recognition of the Soviet Union, it might be possible for world Jewry to contact their brethren in that country. Richards explained: "In view of the fact that F.D.R. may recognize the U.S.S.R., we should therefore not do anything at this moment to jeopardize such recognition."49

American recognition of Stalinist Russia did not appreciably affect the condition of Soviet Jewry. The failure of the Crimean Colonization scheme did not deter the Soviet authorities from trying to find some place in that vast country where the Jews would not bother anyone. As late as June, 1932, a representative of the U.S.S.R. presented a proposal to the American Jewish Congress asking it to help facilitate the settlement of Jewish tradesmen and mechanics in the Biro-Bidzhan region. Soviet officials assured the Administrative Committee that they would arrange for the transportation and settlement of those Jews who wished to go there. As soon as 50,000 Jews had definitely

49Administrative Committee Meeting, 12/27/32, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1932 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society.
established themselves in their new homes, Biro-Bidzhan would be declared an independent republic. The Congress did not accept the proposal.\textsuperscript{50}

Jewish Congress leaders could no more influence Soviet authorities than could any institution or government. The American Jewish Congress throughout the period opposed Soviet plans for its Jewish citizens. Indeed, the fight between the American Jewish Congress and the Joint Distribution Committee over the Crimean Colonization scheme must have convinced the Soviet leadership that the Jewish Congress was unalterably opposed to their plans for its Jewish citizens. To be sure, Stalin and his colleagues must have believed that the Jewish Congress's advocacy of Palestine as a Jewish homeland did not correspond to the ideal of "the workers' state." Moreover, the plight of Soviet Jewry was, to some extent, a reflection of Russia's past. Though the Jews in the Soviet Union were theoretically given the same rights and privileges as any other citizen, the Soviet Government could not erase discrimination and intolerance by administrative fiat. Russia was, for all intents and

\textsuperscript{50}Report of the Administrative Committee of the American Jewish Congress, 10/31 to 6/32, p. 17. American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Zionist Archives and Library.
purposes, still a country trying to come into the twentieth century, and the traditions, albeit bad ones, died slowly.

Indeed, Stalin was willing to work with any organization that would serve his purposes; thus, the Valuta Terror stopped when Stalin decided that cooperation with world Jewry might be helpful in his fight with Hitler. Too, Stalin was willing to overlook ideology when it suited his purposes. Thus, even after the fight over the Crimean Colonization, he was willing to seek the American Jewish Congress's cooperation for his Biro-Bidzhan scheme. It was not until the American Jewish Congress and Josef Stalin faced a common enemy that the two entered into an unholy alliance.
THE AMERICAN JEWISH CONGRESS:
A HISTORY, 1914-1950
Volume II

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By
Morris Frommer, B.A., M.A.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University
1978

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CHAPTER VI

THE AMERICAN JEWISH CONGRESS AND THE JEWISH BOYCOTT OF GERMAN GOODS

The American Jewish Congress was completely unprepared to meet the challenge posed by Adolf Hitler. Leaders of the Jewish Congress miscalculated the threat posed by Hitler; once they realized the significance of the Nazi movement, they resorted to measures which were ineffectual, mismanaged, and,ironically, designed to make the American Jewish Congress the preeminent organization of American Jewry.

Adolf Hitler's meteoric rise to power in Germany was not considered to be catastrophic by many Jewish observers in the United States. Though the American Jewish Congress and the American Jewish Committee were aware of who Hitler was and what he advocated, they, like the rest of the world, did not consider him to be a serious threat to world peace or German Jewry. Anti-Semitism in Germany had always been present, and the murder in 1923 of Walter Rathenau, the
brilliant architect and administrator of Germany's economic self-sufficiency program during World War I, was hardly noticed by Jewish organizations in the United States. Rabbi Wise viewed the assassination as a "sacrifice upon the altar of anti-Jewish passion."¹ The Munich Beer Hall Putsch of 1923 and disturbances in Berlin led the American Jewish Congress to cable the German Ambassador; telegrams inquiring about the situation were sent to Jewish Organizations in Europe. Once the disturbances abated, the Jewish Congress turned its attention elsewhere. Louis Marshall of the American Jewish Committee characterized the Nazi Party as the "German Ku Klux Klan," and stated that the "utterances of that unspeakable group are nothing more than sound and fury. . . . There is not the slightest likelihood that their plan will ever be carried out to the slightest extent."²

¹Report of the Executive Committee, p. 3, Executive Committee Reports, 1923 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 6, Executive Committee, 1916-1949, American Jewish Historical Society.

²Administrative Committee Special Meeting, 11/8/23; October-December folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society; quoted in Naomi Cohen, Not Free to Desist, p. 147.
Even after the world depression made its impact on Germany and the resultant success of the Nazi Party in the Reichstag elections of 1930, Jewish organizations in the United States were ambivalent about Hitler. Stephen Wise believed that the German people would ultimately reject Hitler. He stated:

It is solacing to remember that whatever anti-Semitism there is in Germany today is bound up with the elements of disorder, reaction, and destruction throughout Germany. It is not Germany at its best and highest that is indulging in anti-Semitic riots, but only rowdism, which by its conduct, dishonors Germany as truly as it hurts Germany's loyal Jewish citizens; not the Germany of Rathenau and Stresemann, but the Germany of Hitler.3

Albert Einstein thought the Jews of Germany had nothing to fear from Hitler.4

Despite such optimistic observations, there were some who recognized the serious plight of German Jewry. Jacob Landau of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency believed the situation in Germany was more desperate than the Jewish situation in Poland, Roumania, and Russia combined. He reported that the anti-Semitic movement in Germany was part of an

3 The New York Times, 10/20/30, p. 44. It is interesting to note that the Yiddish press was predicting the worst for German Jewry in 1930 and 1931.

4 The American Israelite, 10/23/30, p. 4.
international conspiracy, and that Hitler had established offices in Geneva to strengthen his contacts with such organizations as the "Aryan Christian Alliance" and the "World League Against the Lie." Moreover, he cited the growth of the Hugenburg press, the large circulation of two Nazi dailies, and innumerable Nazi weeklies as indicative of the power and popularity of the Nazi Party. He concluded:

If in such a country as Germany where the Jews have been as thoroughly assimilated in language, manners, and culture, there could arise such anti-Jewish fanaticism then the situation is extremely serious. . . .

If the Jews of the world failed to counteract the Hitler menace their position and interests were bound to be affected. Therefore, he urged American Jews to protest Nazi policies and actions as being un-American, and hoped that they would solicit non-Jews to express their abhorrence of Hitler. Joseph Tenenbaum, a urologist who was to become the leader of the Jewish Congress boycott program, surveyed the situation in Germany in early 1931 for the American Jewish Congress. He stated that the Jewish

5Report of Meeting of the Sub-Committee on Germany of the American Jewish Committee, 10/8/31, American Jewish Committee/Foreign Countries/Germany/1931-1933.
population there was destitute, intimidated by the Nazis and other anti-Semitic organizations, and "submerged in bleak despair. Jew-baiting and Jew-beating are the order of the day."\(^6\) Tenenbaum's assessment of the situation was not disputed by the Administrative Committee. Bernard Richards wrote Tenenbaum that he had pictured the situation in such terms that the "reader would, in fact, be left with an impression that the whole situation is utterly hopeless and that nothing can be done to improve conditions." Richards's concern, however, was on what effect the report would have on the Jewish Congress. If the situation was as hopeless as stated, then why would Jews wish to contribute to an organization whose task resembled that of Don Quixote's.\(^7\)

By late 1931, leaders of the American Jewish Congress realized that the Nazi movement was more menacing than any of them had heretofore realized; yet, they were in a quandary as to what action could be taken. Bernard Deutsch, President of the Jewish Congress, suggested that


\(^7\)Richards to Tenenbaum, 4/14/31, Stephen S. Wise folder #4, Bernard G. Richards Mss, Jewish Theological Seminary.
Dr. Bernard Kahn of the Joint Foreign Committee in London be contacted for the purpose of ascertaining the attitude of German Jewry toward outside help, and to ask what the Congress could do to alleviate the situation. Deutsch's proposal was not accepted enthusiastically by the Administrative Committee, and he dropped the matter. Wise later suggested that one or two Jewish Congress representatives go to Germany and discuss the problem with the leaders of German Jewry, to plan strategy in case Hitler came to power. If this proposal was not amenable to the Congress, he stated that President Hoover should be urged to send a "distinguished non-Jew to Germany to discuss the whole matter with President Hindenburg and Chancellor Brunning." By January, 1932, Wise's proposals were put on the back-burner, and he opted for a suggestion made by Nahum Goldman that the Jewish Congress approach the American Jewish Committee on the subject of holding a joint conference to discuss the German situation. The Administrative Committee

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8 Administrative Committee Meeting, 10/27/31, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1931 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society.

of the Congress accepted this option, and authorized Deutsch to contact Cyrus Adler.

The two exchanged letters, and each pledged his organization to holding a conference. By mid-January, 1932, no action had yet been taken. Harry Schneidermann of the American Jewish Committee informed Richards that he was trying to select a suitable date, but that it would be at least two weeks before they could meet. Wise was furious at the American Jewish Committee for what he considered to be unnecessary delays and dilatory tactics.\(^\text{10}\) A telegram

\(^{10}\) Administrative Committee Meeting, 1/19/32, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1932 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society. Once before the Jewish Congress had attempted to formalize their relations with the American Jewish Committee. The 1929 Congress Convention authorized Deutsch to appoint a committee "which shall arrange for an early conference of representatives of the . . . Committee and the . . . Congress to the end that sorely needed unity of action with respect to Jewish problems may be affected and present and potential causes of discord in Jewish life be then averted." Deutsch contacted Louis Marshall, and they agreed to appoint committees to confer with each other. However, Marshall died while vacationing in Europe, and nothing further happened. Wise was anxious to secure cooperation, and, despite opposition from Richards, Tenenbaum, and others, a modus operandi was reached with the Committee. Mutual distrust, however, prevented any real cooperation between the two groups. Adler wrote Deutsch: "You say that the understanding is to be that any action taken by you 'will be consistent with the fundamental principles of your organization, that its policy should reflect the judgment of its duly elected
was sent to the Committee suggesting that the joint conference meet on January 21; however, the meeting did not take place until one week later.

At the meeting, Deutsch told the American Jewish Committee representatives that his organization was considering the advisability of requesting President Hoover to ask one of the American delegates to the forthcoming disarmament conference at Geneva to make representations to the German officials "regarding the concern, prevailing in America," over the Nazi Party's anti-Semitic program. He feared that it was already too late to do this. Schneidermann disagreed; he stated that time was not of the essence, representatives on either the Executive or Administrative Committee.' If [this statement] means that you must invariably refer back to your Executive or Administrative Committee, it appears to me such procedure, might, especially in cases of emergency, actually embarrass, if not paralyze action. . . .

"[The] limitations insisted upon by the Congress . . . leaves me with a feeling that there is some reservation in your minds which, if you want to impose them, this Committee ought to carefully consider, but put in the way you have put it they are indefinite and hence I do not know how to meet them. . . ." He further stated that if, during an emergency, the Congress invoked those conditions, then the Committee would be put in a position where it could not take any action until such time as the Congress Executive or Administrative Committee had decided on a course of action. See Administrative Committee Meeting, 2/25/30, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1930 folder, American Jewish Congress Msx, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society.
but that it would not be effective "in view of the magnitude of the Hitler party and the tremendous propaganda which it had been carrying on for so many years." David M. Bressler of the Committee cautioned the Jewish Congress not to be too hasty in its attempts to ease the situation; he stated that Jewish organizations in Germany and Great Britain had cautioned the American Jewish Committee not to do anything "because of the danger that such steps would be utilized as ammunition by the Nazis." Moreover, Schneidermann stated that Adler had been in contact with Max Warburg of Germany and was left with the impression that Warburg discounted the effects of Hitler's accession to power. Indeed, should the National Socialists come to power,

the resulting responsibilities would act as a strong sobering influence and they would not carry out many of the planks of their platform, which were made part of it largely in the nature of bait to win adherents.\[11\]

Baruch Zuckerman disagreed with Warburg's analysis. He stated that the Nazis would not be awed by their accession to power; he believed that the anti-Semitic part of

their program would be carried out as quickly and ruthlessly as possible. He scoffed at the charge that the Hitlerites would turn any Jewish action to their advantage; to remain silent,

we may arouse the suspicion that we are engaged in some underhand activities because no reasonable person will be able to believe that the Jews of America are inactive in the face of the danger...

Unless steps were taken now to counteract Hitler, mass action "may be necessary later." He defined mass action as protest meetings, parades, and mass demonstrations. Lewis L. Strauss of the American Jewish Committee stated that such actions as Zuckerman recommended, i.e., influential publicists condemning Hitler, would be ineffective because the German people were not only anti-Jewish, but anti-American. He advocated doing anything to strengthen the Brunning government, and, if that was to prove futile, to prevent Hitler from executing his anti-Semitic program once he attained power. He did not elaborate what methods he would employ to achieve this end.

Bressler admitted, as did Deutsch, that neither group knew what to do to meet the challenge. Bressler stated that the American Jewish Committee had decided on three steps which, he admitted, were of limited value: (1) the
attempt to deport alien National Socialist agitators, (2) the organization of a League of Human Rights; and, (3) the creation by the American Jewish Committee of a special German Department to keep in touch with the situation in Germany through the German press. Nathan Perlman of the Congress stated that since it was evident that neither organization knew what to do, he suggested a small delegation go to Washington to confer with Senator Borah and other members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Strauss rejected this idea because he believed that the time was not right for such action.

It was finally decided that Jewish leaders in Germany be contacted and asked whether they favored a conference with representatives of the Congress and the Committee; if they deemed a conference inadvisable, what suggestions did they have? After more meetings, the joint conference agreed to contact Dr. Ludwig Hollander and ask him to poll other leading Jews in Germany as to what action American Jewry should take. When notified of the decision, many of the Jewish Congress Administrative Committee expressed their impatience at what they believed were

\[12\text{ibid.}\]
interminable delays; some demanded immediate action. Wise explained that since the Congress had agreed to wait for Hollander's response, "our hands are tied."\textsuperscript{13}

While awaiting Hollander's reply, Wise met with Senator Borah on March 8, and requested the Senator to issue a statement protesting Hitler's anti-Semitic program. Borah agreed to do this if it could be shown that Hitler was using his name to advance the Nazi campaign. The Senator also told Wise that it might be more effective if President Hoover could denounce the Nazi terror tactics, and urged that Adolph Ochs of The New York Times interview the President. Wise then told Cyrus Adler of his conversation with Borah and asked him to contact Ochs. Ochs refused, however, to request an interview. Adler then told Wise that he was going to contact the Foreign Editor of the Scripps-Howard Syndicate to give him some background material on the Hitler anti-Jewish campaign.

On March 10, the New York World Telegram published a story which claimed that Adler, as President of the American Jewish Committee, asked Borah to issue a statement

\textsuperscript{13}Administrative Committee Meeting, 3/1/32, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1932 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society.
denouncing Hitler. The Jewish Congress considered this act as a breach of its agreement with the Committee, namely that both bodies would remain silent on the German situation, and the Administrative Committee was ready to break off relations with Adler and his group. A letter to this effect was prepared, but the next day, Schneidermann of the Committee informed Wise that Adler had not authorized such a statement. Though the letter was withheld, it is significant to note that the American Jewish Congress wished to act independently on the matter.\(^\text{14}\)

Wise was being pressured by the Administrative Committee to do something. He felt bound by his agreement with the American Jewish Committee, so he tried to channel the prevailing discontent in the Congress into more constructive activities. Thus, in late March, 1932, a special committee was created to study the growth of the Nazi movement in the United States. Finally, reports from Hollander and Sidney Matz, an American Jewish Congress member who had

\(^{14}\) Administrative Committee Meeting, 3/15/32, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1932 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society. The American Jewish Congress did not make an attempt to inquire of Adler whether the story was true. It was Schneidermann of the American Jewish Committee who called Wise.
been traveling in Germany, were received. Hollander told them "Hands off, please!" Matz interviewed about thirty Jewish leaders, all of whom, with the exception of George Bernhard, editor of the *Vossische Zeitung*, stated:

> Say to Rabbi Wise that he not concern himself with Jewish affairs in Germany. If he insists upon dealing with Jewish affairs in Europe, let him occupy himself with Jewish problems in Poland and Roumania.\(^\text{15}\)

Matz reported later that Bernhard suggested it might help the Jews in Germany if non-Jews in the United States would criticize the Nazi program. Matz also stated that the American Ambassador in Germany told him that the United States Government could do nothing officially for German Jewry if the disturbances continued. "Help must come from [the Jews of] America," he said. Moreover, Matz reported that most Jewish leaders did not think the situation had as yet become critical.

German Jewry's cautious attitude toward Hitler was echoed by Anglo-Jewish newspapers in the United States. The *American Israelite* editorialized, after the German state

\(^{15}\text{Stephen S. Wise, Challenging Years, pp. 234-235; Administrative Committee Meeting, 4/12/32, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1932 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society.}\)
elections in March, 1932, that the fact that the Nazis made substantial gains "may bring about their disintegration as a party." Hitler's increased power was welcomed by the newspaper. The editors reasoned that the depression and resultant social chaos had toppled more stable governments than Hitler could ever hope to achieve. Bankers, industrialists, politicians of all persuasions are all equally helpless in the face of the economic debacle. Every government is ineffective today. Every government is doomed to be a scapegoat. . . . Hitler was bound to come into power. It might as well be now, when his weakness, in the face of a world problem, may destroy him utterly. . . .16

Nazi propagandists continually stressed the fact that respected German citizens of the Jewish faith had nothing to fear from Hitler; the Nazis only wished to rid the German nation of the Jewish immigrant element, the so-called "Ost-Judentum." To be sure, the anti-Jewish agitation was not directed against the Jew because of his religious beliefs, but against his political views. "Look at the American Socialists and Communists and you will see how many of them are immigrant Jews, especially aliens," stated

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16 The American Israelite, 5/5/32, p. 4.
one propagandist. Such words reinforced the belief, particularly among assimilated German-Jewish citizens of the United States, that Hitler only wished to keep Germany free from rabble-rousing political agitators who just happened to be of the Jewish faith. He only wished to suppress the Bolshevik half of the "Bolshevik-Jew."

Hitler was appointed Chancellor on January 30, 1933. On February 6, 1933, Wise and Deutsch conferred with the German Ambassador to the United States, Baron von Prittwitz, with regard to the situation of German Jewry. The Ambassador opined that much of what Hitler said before his appointment as Chancellor was only campaign propaganda; Wise asked von Prittwitz to express his opinions publicly so as to reassure and allay the unrest in American Jewry. The Ambassador, however, refused to do this.

The Jewish Congress Administrative Committee met the next day. Professor Salo Baron told the group that Germany

17 Administrative Committee Meeting, 7/21/32, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1932 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society.

18 Administrative Committee Meeting, 2/7/33, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1933 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society.
had no alternative--"either it is to be Nazi or Communist, and that Hindenburg accepted Hitler with grave reluctance."
Baron believed that some form of protest action should be taken before the German election of March 5, but that it should be of such a nature so as not to supply the Nazis with more ammunition for their anti-Semitic campaign.
Abraham H. Cohen, Executive Director of the Congress, suggested a mass or protest meeting as an initial step; Israel Thurman believed that a protest meeting "per se" was insufficient. He suggested that a special committee be appointed to formulate plans for the handling of the emergency; that every man of prominence be urged to raise his voice in public protest; and that the Congress should seek the cooperation of the German language newspapers in New York. Deutsch then appointed a special committee of five--Baron, Rabbi Jacob Cohen, Israel Thurman, Joseph Tenenbaum, and Horace Kallen--to put into effect Thurman's proposals.19 Richards was of the opinion that the situation was so fraught with danger that the Congress should adopt a policy of "watchful waiting" and not one of precipitous action. Richards was in the minority; Cohen contended that nothing

19 Ibid.
the Congress "would do would precipitate action." He believed it to be the moral duty of the Congress to act in the gravest of situations. The Administrative Committee decided to attend a conference called by the B'nai Brith, at which the three major Jewish organizations in the United States would confer on the German situation.

The American Jewish Committee could do little despite the fact that the "present situation is full of dynamite for our people in Germany." It, too, urged non-Jews to speak out against Hitler, and sent money to Jewish organizations in Germany to help them. The Committee discounted any efforts made by the American Government on behalf of their co-religionists. Morris Waldman stated that since the end of World War One, American foreign policy had been one of non-intervention, except where "American citizens or their business interests were directly involved." He said that the American Jewish Committee was trying to bring about the return to the "former humanitarian foreign policy;" however, that depended on the manner "in which the questions of debts and disarmaments are settled."

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20 Ibid.
21 Ibid.
The Committee was waiting for its conference with the Congress and the B'nai Brith to see what could be done.22

The three groups met on February 22, 1933. A policy of unified action was discussed but no decision was reached. The conferees did agree to a suggestion that a smaller committee, consisting of the President and two representatives from each organization meet on a regular basis to discuss the situation. All agreed that obtaining the cooperation of non-Jews in the fight against Hitler was essential. Moreover, the three groups would coordinate their efforts to see that President-elect Roosevelt appoint a sympathetic American ambassador to Germany. Alfred Cohen of the B'nai Brith told the gathering that he was assured by reliable sources in Germany that Hitler would not survive the March 5 election.23 Thus, the three groups did little else but pursue their own course, and no one protested when the Congress sponsored a mass meeting at Carnegie Hall on "Hitlerism and its Meaning."

22Waldman to Stern, 2/16/33, American Jewish Committee/Germany.

23Administrative Committee Meeting, 2/28/33, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1933 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society.
The Administrative Committee of the Jewish Congress was being pressured by its constituent organizations and the Yiddish press, particularly, Samuel Margoshes, Editor of Der Tog, to protest formally the situation in Germany. Wise, however, was very reluctant to approach President Roosevelt; he stated: "We hesitate to use up any of Roosevelt's limited time and to add to his terrible cares." Moreover, relations between the two had not been very amicable since they had clashed over the ouster of Mayor James Walker of New York. But Wise and Deutsch were forced to call for protest action when the National Executive Committee met on March 12, 1933. They tried but could not prevent the passage of a resolution which authorized the Executive Committee to

sponsor a series of meetings to voice the protest of the American people against the outrages committed against the Jewish citizens of Germany and to call

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25 The Seabury Investigation Committee concluded that Walker should be removed from office. Roosevelt, then Governor of New York, proceeded slowly. Wise and John Haynes Holmes, who worked for the Reform Committee of One Hundred, were impatient and criticized F.D.R. for moving too slowly. He, in turn, severely criticized Wise and Holmes; hence, the split.
upon the civilized peoples of the world to express their disapproval of the tacit conduct of the German Government in the face of attacks upon peaceful citizens...

The Administrative Committee, at its March 14 meeting, also decided to send a delegation to Washington to confer with government officials, and invited the American Jewish Committee and the B'nai Brith to join the protest actions.

The American Jewish Committee and the B'nai Brith met separately and urged the American Jewish Congress to refrain from sponsoring any mass demonstrations until such time as the Joint Conference on Germany could meet. The Congress refused to comply with this request; Schneidermann of the Committee told Cohen that "if the Congress proceeded with their plans there no longer would be joint action of the three organizations in this matter."  

In accordance with the March 12 resolution, the Jewish Congress issued a call for a conference of all national


\[27\] Ibid., pp. 42-43. See also, Administrative Committee Meeting, 3/14/33, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1933 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society.
and local Jewish organizations to devise ways and means to meet the Hitler threat. At the conference, speaker after speaker denounced the "counselors of inaction," and demanded that the Congress do something. Margoshes introduced a resolution calling on American Jewry to set aside one day for solemn protest. This did not satisfy some delegates. J. George Fredman, a leader of the Jewish War Veterans of the United States, offered an amendment to the Margoshes resolution calling for a boycott of all German goods and services. The Fredman amendment had much support from the delegates, but Wise, Deutsch, and Nathan Perlman were lukewarm to the idea. They mustered enough delegates to defeat the amendment; the Margoshes resolution passed, unamended. J. George Fredman, a leader of the Jewish War Veterans of the United States, offered an amendment to the Margoshes resolution calling for a boycott of all German goods and services. The Fredman amendment had much support from the delegates, but Wise, Deutsch, and Nathan Perlman were lukewarm to the idea. They mustered enough delegates to defeat the amendment; the Margoshes resolution passed, unamended.  

Joseph Proskauer and James N. Rosenberg, representing the American Jewish Committee, cautioned the conference not to initiate any protest campaigns, mass meetings, or boycotts. Wise countered that even if such actions were disavowed by the leaders of American Jewry, 

the Jewish masses would not listen, and would not have the slightest effect on Hitler's policy toward the Jews. A huge protest rally was set for March 27, 1933, at Madison Square Garden.29

Expressions of sympathy poured into the Jewish Congress headquarters. The American Federation of Labor joined the protest movement as did numerous church organizations. The Commission on International Relations of the General Council of the Congregation of Christian Churches sent a protest to the Congress describing Nazi activities as "unchristian and barbarous." Three resolutions were introduced in the United States House of Representatives authorizing the State Department to lodge a formal protest with Germany. On March 20, 1933, the Jewish War Veterans

29Wise feared any movement which the Congress could not control. "We feel that something must be done," he wrote a friend. "You cannot imagine the feeling that rages through the country. There are all sorts of things being spoken of, such as boycott of goods, the avoidance of German steamers, and, after all, four millions of Jews in America have a real purchasing power." Wise to Gottheil, 3/20/33, Stephen S. Wise Mss, Box 947, American Jewish Archives. He was afraid that if irresponsible elements within the Jewish community should gain control of such a boycott movement, it would do irreparable harm to the Jewish cause. "We want neither Communist nor Socialist nor Revisionist meetings. We want Jewish meetings and as soon as we take our hands off we are going to have Communist, Marxist, and Revisionist demonstrations." The New York Times, 3/20/33, p. 5.
endorsed the boycott movement and arranged to hold a mass protest parade on March 23. In this frenzied atmosphere Wise and Deutsch went to Washington and conferred with Under-Secretary of State William Phillips. They urged him to ascertain all the facts on the anti-Semitic policies of the Hitler regime, so that diplomatic representations could possibly be made. Moreover, Wise and Deutsch made known their anxiety over the appointment of an ambassador to Germany. Too, they told Phillips that the nascent boycott movement was not being endorsed by "responsible" Jewish organizations, including the American Jewish Congress. After the meeting, Wise was authorized to state that the Department of State ordered the United States embassy in Berlin to make a complete report on the anti-Semitic policies of Nazi Germany.30

On March 23, 1933, the Jewish War Veterans paraded to City Hall; the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Disabled American War Veterans, and the American Legion participated. Jewish Congress leaders tried to persuade the Jewish War Veterans to postpone the mass parade, and when they refused

to do so, urged Mayor O'Brien to absent himself from the review stand. Jewish Congress leaders believed that diplomatic representations would serve a more useful purpose at this time than protest marches. Moreover, many in the Congress feared that the Jewish War Veterans were stealing thunder and lustre from their massive protest rally scheduled for March 27, plans for which had been made at an earlier date.31

On the eve of the Madison Square Garden rally, Wise received a cable from Secretary of State Cordell Hull in which he stated that mistreatment of Jews in Germany had virtually ceased. He indicated though that there was still some scattered picketing of Jewish stores and professional discrimination.

These manifestations were viewed with serious concern by the German government. . . . Hitler . . . issued an order calling upon his followers to maintain law and order . . . and to avoid the creation of possibly embarrassing international incidents. . . . As a result, the embassy reports that the authority of the regular police has been reinforced.

31Administrative Committee Meeting, 3/22/33, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1933 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society. See also, "History of the Boycott," Non-Sectarian Anti-Nazi Boycott League and Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America Mss, Box 2639, American Jewish Archives.
The embassy reported that there was a widespread feeling in Germany that "following so far-reaching a political realignment... some time must elapse before a state of equilibrium could be re-established." He further noted that the embassy believed such a stabilization had been reached, and that the situation would soon revert to normal.32

Despite assurances from Hull, the mass protest rally went on as scheduled. Jewish leaders in Germany cabled Wise to postpone the event; Ernest Wallach, Vice-President of the Central Association of German Citizens of the Jewish Faith, urged that if the meeting could not be postponed, that the speakers "refrain from stirring the emotions of the audience against Germany." He assured Wise that the "German Government is permanently and successfully engaged in assuring peace and order to all citizens without discrimination." Wise and Deutsch rejected the denials as "pitifully unconvincing."33 At the protest rally, Wise stated that all demonstrations would stop if Hitler and his henchmen


accepted the following four demands: (1) an immediate cessation of all anti-Semitic activities and propaganda in Germany; (2) the abandonment of the policy of racial discrimination against and economic exclusion of Jews from German life; (3) protection of Jewish life and property; and (4) no expulsion of "Ost-Juden" who entered Germany after 1914. Wise justified the protest rally on the conviction that silence was tantamount to acquiescence. "No matter what the Hitlerites do now," he stated, it will be nothing more than the overt commission of acts that would have been covertly performed, protest or no protest. . . . They [German-Jewish leaders] have been saying for years there is no Gefahr (danger) of Hitler's coming to power. They have no judgment and certainly they can have no objective judgment now. . . .

The protest rally also ordered the Jewish Congress to raise an emergency fund to help the Jewish sufferers and combat the Hitlerite program. A Committee of One Hundred was appointed to oversee the operation.

The Nazis used the Jewish Congress protest rallies as an excuse to initiate a one-day economic boycott of German-Jewish businesses. Nazi spokesmen proclaimed the

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34 Ibid.

boycott to begin on April 1, and if the anti-Nazi agitation did not cease, the boycott would resume on April 5. Wise was aware of the boycott for he was forewarned of it in a letter sent by an anonymous Jew in Germany.

You have no idea of how this was organized to the nth degree. They had speakers in every factory . . . telling workmen . . . that through a boycott instituted by the Jews against Germany, they, the workmen, would be the ones to suffer and so they must help in rooting out these people.36

The Jewish Congress Administrative Committee met on March 29 to decide what action to take. Wise and Deutsch were sent to Washington and asked the State Department to make representations to Germany. They conferred with Under-Secretary of State Phillips on March 30, and gave him documentary proof of the situation in Germany. Phillips was sympathetic to the Jewish cause; he believed that Hitler was no longer "master of the situation and that the one-day boycott is a concession Hitler had to make to his followers out of fear for their wrath." Phillips urged Wise and Deutsch not to make any statement to the press in view of the fact "that anything said at this time might be harmful." When Deutsch conferred with Secretary of State

Hull, he was told the Nazis agreed to call off the boycott if the State Department "would issue a friendly statement to that Government." The State Department complied, but the message did not reach Germany in time to get the boycott postponed. "This accounts for the fact that the boycott lasted only one day," said Deutsch.37

Despite calls for continued protests, Wise and the Administrative Committee kept silent. Goldberg believed that some public statement was necessary, as did Richards. All were in agreement, however, that any public statement explaining the Jewish Congress's position would have to include a disavowal of the responsibility for the boycott. Margoshes proposed that the Jewish Congress send a message to Nazi leaders through the State Department that it did not favor a boycott, and that the boycott was only sanctioned by isolated Jews who would cease and desist if the Nazis discontinued their terror tactics. It was finally decided that a press release would suffice to reassure "our own constituency" and to "keep the attention of the American

public . . . centered on the cause, and mobilizing American sympathies." In a statement issued April 5, Wise declared that the official lifting of the anti-Jewish boycott did not deceive anyone, and that as long as Hitler continued to press his anti-Semitic policies, the Jewish Congress would continue to protest. Significantly, Wise mentioned nothing about the anti-German boycott in the United States. He adamantly opposed the boycott movement, for he feared that it would interfere with diplomatic representations. "We have not organized a boycott, and we shall not organize one. A boycott would be the last and not the first weapon of the Jewish people. . . ."

Nazis continued to persecute the Jews of Germany. Civil law excluded all Jews from official appointments;

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38 Administrative Committee Meeting, 4/4/33, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1933 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society.


40 C. H. Voss, Stephen S. Wise: Servant of the People, p. 183; The American Israelite agreed with Wise. In an editorial it stated: "Should we proclaim a boycott we should be merely falling into a political trap. An economic boycott involves the suffering of innocent people. A boycott is not in harmony with the ethical and pacifistic outlook. We cannot decry the German economic boycott if we engage in the same nasty business. Jewish leadership cannot accept the boycott ideas." The American Israelite, 4/6/33, p. 1.
moreover, those Jews who were dismissed from their civil service posts were declared ineligible to receive their pensions or unemployment compensation. A *numerus clausus* of 1 per cent was applied to Jewish lawyers; Jews in the arts and theater were systematically relieved of their positions; of the approximately 70,000 Jews engaged in business and commerce, almost one-third were out of business by April 15, 1933; non-Jewish employers were required to have not more than 5 per cent of their work force composed of Jews. In response to these outrages, the Jewish Congress again decided to take to the streets.\(^4\) A conference was called for April 19 to plan the protest march.

Rabbi Wise was reluctant to issue the call for the conference, but he relented due to the pressure exerted by the Yiddish press, particularly, Samuel Margoshes. Richards was disgusted by the whole affair.

The meeting was another noisy and confused affair with a lot of heated and aimless talk and resolutions to have another conference of local organizations, another street parade promoted by Dr. Margoshes, and similar things which are to assure the attainment of an

\(^4\)The New York Times, 4/15/33, p. 7; Administrative Committee Meeting, 4/12/33, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1933 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society; American Jewish Committee/Nazism/American Jewish Congress, 4/14/33.
anti-climax. . . . I again experienced the painful feeling that with the Thunder banging away in most planless manner, German-Jewish interests are far from being in safe hands. 42

Wise still hoped that President Roosevelt would show his concern. "Roosevelt ought to know the story. Of course Felix Frankfurter must have told Roosevelt much, but there is still much to be told. . . ." While he contemplated doing the "very, very, lamentable thing of crying out against the President," he thought that further protest meetings would be futile, and perhaps, even harmful. Moreover, Samuel Untermeyer, a leader of the nascent boycott movement in the United States, publicly criticized both Roosevelt and the United States Congress for their failure to protest the Nazi terror. Wise and Deutsch were afraid that delegates to the forthcoming conference would agitate for a boycott as well as some expression of sympathy and concern from F.D.R. Thus, Wise demanded that the Chairman prohibit all such criticism. 43

42 Richards to Sherman, 4/13/33, Carl Sherman folder, Bernard G. Richards Mss, Jewish Theological Seminary.

The conference convened in the Hotel Pennsylvania with 1,200 delegates in attendance. Some delegates demanded a total boycott of German goods and services; Wise replied that the "time has not yet come for an official boycott—we still have other weapons." Jewish Congress leaders were able to prevent the passage of the boycott resolution, but to appease the delegates, they consented to another protest march, to be held on May 10, 1933, and the gathering of a petition to be sent to the United States Congress urging that body to protest Nazi actions. Wise was still hopeful that the President would act. "Our government has been helpful... but it has not been fanatic in cooperating with us," he stated.

Agitation for a boycott was widespread. Samuel Untermeyer declared that from "now on Jews will be justified in seeing to it that nowhere in the world and under no circumstances should a Jew buy or use merchandise manufactured in Germany, or support German industry in any

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45 Wise to Gottheil, 4/17/33, Stephen S. Wise Mss, Box 947, American Jewish Archives.
form." Unwilling to endorse the boycott, the Jewish Congress was also berated by the American Jewish Committee and the B'nai Brith for its protest meetings.

We . . . consider such forms of agitation as boycotts, parades, mass-meetings, and other similar demonstrations as futile. They serve only as an ineffectual channel for the release of emotions. They furnish the persecutors with a pretext to justify the wrongs they perpetrate and . . . distract those who desire to help with more constructive efforts. 47

In an attempt to bring about some form of unity, Alfred M. Cohen, President of the B'nai Brith, sent telegrams to the Congress and the Committee suggesting that the three organizations resume joint consultations. Deutsch refused to cooperate with Cohen because such "cooperation" led to inaction; moreover, Deutsch did not even present the Cohen proposal to the Administrative Committee. 48

By mid-May, 1933, Wise and other leaders of the Jewish Congress began to realize that President Roosevelt was not going to come to their aid; the State Department was helpful, but not over-enthusiastic. Moreover, Roosevelt

46 The American Israelite, 4/27/33, pp. 1, 5.

47 American Jewish Committee/Boycott/American Jewish Committee, 4/28/33.

48 Waldman to Mack, 5/12/33, American Jewish Committee/Foreign Countries/Germany/1931-1933.
had been counselled by German Jews such as Max Warburg not to do anything and that the situation in Germany would eventually stabilize. The result was that F.D.R. found it much easier to play off one Jewish faction against another than to formulate and execute any meaningful policy to help the stricken Jews of Germany. Too, men such as Newton D. Baker advised the President not to act, and he cautioned Jewish leaders not to protest. He stated that "other nations have troubles, too, and that the Jews must not merely think of themselves." Secretary of State Hull adamantly opposed the Jewish boycott movement, condemning it as "economically unwise;" the boycott was not only a violation of diplomatic prudence, but was counter to the "plain logic of facts." 

Critics of the Administration's policy of silence voiced their disapproval in shriller tones. Isidore Apfel, Grand-Master of the Independent Order of Brith Abraham, urged the government to make its position known. Addressing the giant protest rally on May 10, 1933, Apfel stated:

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50 Joint Boycott Council folder, Joseph Tenenbaum Mss, 1933-1938, YIVO.
Are we to believe that the new deal will mean a raw deal for our people...? I call upon our President... to stay the hand of the Angel of Destruction...

... Let the voice of official America be heard. England has done it! France has done it! Why can't Free America do it?

In an attempt to push the Administration off dead center, Jewish members of the House of Representatives asked that representatives of the American Jewish Congress and the American Jewish Committee meet under their auspices to bring about some form of unity. The meeting took place on May 26, 1933, with Supreme Court Justices Brandeis and Cardoza in attendance; the meeting accomplished nothing. Cyrus Adler refused to attend because of his personal dislike of Deutsch, and Judge Joseph Proskauer left after a short time to confer with Cordell Hull.

At a later meeting, Proskauer stated that an agreement of unity must be reached; he asked Deutsch to prepare a statement of unity between the three groups and that he would sign it. Deutsch noted, though, that a declaration of unity would be worthless without Adler's signature. Wise then read a statement he had prepared in which he announced

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the formation of a Conjoint Consultative Committee, to be composed of three to five representatives from each organization. The Committee was to meet at regular intervals and have the power to make representations on behalf of the three groups in dealing with all official bodies and the United States Government. Edward L. Bernays, representing the American Jewish Committee, objected to the name of the organization, and noted that the parallel between the new body and the Conjoint Committee of the Anglo-Jewish Association and the Jewish Board of Deputies was "infelicitous." He offered a counter-statement in which a Joint National Jewish Committee was to be created, composed of three representatives of each organization. This Committee—"comparable to like committees of other racial and religious groups . . . such as the National Catholic Council, the Federal Council of Churches"—would meet at regular intervals and have the power to recommend joint action by the organizations it represented as well as make representations to other official bodies. Wise rejected the Bernays statement, and the three groups decided to meet at a later date for further consultations.

When Wise reported back to the Administrative Committee, there was much opposition. Nathan Perlman opposed
the inclusion of the B'nai Brith, which he termed a fraternal organization, as an equal of the Congress and the Committee. He believed that the Independent Order of Brith Abraham, a constituent organization of the Congress and one with a much larger membership than the B'nai Brith, had a better right to be included. Thus, he stated that only the Congress and the Committee be signators of any unity agreement. Leo Wolfson did not wish to see the Congress in any Council or Committee. Once the Congress joined such a group it "would immediately be placed at a disadvantage as the vote would be six for the point of view represented by the Committee against three for the Congress." If the Congress could not control the new body, it should not join.

Dr. Joseph Tenenbaum warned that any unity agreement should not deteriorate into a "unity for inaction." To prevent the American Jewish Committee's philosophy of "do-nothing" from prevailing, he suggested that each organization be "autonomous in its work;" if agreement on a certain course of action could not be reached, the organization desiring the program should be allowed to execute it. Tenenbaum's pessimism was echoed by Israel Thurman who did not think that any unity plan would succeed. Margoshes frowned on the creation of any permanent
unity committee "since all those present knew how ineffectual an attempt at united action would really prove. . . ."

Wise then stated that some form of unity would have to be achieved. He reasoned that the passion "for unity among the Jews of America was underestimated, the question was even becoming more important than the fight against Hitlerism." He proposed that a special committee of five be appointed to confer with the American Jewish Committee to consider the possibility for "effectuating the ideal of a united front." Deutsch named Tenenbaum, Lipsky, Margoshes, Perlman, and Jacob Fishman to formulate a program. This committee did nothing, and subsequently, Wise and Deutsch conferred with Proskauer and Sol Stroock of the Committee. The four agreed to the formation of a consultative committee composed of three representatives from the Congress, Committee, and the B'nai Brith. Wise urged the Committee to ratify immediately the agreement, which it did at its Executive Committee meeting of June 5, 1933. That night, however, Wise told the sub-committee that the terms

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52 Administrative Committee Meeting, 6/2/33, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1933 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society. Wise and Deutsch were ex-officio members of the committee.
of the agreement out of which a Consultative or Conjoint Committee was to be created had to be absolutely clear and explicit. He stated that the Congress would have to receive at least one-half of the seats on the Committee, and that no organization in the Consultative Committee could veto any action by any of the constituent bodies. It is not clear why Wise changed his position; perhaps he believed that the Administrative Committee would not ratify such an agreement. When he presented the agreement to the Administrative Committee on June 7, Louis Lipsky strongly opposed the report. He thought that the unity plan was nothing more than a facade to dupe the Jews of America into thinking that unity had finally been achieved. He objected to the provision which gave each group the right to withdraw at any time. He urged that a "real united body" should be established in the United States, even if that meant the eventual disappearance of the American Jewish Congress. He stated that American Jewry was ready for such a move, and that "this sentiment ... is strong among a large part of the members of the American Jewish Committee as well as the B'nai Brith."53 In what amounted to a minority report,

53 Administrative Committee Meeting, 6/7/33, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1933 folder, American Jewish
Lipsky proposed in the form of a resolution the formation of a Consultative Committee, each group to appoint five members, to deal with the German situation and to establish unified representation before the American Government. However, the Consultative Committee was to be only a temporary institution; Lipsky proposed the creation of an institution to be known as the American Jewish Council. A Joint Conference Committee composed of seven members from the Congress, seven from the American Jewish Committee, and two additional members to be unanimously agreed upon by the others, would issue a call for an American Jewish convention to be held not later than January 1, 1934; the convention would create a permanent organization to represent the Jews of America. The American Jewish Congress and the American Jewish Committee were to agree in advance that if and when such an institution was established, they would transfer their activities and merge their "corporate existence within the life and activities of the new organization. . . ."54

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Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society. See also, Waldman to Adler, 5/28/33, American Jewish Committee/Policy Committee/German-Jewish situation/1933 (ADM).

54 Administrative Committee Meeting, 6/7/33, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1933 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society.
Wise asked the Chair whether the Administrative Committee had the authority to enter into any plan which might mean the end of the Congress. Deutsch ruled that only the delegates to a regularly convened session could dissolve the organization. Wise then asked Lipsky to withdraw his resolution which the latter refused to do. The Chair then ruled his motion out of order; Lipsky then proposed an amendment to the minority report which called for a special session of the Congress; again, Deutsch ruled the proposal out of order. It was obvious to Wise, however, that a majority of the Administrative Committee favored the Lipsky proposal in principle. He stated that a way out of the difficulty might be the appointment of a committee with power to say to the American Jewish Committee that the Congress was willing to join it in the creation of a joint consultative committee provided that it base its work on the four demands enunciated by Wise at the Madison Square Garden protest rally. If the American Jewish Committee refused to accept the proposal, the Congress would submit to them the Lipsky proposal. If the Committee further refused to accept the proposal, the Congress would then present a proposal enunciated by Margoshes whereby half of the representation on the consultative committee
would be Congress members, no organization would have the right to veto any proposed action, and, if agreement on a particular plan of action could not be reached, the organization would be "asked to watch it from afar. . . ." To this, Lipsky agreed, and the American Jewish Committee was informed of the Congress's proposal.55

The Committee rejected all proposals submitted to it, and deplored the Congress's raising of questions of "such fundamental importance and difficulty," claiming that these would only "result in serious delays, misunderstandings, and differences of opinion." The Committee asked that the Congress ratify the agreement between Wise, Deutsch, Proskauer, and Stroock. Wise tried to delay, but he finally persuaded a very reluctant Administrative Committee to accept the proposal. Unity at this time was of the essence.56

The Joint Consultative Committee was a complete failure. Even in the face of Hitler, American Jewish leaders

55Deutsch to Proskauer, 6/10/33, American Jewish Committee/American Jewish Congress.

could not trust each other. Morris Waldman called it a "sham" and a "delusion." Bernard Deutsch, only five days after the creation of the Committee, wrote:

I came away from the second meeting of the Joint Council . . . with a deep feeling of the futility of it all. They haven't a single suggestion to offer as to future action. So far as we ourselves are concerned, we haven't very much either. . . .

By December, 1933, Joseph Tenenbaum told the Jewish Congress Administrative Committee that if definite functions for the Consultative Committee were not put into practice, the body should be disbanded; the Jewish Congress refused to do this because as Lipsky stated: "all this would do would be to give ammunition to the American Jewish Committee to attack the American Jewish Congress."^8

Though the Congress finally realized the magnitude of the Hitler terror, it could not formulate any program either to alleviate the plight of German Jewry or to change

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^7 Naomi Cohen, Not Free to Desist, pp. 219-220; Deutsch to Kallen, 6/26/33, American Jewish Congress folder, 1933, Horace Kallen Mss, YIVO.

^8 Administrative Committee Meeting, 11/28/33, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1933 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society; Administrative Committee Meeting, 3/13/34, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1934 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 3, Administrative Committee, 1934-1959, American Jewish Historical Society. The Consultative Committee agreement was renewed in May, 1935.
substantially American foreign policy. The failure of the Joint Consultative Committee was just one of the many disasters encountered by the American Jewish Congress. Aside from the creation of a number of committees, the Jewish Congress did very little to counter effectively the Nazi onslaught, and even those committees either did not meet or proved to be totally ineffectual.\footnote{Nearprint File, Abraham H. Cohen Mss, American Jewish Archives.}

At an emergency session of the American Jewish Congress, held in Washington in late May, 1933, Abraham H. Cohen outlined the steps the Congress had already taken to meet the crisis: the creation of a special Organization Department under the direction of Rabbi Jacob X. Cohen, whose purpose was to enlarge the Congress's constituency; a Department of Research and Publicity was organized; and the American Jewish Congress "Courier," a monthly magazine, was established. Moreover, the emergency session authorized the initiation of an Emergency Fund Drive to aid German Jewry.

Though the Congress was able to enroll new members, it did not portray the enemy as Hitler, but as the American Jewish Committee. Horace Kallen of the Committee on
Organization stated that to be effective, the Congress would have to render some service to the individual as compensation for affiliation and adherence to the organization. . . . It is imperative that the Congress develop strength and power which it might exert in behalf of the group interest as well as the individual interest if the rank and file is to participate. . . . in a progressively sustained program of activity. An animated fight serves to rally participants. . . . [The American Jewish Committee] might well be defined as the common enemy against which to fight.60

Kallen proposed that the Congress enroll 750,000 Jews at a membership enrollment fee of $1.00. Toward this end, a director of organization was appointed with eight assistants. The campaign, however, foundered on the rocks of personal politics and petty rivalries. Instead of trying to secure individual subscriptions, some of the field workers thought of themselves as directors of organization in their geographic bailiwicks, and announced "questionable and unsystematically determined community pledges having no value and doing actual injury to the planned campaign."61

60 Administrative Committee Meeting, 10/18/32, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1932 folder, American Jewish Congress MSS, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society.

In August, 1933, Kallen stated:

I have the definite impression that we have not capitalized the sympathy and good-will which our work has aroused or drawn upon additional personnel... I am afraid that we shall find ourselves when the Hitler flurry is over, or becomes chronic, as it must, exactly where we were before it started... 62

The Research and Publicity Department proved no less a fiasco.

There were no signs of an adequately functioning bureau of research... even the assembling and classification of factual material, so necessary in documenting statements of policy and in evolving plans of procedure, appeared to be lacking.63

The "Courier's" function was to convey information not readily available elsewhere. Its purpose was to form the minds of the masses, "or at least influence them through editorial opinion."64 However, there was no working relationship between the "Courier" and the Publicity and Research Department; moreover, specialized information was lacking, and the Congress was unwilling to pay for it. The Honorary Campaign Committee of the Jewish Congress charitably characterized it as a "fair example of what an

62 Ibid.
63 Ibid.
64 American Jewish Committee/American Jewish Congress/1933.
intelligent amateur can accomplish ... [but] not up to the professional standard, either in content or format, that the only continuing organ of the Congress should have."

Five days before the emergency session of the Congress was to convene, Kallen proposed that a national campaign for funds, to be known as the "Anti-Hitler Defense Fund," be launched at the session, with the objective of $2,000,000. The fund was to "enlighten and educate the public to a realization of the problem facing world Jewry."

Kallen stated that professional fund-raisers had volunteered their services; Dr. Philip Goldstein, one of the fund-raisers, told the Administrative Committee that in view of the depressed state of the economy, it would be extremely difficult to raise such a sum. Margoshes questioned the need for such a large sum; moreover, what would the Congress do with it once it collected the money? Goldstein countered that a definite sum should be stated publicly "for its psychological effect." He also stated that Zionist and relief organizations would oppose the campaign.

since none of the money would be earmarked for those causes.

Others on the Administrative Committee objected to the lack of a definite program, and many questioned its eventual success. Judge Hartman believed that such a campaign would fail if the public was not told for what the money was to be used. Others opined that the campaign could succeed depending "on the spirit in which we approach the public."

Wise then made an impassioned plea to the Administrative Committee. He was amazed that there should be any doubt as to the need for such a fund. He stated that lack of funds prevented the sending of at least ten men of "unquestioned repute" to Germany to gather material and "bring back the truth to the people." The Jews of America were waiting to be organized, and the Emergency Defense Fund was the vehicle by which the Congress could achieve this task. Thereupon, the motion for the fund was approved.66

66Administrative Committee Meeting, 5/16/33, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1933 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society.
The emergency session of the Congress approved the campaign fund; however, leaders of the Congress still questioned its need. Richards thought the idea of sending and paying for prominent men to go to Germany to report on the situation was the utmost folly.

I am very much afraid that all talk of this kind with regard to large funds and large expenditures will lead to implications of slush funds, bribery, and what not. . . . Is there very much of a choice between the evil results of falsehoods and those which are bound to follow the truth that is to be paid for?67

He thought a sum of $100,000 a year would suffice. Other leaders in the Congress did not believe in the necessity for such a fund. By August 1, 1933, only $100,000 was collected, and one Jewish Congress leader stated that until the Congress had a definite program the campaign fund would lag. Indeed, the whole campaign was an amateur attempt at fund-raising, and those in charge did not have the vaguest notion of how to raise such a large sum of money. Schemes such as honoring the University-in-Exile, benefit concerts, and a national day of mourning were bandied about by the Committee on Organization and Finance. Appeals for funds

67 Richards to Wise, 5/18/33, Stephen S. Wise folder #2, Bernard G. Richards Mss, Jewish Theological Seminary.
from New York City public school officials failed; lawyers groups did not wish to contribute. Lack of planning, petty jealousies, and gross inefficiency contributed to the Congress's failure to execute a concrete program to combat Hitlerism. As one observer of the Congress noted:

There must be a re-birth of the entire internal machine of the Congress; there must not be a new organization competing with the old, but a new organization unified with the old. . . . Re-birth calls for an end to spasmodic and haphazard cooperation.69

American Jewish Congress leaders exhibited the same lack of planning, petty jealousies toward individuals and organizations, and gross inefficiency in their attempt to direct and control the boycott movement in the United States. The boycott unleashed tremendous emotion among American Jews; it enabled the masses to feel that they, as individuals, were doing something to destroy Hitler. When Samuel Untermeyer announced in May, 1933, the formation of the American League for the Defense of Jewish Rights, he received world-wide attention and acclaim from American Jewry. Though the American Jewish Committee and the B'nai

Brith adamantly opposed the promulgation of an official boycott, the Jewish masses disregarded their advice, and sought out those organizations that favored such a tactic. Boycott advocates such as Dr. Abraham Coralnick, associate editor of Der Tog, believed the boycott to be in the best interests of the United States. "As far as the business interests are concerned," he stated, "we are more than sure that by diverting temporarily . . . into other channels, in

70 Morris Waldman of the American Jewish Committee wrote Untermeyer: "In the final analysis our differences of opinion revolve only around the question of tactics." The Committee decided against the boycott for the following reasons: (1) an official boycott against Germany would have provided the Nazis a pretext for further excesses; (2) the promulgation of a boycott would have forfeited the friendship of Christians in the United States, and their help in efforts to restore German Jewry's rights; (3) an official Jewish boycott of Germany would "crystallize" a cleavage between German Christians abroad who numbered in the millions, and Jews outside of Germany; (4) the boycott would lead to a general retaliation against Jewish businesses; (5) the Jews would be made "scapegoats" by Christians for "special unfortunate consequences of this boycott likely to develop in individual countries," i.e., United States citizens who held German bonds; (6) the boycott was unwise as a method of practical politics; (7) the boycott would stimulate anti-Semitic activity; (8) there were ethical objections to a boycott; and (9) if the Jews used a boycott, they were endangering their right to appeal to public authority and to the conscience of the world. See Waldman to Untermeyer, 5/9/33, American Jewish Committee/Boycott/American Jewish Committee; Proskauer to Untermeyer, 6/26/33, American Jewish Committee/Boycott/American Jewish Committee/Germany/Boycott/Public Opinion; Naomi Cohen, Not Free to Desist, pp. 163-165.
the main toward the markets and industry of America, we are helping to revive in this country prosperity and affluence. By this policy of boycott adopted by us, we are doing a patriotic service as Americans without embarrassing in any way our National Administration and are fulfilling our moral function in the society of free men."71

The Jewish Congress vacillated on the issue of the boycott. On May 15, 1933, the Administrative Committee met to discuss the boycott, but did not do so. It was not until its June 22 meeting that the Administrative Committee discussed the issue. Wise still clung to the hope that the President would act on behalf of German Jewry. On June 13, 1933, he stated

I have no doubt that President Roosevelt has been as far from indifferent to the horror of the situation in Germany as you and I. But for reasons which must have seemed adequate to him, he has refrained from public utterance or public action. ... I am not without hope that the President may yet, as I believe he ought to, see fit to choose some course of action which will make clear to the Hitler Government the abhorrence of the American people. ...72

Wise, however, on June 22, recommended to the Administrative Committee the appointment of a special committee to


72Quoted in Ibid., pp. 98-99.
consider the advisability of launching a boycott against German goods and services and to recommend procedures to carry through the program. This proposal was approved as was one made by Kallen whereby the Congress would send an unofficial observer to a boycott conference in London.

The special committee reported to the Administrative Committee on June 29. Margoshes, the chairman, believed that if action on the boycott was to be taken without consulting Jewish leaders in Palestine and Europe, it should have been taken a few months earlier. In view of the fact that the World Jewish Conference was to convene in another six weeks, and the extreme difficulty of doing anything worthwhile during the summer months, any action would have to be deferred until the autumn "to receive that occasion for dramatization to which it is entitled." Therefore, the committee recommended that no action be taken before the American Jewish Congress delegates to the World Jewish Conference could confer with Jewish leaders in Europe. Despite some feeble opposition from some members of the Administrative Committee, the report was approved.\footnote{Administrative Committee Meeting, 6/29/33, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1933 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society.}
In mid-July, 1933, Wise left for Europe to attend the World Jewish Conference. Even though he admitted that the evidence he had seen proved the Jewish situation in Germany to be almost hopeless, he still refused to sanction the boycott until after the Conference.

I . . . adhere to my judgment that a world boycott cannot be publicly proclaimed by any one group in world Jewry. This is our grievance against Untermeyer and his two fellow musketeers [sic] that without conferring with anyone, they took this great step in such a way as to do a minimum of hurt to German commerce and a maximum of damage to the Jewish people.74

Refugees from Germany in London and Paris insisted that a "publicly proclaimed boycott . . . most undesirable, dangerous." He believed that other measures could still be taken to relieve the situation, namely, that the League of Nations extend the operations of the Nansen Passport Office to all Jews driven from Germany, provided that Great Britain, France, the United States, and possibly Italy, allowed them to enter. Moreover, Wise thought that we shall have to press publicly despite every risk for foreign intervention. The English are ready, in my judgment, to go very far. . . .

74 Administrative Committee Meeting, 8/3/33, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1933 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society; Jacob X. Cohen to Kallen, 7/28/33, American Jewish Congress folder, 1933, Horace M. Kallen Mss, YIVO.
He conferred with the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Paul Boncour, who stated that the German situation called for international activity. "Surely we, in America," wrote Wise, "must and can bring sufficient pressure to bear upon our own Government to move it to unite with England and France." 75

The Administrative Committee met in special session on August 3. Deutsch said that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss and decide on the boycott issue. He told those assembled that the League for the Defense of Jewish Rights had just concluded an International Boycott Conference in Amsterdam where a World Jewish Economic Federation had been established to oversee the boycott; moreover, various branches of the Congress were demanding the Administrative Committee take action.

Abraham Spiro thought the American Jewish Committee and the B'nai Brith should first be consulted before the Congress took a definite stand. Deutsch countered that the issue had been discussed at the Joint Consultative Committee and both organizations were opposed to any public declaration of a boycott. Yet, Isadore Teitelbaum naively

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75 ibid.
believed that if the Committee and the B'nai Brith could be convinced that there was enough sentiment for a boycott, they would come out in favor of it. However, even if the above organizations declared in favor of a boycott, he would still oppose its promulgation because it would "alienate the sympathy of the Christian world." Rather than a boycott, he would appeal to Christians around the world to help stem the tide of anti-Semitism in Germany. Horace Kallen adamantly opposed the boycott. Though he had once favored such a tactic, he reluctantly concluded that it would be wholly ineffective because the Jews of the United States, even if they were unanimous about a boycott, did not constitute a "sufficiently effective market for German goods" to affect appreciably the German economy. To be successful, he explained, a boycott would have to be supported by Christian America; however, since many Jews were opposed to it, he saw no reason why Christian America should take up the burden. He also stated that both American Jews and Christians were holders of German municipal, state, and national bonds that were in default. He cited the creation of such organizations as the Foreign Bondholders Protective Council which sought repayment of those bonds through diplomatic means, and
men such as John Foster Dulles, a leader in the Council, had loudly proclaimed his opposition to any and all boycotts. Too, the German Government took the position that the bonds could not be amortized unless exports exceeded imports. "If we declare a boycott—whether it is successful or not—we become charged with the failure of [American bondholders] to receive their just interest," Kallen stated.

Others on the Administrative Committee favored the immediate promulgation or endorsement of the boycott. Dr. Joseph Tenenbaum stated that unless the American Jewish Congress declared in favor of a boycott, "it would be too late." He believed that now was the time for action; the boycott was a world-wide phenomenon, and was being executed without the aid of or assistance from the Congress. Thus, the prestige of the Congress had been dealt a serious blow. He stated that there was not one reason why the Administrative Committee should not now declare for a boycott, and that to delay any further would mean the end of the Congress as an institution. Almost all those present favored it, as did those on the National Executive Committee. Bernard G. Richards favored the boycott, and stated that the Congress's delay redounded to its advantage,
because it could tell the world that it had tried other 
measures to alleviate the situation, and that, finally, it 
was going to use the last weapon it had in its arsenal.
Carl Sherman originally opposed the idea of a boycott 
because "it was not quite what Jews of dignity should 
undertake." Now, however, in view of the situation, he 
supported the tactic. Margoshes stated that he had always 
been in favor of the boycott and that the Congress should 
direct it. He said the time to act was NOW, especially in 
view of the fact that Untermeyer was planning to create a 
"great and important movement throughout the United 
States."76

Another group, though it favored the boycott, wished 
to delay its endorsement until Wise returned from the 
World Jewish Conference. Leo Wolfson thought the boycott 
to be a wise action; however, he noted that other Jewish 
problems existed with which the Congress could deal. He 
moved, therefore, that the Executive Committee meeting, 
scheduled for August 6, be postponed. Israel Thurman 
believed that the Congress "must be careful not to deepen 

76 Administrative Committee Meeting, 8/3/33, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1933 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society.
and widen the schism that is beginning to appear between the Jews of America and the German-descended citizens of America. . . ." Rather than a Jewish boycott against Germany, there should be a world-wide boycott against Hitler's regime. Moreover, he did not think the Congress should take any "hasty action" merely because Untermeyer "might supersede us in doing so." After considerable debate, Wolfson's motion was approved by a vote of twelve to ten, and the Executive Committee meeting was postponed until August 20, 1933.

When Untermeyer returned from Amsterdam, he charged Wise with misrepresentation; he referred to him as the "kingpin of mischief makers" who was

junketing around the continent engaged in his favorite pastime of spreading discord, asserting at one time and place that he favors the boycott, and at another that he is opposed or indifferent to it, all depending on the audience he is addressing, but always directly or indirectly delivering a stab in the dark.77

Untermeyer did consent, however, to meet with a delegation from the Jewish Congress to discuss possible cooperation in boycott endeavors. After the conference, the delegates cabled Wise in Prague that in view of the tremendous public

pressure in America, he declare himself in favor of the boycott. 78

On August 14, 1933, Wise in a speech delivered before the Prague Jewish community declared himself in favor of the boycott.

As long as Germany declares the Jews to be an inferior race . . . decent self-respecting Jews cannot deal with Germany in any way, buy or sell or maintain any manner of commerce with Germany or travel on German boats. 79

The Jewish Congress Administrative Committee met three days later. Margoshes offered a resolution endorsing the boycott; yet, there was still a great deal of opposition. Kallen stated he was opposed to the issuance of any public declaration "at the time" because of the possible injury that such a statement might have on Jewish interests in America. Moreover, a boycott called without adequate preparation would end in dismal failure; rather, he suggested a plan of action be evolved, and only then should the Congress publicly declare its support of the boycott. Others repeated Kallen's arguments, but the resolution

78 Administrative Committee Meeting, 8/17/33, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1933 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society.

passed. An amendment to the resolution was also passed which prevented anyone who had voted against it speaking in opposition to the boycott at the Executive Committee meeting. The Executive Committee proclaimed the boycott, and Untermeyer proudly stated that "Germany will crack this winter if American Jewry does its share in boycotting German goods."
No comprehensive plan of action existed. Kallen said the Congress would have to employ experts to serve on a boycott committee, among whom would be a financier, an expert on shipping, and expert on the import-export trade with Germany, and one who was thoroughly familiar with the retail market for German goods in the United States. He warned, moreover, that only "responsible" people from the Jewish Congress should work as liaisons with the experts. He stated that the most difficult problem the boycott committee would have to resolve was that of approaching the major holders of German securities in the United States, and trying to enlist their "goodwill and cooperation." He thought that if the boycott could be linked to the National Recovery Act, it would stand a much greater chance of success. He also cited the need for cooperation with the A.F.L., the churches, particularly, the Roman Catholic Church, and liberal groups throughout the United States; once their cooperation was received, an American boycott could be declared.  

\[82\] Kallen to Deutsch, 8/18/33, American Jewish Congress folder, 1933, Horace H. Kallen Mss, YIVO.
The boycott, like so many other Jewish Congress programs, never succeeded due to lack of interest among Jewish Congress leaders, to pursuit of other means to combat the Nazis, inefficiency, and petty politics. Boycott advocates were stunned when they learned that only three days after the Congress had solemnly proclaimed the boycott, the German Land-Trade League announced that a barter agreement had been reached with Syria-Palestine, whereby Germany would import approximately nine million marks worth of Jaffa oranges in exchange for twenty million marks worth of German industrial goods. Moreover, the goods were to be shipped in German bottoms. Too, the German Minister of Economics and the Anglo-Palestine Bank of Palestine signed a ha-avarah (transfer) agreement whereby Jews were permitted to emigrate from the Fatherland and to take with them about two million dollars worth of machinery and wares. "Accordingly, such Jews would turn their monies over to a special Reichsbank fund for which they would be compensated in German-made goods to be taken with them upon embarkation."83

The Ha-avarah and barter agreements left Jewish Congress leaders dismayed. They did nothing. When Wise returned from Europe, he was still not convinced that the boycott was the only weapon left to world Jewry.

It is a weapon, but it is not the weapon. It is not the last great overwhelming method of attack. We must still wield that weapon. . . . Unless the League acts, or until, better still, England, America, and France, the best judgment is that salvation will come through the united action of England and America.

He told the Administrative Committee that it was very important to try to convince F.D.R. and the State Department to give their support. He saw the boycott not as an economic weapon against Germany, but as a political weapon to be used as an adjunct to diplomatic representations.

The one great good that can come to us will be joint action by Washington and London. A boycott may be good--it may not avail. Washington and London--F.D.R. and the Prime Minister--can do more than a hundred boycotts. We have taken the weapon of the boycott into our own hands. We must wage it effectively, conscientiously--and I still believe, and certain people in Washington and London do--that if Germany is to be deterred . . . it will be in part, not wholly, but largely as a result of such pressure as we can move Washington and London to bring to bear.\(^8^4\)

\(^8^4\)"Report by Wise on European Trip to the Administrative Committee of the American Jewish Congress," 9/23/33, pp. 25, 29-30, folder 7A, Stephen S. Wise Mss, American Jewish Congress, Box 1, Administrative Committee Minutes, American Jewish Historical Society. The State Department's attitude was expressed by Cordell Hull: "The
Wise's faith in eventual American diplomatic action led him to the position that cooperation with Samuel Unter- 
meyer's American League for the Defense of Jewish Rights 
was not absolutely essential to the boycott effort. More­ 
over, his personal dislike of Untermeyer affected his j udgment. He and Untermeyer had clashed in 1923 over the 
publication of a speech delivered by Israel Zangwill in 
which Zangwill predicted the demise of political Zionism; 
in 1924, over the Ku Klux Klan, as well as Untermeyer's 
remarks over nation-wide radio in which he chastized Wise 
for his non-committal attitude toward the boycott. When 
Untermeyer called Wise and asked him to meet "to settle the 
thing," Wise told him that he could do nothing without the 
consent of the Administrative Committee. Untermeyer per­ 
sisted, and Wise told the gentleman from Greystone that 
upon Deutsch's return from Europe, a decision would be 
made. A committee was finally appointed to meet with 
Untermeyer.

Deutsch told the committee that the Jewish Congress 
did not seek total control of the boycott movement, but

friendly and willing cooperation of Germany is necessary to the program of world recovery." Quoted in Naomi Cohen, 
Not Free to Desist, p. 162.
only wished for "equal representation;" moreover, the committee was instructed to make sure that the Congress was fully represented on any fund-raising committees as well as any committees which would allocate the funds. Opinion varied on what Margoshes termed "parity." Some wished to cooperate with Untermeyer regardless of what arrangements were made. Rabbi Louis I. Newman, a Jewish Congress delegate from San Francisco, stressed the importance of unity, and Hartmann added that it would be practically impossible for the Congress and the American League to run separate campaigns. Thurman insisted that "we should help out Untermeyer in every way possible." Others insisted on parity. Personally, Deutsch was opposed to any sort of cooperation with Untermeyer because if a joint campaign for funds was initiated,

it would mean that we cannot go out and raise funds for the regular work of the Congress, which means that the Congress can close up because we won't have the funds to continue.

Wise stated, though, that it was necessary for the Congress to cooperate with Untermeyer because "to refer the matter of the boycott to the League would be surrendering to others who have no sense of responsibility to Jewish life." Moreover, he said that Untermeyer needed the Congress more than it needed him; "he has no organization; is unwilling
to spend large sums of money; can't give of his time. . . ."
It was then moved and passed that the committee accept nothing less than parity.**85

Negotiations with Untermeyer proved fruitless. The Administrative Committee was unwilling to accept anything less than parity. Too, if the Jewish Congress were to join forces with Untermeyer, and should the boycott fail, Jewish Congress leaders were afraid that they would be blamed "because it would be said that the Congress took away these men from . . . Untermeyer."**86 Moreover, the Congress refrained from cooperating with the A.L.D.J.R. because it sought the cooperation of the A.F. of L. Yet, here too, the Congress almost nullified the efforts of labor leaders to have the A.F. of L. convention endorse the boycott. It continually requested that representatives of the Congress be allowed to speak on the German situation, in spite of the fact that the labor leaders wished to take action

**85 Administrative Committee Meeting, 9/23/33, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1933 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society.

**86 Administrative Committee Meeting, 11/28/33, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1933 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society.
"without any pressure from the Jewish side." The A.F. of L. approved the boycott recommendation of its Executive Council in October, 1933.

When Wise and Perlman conferred with William Green in November, 1933, they learned that the A.F. of L. had done nothing except to pass the boycott resolution. The two suggested that copies of the resolution be sent to every State and Local Federation, that a separate bureau be created in the A.F. of L. headquarters in Washington to deal solely with the boycott, and that Green call a meeting of labor leaders in the New York area and ask that machinery be created for the boycott movement. Green agreed to all of the recommendations. Wise told Green that the Jewish Congress "would want to follow the lead of the A.F. of L. and cooperate with them in the movement and that we would be delighted to join in any bureau they would create." In the meantime, the Congress did very little.

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87 Meeting of the Committee on Policy, Minutes, 10/18/33, American Jewish Committee/Policy Committee/German-Jewish situation/1933 (ADM).

88 Administrative Committee Meeting, 11/28/33, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1933 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society.
Lillie Shultz, chairwoman of the Research Department of the Congress, wrote Wise that there was an immediate need for a boycott program that would give the masses some direction. She stated that the most vocal members of Congress were joining Untermeyer's group because of the Congress's failure to establish a program. She suggested that the Congress send through its affiliated organizations a pledge card whereby each signator promised not to buy German goods or services; the cards were to be returned to the local Congress office. "I think this pledge . . . would aid us considerably in strengthening our organization inasmuch as it would give us an index of names of interested persons." Kallen's suggestions, Shultz's recommendations, and those of Professor Max Winkler who had been hired to oversee the boycott program were not acted upon.

As late as December 26, 1933, four months after the Administrative Committee endorsed the boycott, no one, aside from Winkler, had been hired to carry on the boycott work. Moreover, the Publicity Department was charged with


90Winkler's plan paralleled Kallen's suggestions. See Memo of Max Winkler, 11/20/33, folder 7B, Stephen S. Wise Mss, American Jewish Congress File, Anti-Nazi Boycott Committee, American Jewish Historical Society.
the failure to identify the Congress in the public mind with the boycott. Rabbi Jacob X. Cohen declared that "he . . . had felt that the Congress had detached itself from the boycott movement." Indeed, even in the midst of the Hitler tyranny, some on the Administrative Committee wished the Congress to take up other problems; to wit: the problem of Jewish education, organization of local Kekillahs, social adjustment of uprooted Jews, and the Jewish farm settlement movement. Abraham Goldberg charged that the Congress found itself in such difficult circumstances because of the "assimilationist tendency of the leadership which does not see Jewish reality nor really feel Jewish life."91

It was not until the latter part of February, 1934, that the Congress organized a boycott bureau. Dr. Joseph Tenenbaum outlined the bureau's objectives: (1) to promote public sentiment in favor of the boycott; (2) to provide guidance and assistance to those carrying on the boycott; (3) to bring moral pressure upon those businesses that had not as yet adopted the boycott; (4) to establish

91 Administrative Committee Meeting, 12/26/33, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1933 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society.
and maintain an information service in regard to equivalents and substitutes for German goods and services; and (5) to enforce the boycott.92

To promote boycott sentiment, the Congress had earlier approved of a plan for holding a public trial at which the crimes of the Hitler regime were to be recounted by eyewitnesses. Though some on the Administrative Committee were fearful of the trial's possible effects on German Jewry, the decision was made to hold the trial in cooperation with all anti-Hitler factions in the United States. "The Case of Civilization against Hitler" took place on March 7, 1934, and the attendant publicity was used by the Congress to further the boycott.93 Moreover, in late March, 1934, the A. F. of L. accepted the Congress's offer of cooperation and a joint boycott committee was established to oversee the operation of the boycott.94


93 American Jewish Congress, The Case of Civilization Against Hitler, (New York, 1934), passim.

94 Administrative Committee Meeting, 3/20/34, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1934 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 3, Administrative Committee, 1934-1959, American Jewish Historical Society.
Congress had hoped that the A.F. of L. would become the focal point of the boycott, and Wise was willing to turn over all boycott activities to that organization. However, the A.F. of L. did little else but pass a resolution at its annual convention reaffirming its opposition to Hitler.95

Tenenbaum wished to aid those who had previously purchased German goods and services, and upon the promulgation of the boycott, had stopped. The Boycott Committee of the Congress planned a "Goodwill Merchandising Fair" by which it hoped to show the public where substitutes and equivalents could be bought. One of the principal obstacles in the enforcement of the boycott was the explanation given by users of those products that German-made goods were "unique" in their make, quality, and price and could

95 Wise to Untermeyer, 10/12/34; Green to Wise, 10/3/34; Untermeyer to Wise, 10/15/34, in possession of Mrs. Ruth Richards Eisenstein, New York City, Archives of the Jewish Information Bureau. Untermeyer was not enthusiastic about the performance of the A.F. of L. "I would not under any circumstances be willing, after my experience with these gentlemen, to turn over the leadership of the boycott to them even though we were to continue to do the work . . . . They have too many crushing burdens and problems . . . . at this time to be able to give the subject any real attention. To them it is purely a collateral matter in which they are . . . not deeply interested as compared with the vexatious problems that are pressing upon them at this crisis in their affairs."
not be substituted by American or other products." Moreover, Tenenbaum stated that the Fair would "raise money for the Congress." William Spiegelman, Executive Secretary of the Boycott Committee, wrote Wise:

> It is our conviction that the Fair will serve a two-fold purpose. It will help to stimulate trade recovery throughout the world, and, at the same time, isolate Hitler [sic] Germany, which is retarding trade recovery as it is threatening international peace.

Tenenbaum contracted with Samuel E. Kimball, President of the Commercial Expositions Company, to coordinate the project for a fee of $4,000; the Congress was to receive 70 per cent of the net revenues. Though the Congress had already signed a contract, many on the Administrative Committee had serious reservations about the project. Carl Sherman did not believe the affair should be held under the auspices of the Jewish Congress, while Richards believed it contrary "to the dignity of the Congress." Scheduled

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96 Boycott Committee of the American Jewish Congress, 3/8/34, folder 7B, Stephen S. Wise Mss, American Jewish Congress file, Box 2, Anti-Nazi Boycott Committee, American Jewish Historical Society.


98 Administrative Committee Meeting, 4/10/34, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1934 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 3, Administrative Committee, 1934-1959, American Jewish Historical Society.
to open in June, 1934, the Fair did not open its doors until late October; by that time, the boycott movement in the United States was almost negligible.99

The American Jewish Congress, despite its sponsorship of the Goodwill Merchandising Fair and other boycott activities, decided as early as late March, 1934, that the boycott was nothing more than a quixotic gesture. At the same time that the Fair was being planned, the Budget Committee of the Congress wished to maintain the Boycott Committee on a volunteer basis.100 Tenenbaum threatened to resign if more funds were not appropriated. "We cannot, 

99 The London Boycott Committee allegedly offered to end the boycott if Hitler repealed the discriminations against the Jews and restored their civil rights. A cable to this effect was published in the United States and many withdrew their support for the boycott upon its publication. See Untermeier to Ovedorf, 10/24/34, in possession of Mrs. Ruth Richards Eisenstein, New York City, Archives of the Jewish Information Bureau. Brandeis was also of the opinion that "we could not consider peace on terms which would be less than the complete restoration of equal citizenship. We would show the worst judgment imaginable if we were content to take a lesser position than equality." See "Memo of Talk of Brandeis with Wise, Kallen, Waldman, and Stroock, 5/15/34," Louis D. Brandeis folder Stephen S. Wise Mss, American Jewish Congress file, Correspondence, Section 7, American Jewish Historical Society.

100 Administrative Committee Meeting, 3/20/34, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1934 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 3, Administrative Committee, 1934-1959, American Jewish Historical Society.
we dare not stop at half-measures," he stated. In a summary report of boycott activities, Tenenbaum warned the Administrative Committee not to "quibble about trifles; "if we are to win this fight, we must put our principal strength in the front-line of the counter-attack." Tenenbaum demanded that the Boycott Committee be given the authority to raise additional funds for boycott work, and that it have sole control over cash disbursements. He warned the Administrative Committee that if the Congress did not lead the boycott, no one would.

If we permit the boycott movement in America to become an academic issue, or an 'attitude'--to use Kallen's phrase--well then, in less than six months, the Boycott will be ancient history and not a very glorious page at that."

If the Congress were to discontinue boycott activities, its very existence would be threatened as well as that of the proposed World Jewish Congress.

The masses want boycott. Under no circumstances can we permit the Congress to lose its grip over the boycott. Neither can we afford to stand by at the tail end of a movement which carries a tremendous potential force for hurting Germany and raising our self-respect.

Unless his demands were met, he threatened to resign.

The Administrative Committee was split on the issue; the Committee of Seven, the chairmen of all the Congress committees, opposed any further appropriation to the boycott bureau. Wise, however, was unwilling to discontinue all boycott work; he was satisfied to let Tenenbaum continue provided the boycott did not become a financial albatross.

Conflict and tensions grew. In late May, 1935, Tenenbaum told the Administrative Committee that it is strange that there should be so many difficulties not only regarding the question of money but also regarding the question of publicity, which is the backbone of the boycott movement. . . . It is no use going on as we have for the past year and a half, wrangling about trifles and forgetting the bigger issues.

The Boycott Committee of the Jewish Congress eventually merged with the Jewish Labor Committee to form a Joint Boycott Council in February, 1936; Wise gave his blessing

102 Ibid., Administrative Committee Meeting, 10/16/34, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1934 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 3, Administrative Committee, 1934-1959, American Jewish Historical Society; Tenenbaum to Wise, 10/22/34, Joseph Tenenbaum Mss, 1933-1938, Joint Boycott Council, YIVO.

103 "Report Submitted to the Administrative Committee by the Chairman of the Boycott Committee of the American Jewish Congress, 5/23/35" World Jewish Congress Mss, 1931-1944, YIVO.
to this arrangement despite his distrust of B. Charney Vladeck, head of the Jewish Labor Committee.

Though it continued to give lip service to the boycott, almost all Congress leaders were glad to see that they no longer had to expend valuable resources on a cause which they thought to be hopeless. Only Tenenbaum and his followers viewed the boycott as the ultimate weapon in the Jewish arsenal; he was willing to promote the boycott even if it "should prove a failure." He deemed it his moral duty to continue the boycott; to "strain every ounce of our energy, and if we are to fail, then at least let us leave to posterity the impeccable proof that we have made the most of our opportunities." No one on the Administrative Committee listened very attentively when Tenenbaum spoke.

Boycott advocates continued to proclaim proudly that Germany's economic future looked hopeless; they cited statistics which allegedly proved that American imports of German goods declined on a percentage basis.

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104 Tenenbaum to Wise, 10/22/34, Joseph Tenenbaum Mss, 1933-1938, Joint Boycott Council, YIVO.

105 The American Israelite, 4/16/36, pp. 1, 8.
German Imports to U.S. | Total U.S. Imports | % from Germany
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1932 | $73,571,644 | $1,332,773,548 | 5.8
1933 | 78,167,612 | 1,449,207,682 | 5.4
1934 | 68,805,488 | 1,655,055,447 | 4.2
1935 | 77,741,474 | 2,047,287,217 | 3.8

Yet, these statistics are very misleading. The greatest decline in imports from Germany occurred from 1929 to 1932, when they fell almost 71 per cent. In 1932, before Hitler came to power, the monthly average of imports from Germany was approximately $6.1 million; in 1934, at the height of the boycott, the average monthly figure had declined to slightly less than $5.9 million. However, the latter figure actually represented a slight increase in the quantity of imported goods since the German Reichsmark had fallen in value.106

State and Treasury Department opposition to the boycott was manifest. Secretary of State Hull, an ardent champion of the Open-Door policy, believed that economic recovery lay in the revival of international trade. Thus, he opposed the boycott as "economically unwise;" he stated that a boycott was costlier "to the boycotters than to the boycotted." He asserted, moreover, that it cost the

United States $5. for every $1. of foreign goods boycotted. The Treasury Department was somewhat more flexible than Hull. The tariff act then in force mandated that every article of imported merchandise and its container be clearly marked to indicate the country of origin. However, the Treasury Department interpreted this provision very loosely, and often allowed goods from Germany marked with a city, province, or other political subdivision to enter the country. Too, the Nazis encouraged German manufacturers to print illegibly the point of origin and place it on an inaccessible part of the article. It was not until Samuel Untermeyer threatened the Department with a lawsuit did the policy change. Treasury decision 46865 was handed down in early March, 1934; however, it would not take effect until ninety days later. Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, Stephen Gibbons, explained that a three-month grace period was necessary so as not to work hardships and financial losses upon American importers and others who hold executory contracts, and that such an early application of a new ruling . . . hinders and embarrasses international commercial intercourse, and

107The American Israelite, 9/27/34, p. 4.
causes ill feeling and resentment on the part of exporters and shippers in friendly nations.\textsuperscript{108} Untermeyer claimed that the State Department could have made an exception to the ninety day ruling with regard to Germany, since that country's evasion of the law had been "willful." However, the State Department refused to make such an exception, and German goods continued to flow into the country with country of origin labels such as "made in Bavaria," and "made in Hamburg."

The Jewish Congress, though it tried to enlist non-Jewish support, considered the boycott a Jewish measure. Wise had always stated that the boycott was a weapon Jews could use to combat Hitler. "My position has been that a world Jewish boycott could only be declared against Germany by a world body of Jews." Samuel Margoshes said that even though non-Jewish organizations endorsed the boycott, "It takes Jewish vigilance to see to it that American workingmen do not buy German goods." If the Jews were to relinquish control of the boycott, it was doomed to failure;

\textsuperscript{108} Gibbons to Untermeyer, 3/8/34; Untermeyer to Gibbons, 3/12/34; Untermeyer to Brown, 3/14/34, David A. Brown Mss, Box 2303b, American Jewish Archives.
the Jews were to lead while others followed. By emphasizing the Jewish aspect of the boycott, the Jewish Congress Boycott Committee expanded the scope of the boycott to include all German-American businesses. Deutsch made the rather fantastic statement that all German-American societies paid a part of their membership dues to the Nazis and received financial support from the Hitler regime. Untermeyer even wished to proclaim a secondary boycott against stores frequented by the German-American community. The Congress had totally alienated organizations such as the Steuben Society that had cooperated with it in the past.

The American Jewish Congress was completely unprepared to meet the challenge of Adolph Hitler. Once the significance of the Hitler threat was realized, the Jewish Congress did not prepare any comprehensive plan of action, and resorted to haphazard schemes which foundered on inefficiency, gross mismanagement, and lack of interest.


110 Kudlich to Kohler, 5/10/34, American Jewish Committee/Germany/Boycott/Public Opinion; Brown to Untermeyer, 7/17/34, David A. Brown Mss, Box 2303b, American Jewish Archives.
The enemy was not only the Nazis in Germany, but also any organization which attempted to usurp the authority of the American Jewish Congress. Hitler triumphed while the American Jewish Congress wallowed in its own shortsightedness.
CHAPTER VII

RESCUING EUROPEAN JEWRY: 1933 TO 1945

The American Jewish Congress's reluctance to initiate an economic boycott of Nazi Germany and the subsequent failure of this venture forced the Congress to pursue other methods to alleviate the plight of their co-religionists. Jewish Congress leaders sought rational solutions to a situation that was almost insolvable; they appealed to a world whose conscience had been suppressed by economic trauma. Like a cancer, Nazi ideology and tactics spread until they infected the entire European body-politic, and the antibodies of democratic thought and moral suasion did not arrest the dreaded disease. Thus, Jews in Germany and Nazi-occupied Europe were condemned to economic destruction and, eventually, physical annihilation.

One way in which Stephen Wise and other Jewish Congress leaders sought to rescue their European brethren was to have them emigrate from Germany to the United States or to any other sanctuary. Yet they realized that any
attempt to substantially alter basic American immigration policy, i.e., the quota system, would be fruitless. Jewish Congress leaders not only had to convince a hostile Senate and House of Representatives, but, also, a substantial number of American Jewish leaders who were not over-enthusiastic about any attempt to open America's doors to thousands of immigrants when millions of native Americans were standing in bread lines. Max Kohler of the American Jewish Committee typified this attitude:

We ourselves are suffering from such economic distress that we cannot take care of our own resident unemployed! You create a situation where it will be charged that America's Jews want to sacrifice America's obvious and essential interests on behalf of their German co-religionists. . . .

In actuality, there was no need to alter the quota system, for the American Congress had made Germany one of the most favored nations; it had the next largest quota to Great Britain, and it had not been filled for many years. The problem, however, lay in President Hoover's Executive Order of September 8, 1930, which commanded the Secretary of State to instruct American consulates to interpret strictly the "public charge" provisions of the law, and,

1Kohler to Dickstein, 3/31/33, American Jewish Committee/Immigration/1933.
thus, to issue virtually no visas at all. Jewish Congress leaders in conjunction with the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society urged the revocation of the Executive Order so as to enable victims of Nazi oppression to utilize the almost 25,000 places in the German quota. Toward the end of March, 1933, Representative Samuel Dickstein introduced a bill toward this end; however, when hearings were scheduled, Wise and Bernard Deutsch declined to testify because they feared the opposition of the "patriotic" groups such as the Daughters of the American Revolution. Too, the State Department expressed strong opposition to the measure, and the Dickstein bill died in committee.

Jewish Congress leaders abandoned their attempt to legislate an end to the public charge provision and concentrated on trying to persuade President Roosevelt to ease the consular interpretation of the law. Wise urged the President to issue a public proclamation in which he

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2Adler to Harzfeld, 4/5/33, American Jewish Committee/Germany/Boycott/Mass Meetings; "Review of Refusals of Visas by Consular Offices," Hearings, House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, 73 Congress, First Session, (Washington, 1933), pp. 1-33. The "public charge" provision of the immigration law prohibited anyone from entering the United States if the authorized officer of the State Department believed the would-be immigrant would have to be supported by public funds after his arrival.
would not directly mention the Jewish situation in Germany, but would emphatically declare that America had always been a land of asylum. As before, Roosevelt refused to act. However, Jewish efforts did prove to be of some value, for at the end of 1933, the State Department accepted visa applications from German citizens residing in countries other than Germany. Heretofore, the State Department accepted visa applications in a nation only from those who were citizens of the country or permanent aliens. Moreover, a short time later, the State Department announced that visas would be issued to those whose friends or relatives agreed to post bond as a guarantee that the immigrant would not become a public charge. Previously, the State Department required that the immigrant himself post bond; for the well-to-do German Jews this would not have represented any great problem, but the Nazis forbade any would-be emigrant from leaving Germany with anything more than a small percentage of his assets. 

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4? to Phillips, 7/18/33, American Jewish Committee/Germany. The State Department's volte-face did not appreciably affect the rate of immigration. In the years 1934 and 1935, only about 9,000 Jews immigrated to the United States from all foreign lands.
groups clamored that the State Department had opened the flood gates to the Jews, in actuality, the number was insignificant. To be sure, almost all German Jews felt that they were totally assimilated into German society and that Hitler was but a fleeting, though terribly frightening, nightmare. Many of the 600,000 German Jews refused to leave the country where they occupied important posts in business and government. When they did leave, they emigrated to countries bordering Germany in anticipation that they would soon return to the Fatherland.5

Anti-immigration feeling was so intense in the United States that Jewish groups were reticent to initiate a program to place German-Jewish children in American foster homes. However, the Executive Committee of the American Jewish Congress passed a resolution favoring the admission of fifty thousand German-Jewish children to be cared for by private families. The idea originated with Morris Waldman of the American Jewish Committee who broached the subject at a meeting of the Joint Consultative Council. The Congress and other Jewish organizations decided to consult State and Labor Department officials. The

5Ibid.
Commissioner General of Immigration was favorable to the idea as was Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins; State Department personnel and several Jewish leaders—Sol Stroock, particularly—were opposed. However, the immigration law forbade any group or philanthropic organization from bringing any immigrant to the United States, and a school bond and public charge bond had to be filed with the Department of Labor for children under the age of sixteen.

At a Jewish Congress Administrative Committee meeting, it was decided that the law could be circumvented by having individuals as individuals pay for the transportation of each child. A committee was organized to persuade 250 people to donate $100 each for the transportation costs. Also, a plan was devised for the organization of a corporation to be chartered by the State of New York with a capital of $25,000. The corporation would then disburse the necessary monies for school bonds and public charge bonds. The money was donated by the Baron deHirsh Fund. Subsequently, Secretary of Labor Perkins decided that to

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^Administrative Committee Meeting, 5/1/34, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1934 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 3, Administrative Committee, 1934-1959, American Jewish Historical Society.
prevent patriotic and nativist groups from arousing Congressional restrictionists, the 250 children were to be granted temporary rather than permanent visas.  

Jewish Congress leaders realized that anti-immigration sentiment was so prevalent in the United States that only a few Jews could possibly immigrate to the United States. To be sure, many German Jews did not wish to come to the United States, and nativist groups were quick to point out that no tampering with the law or executive orders was needed in view of this phenomenon. Yet time was running out for Germany's Jews. The fascist cancer was beginning to spread to France, Poland, and Austria, and it became increasingly difficult for Germany's Jews to enter these countries. The Jewish Congress attempted to stabilize this situation by urging the creation of an international agency through the League of Nations which would serve as a clearing house for all relief operations in the countries to which the refugees fled. As Wise stated:

7Sheldon Neuringer, "American Jewry and United States Immigration Policy," pp. 222-223. For an earlier attempt to initiate a child-rescue program, see Williams to American Jewish Congress, Administrative Committee Meeting, 6/7/33, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1933 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society.
the aim would not be palliative relief which is being attempted in a hundred ways in all the lands of Europe and America, but to explore the possibilities of immigration and reconstruction, including the problem of citizenship for those who are refugees from the Hitler Reich.

Plans for such an agency had already been discussed by the Joint Consultative Council. Dr. Ernst Feilchenfeld, who had been retained by the Joint Distribution Committee, developed a plan for the Nansen Organization to extend help to German refugees. The Organization would have the power to negotiate with the Hitler government regarding the property interests of all the Jews. Proskauer and Stroock conferred with representatives from the American Jewish Congress and had "impressed upon them the importance of the avoidance by Jewish organizations of the appearance of sponsoring any candidate."10

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8 Quoted in the Jewish Exponent, 9/22/33.

9 Policy Committee Meeting, Minutes, 9/1/33, American Jewish Committee/Policy Committee/German-Jewish Situation/1933 (ADM), AJC. The Nansen Office, established in 1921 and directed by Fridtjof Nansen, sought to facilitate the emigration of persecuted peoples by the issuance of an "International Passport." The Nansen Passport granted refugees the same social and economic rights as those nationalists in the host country. However, the passport was valid for only one year, and only if the refugee's native country certified that he would be allowed to return. After Hitler took power, German-Jewish refugees could not obtain a Nansen passport because Hitler would not guarantee their right to return to Germany.

10 Ibid., 10/18/33.
The Committee and the Congress could not reach agreement on whom they wished to see appointed as director of the Autonomous Office of High Commissioner for Refugees from Germany. The Congress wished to see James G. MacDon-ald, director of the Foreign Policy Association, appointed, while the Committee, in deference to its British counterpart, the Board of Deputies of British Jews, opted for Lord Robert Cecil who was willing to accept the post "if an assistant who would take active charge could be appointed." Some members of the Committee thought MacDonald unqualified for the position, and Edgar A. Mowrer, former correspondent in Germany for the Chicago Daily News, allegedly told the Committee that MacDonald "regarded Hitlerism in a somewhat sympathetic tone." Wise viewed the Committee's choice in not too friendly terms.

I am very much afraid that certain groups in England and America are going to stress the setting up of a commission . . . for the care of the immigrant German Jews which may minimize other possibilities of action on the part of the League of Nations. And I want to warn you. I think there is a very real danger that all

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11 Ibid.
12 Ibid.
interest and all attention will be concentrated on this one thing. 13

MacDonald was appointed by the League Council; he appointed as assistants two Jewish representatives from America, one from the "conservative" element represented by the American Jewish Committee, and one from the "democratic" element represented by the American Jewish Congress. MacDonald, however, was hindered in his attempts to rescue German Jewry.

The Autonomous Office of High Commissioner was created as an agency completely separated from the League of Nations. Though the League did provide the High Commissioner's Office with an initial sum of 25,000 francs, it did not continue to fund the agency, and the Office soon became dependent upon the contributions from Jewish organizations. 14 The High Commissioner's function was to open the doors of countries so that Jews could immigrate and settle, to consider and decide on plans together with

13Report by Wise on European Trip, 9/23/33, p. 23, Administrative Committee Minutes, folder 7A, Stephen S. Wise Mss, American Jewish Congress File, Box 1, American Jewish Historical Society.

14Though ostensibly created to deal with all German refugees, non-Jewish organizations contributed very little to the support of the Autonomous Office.
private relief organizations to best carry out the immigration and resettlement, and to coordinate the various aspects of relief and refugee activities. It soon became clear, however, that the Autonomous Office was only duplicating the work of the Nansen Commission; moreover, it was forbidden under its charter to help those Jews who sought refuge from the Nazi terror in Austria.\(^\text{15}\) As soon as the League appointed the High Commissioner and his aides, and funded the project, it washed its hands of the whole matter. A representative of the League of Nations Secretariat comments: "It would not be possible for the League to participate in the organization in an official way. . . ."\(^\text{16}\) All of the correspondence which came to the League about the office of the High Commissioner was forwarded on to Geneva. As MacDonald stated: "I would say that the world has been disagreeably conscious of the Jews; they are considered a drug on the market."\(^\text{17}\)

\(^{15}\)Saul S. Friedman, *No Haven for the Oppressed*, (Detroit, 1973), pp. 5-52.

\(^{16}\)Memorandum from Waldman to the Executive Committee, 11/3-4/33, American Jewish Committee/American Jewish Congress.

\(^{17}\)Naomi Cohen, *Not Free to Desist*, pp. 174-175.
By July, 1936, the Autonomous Office of High Commissioner was reduced to deciding the legal status of refugees. At an inter-governmental conference on refugees held in Geneva, the participating countries refused to grant refugees work permits, and the vital problem of distributing the refugees amongst the countries for resettlement was removed from the agenda. Professor George Bernhard, a friend of the Jewish Congress and its unofficial representative in Europe, urged the Congress to press the following demands for the refugees:

1. Expulsion of refugees by administrative order shall be governed by fixed rules, and arbitrary decisions by bureaucrats be made impossible, expulsion shall take place only after orderly proceedings in which the representative organization of the refugees has participated in an advisory capacity.

2. No request of extradition of refugees to Germany shall be granted unless it is absolutely clear that the crime for which their extradition is asked is not being used by Germany as a pretext to cover up political objectives.

3. The governments of the countries of refuge shall grant the refugees the right to work.18

The League did not take any action.

In February, 1938, an inter-governmental conference met in Geneva for the purpose of adopting a convention on

the status of refugees from Germany. Jewish Congress representatives tried to broaden the definition of the phrase "refugees from Germany" so as to include stateless persons. In addition, it proposed that refugees be made eligible for social insurance, relief, and educational opportunities in countries of refuge. Most of the Jewish Congress's proposals were embodied in the Geneva Convention of February 10, 1938, which was signed by seven governments. However, it was never ratified, because most countries feared a new influx of refugee Jews after Hitler triumphantly marched into Austria.19

Jewish Congress efforts to persuade the League of Nations to take some action against the Hitler terror were not totally fruitless. Germany had been bound by a treaty negotiated with Poland under the auspices of the League in May, 1922, whereby Germany pledged to "assure full and complete protection of their life and liberty to all inhabitants of Germany without distinction of birth, nationality, language, race, or religion." Moreover, all German nationals were to be equal without distinction of race, language or religion." Every inhabitant of Upper Silesia was given

19 Ibid., pp. 112-113.
the right to appeal directly to the League regarding any alleged violations. When the Reich introduced Germany's racial laws into Upper Silesia, the Jewish Congress and the Committee of Jewish Delegations presented the League two petitions in May, 1933. One of the petitions was signed by Franz Bernheim, a Jewish resident of the territory, who had been dismissed from his job because of his religion. The German representative to the League Council admitted that Germany's binding treaty obligations could not be abrogated by internal decree. Yet, when the Council report was drafted in Bernheim's favor, the German representative refused to accept the report, and "expressed his doubts as to whether it came within the League's jurisdiction." League of Nations jurists upheld the Council's report, and Germany was forced to adhere to the treaty until its expiration in July, 1937.

Following the promulgation of the Nuremburg decree in 1935, whereby German Jews were systematically excluded from German life and denied basic legal rights,

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20Ibid., pp. 34-35; Raymond L. Buell, Poland: Key to Europe, (New York, 1939), pp. 330-331.
21World Jewish Congress, Unity in Dispersion, pp. 34-35.
leaders of the German-Jewish community, with the aid of American and British Jews, approached the Nazis with a plan for the systematic emigration of the Reich's Jews. Max Warburg, a wealthy German Jew, envisioned the emigration of some 100,000 German-Jewish youth. In return, a liquidation bank was to be established which would, in effect, have provided the emigrants with enough funds so that they could establish themselves in another country and then send for their relatives. The American Jewish Congress opposed the plan. One Congress member stated that the liquidation bank would be used as an instrument to expropriate in a polite way a considerable part of the fortunes of men of wealth, and at the same time secure much needed foreign funds for Germany either in the form of credits or in the form of foreign valuta (exchange), while Jews became drummers for Hitler.  

Wise later declared:

The American Jewish Congress is not interested in saving Jewish wealth. We will oppose support for any plan for saving Jewish money at the expense of Jewish honor the world over.

While Wise was saving Jewish honor, and possibly preventing

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22 Shultz to Wise, 2/26/36, Executive Committee Minutes, 1936 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 6, Executive Committee, 1916-1949, American Jewish Historical Society.

23 The American Israelite, 4/9/36, p. 11.
other anti-Semitic governments from adopting the scheme, the problem of how to save the Jews in Germany remained.

A glimmer of hope appeared when Dr. Howard Blake, a friend of Wise, went to the Dominican Republic. Armed with a letter of introduction from Wise, Blake managed to see and confer with President Raphael Trujillo. Trujillo proposed that Jews could emigrate from Europe and settle in his country to become tillers of the land and small shopkeepers. Trujillo envisioned as many as one million Jews from Germany, Poland, and Roumania coming to the Dominican Republic, each provided with thirty acres of land and tax exemption for five years. Trujillo estimated that transportation costs and "sustenance" costs would be approximately $1,000, to be paid by philanthropic Jewish organizations. Upon his return to the United States, Blake reported his conversation to Wise, and was quite optimistic. The next day, however, Wise received a letter in which he was asked to examine a Foreign Policy Association pamphlet, "Dictatorship in the Dominican Republic." Its author indicated that a reign of terror existed in the country; "the region is credited with an extensive system of espionage. . . . No one knows whom to trust. . . ." In view of the existing conditions and the total control of the regime of
all avenues of commerce,

the country leaves no hope that any people may expect
the freedom of worship and the pursuit of gainful indus-
try and the safety of even the remotest resemblance of
a haven free from oppression. . . . The territory, if
at all contemplated for Jewish colonization, should be
completely forgotten for such purpose. . . .

The above episode is very significant, for it high-
lights the haphazard approach private Jewish organizations
followed to rescue European Jewry. The exigencies of the
worldwide depression left the American Jewish Congress
grasping for straws in the wind. What was truly needed to
relieve the plight of European Jewry was a highly organized
international effort. The Nazi annexation of Austria in
March, 1938 widened the arena of lawlessness and murder;
the economic and political destruction of Austrian Jewry
can best be illustrated by the fact that in less than
eighteen months after the Nazis marched into Vienna, over
25,000 Jewish businesses were either "Aryanized" or liqui-
dated. The situation in Poland was similar. Over two-
thirds of the Polish-Jewish population had incomes below
the subsistence level. Polish anti-Semites adopted Hitler's
racial anti-Semitism. The National Radical Party and the

\[^{24}\text{The New York Times, 1/9/37, p. 26; ? to Wise, 1/19/37, Stephen S. Wise folder #2, Barnard G. Richards Mss, Jewish Theological Seminary.}\]
National Democratic Party united in a Camp of National Unity with the avowed purpose of forcibly "evacuating" the Jews from Poland.25

After Hitler marched into Austria, President Roosevelt announced that the administration had become so impressed with "the urgency of the problem of political refugees" that it had contacted several European and Western Hemisphere countries for the purpose of cooperating "in setting up a special committee [to facilitate] the emigration from Austria and presumably from Germany of political refugees."26 Though Roosevelt's announcement was initially greeted with praise from the American-Jewish community, the administration was not as magnanimous as it appeared to be. Both Secretary of State Cordell Hull and the President did not expect any country to "receive a greater


26Quoted in Saul S. Friedman, No Haven for the Oppressed, pp. 52-53.
number of immigrants than is permitted by its existing legislation;" financing of the proposed emigration and resettlement would have to be borne by the private relief agencies; nothing was to be done that would interfere with the operations of the Nansen Office or the Autonomous Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees from Germany; and no religious or ethnic group was to be identified with the refugee problem or the calling of the conference.\(^7\)

Enthusiasm turned to despair. Hull and the President did little to organize the conference and hoped the French would assume responsibility for making all arrangements.\(^8\) The British were most anxious to avoid any mention of Palestine as a possible haven for refugees; the French were not anxious to open their borders to more Jews.

George Messersmith of the State Department told Wise:

> Any attempts to interject in an active form the Palestine and Zionist problems, should be rejected, as there are so many passions involved and so many major problems that any endeavor to consider these problems


would probably lead to the early disruption of the conference. . . .

Disappointed by Messersmith, Wise still expected the conference to be a success, even though an American Jewish Congress representative in Europe stated that government and interested circles over here seem as yet to have practically no precise information of any sort as to just what the United States will propose to do at Evian.

Wise then began to exhibit those very tendencies which he deplored in others. He disregarded the numerous signs that the Evian Conference would be nothing more than a grotesque public relations gimmick, and confidently told his associates that "I have so shaped things that I am sure that he [Chaim Weizmann] will have . . . a most vigorous welcome. . . ." Wise later learned that the American delegation at Evian was very much opposed to Weizmann's appearance at the proceedings.

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29 Minutes of First Meeting, President's Advisory Committee on Political Refuge File, Stephen S. Wise Mss, American Jewish Historical Society.


32 Weizmann to Wise, 7/14/38, Stephen S. Wise Mss, Box 1001, American Jewish Archives.
The Conference convened in early July, 1938, in the resort town of Évian-les-Bains, France. Thirty nations participated. Myron Taylor, the head of the American delegation, proposed that the conference facilitate the resettlement of political refugees from Germany and Austria, including those who wished to leave; that the conference assist in expediting "urgent cases;" that the conference agree on a system of providing papers acceptable to the participating nations to those refugees who were not able to secure the proper documents; and, that the conference establish an inter-governmental office to formulate and carry out long-range solutions to the refugee problem.

American proposals did not fare well. The British successfully opposed any general definition of the term "refugee", and Palestine was not a factor in the deliberations. British efforts to thwart the conference were unwittingly aided by the "deplorable impression" made by some twenty

33Argentina, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Columbia, Great Britain, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Sweden, Switzerland, United States, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

34The American Israelite, 7/7/38, p. 1.
private Jewish organizations, who wished to present their particular point of view to the delegates. The British Council for German Jews refused to organize the various Jewish groups into a unified, cohesive body, which would probably have had a greater chance of presenting its case to the conference. Sir Herbert Samuel, leader of the British Council for German Jewry, refused to make any attempt at unity, because he feared some observers and the Nazis would raise the canard of "international Jewry."³⁵

The Evian Conference produced very little. The final communique of July 15, 1938, stated that the life of the conference would be prolonged by the establishment of an Inter-Governmental Committee on Refugees, consisting of members of the world community who wished to participate. The Committee's function was to negotiate "with the Nazis to improve present conditions of exodus and to replace them with conditions of orderly emigration" from Germany. The scope of the Committee's concern was to be limited to those refugees from Germany and Austria only.³⁶ The rhetoric

³⁵Goldmann to Wise, 7/16/38, Stephen S. Wise Mss, Box 1001, American Jewish Archives.

³⁶United States Department of State; Foreign Relations of the United States: 1938, volume 1, pp. 755-757.
of Evian did not match later actions; the Inter-Governmental Committee was handicapped in its attempt to find havens for refugees for the same reasons that plagued the Autonomous Office of High Commissioner. Few countries were willing to open their doors to Jewish refugees, and those who did offer were seeking more publicity and good public relations than refugees.³⁷

Jewish Congress leaders were utterly dismayed and disappointed by democracy's cowardice in the face of the Nazi aggressors. The Munich Pact and later the events of Kristalnacht (November 10, 1938), in which in retaliation for the murder of a Nazi official, Count von Rath, in Paris by a Jew, the Nazis perpetrated the most heinous destruction upon the Jews of Germany, only added to their fears for German Jewry. Before Kristalnacht, the Nazis had seemed content to "humiliate" and "degrade" the Jewish community of Germany; after Kristalnacht, the Nazi regime systematically planned to destroy the remnants of a once proud and

³⁷At Evian, the representative form the Dominican Republic stated that President Trujillo would welcome 100,000 refugees from Germany and Austria to settle as colonists. The exiles were to be "agriculturists with unimpeachable records, who satisfied the condition laid down by the Dominican legislature." A Dominican Republic Settlement Corporation was chartered in 1939; however, by the end of 1941, only 500 Jewish families had settled there.
A prosperous Jewish community. A fine of one billion Reichsmarks was imposed upon the Jewish community as a punishment for the murder of von Rath. Moreover, the damage done to Jewish property was to be paid for by the Jews; all payments for insurance claims were confiscated by the regime; Jews who wished to emigrate from Germany were not permitted to take any of their assets with them; and Jews were no longer entitled to receive benefits from public welfare funds.\footnote{Wise to Goldmann, 9/14/38, Stephen S. Wise Mss, Box 1001, American Jewish Archives; The New York Times, 10/30/38, p. 19; "The Situation of European Jewry: A Summary of the Conditions under which Jews Live in Eastern and Central Europe," pp. 3-4, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Zionist Archives and Library; Saul S. Friedman, No Haven for the Oppressed, pp. 62-63.}

The response of Jewish Congress leaders and the Roosevelt administration to the events of fall, 1938, was tepid. Though F.D.R. called the American ambassador to Germany home for consultations, little else was done. Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau told F.D.R. that he had received a letter proposing that the United States acquire British and French Guiana in return for the cancellation of their World War One debts. The President rejected the idea of making these two territories a haven for Jews because he thought "it would take the Jews five to fifty
years to overcome the fever." Rather, he suggested the Cameroons as a possible Jewish haven, claiming that some "very wonderful, high land, table land, wonderful grass and ... all of that country has been explored and it's ready." Roosevelt's plan was sheer fantasy, for Morgenthau commissioned a study of the Cameroons and the conclusions reached did not support the President's wishful thinking.

In some way Morgenthau wished to convey to the Nazis the total reprehension of the American government to the Munich Pact and Kristalnacht. He directed Treasury Department lawyers to establish legal reasons to compel him to impose countervailing duties against German exports to the United States. According to the Tariff Act of 1930, the Secretary of the Treasury was compelled to raise duties on imports from countries that subsidized their exports to the United States. Morgenthau did not have to seek Congressional or State Department approval for such an action. As a


40Ibid.

courtesy, he wrote Hull of his scheme. One week after Kristalnacht, Hull replied:

I might also point out that this action at this time might possibly affect the prospective attempt of the Inter-Governmental Committee on Political Refugees to secure German cooperation looking toward the facilitation of refugees from Germany—though I may say that the prospects of such facilitation at the present moment are distinctly uncertain.42

Morgenthau pressed his scheme with the President, but Hull was successful in delaying the matter for over four months.

Hull feared that any attempt to embarrass politically the Nazis would virtually nullify any chance to save the Jews. The Inter-Governmental Committee had been negotiating with the Nazis since the latter part of summer, 1938. The Nazis had proposed to permit the refugees to take out part of their property in German-made merchandise. As with the Ha-avarah agreement five years earlier, the Nazis wished to use the refugee question as a means to dump German goods on the world market. In December, 1938, Schacht met with western diplomats in London. He stated that Jewish property not yet confiscated by the Reich was approximately six billion Reichsmarks ($2.5 billion). In return for this sum, the Nazis would permit the emigration of some 50,000 Jewish

42Ibid.
males each year for three years. Schacht coated his plan in humanitarian terms; the Jews would be permitted to leave with funds drawn from a trust fund equal to 25 per cent of all Jewish property in Germany, and to be raised by the world Jewish community. In addition, Germany would pay 4 per cent interest and annual amortization of 2 per cent which would allow Jews to buy German-made products to be taken with them.\textsuperscript{43} Jews, he stated, would no longer be persecuted. George Rublee of the prestigious Washington law firm of Covington and Burling presented a similar proposal but with some important qualifications. Rublee hoped that there could be a complete restoration of German trade with nations that had formerly done business with the Reich. He believed that half the proceeds from this increased trade would be applied to the assistance of the refugees, as well as 50,000,000 pounds sterling from German foreign exchange.\textsuperscript{44}

When Jewish Congress leaders were informed of the various schemes, they did not know what to do. Wise had always been opposed to "ransom" plans, but in the early months of 1939, he began to waver. The shock of Kristalnacht

\textsuperscript{43}\textit{United States Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States: 1938}, volume 1, p. 874.

\textsuperscript{44}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 809-813.
had dissipated and the United States Congress again turned its attention to the prevention of liberalizing the quota system. The Wagner-Rogers bill, which called for the admission of 20,000 German refugee children under age fourteen on a non-quota basis, and for which Wise lobbied behind the scenes, was defeated. Moreover, Wise told the Executive Committee of the Jewish Congress that high officials in the government informed him that the plans could conceivably work, and, thus, he supported it as a last measure to save German Jewry.

But not all in the Jewish Congress were so believing of government officials. Joseph Tenenbaum, the leader of the Jewish Congress boycott committee, argued that the plan was nothing more than a program of confiscation and ransom. The "Agreement" signed in Berlin on February 2, 1939, was nothing more than a farce. He argued that with every Jew leaving Germany, 75 per cent of his property would be confiscated by the Reich; at that rate, the remaining Jewish property would "melt away before any substantial number of Jews could quit Germany." Since the Jewish community in Germany lived on the accumulated capital of its wealthy members, the remaining property would last perhaps only three to five years, the time necessary to get 150,000 Jews
out of Germany. Tenenbaum saw the implications of the "Agreement," for he realized that for every dollar "saved" for emigration, $4 to $5 was being put back in Germany. He argued that had the Inter-Governmental Committee, instead of bargaining for 'Jewish property' simply insisted on an orderly process of emigration, with the refugees permitted to take out some of their belongings and the German Government providing . . . transportation . . ., we could have been able to save fully as much or more on some of the property without any obligation on our part to keep Germany supplied with fresh money each time the Jewish property reserve became empty. . . .

He questioned the ability of world Jewry to force the Nazis to secure "fair treatment" for the remaining Jews. Even if the Germans did live up to their end of the bargain, where would the German Jews emigrate? He cited the case of the St. Louis, a boat with 917 German Jews aboard, which was prevented from landing at many ports of call. The "Agreement" was never carried out, because the Nazis invaded Poland less than seven months later. A new and horrible chapter in Jewish history was about to be written.

45 Tenenbaum to Wise, 5/1/39, Joint Boycott Council and Refugee Problems folder, Joseph Tenenbaum Mss, YIVO.
Before the outbreak of World War II, many Jewish scholars had determined that all of the old formulas of Jewish political life in an alien world had lost their meaning and would have to be fundamentally altered to meet the new political, economic, and social realities. In April, 1939, Dr. Jacob Robinson, an international jurist and leader of Lithuanian Jewry, submitted a plan for the creation of an Institute for Research in Contemporary Jewish Life. He thought the task of the Institute to be the scientific investigation of the political-juridical position of the Jews in the Diaspora; the various research projects were to be the sub-structure of a new, well-defined Jewish policy.46

After World War Two began, the original project was modified to meet the urgency of the moment and to make sure that the post-war settlement would include inviolable guarantees to the Jews. The fundamental aim was international protection of Jewish rights.

To present a united front at the peace conference, the Jewish Congress invited the American Jewish Committee to join the Institute to formulate policies. Nahum Goldmann and Maurice Perlzweig of the World Jewish Congress told the

Committee that Palestine would not be an issue since that problem fell within the purview of the Jewish Agency for Palestine. Morris Waldman of the American Jewish Committee stated that since the United States was still a neutral nation, the Committee would not join in the project. He also stated that the many members of the Committee would not cooperate with anyone from either the American or World Jewish Congress, and that objections would be raised to any international cooperation of a political character during the war. The Committee did not choose to participate in the Institute’s activities.

Some members of the American Jewish Congress questioned the goals of the Institute. Rather than prepare for the peace, it was imperative that Hitler be defeated. The goal of "Defence of Jewish Rights" had lost all meaning; the question that now had to be answered was how could American Jewry safeguard its brethren in Europe. In a memorandum to the American Jewish Congress, Mordecai Boraisha


48The name was changed to the Institute of Jewish Affairs in 1941.
did not bother to mention the Jews' position in Europe if Hitler was victorious; even if Britain and France were to defeat Hitler, he did not foresee much hope for the Jews. Indeed, the problems were almost insurmountable. The best way, according to Boraisha, to salvage anything of an almost hopeless situation was to support President Roosevelt's "preparedness" campaign. Indeed, the implication was very clear that Boraisha would gladly welcome United States entry into the European conflict.

The preparedness debate was, in essence, a question of what role the United States would play in the world arena. Jewish Congress leaders perceived themselves to be internationalists; Wise had vigorously campaigned for the League of Nations as did many in the Jewish Congress. One of their contentions was that if the United States was to pursue an isolationist course, then the defense of Jewish

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49Boraisha to American Jewish Congress, 8/27/40, M. Boraisha folder, Stephen S. Wise Mss, American Jewish Congress File, Correspondence, Section 7, American Jewish Historical Society. Boraisha was prophetic in his estimate of Soviet intentions: "There is a prevailing opinion that even a British victory will not cause the Soviet Union in the near future to return the territories occupied in the last year. We are therefore faced with the fact that five million Jews are doomed to spiritual extinction. . . . A New Order in Europe may also cause changes in the inner policies of the Soviet Union and we are to be prepared with some plans for the spiritual saving of Russian Jewry. . . . "
rights abroad would suffer as it did during the inter-war period. Their experience with trying to relieve the plight of their European brethren led them to believe that only a new foreign policy, based on international guarantees, could save the situation. Thus, when President Roosevelt called for America to be the arsenal of democracy, Jewish Congress leaders responded with enthusiasm.50

Wise and other Jewish Congress leaders joined with liberal and anti-Nazi groups to participate in the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies. They also began to organize a patriotic front of all the groups of American citizens whose native lands were occupied by the Nazis, e.g., Poles, Czechs, Dutch, Norwegian, Belgian, and Franco-American organizations. Wise even went so far as to reject any attempts to permit the admission of Jewish refugees, "however imminent be their peril," for fear that Republicans and anti-Roosevelt Democrats would use the refugee and quota issues to hurt the President's re-election chances.

Cruel as I may seem, as I have said to you before, his re-election is much more important for everything that is worthwhile and that counts than the admission of a few people. . . . 51

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Wise and Carl Sherman, former Attorney General of New York State and Chairman of the Jewish Congress Administrative Committee, ruthlessly cut down any opposition within the Jewish Congress to F.D.R.'s preparedness campaign. At a meeting of the national council of the Youth Division of the American Jewish Congress, Wise and Sherman dissolved the Youth Division because it had declined a request of the Jewish Congress Governing Council to withdraw from the American Youth Congress and repudiate a stand taken by its New York chapter against aid to the Allies short of war.52

After November, 1940, the Jewish Congress publicly called for more extensive aid to the Allies. Jewish Congress leaders planned a program of Jewish aid to Great Britain in the form of supplies rather than military implements. In a memorandum to Wise, the Executive Director of the Congress outlined the functions of the proposed organization:

1. securing of needed supplies for Great Britain other than military materiel;
2. the organization would serve as a propaganda agency to influence American public opinion for "all possible support to Great Britain, short of war, by the American people as a whole."53

53Shultz to Wise, 12/17/40, (Memorandum, 1936-1943), American Jewish Congress File, Correspondence, Section 7, Stephen S. Wise Mss, American Jewish Historical Society.
The plan proposed that the Jewish Congress solicit funds for the purchase of supplies as well as the solicitation of the supplies themselves such as ambulances, rolling kitchens, drugs, medical instruments, absorbent cotton, clothes, cots, binoculars, and any other goods or services which the British authorities would request.54

A conference to establish a National Committee on Jewish Aid to Great Britain was called by the American Jewish Congress and met in New York City on December 29, 1940. In his opening remarks, Wise stated that the new organization would be independent of the Jewish Congress. He then read a message from Henry A. Atkinson, Secretary of the Inter-Faith Committee for Aid to the Democracies, inviting the Conference to affiliate the newly established National Committee with his organization so as to better plan future activities and avoid duplication of effort.

Wise immediately endorsed the proposal, and tried to carry it through in the form of a resolution. There were serious objections raised from the floor. Representatives of the Jewish National Workers Alliance and Dr. Joseph Tenenbaum of the Jewish Congress argued that the primary purpose

54Ibid., See also, Shultz to Wise, 12/17/40.
of a "Jewish" campaign was to emphasize the "special Jewish contribution to Great Britain, and the formation of a Jewish section in a non-sectarian body would be contrary to that purpose." Lillie Shultz objected to the proposed amalgamation of forces from a structural standpoint. "With respect to relief," she wrote Wise, in all our thinking in connection with American Jewish Aid to Great Britain, we saw the necessity of establishing a separate body for this undertaking to be initiated by us. . . . Through the creation of a separate body, it would become possible to attract elements to it that would not ordinarily be attracted to the Congress, and that from the Congress's standpoint, it is essential that there should be a separation between it and its normal activities in a relief undertaking which, however important, was temporary and not allied to the principal objectives of the American Jewish Congress as an agency for the defence of Jewish rights.

Since the primary purpose of the Interfaith Committee was political, she questioned where the Jewish Congress would fit in, since the Interfaith Committee was to function as a relief agency.

Wise and Samuel Margoshes successfully swayed the Resolutions Committee and the conference representatives to

55Report of Z. Shuster on "Conference on American Jewish Aid to Great Britain," 12/40, American Jewish Committee/American Jewish Congress.

56Shultz to Wise, 12/17/40, (Memorandum, 1936-1943), American Jewish Congress File, Correspondence, Section 7, Stephen S. Wise Mss, American Jewish Historical Society.
vote for affiliation and for funneling the supplies through the British War Relief Society. It is not clear why Wise was so eager for affiliation with the Interfaith Committee. One observer noted, however, that Wise was not thoroughly convinced of the success of the undertaking; hence, he wished for the support and organizational sub-structure of the other organization. Also, Wise might have feared further backlash from nativist and isolationist elements who combined anti-Semitism with their isolationist philosophy.

As the United States moved inexorably toward war, the Jewish Congress and other internationalist groups were charged with "agitating for war." Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor pushed the United States over the precipice.

At the same time that the American Jewish Congress was busily denying charges of war mongering, disquieting news was being received by State Department officials that


58 "Investigation of Un-American Activities; Report of Nazi Propaganda in the United States," passim, Dickstein Committee Mss, Box 473, American Jewish Archives. See also, Saul S. Friedman, No Haven for the Oppressed, p. 50. Said F.D.R.: "First things come first, and I can't alienate certain votes I need for measures that are more important at the moment by pushing any measure that would entail a fight."

the Nazis were conducting mass executions of Jews. On June 2, 1941, Jan Ciechanowski, Ambassador of the Polish Government-in-Exile in London, reported to Secretary of State Cordell Hull that the Nazis had perpetrated "compulsory euthanasia" against the Jews. Unsubstantiated, but recurrent, tales of horror reached the ears of State Department officials as well as Jewish Congress leaders. On the anniversary of Hitler's assumption of power in 1942, the Fuhrer declared:

We know full well that the war can end only by the extermination of the Germanic peoples or by the disappearance of Jewry from Europe. Aryan peoples will not be removed from Europe and this war will see the destruction of Jewry.60

Reports of further atrocities circulated amongst diplomats. In June, 1942, the Polish Government-in-Exile broadcast that 700,000 Jews in Poland and Lithuania had been murdered by the Nazis; the Jewish Telegraphic Agency reported that more than 120,000 French and Austrian Jews died while in transit to Poland. State Department officials in Stockholm reported to Hull of various massacres of Jews which were

Nazi crimes against the Jews and other subjugated peoples were the focal point for a conference of eight governments-in-exile and the Free French National Committee held in London in January, 1942. The delegates to the St. James Conference declared their determination to see to it that "those guilty and responsible, whatever their nationality, are sought for, handed over to justice, and judged." Crimes against the Jews were not specifically considered even though the World Jewish Congress pleaded with the delegates to include a "specific statement with reference to those crimes and an explicit denunciation of those guilty of perpetrating them." The delegates refused to do this; General Sikorski, President of the Conference, declared that as the character, the race or religion of the victim ought not in any case to constitute an element susceptible of modifying the criminal nature of an act or the degree of its illegality; there was no reason explicitly to recall the sufferings endured by the Jews, all the more so as such a reference might be equivalent to an implicit recognition of the racial theories which we all reject.

61 Saul S. Friedman, No Haven for the Oppressed, pp. 135-136.

Jewish leaders were no more successful in persuading Allied
governments to give succor to the victimized Jews. Churchill had told the House of Commons "that no form of relief can be devised which would not directly or indirectly assist the enemy's war effort." Secretary of State Hull concurred.

Wise sought to relieve the anxieties of the American-Jewish community. He was aware of the many rumors and unsubstantiated reports of Nazi atrocities, and he asked President Roosevelt to extend his sympathies to the Jews which F.D.R. did. But that was all F.D.R. did.

On August 1, 1942, Dr. Gerhart Riegner, director of the Geneva office of the World Jewish Congress, talked to a German industrialist, who told him of the Nazis' plan to exterminate the Jews with the use of prussic acid. Riegner attempted to verify the story, and once satisfied of its essential veracity, he went to the American Embassy on August 10, 1942. There, he talked to the American

63 Ibid., pp. 9-11.
64 Ibid.
Vice-Consul, Henry Elting, Jr., and requested that the Embassy notify the State Department and the World Jewish Congress, of which Wise was President. Elting cabled Hull and asked the Secretary of State to inform Wise.

Elting also cabled Leland Harrison, his superior in Bern. Harrison was very skeptical of the Riegner story. He in turn cabled the State Department that the Riegner story was nothing more than "war rumor inspired by fear and what is commonly understood to be the actual miserable condition of those refugees who face discrimination as a result of physical maltreatment. . . ." Upon receipt of the Harrison cable, Elbredge Durbrow, State Department European Division Director, reported to his superiors that Wise and other Jewish leaders should not be informed of the Riegner story. The State Department later cabled the embassy in Switzerland that "no further unconfirmed reports be transmitted by third parties. . . ." Riegner also wired Sidney Silverman, a Labor M.P. and Chairman of the

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67 Ibid., Durbrow acknowledged, though, that even if the story was true, the United States could do nothing about it.

68 Ibid.
British Jewish Congress, and it was he who actually relayed the story to Wise.

Wise called an emergency session of the American Jewish Congress Governing Council. It was decided that prior to any public announcement about the atrocities, Wise would go to Washington and talk to State Department officials. He conferred with Sumner Welles whom Wise respected and trusted; the Under-Secretary asked the rabbi not to make the story public until the Allied governments could verify it. Ten weeks later, Welles told Wise that Riegner's allegations were correct. Stunned and shaken, Wise did not know what to do.

The President of the American Jewish Congress had continually sought the advice of government officials as to what action should be taken. Myron Taylor and the President's Advisory Committee on Political Refugees told Wise that efforts were being made to persuade the Pope to intervene. He did not think much of this tactic, for he considered the Pope an "enshrined prisoner," one who was "a politician first and a churchman second." Moreover, he did not

69Ibid., pp. 136-137, 142. See also, Stephen Wise, Challenging Years, p. 274.

70Carl H. Voss, Stephen S. Wise: Servant of the People, p. 250.
think Roosevelt's intervention would help, because Hitler would not listen to a man who had deprived him of a complete victory. He asked Harold Ickes to contact the President to determine if one thousand Jewish children could be brought to the United States from Europe; the children were to be maintained in the Virgin Islands. If this proved to be politically feasible, then adults who otherwise would be murdered by "Hitler's brutes," could be provided safety. Nothing ever came of this.

Together with the leaders of the American Jewish Committee, the B'nai Brith, the Jewish Labor Committee, and the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States, Wise requested a meeting with the President in December, 1942. The delegation presented F.D.R. two memoranda. The first set forth the hopes of the Jews of the world that the President as "the symbol of humanity's will to fight for freedom" would publicly act to save European Jewry; unless action was immediately undertaken, "the Jews of Europe are doomed." Wise told the President that although the . . . process of extermination has never abated . . . [it] has not followed a uniform course and

71Ickes to F.D.R., 10/7/42, Stephen S. Wise Mss, Box 1001, American Jewish Archives. A similar plan had been ban­died about by the Administration in the autumn of 1940; nothing was done.
there are clear cut indications that the Nazi regime has sometimes retreated in the face of energetic and clear cut warnings on the part of President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill.72

The memorandum did not elaborate on how this could be accomplished.

The second memorandum detailed the methods by which the more than two million Jews were put to death:

1. Jews were loaded onto freight cars strewn with chloride or lime and sealed; 30 per cent of the victims died by suffocation or starvation;

2. Jews were lined up along side mass graves and machine gunned;

3. Jews were used as human guinea pigs in Nazi experiment centers where their genitals were cut off, or they were "humanely" put to death by the injection of air bubbles into their veins;

4. Jews were either asphyxiated or burned alive in crematoria.

The memorandum further noted that in addition to these "quick" methods, the Nazis killed their victims through such inventive measures as "racial ration systems," and forced labor where the victims were worked to death or shot. The memorandum concluded that the Jewish population of thirteen

72 12/8/42, American Jewish Committee/Nazism/American Jewish Congress.
European countries had been reduced by over 50 per cent since 1939.73

The delegation urged the appointment of an American commission to "receive and examine all evidence of Nazi barbarity," and that "such action as is initiated by the United States would be joined by the United Nations."74 F.D.R. repeated his pledge that the perpetrators of the crimes would be "brought to strict accountability"; that the United States would make every effort to save those who could be saved; and that, in conjunction with the other allied countries, a commission would be established to receive and examine evidence of Nazi barbarities. One week later, the Allies announced to the world the existence of the murder camps, and warned that "those responsible for these crimes shall not escape retribution."75

Though the President promised everything the delegation requested, Wise had an uneasy feeling about the meeting. It was almost as if he had heard the same tune before and

73 Ibid.
74 Ibid.
75 Saul S. Friedman, No Haven for the Oppressed, p. 133.
the record was beginning to warp. Yet Wise had to deal with the Chief Executive; if anything was to be accomplished, he believed Roosevelt must do it. Other Jewish Congress leaders were not as enamored of the man from Hyde Park as was Wise. They felt that only by forcing the President's hand through public pressure would the rescue of European Jewry even be attempted. They believed that the only way public opinion would be aroused and the government moved to action was through mass demonstrations, similar to the mass protest marches of 1933. They sought to mobilize the Jewish masses for a march on Washington to arouse a docile Congress. To gain the support of various other ethnic groups, they approached the A.F. of L. and the C.I.O. and conducted a media blitz with public speakers and articles. 76

Wise was able to prevent such a program. He apparently promised those who favored other tactics that if his efforts to move the government to rescue European Jewry were not successful, mass demonstrations would ensue. He and other leaders of Jewish organizations once again gathered to see what course of action should be taken. Joseph

76 Memorandum (?) 12/10/42, World Jewish Congress Mss, 1931-1944, YIVO.
Proskauer of the American Jewish Committee suggested that he alone would go to see Sumner Welles. "He will talk to me and I will get his judgment on what you call 'action'. . . ." Welles told Proskauer that the Jews' demands would be discussed at the upcoming Anglo-American Conference on Refugees, to be held in April at an undetermined site.

Wise reported to Jewish Congress leaders on what had transpired. To put pressure on the government to do something, it was decided that a mass rally be held at Madison Square Garden on March 1, 1943, to discuss possible action and present a list of demands. Almost 20,000 people crowded into the Garden. After many vociferous speeches, several proposals were made to rescue the Jews:

1. Through the mediation of neutral agencies, the German Government should be approached to secure its agreement to the release of the Jews and to consent to their emigration to havens of refuge;

2. The United States should take steps to designate and establish a number of sanctuaries in Allied or neutral states to serve as havens;

3. The procedure that was currently in force in the administration of the immigration laws in the United States should be revised and adjusted within the quota system to meet the exigencies of the war;

77Carl H. Voss, Stephen S. Wise: Servant of the People, pp. 256-257.
4. Great Britain should be asked to provide for a reasonable number of the refugees;

5. The United Nations should urge the Latin American republics to modify their administrative regulations which hindered the rescue process;

6. Great Britain should be asked to open the doors to Palestine to allow Jewish victims of the war to enter;

7. The United Nations should provide financial guarantees to all neutral states that gave temporary refuge to the victims of Hitler;

8. The United Nations was urged to establish an appropriate inter-governmental agency which would have the power to implement the rescue program.78

The proposals were sent to President Roosevelt. On March 2, 1943, Welles declared that these demands would be carefully considered at the forthcoming Anglo-American Conference on Refugees to be held in Bermuda. The next day, Welles divulged to the press the details of a note on the Conference from Hull to the British Ambassador. Hull did not mention the Jews or their plight; he reportedly told the ambassador that no binding decisions were to be made, and that the Conference would make its "recommendations" to the almost impotent Intergovernmental Committee on

Political Refugees. He implied that nothing could be done to save European Jewry; shipping was at a premium and could not be used for refugee transport.\textsuperscript{79} Hull had suggested Ottawa as the site of the conference, but the British were even reluctant to meet there because the press might swarm over the deliberations. Rather they opted for Bermuda because of its inaccessible location and because all communications systems were controlled by the British.

Wise was almost positive that the Bermuda Conference would do nothing to save the Jews. As one of the leaders of the Joint Emergency Committee for European Jewish Affairs,\textsuperscript{80} he wrote to Sumner Welles and expressed his concern. He had thought that, at last, effective action would be taken; but he was disappointed that neither the British nor the Americans had seen fit to invite the representative Jewish organizations of the two countries to consult with the delegates. He asked Welles for a hearing

\textsuperscript{79}Saul S. Friedman, \textit{No Haven for the Oppressed}, pp. 158-159.

\textsuperscript{80}The Joint Committee represented the American Jewish Congress, the American Jewish Committee, the B'nai Brith, and the Synagogue Council of America.
at the Conference, but the request was denied. 81

The American delegates to Bermuda--Sol Bloom, Chairman of the House of Foreign Affairs Committee, Dr. Harold Willis Dodds, President of Princeton University, R. Borden Reams, a State Department official, and Senator Scott Lucas--believed that the ultimate priority was winning the war, and thus anything that hindered the war effort could not be tolerated. The final communique of the Bermuda Conference reflected this concern:

From the outset it was realized that any recommendations that the delegates could make to their governments must pass two tests: would any recommendation submitted interfere with or delay the war effort of the United Nations; and was the recommendation capable of accomplishment under war conditions? 82

The Bermuda Conference rejected the proposal to enter into further negotiations with the Axis for the release of the condemned Jews. The conferees did not believe they had the authority to recommend the shipping of

81 Unpublished memorandum of the Joint Emergency Committee for European Jewish Affairs, 4/19/43, "Program for the Rescue of Jews from Nazi Europe," YIVO. Wise wished to present to the Bermuda Conference essentially the same proposals he had forwarded to the President after the March 1, 1943 rally at Madison Square Garden.

82 Quoted in World Jewish Congress, Unity in Dispersion, p. 165.
food to concentration camp inmates, and they were not willing to establish temporary havens for victims of Nazi cruelty. The British were totally successful in preserving their policy of restricting immigration to Palestine as outlined in the White Paper of 1939.83

Reactions to the failures of the Bermuda Conference were quickly forthcoming. Dr. Frank Kingdom, President of the International Rescue and Relief Committee, attacked the Conference as a "shame" and a "disgrace." He implied that the whole disgusting episode was a public relations gimmick. Rabbi Israel Goldstein, President of the Synagogue Council of America, echoed these sentiments.

The job of the . . . Conference was apparently not to rescue victims of Nazi terror but to rescue our State Department and the British Foreign Office from possible

83 "Survey of the Rescue Activities of the World Jewish Congress, 1940-1944," pp. 22-24, World Jewish Congress Mss, 1931-1944, YIVO. The State Department tried to clarify its position to a very skeptical public the achievements of the Bermuda Conference: (1) It agreed upon financial measures to cover the cost of maintaining refugees in neutral countries; (2) "When shipping became available, a number of temporary havens would be established and refugees transported"; (3) Upon the termination of hostilities, the conferees would provide for the repatriation of refugees; (4) To meet the exigencies of the war, the delegates would submit a plan for an expanded inter-governmental refugee organization with full authority over refugee matters. See Saul Friedman, "Official United States Policy toward Jewish Refugees," pp. 311-312.
embarrassment.\textsuperscript{84}

The World Jewish Congress's \textit{Jewish Comment} editorialized:

The truth is that what stands in the way of aid to the Jews in Europe by the United Nations is not that such a program is dangerous, but simple lack of will to go to any trouble on their behalf.\textsuperscript{85}

Though Wise was incensed by the Bermuda fiasco, he refused to sanction public demonstrations against the President. He feared that public protest would only solidify the Congress behind the Executive in support of the "do-nothing" attitude.

I cannot and will not do it. That we should tell the world, including the Nazis, that the President and our government will not do anything for the refugees is morally and perhaps even physically suicidal.\textsuperscript{86}

He thought the Joint Emergency Committee was nothing more than a platform for long speeches by "all the wild people" in the Committee.\textsuperscript{87} He suggested that a small group from the Joint Emergency Committee be appointed to negotiate

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{84}The \textit{New York Times}, 4/29/43, p. 9.
  \item \textsuperscript{85}Quoted in World Jewish Congress, \textit{Unity in Dispersion}, p. 165.
  \item \textsuperscript{86}Wise to Goldmann, 4/23/43, \textit{Stephen S. Wise Mss}, Box 1001, American Jewish Archives.
  \item \textsuperscript{87}Ibid.
\end{itemize}
with government officials; "then, we will do some busi-
ness." The Rabbi opted for shtadlan diplomacy.

It is very easy to hold press conferences and to call
meetings, but we must consider in advance what it will
lead to—-that it will shut every door and leave us
utterly without hope of relief as far as F.D.R. is con-
cerned. He is still our friend, even though he does not
move as expeditiously as we would wish. But he moves as
fast as he can, in view of the Congress on his hands, a
bitterly hostile and in a very real sense partially
anti-Semitic Congress. 89

Thus, Wise was able to prevent the "hotheads" on the Jewish
Congress Executive Committee from calling for mass street
demonstrations to protest government inaction regarding the
atrocities. 90 Immediately after the Bermuda Conference, he
asked to see President Roosevelt about what could be done
to save the remnants of European Jewry without hurting the
war effort. 91

88 Ibid.

89 Wise to Goldmann, 4/22/43, Stephen S. Wise Mss, 
Box 1001, American Jewish Archives.

90 Executive Committee Meeting, 6/8/43, Executive Com-
mittee Minutes, 1943 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, 
Box 6, Executive Committee, 1916-1949, American Jewish Histor-
tical Society.

91 Wise to F.D.R., 4/28/43; F.D.R. to Watson, 5/11/43, 
Watson to Wise, 5/12/43, Microfilm #89, Stephen S. Wise--
Franklin D. Roosevelt Correspondence, 1920-1945, American 
Jewish Archives.
The above does much to explain Wise's actions during the Holocaust. Even though the Jewish Congress had established a special planning committee to coordinate rescue activities and maintain contact with government agencies, it worked under the assumption that "winning the war" was the paramount issue. Though, as Chaim Greenberg claimed, it sought the support of Christian clerics to help save the Jews, and though it failed miserably in its attempt, the question remained what tactic would have succeeded. Wise was the American Jewish Congress from the first days of the war to V-E Day. He discounted any attempts to sway Papal opinion for he considered Pius XII a politician, not a Churchman. To the charge that a "foreigner" chaired the Rescue Committee when one who was wise in the ways of Washington politics could have done better, one must answer that war tends to consolidate power in the hands of a very few men. It was Wise who knew Roosevelt, not the Rescue Committee; the Jewish Congress placed upon Wise the terrible burden of finding solutions to insolvable situations. No other Jew gave of himself more in those harrying days than Stephen Wise. Orthodox Jewish groups refused to cooperate with any organizations unless they were given important posts on rescue committees. The Jewish Labor Committee typified this
attitude, and followed the path of "non-cooperation, non-action, and keeping apart from common attempts to accomplish something." 92

Wise's attitude toward the rescue of some 70,000 Transdniastrian Jews in February, 1943, can also be explained in the above framework. Ben Hecht, a playwright and co-chairman of the Committee for a Jewish Army, placed a full page advertisement in The New York Times which stated that Roumania would allow the 70,000 Jews to leave at a cost of fifty dollars per person for transport to the border. Wise was aware that Riegner had ostensibly approved of the scheme, but he publicly stated that no confirmation had been received, and, therefore, no collection of ransom money was necessary at that time. He wrote a long letter to John Haynes Holmes in which he referred to the proposed "sale" as a "hoax on the part of the Hecht group." He questioned Hecht's information, for he told Holmes that the cost per person would not be $50, but almost eight times that amount.

That would mean $30,000,000 to begin with; and even if the thing could be effected and it were not a barefaced swindle and thievery, we could not afford to pay a penny

92Quoted in Saul S. Friedman, No Haven for the Oppressed, pp. 144-146.
to Roumania, to the government or the swindling representatives of the government, without the express consent of our own government. For, as you know, Roumania has declared war against us. 93

Aside from the technical problem of paying the ransom, certain other factors entered the situation. To be sure, Wise did not want to jeopardize whatever chance the Jews had that something productive would come out of the Bermuda Conference. Also, Wise did not wish to deal with terrorist Jewish groups which the American Jewish Conference had condemned. Much has been made of the delay in precious time from when Wise first learned of the scheme until he pressed F.D.R. to act.

Wise must have pondered why Hecht chose the vehicle of a full-page advertisement in The New York Times. It must have seemed incredible to him that as delicate a matter as the sale of Jews would be plastered on the pages of the Times. Bribery and ransom payments are not activities one would wish to be made public; moreover, if the offer had been accepted, would not the Roumanian Government have disavowed any connection with it, and branded the offer as

Allied propaganda and chicanery? Also, had the Roumanian Jews been allowed to leave, where could they have gone? The British categorically refused them entry into Palestine; North Africa was a no-man's land for Jews even after its liberation, and the United States was unwilling to give the Jews a haven in the United States or any of its territories.94

In July, 1943, Wise came to Washington and talked to Treasury Department officials about the rescue of the Trans-Dniestrian Jews. He told Secretary of the Treasury Morgenthau that he had learned that Nazi officials in Roumania would allow the evacuation of the Jews if they were paid $170,000 in local currency. He told Morgenthau that the Jews of Roumania could make the payment provided they were reimbursed in dollars or Swiss francs, to be held for them until the end of hostilities. He further stated that representatives

94One day after Wise announced that no funds would be collected to finance the ransom scheme, the American Jewish Congress asserted that the "anti-Jewish legacy of the Nazis remained intact in North Africa. . . . No changes of an important character have been made in the political and economic situation." The New York Times, 2/15/43. See also, F.D.R. to Wise, 3/23/43, Microfilm #89, Stephen S. Wise-Franklin D. Roosevelt Correspondence, 1920-1945, American Jewish Archives.
of the World Jewish Congress could direct the operation from Geneva, and that the State Department was notified of the possible transaction. Morgenthau told Wise that the Treasury Department was "fully sympathetic to the proposal."95 In a later meeting with the President, Wise stressed the fact, that unlike the Hecht scheme, no U. S. currency would actually be transferred, since it would be held in escrow in blocked accounts in Swiss banks. F.D.R. orally approved of the plan.96

State Department officials, however, were either skeptical of the scheme or totally opposed to it. Though Hull assured Morgenthau that his aides were cooperating fully, it was not until late September, 1943, that the necessary cables were sent to Bern. Harrison cabled for specific instructions; he also noted that the British were opposed to the plan. Morgenthau tried to persuade the British to withdraw their objections to the issuance of the necessary licenses. By mid-December, 1943, the British finally agreed; however, only $25,000 was to be allocated,

95 John Morton Blum, From the Morgenthau Diaries: The War Years, volume 3, pp. 210-211.
96 Ibid.
"and only under conditions preventing the movement of dollars to Nazi agents or other objectionable persons."97

Also, the Foreign Office noted that 70,000 Jews could not be accommodated in the Mid-East. Morgenthau's aides urged him to talk to the President, but he was reluctant to start a bureaucratic war with the State Department. He chose to see Hull once again.

Hull, too, was flabbergasted about the delays and obstructionist tactics of his own colleagues. Gerhard Riegner soon received the necessary funds, but Morgenthau's joy soon turned to bitter disappointment. State Department underlings neglected to send the new licenses to Switzerland. The British once again began to raise objections; the movement of refugees, they believed, "would create problems in transportation and accommodation which might be embarrassing not only to this government but to your own."98 Morgenthau decided to go to the President.

On January 16, 1944, Morgenthau handed F.D.R. a memorandum entitled a "Report to the Secretary on the Acquiescence of This Government in the Murder of the Jews." With

97 Ibid.
98 Ibid.
Treasury Department General Counsel Randolph Paul and Foreign Funds Chief John Pehle, co-authors of the report, at his side, Morgenthau recounted to the President the sad tale of State Department procrastination, inaction, and suppression of reports. He demanded that F.D.R. take immediate action to rectify the situation:

There are a growing number of responsible people and organizations today who have ceased to view our failure as the product of simple incompetence on the part of these officials in the State Department charged with handling this problem. They see plain anti-Semitism motivating the actions of these . . . officials, and, rightly or wrongly, it will require little more in the way of proof for their suspicion to explode into a nasty scandal.99

The President, shocked and angry at the allegations, responded quickly. On January 21, 1944, he created the War Refugee Board and appointed John Pehle as Director. Unlike agencies which had previously tried to deal with the problem, Pehle was given the power to appoint special assistants with diplomatic status who were permitted to go wherever their presence was required. Moreover, they could negotiate with any country to secure the release and

evacuation of imprisoned Jews, and, most importantly, were exempted from the provisions of the Trading With the Enemy Act.\textsuperscript{100} When the creation of the War Refugee Board was announced, the American and World Jewish Congress submitted a program to the new agency, "A Program of General Measures of Relief and Rescue of Jews Threatened with Extermination by the Enemy." Both agencies stressed that if the program of the War Refugee Board is to be fulfilled, customary procedures must be superseded. The rescue of Jews from the clutches of the Nazis now falls for the most part within the sphere of underground activity, and commando and guerrilla warfare.

The program was divided into psychological and diplomatic steps and measures. It called for continual warnings to the Nazis as well as for appeals to the surrounding populations to aid the Jews, for publication of the facts of extermination through the media, for continued pressure on the satellites and encouragement of the neutral states, for immediate trials of the already captured war criminals, and the reclassification of the Jewish victims as civilian internees. The plan also proposed the creation of temporary camps in free countries, the granting of shipping rights to the International Red Cross to transport food

\textsuperscript{100}Saul Friedman, \textit{No Haven for the Oppressed}, p. 213.
and medicine to the internment camps, the removal of transit
difficulties in Turkey, the exploration of the possible
exchange of Jews for Axis nationals, and further support of
underground groups in their efforts to smuggle Jews out of
Nazi areas. 101

By June, 1944, Pehle could report that with the help
of the World Jewish Congress, a program for the removal of
Jews from France to Spain, Switzerland and North Africa
had been started, and that in conjunction with the Joint
Distribution Committee, more than 5,000 Jewish children had
been evacuated from France. The War Refugee Board also had
begun to plan for the rescue of Jews from Poland and Hun-
gary, and had worked closely with the Vatican in this mat-
ter. 102

Though the War Refugee Board saved thousands of
Jews from annihilation, the Nazi murder camps had proved

101 World Jewish Congress, Unity in Dispersion, pp.
170-171.

102 John Morton Blum, From the Morgenthau Diaries:
The War Years, volume 3, pp. 223-224; Administrative Com-
mittee Meeting of the American and World Jewish Congress,
6/25/44, pp. 5-8, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 1,
Zionist Archives and Library; Goldmann to Wise, 8/10/44,
Stephen S. Wise Mss, Box 1001, American Jewish Archives;
"Survey of the Rescue Activities of the World Jewish Con-
gress, 1940-1944," pp. 41-42, World Jewish Congress Mss,
1931-1944, YIVO.
to be as efficient as their directors had forecasted.

Relief and rehabilitation for those Jews fortunate enough to escape death was carried on by the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration in conjunction with private organizations. However, even in this area, the Allies showed the same callousness as before. Whereas every other part of the European population retained its social institutions, even if in weakened form, the Jews were completely deprived of theirs. That Jewish leaders attending the Atlantic City Conference in 1944 at which plans for the U.N.R.R.A. were drawn up had to remind the delegates that such was the case tells much about the insensitivity of Allied officialdom. In the area of rehabilitation, government officials and even some Jewish leaders still clung to the hope that the few remaining Jews could best be dealt with by sending them back to their countries of origin. They failed to realize that there were thousands of Jews who had dwelled in places which were not their countries of origin; moreover, anti-Semitism still ran rampant in Eastern Europe, and, despite assurances from leaders of governments-in-exile that the Jews that did return would be treated fairly, the opposite was to prove true. American Jewish Committee spokesmen
believed that the Jews could return to their homelands with little difficulty, and were assured by such notables as Professor Algiard Gorka, Chief of the Minorities Division of the Polish Ministry of the Interior, that Jewish integration into the Polish nation will take place, despite the fact that a Jewish nationalism will exist as an emotional catharsis after the war. . . . [T]he American Jewish Committee philosophy of Jewish life will gain great acceptance in Poland. . . .

Jews of enemy alien nationality were caught in a netherworld of bureaucratic regulations. U.N.R.R.A. adopted the principle that no relief could be given to enemy peoples until the Council of the U.N.R.R.A. had first taken care of the peoples of occupied territories. Jews in Hungary, Roumania, and Germany were to be treated as though they were enemies. 104 It was not until late 1945 that someone thought of the idea to ask those Jews in the displaced persons camps where they preferred to be resettled. Their first choice was Palestine, with the United States, Great

103 Meeting with Professor Algiard Gorka, 11/22/44, American Jewish Committee/Foreign Countries/Poland/1944.

104 For a comprehensive view of post-war problems facing the Jews of Europe, see Administrative Committee Meeting, 6/25/44, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 1, Zionist Archives and Library.
Britain, the British Dominions, and South America also frequently mentioned.\textsuperscript{105}

Jewish demands at the peace conferences after the war fared no better than Jewish demands during the war. The American and World Jewish Congress recognized the differences in the situations that existed in 1945 and those which prevailed in 1919. After World War I, the Committee of Jewish Delegations thought that a uniform solution could be found for the Jewish question in Eastern Europe. They sought to circumvent national hostilities toward the Jews by a general emancipation on the international level. It was hoped that the essentially "legal problems of individual and group equality" could be solved everywhere by international fiat. By 1945, however, the "demographic basis for ethnic and cultural autonomy had been tragically narrowed down. The conception [sic] of minority rights had been discredited by Germany's misuse of it."\textsuperscript{106} Also, of the five countries suing for peace, four were within the Soviet orbit, and even though the Russians had made the


\textsuperscript{106}World Jewish Congress, Unity in Dispersion, pp. 249-250.
practice of anti-Semitism a crime, they resented the fact that Jewish organizations wished to pry into the "domestic" affairs of states which had already guaranteed their Jewish citizens all freedoms.

Toward the end of the war, the Commission to Study the Organization of Peace, established by the American Jewish Congress, outlined the demands of the Jewish people to the Big Four. They were:

1. Recognition of the right of the Jewish people to be heard at the peace conference;
2. The assurance of equal rights for every Jew in all countries of the world;
3. Palestine as a Jewish commonwealth with free immigration, under Jewish administration and control;
4. The outlawing of anti-Semitism by international regulation;
5. Recognition of Jewish group rights in all lands where such rights were accorded to others;
6. Compensation and reparation for losses suffered by Jews in Germany and Nazi-occupied territories;
7. Freedom to return to the lands from which Jews were driven by the Nazis and opportunities for migration and settlement in other lands for those Jews who could not or did not wish to return to their former homes;
8. Trial and punishment for all war criminals and those responsible for the holocaust;
9. Establishment of an appropriate United Nations agency responsible for the rehabilitation of the Jews.107

107"Post-War Demands of the American Jewish Congress," (n.a., n.d.) American Jewish Congress Mss, 1931-1944, YIVO. See also, Richards to Fagley, 1/30/45, in possession of Mrs. Ruth Richards Eisenstein, New York City, Archives of the Jewish Information Bureau.
Though the American Jewish Congress leadership recognized the totally different circumstances facing the victims at the end of World War Two, it still stressed an international solution to an essentially nationalist problem. The Commission to Study the Organization of Peace wished to safeguard human rights through international means. It wished to convene a conference through the United Nations to promulgate an international bill of rights and to establish a permanent commission on human rights. It also wished to recognize the right of individuals or groups, under prescribed limitations, to petition the commission on human rights, after exhausting local remedies, in order to call attention to violations.¹⁰⁸

Alexander Pekelis, a lawyer for the American Jewish Congress, tried to incorporate the above in a memorandum to be submitted to the delegates to the San Francisco Conference. He clearly recognized the great ideological and political differences between the Allied nations and sought some guarantee of individual rights "on the basis of a

realistic appraisal of the present attitude of the various nations." He also realized, that given the present political climate and the mutual distrust of the United States and the Soviet Union, it would be very difficult to formulate detailed provisions dealing with human rights that would "prove acceptable at this time to all interested parties." Moreover, he implied that even if such guarantees could be incorporated into the United Nations charter, an outright enforcement of these standards would be blocked by the reluctance to recognize a superior international jurisdiction in a sphere long a jealously guarded domain of exclusive domestic jurisdiction.

He sought to solve this dilemma by devising a scheme which would make use of the fact that all nations agreed on the necessity of some basic human rights, but, at the same time, avoiding too detailed a list of such rights, and sidetrack the opposition to superior international enforcement, deemed a challenge to national sovereignty.

Thus while avoiding any attempt to formulate too "detailed" a bill of rights at that time, he, nevertheless, proposed the immediate creation of an international agency that would "operate within the framework of national sovereignty."109

109 Pekelis Memorandum on the International Protection of Human Rights to be Presented to the San Francisco Conference, 1945, American Jewish Congress Mss, 1945-present, YIVO.
The creation of an international agency was not contingent upon the adoption of an international bill of rights. He believed that the "fundamental rules" of such a bill of rights were already incorporated into the organic laws of most countries. Moreover, he believed that the San Francisco Conference would never produce such a document in so short a period of time. Unlike the Committee of Jewish Delegations at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919, Pekelis stressed the development of effective "procedural enforcement devices rather than the formulation of additional rules of substantive law."\textsuperscript{110}

Once created, Pekelis envisioned the agency as having four functions. Its first task was to make a study of the conditions prevailing in the countries in regard to the protection of human rights and to publish its findings. The agency would also be permitted to appear before administrative agencies, national legislatures and courts as either a witness or amicus curiae, whenever it believed that the case before such a body was of international concern. The agency was also to be granted the right of independent petition.

\textsuperscript{110}Ibid.
To assure the effective protection of the inarticulate, the Agency should have the right of initiative, independent of the complaint of interested private parties. And to remedy possible reluctance of local attorneys in critical areas to appear in proceedings against their own governments, the various member nations should, on reciprocal terms, grant to the lawyers admitted to practice in other countries the right to represent the agency before the national courts of all members of the International Organization.

Finally, he thought the agency should apply the technique of "yardstick regulation," to the field of civil liberties. Much like T.V.A. and the electric power industry in the United States, the agency, through the use of the media, would be better able to gauge "the actual scope of freedom in a country than volumes of investigation."\textsuperscript{111}

Pekelis thought the agency should be completely independent. He based his assertion on the fact that independent regulatory agencies in the United States, while technically under the financial control of the Congress and the Executive branch, were in fact almost a fourth branch of the government, often oblivious to the wishes of the other three. Much like the progressives of early twentieth century American politics, Pekelis thought that such an independent agency would be shielded from the corrupting

\textsuperscript{111}\textit{Ibid.}
influences of the private and public sectors. His whole concept of a human rights agency was based on the assumption of the "overwhelming importance of procedural institutions over substantive rights."\textsuperscript{112}

Pekelis's memorandum was not presented to the San Francisco Conference delegates in its original form. When the American Jewish Congress, the American Jewish Conference, and the British Board of Deputies presented their demands to the delegates, they made one substantive change which Pekelis had cautioned against. The three organizations maintained that

protection involves concrete obligations by the States concerned since only detailed and clearly defined obligations can be either guaranteed or violated. It has, therefore, always been held that only a clearly stated catalogue of human rights and fundamental freedoms can guarantee their international observance, as only their enumeration in a domestic act makes them effective on the national scene.\textsuperscript{113}

They wished to see either the Security Council or the Economic and Social Council implement the international bill of rights, and if either these two agencies could not bring relief to the aggrieved group of citizens, then the International Court of Justice would make the final and

\textsuperscript{112}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{113}World Jewish Congress, \textit{Unity in Dispersion}, p. 314.
definitive decision.

It is not clear why the three organizations changed tactics at the last minute. A clue, perhaps, lay in their beliefs as to the causes of Nazism. They alleged, in the memorandum they presented to the delegates at San Francisco, that this alien ideology gained widespread acceptance because of the "lack of an international guarantee of human rights." Unlike Pekelis, they wholeheartedly believed that guarantees on paper were the *sine qua non* for a better future for the Jews. Thus, they thought that the great mistake made by Jewish leaders at Paris in 1919 was the fact that human rights and group rights were made a part of the organic laws of the defeated, newly created, or enlarged states, and, hence, only tenuously tied to the League of Nations, which was to be the guarantor of such rights. Moreover, they must have been deeply affected by the euphoria of a new international organization that would not repeat the mistakes of the discredited League. Unlike Pekelis, they reasoned that the United States and the Soviet Union would continue to cooperate after the defeat of Germany.

114Ibid., p. 315.
The delegates to the San Francisco Conference rejected the joint memorandum of the three organizations. As Pekelis had warned, there was too much to be done in too short a time period; global and regional geo-political considerations were more important than an international guarantee of human rights. The Charter of the United Nations, as it was finally drafted at San Francisco, contained nothing about the enactment, supervision, or enforcement of human rights; moreover, no procedure or jurisdiction for that purpose was created. The conferees did affirm, however, in Article One, Paragraph Three of the Charter, as one of the purposes of the United Nations, the achievement of international cooperation in "promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion." Articles 55 and 56 pledged each member state to "take joint and separate action in cooperation with the Organization" for the promotion of "universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms." Article 62 charged the Economic and Social Council with making recommendations for that purpose, and Article 68 dealt with setting up a commission for the promotion of human rights. It must be noted, however, that fifty
nations, upon signing the document, became members of the new organization, many of which had long histories of anti-Semitism. No "test of membership" was required; now member states were only required to prove that they were "peace-loving." Moreover, even if violations did occur, Article Two, Paragraph Seven of the Charter expressly forbade interference in matters which "are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state or shall require the members to submit such matters to settlement under the Charter." The only exceptions to this clause were to be made when the Security Council determined that measures for enforcement were necessary against threats of peace, breaches of the peace, and acts of aggression.¹¹⁵

Rabbi Wise was totally disenchanted with the events that took place; he wrote:

It [the San Francisco Conference] is chiefly an attempt to rescue the gains of the war. Britain is bent upon remaining an empire; Russia desires to become a mighty empire; and we are wobbling between the two, not quite an empire, but insistent upon getting things which will involve us in all sorts of trouble. . . .¹¹⁶

In January, 1946, as provided for by Article 68 of the Charter, the Commission on Human Rights was created.

¹¹⁵Ibid., pp. 313-320.
¹¹⁶Carl H. Voss, Rabbi and Minister, p. 321.
The American and World Jewish Congresses were unable to influence the deliberations of the Commission until they were granted consultative status in March, 1947. In June, 1947, the World Jewish Congress submitted a memorandum to the Drafting Committee of the Commission. The memo recognized the fact that considerable time was needed to adopt an international bill of rights; however, much could be done in the interim. Accordingly, the Drafting Committee was urged to submit to the General Assembly a draft-resolution which affirmed the obligation of all members to assure equality before the law of all inhabitants without distinction as to race, language, sex, or religion; request them to enact appropriate legislation to implement this equality and to take action to insure it, through specially designated state organs.

The draft-resolution was to provide for the right of aggrieved persons or groups to petition the Commission, for the Commission to notify the governments concerned, to report to the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council on action taken by member states, and to publish reports thereon. Moreover, the memo asked that the General Assembly request member states to communicate to the Commission their observations on the petition.  

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Further memoranda by the World Jewish Congress stressed the necessity for the establishment of effective international machinery to protect those rights; that the right of individuals and groups to appeal to the Commission on Human Rights must be established, and that a procedure for the submission of petitions be laid down, conferring upon organizations granted consultative status with the Economic and Social Council the right to submit such petitions.\textsuperscript{118}

Too, World Jewish Congress leaders tried to broaden the term "equality" by guaranteeing the equal exercise of political activities and functions, public offices, professions and employment, and cultural and educational pursuits. It was further urged that the dissemination and teaching of racial and religious hatred be prevented; freedom of speech, press, and assembly were not to be "misused for this purpose and that education serve to combat the spirit of intolerance and hatred toward groups."\textsuperscript{119}

The Human Rights Commission adopted those suggestions, and made them a part of the International Bill of Rights, written in Geneva in 1948. Jewish Congress leaders had achieved their goal. However, acceptance of the

\textsuperscript{118}\textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{119}\textit{Ibid.}
Bill of Rights by the international community had been anything but satisfactory.

Jewish organizations were not so successful in their attempts to insert guarantees for Jews in the peace treaties with the defeated nations. They were denied participation in the Paris Peace Conference deliberations, and could only press their demands on an informal basis to anyone who cared to listen. In early August, 1946, Wise and Louis Lipsky wrote Paul Henri Spaak, Chairman of the Rules Committee of the Paris Peace Conference, that they be given a chance to present their case. Secretary of State James Byrnes answered, however, that the "Rules Committee has concluded its work without taking any specific decision with respect to the communications from non-governmental organizations. . . ."120 Byrnes went on to state that the United States had consistently advocated

the inclusion in the draft treaties of provisions establishing the principle that all persons shall enjoy the fundamental freedoms and human rights without distinction as to ethnic origin, sex, language, or religion, thus incorporating the principles of the Charter of the United Nations in all treaties.121

120Quoted in Ibid., p. 257.
121Ibid., p. 258.
Essentially, the Jews' demands at the Peace Conference were:

1. A commitment on behalf of the country concerned to "take all measures necessary to secure to all persons under [its] jurisdiction, without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion, the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of expression, of press and publications, of religious worship, of political opinion, and of public meetings;"

2. That the defeated nations set free all persons held in confinement because of their racial origin;

3. That all discriminatory legislation and restrictions imposed be repealed, and a pledge not to enact any law which would infringe upon those rights mentioned in Number One;

4. That the concerned governments would not permit the existence and activities of organizations "of a fascist type which have as their aim denial to the people of their democratic rights."  

Jewish Congress leaders did not press their demands for inclusion in the Bulgarian peace treaty, for they believed that the Bulgarian Government would continue its policy of non-repression of Jews, freedom of emigration, and would treat Jewish nationals abroad, in respect to restitution, on the same basis as those living in Bulgaria. The Italian peace treaty included the first and last demands of the Jewish organizations. Italy, like Bulgaria,

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122Quoted in Ibid., pp. 258-259.
Jewish demands in regard to Roumania and Hungary included all of the above as well as a request that restitution of Jewish assets and transfer of heirless property for purpose of Jewish relief and rehabilitation be inserted in the peace treaties. While the American and British delegations supported the Jewish demands, the Soviet Union wavered, because it did not want the International Relief Organization to be one of the agencies administering the dispersal of funds. After consenting to this proviso, the Council of Foreign Ministers passed the amendment.

All other Jewish demands to the Paris Peace Conference were ignored. Jewish organizations were particularly upset over the fact that none of the treaties contained adequate methods for enforcement. No provisions were made to guarantee supervision and enforcement, an aggrieved party could not appeal to any international forum, and Jews were not guaranteed rights accorded to similar national groups. The Big Four inserted two methods for enforcement of the treaty provisions. Political disputes were "to be under the surveillance of a group composed of the heads of missions in the capital of the defeated countries representing either the Big Two, Three, or Four. . . ." Nothing in
the treaties mentioned methods about settling disagreements between the heads of missions.\textsuperscript{123} No procedure was outlined by which Jews could inform the heads of the missions about alleged violations; if a Jew chose to complain to the appropriate authorities, there was no guarantee that reprisals would not be taken by the local government.\textsuperscript{124}

In the period 1933-1945, Jewish Congress leaders sought to prevent the political, economic, and physical annihilation of their European co-religionists by seeking rational solutions to situations that defied comprehension. Appeals to Nazi officialdom fell on deaf ears; how could one appeal to people who considered human beings--Jews and non-Jews--as nothing more than building blocks for the creation and preservation of the Third Reich? If a particular block proved to be defective according to Nazi specifications, then it was merely discarded--destroyed. In addition, Jewish leaders in the United States were confronted

\textsuperscript{123}The Big Four finally decided this point when they agreed to resolve disputes by arbitration.

\textsuperscript{124}For a typical reaction of Jewish leaders to the Paris Peace Conference, see Press Release, 8/30/46, Irving Miller folder, Stephen S. Wise Mss, American Jewish Congress file, Correspondence, Section 7, American Jewish Historical Society.
with economic depression, reaction to which ranged from platitudes about jobs for American citizens to outright anti-Semitism. Thus, pleas to open the immigration gates fell on deaf ears. This same insensitivity, a perverse callousness toward suffering people—Jews as well as non-Jews—was reflected by American and Allied officials during the war years. Those who refused to permit persecuted peoples to enter the United States during the depression raised equally pious platitudes during the war. The need for jobs for American citizens was replaced after December 7, 1941, by the need to win the war without any delays or inconveniences. Even after Hitler had been defeated, the unfortunates in the Displaced Persons camps were treated worse than the defeated populace. Why, they asked, were the German people permitted to wear warm clothing, while they, the victims of Nazi barbarity, had to be content with the rags of concentration camp uniforms? The shooting war had ended, but American policy once again showed an insensitivity to the victims of the war. Ex-Nazis were being appointed to official positions within the American sector in Germany; the Jews were left to fend for themselves as best they could.
The American Jewish Congress had prided itself on being the only true democratic Jewish organization serving the needs of American Jewry. Yet, when the greatest crisis facing the Jews of America and their co-religionists in Europe befell them, the leadership of the American Jewish Congress reverted to the shtadlan tactics which they had heretofore deplored in others. The leadership of the American Jewish Congress placed a terrible burden on Rabbi Stephen Wise. During the period 1941 to V-E Day, he was the American Jewish Congress, and, whether he liked it or not, became the shtadlan par excellence! It was he who was friendly with President Roosevelt; perhaps he did not recognize the fact that F.D.R. used him as he used so many others. But it is very difficult to accuse the one man who could have helped the Jews of Europe of being callous, insensitive, and unworthy of support. To be sure, Wise sided with Roosevelt because there was no one else to whom he could turn! Perhaps he refrained from denouncing the President because he could not believe that the man from Hyde Park would have a deaf ear to the cries of anguish. Indeed, if Wise was guilty of anything, he was guilty of too much trust.
Though his tactics failed in the inter-war period as well as during the Holocaust, the American Jewish community gave him their almost solid support. They marched to the beat of his drum because there was no one else to whom they could give their trust. As the Jews of the Eastern European ghettos looked to their rabbi for solace and succor, so too did the American Jewish community look to Wise for aid and comfort. It was he whom they hoped would bring them deliverance. But circumstances were beyond his control both during and immediately after the war. It was not Wise who failed; governments, politicians, and human nature itself must stand in the docket.
CHAPTER VIII

THE AMERICAN JEWISH CONGRESS AND THE CREATION OF THE WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS: DOMESTIC POLITICS ON A GLOBAL SCALE

When the delegates to the American Jewish Congress met in Philadelphia in December, 1918, they adopted a resolution which called for the convening of a World Jewish Congress as soon as peace was declared. Some delegates and observers hailed the resolution and predicted that such a step would at once transform the Jews from an anomalous, unorganized group into a cohesive unit—"a psychological entity which the mind could clearly perceive and judge."

Abraham Schomer, a New York lawyer, even went so far as to state that the creation of a World Jewish Congress would at once put an end to anti-Semitism and allow for rational thought on the Jewish question.¹

Though the Paris Peace Treaty was signed in 1919, many Jews who had favored the World Jewish Congress

¹"The Jewish Question in the Light of Psychology," Abraham Schomer folder, American Jewish Congress file, 1915-1923, American Jewish Congress Mss, YIVO.
resolution in Philadelphia were no longer interested, and the World Jewish Congress idea lost popular support. The fledgling American Jewish Congress had tremendous difficulty just trying to pay the rent for its offices, and could not hope to expend precious funds on an idea for which no one seemed to care and which held out little chance of success. Articles occasionally appeared in the Anglo-Jewish press calling for the establishment of a world Jewish body; some people argued that Jews would not be heard in the councils of governments unless some authoritative organization spoke for all of American and world Jewry.

There are so many generals, so many leaders planning and directing toward different ends, that the ultimate purpose--that of preserving Jewish identity, of acting in behalf of the whole Jewish people in all matters clamoring for solution--is lost sight of, stated Louis D. Gibbs, First Vice-Chairman of the Committee for a World Jewish Congress.2 Julian Mack stated that in view of the existence of the World Zionist Congress, he questioned whether a world Jewish organization would ever

2The Jewish Advocate (Boston), 12/23/20, p. 8.
be established. Leaders of the American Jewish Congress hoped that advocates for such a world body would quietly give up their plans.

American Jewish Congress leaders did give lip-service to the idea. Rabbi Stephen Wise even suggested that a World Jewish Council be established to take the place of the moribund Committee of Jewish Delegations. He pointed out that American Jewry needed an authoritative European-Jewish body to consult on matters of importance. He suggested that the proposed council consist of representatives of the Jewish communities of Argentina, South Africa, Palestine, and the United States, hardly a cross-section of world Jewry.

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3"Mack Statement to the American Jewish Congress," 5/30/20, Julian Mack folder #2, Richards to Straus, 10/19/20, Nathan Straus folder, Bernard G. Richards Mss, Jewish Theological Seminary. Jewish Congress leaders were not opposed to the creation of a world Jewish body in principle; however, they thought that they faced too many problems in the domestic and foreign arenas to be burdened with such a task. They did, nonetheless, call for the creation of a world Jewish body "To arouse the interest of and to organize American Jewry for participation [in a World Jewish Congress] for the upbuilding of Palestine." See The American Israelite, 9/28/22, p. 2.

4The Jewish Advocate (Boston), 8/5/26, section 3, p. 1. The Alliance Israelite Universelle, the German Central Verein, and the British Board of Deputies were unalterably opposed to the creation of such an organization.
It was only with the rise of National Socialism in Germany that the leadership of the American Jewish Congress expressed a serious interest in the formation of a World Jewish Congress. A special committee met in Rabbi Wise's chambers on April 15, 1931, and decided that the Administrative Committee of the American Jewish Congress should lay plans for the calling of a conference of representatives of world Jewry, to be held at Basle, in the summer of 1931. The conference was to consider the state of Jewish affairs and to study the advisability of convening a World Jewish Congress. Wise contacted Jewish leaders in Europe to ascertain their opinions, and was told that Leo Motzkin of the Committee of Jewish Delegations had already called for such a conference to be held in the United States. Wise decided to proceed with his conference because he thought that Motzkin was trying to perpetuate the Committee of Jewish Delegations, an organization which he considered to have outlived its usefulness.

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5 Administrative Committee Meeting, 4/22/31, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1931 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society.

6 Administrative Committee Meeting, 5/19/31, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1931 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society.
Motzkin finally postponed his plans for the conference and threw in his lot with Wise. The Basle Conference convened on July 12, 1931. Delegates from Eastern European countries were enthusiastic about the idea of a World Jewish Congress; yet, they were reluctant to spend time and energy as well as financial resources on a venture that promised no real hope for alleviating their problems. Isaac Gruenbaum, an ardent Polish Zionist, was skeptical of the whole idea, but he stated that if Palestine was to be the main focus of the World Jewish Congress, then there would be great interest and participation. At the end of the Conference a provisional committee and council were created to lay the groundwork for a World Jewish Congress.  

Some American Jewish Congress delegates to the Basle Conference became convinced that if the American Jewish Congress would take the initiative in the creation of a world body, not only would it have a leading voice in the new organization, but it would also attract new membership,

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7 Goldberg to Deutsch, 7/19/31, Wise to Deutsch 7/17/31, Stephen S. Wise folder #2, Bernard G. Richards Mss, Jewish Theological Seminary.
i.e., "infuse new blood into our American Jewish Congress." At the American Jewish Congress convention, held in October, 1931, many delegates voiced the same opinions, and passed a resolution empowering the Executive and Administrative Committees of the Congress to take "such action as may be required to convene a World Jewish Congress." Wise had stated only a week earlier that "it might be wise to postpone for one or two years the convening of a conference preliminary to the calling of a World Jewish Congress." Wise submitted to the wishes of the convention delegates; however, it was not until March, 1932 that the Administrative Committee discussed the matter of a preliminary conference.

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8Ibid. Delegates to the American Jewish Congress convention held in Philadelphia in October, 1931, voted overwhelmingly to participate in another preliminary conference for a World Jewish Congress set for the Summer of 1932 in Geneva.

9Administrative Committee Meeting, 12/7/31, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1931 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society. The Resolution was dated 10/20/31.

10The American Israelite, 10/22/31, p. 1.

11Administrative Committee Meeting, 3/15/32, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1932 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society. The Congress leadership devoted its attention to the growing menace of Nazism in Germany.
The Administrative Committee moved very cautiously in the matter of a World Jewish Congress. Abraham Goldberg, after much study, outlined to the Committee a three-pronged approach to the problem. He suggested that the Congress sound out several of the leading Jewish organizations in the United States in order to obtain their cooperation and assistance in the calling of the preliminary conference. He stated that the various national organizations were to be told that the preliminary conference in no way ensured the calling of a World Jewish Congress. To arouse interest in the movement, Goldberg suggested that a nationwide press campaign be initiated; then

formal invitations should be addressed to the leading national organizations who could be expected to respond favorably to the idea of a conference. At the same time, someone [sic] should be designated in Europe to carry on a similar activity. . . . 12

After reviewing Goldberg's suggestions, it was recommended that a special meeting of representatives of Jewish organizations in New York be convened, and that the organizations be urged to contribute money and manpower to the cause. 13

While the Administrative Committee approved of the plan, it

12 Ibid.
13 Ibid.
did not want to scare any prospective members away by making it mandatory that money be pledged to a cause which some organizations did not consider necessary. The meeting of New York Jewish organizations was supposed to have taken place on April 3, 1932; however, there were numerous delays.

Because there was less than unanimous agreement in the Jewish Congress Administrative Committee about the project, Bernard Richards suggested that the whole idea of a World Jewish Congress be postponed. He was overruled. Members of the Administrative Committee pointed out to him that the Congress was committed to action, and that negotiations were already underway with the American Jewish Committee, the B’nai Brith, and the Council of Jewish Women. To back out now, it was implied, would make the American Jewish Congress look foolish. The Executive Director told Richards that he assumed that all organizations affiliated with the Jewish Congress would participate, and that there was nothing to worry about. It was decided that a preliminary conference would meet in July, 1932 at Geneva.  

14 Administrative Committee Meeting, 4/12/32, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1932 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society. The American Jewish Committee had already indicated its unwillingness to participate in such a conference, and denounced the entire concept.
Because of a lack of funds, personnel, and support, the Jewish Congress was greatly handicapped in its efforts to plan for the preliminary conference. Dr. Nahum Goldmann had offered to visit a number of European countries to interview leading Jews. After much discussion by the Administrative Committee, Wise pledged somehow to find the necessary funds. Almost everyone on the Administrative Committee was of the opinion that the Jewries of the world would send delegates to Geneva; they were quite disenchanted when Goldmann cabled:

> After discussion London, Paris . . . recommend strongly invite Conference only organizations personalities [sic] with national program . . . Participation assimilation-ist organizations improbable . . . Invitation all kind organizations would create confusion with possibility practical results . . . Necessary first unite national groups for launching movement World Congress . . .

They were also jolted when Motzkin wrote Wise that the Committee of Jewish Delegations also planned to hold a conference, but in deference to Wise, the Committee suggested a joint conference, with half the time being spent on discussions of the World Jewish Congress. Wise hurriedly called a meeting of Jewish Congress leaders on May 23, 1932, and it was decided that, rather than have competing conferences, the Congress would issue a call for a Conference in
conjunction with the Committee of Jewish delegations.  

The Preliminary Conference for the creation of a World Jewish Congress was to meet in August, 1932. Delegates from twenty-one nations and Palestine were to arrive in Geneva; however, the Alliance Israelite Universelle, the B'nai Brith, the American Jewish Committee, leaders of the Zionist movement, and the Central Verein Deutscher Straatsburger Judischen Glaubens refused to attend, and castigated the participants for their precipitous action. Cyrus Adler, President of the American Jewish Committee, categorized the meeting as a "sensational blunder."

The enemies of Jews in every country and especially in Germany would seize upon the Congress as an alleged justification of their charges. The question is not whether such a result should occur, but whether it is likely to occur. The Jews of Europe, and especially of Germany, want no such Congress.  

Indeed, instead of reacting to Hitler with deeds, some members of the American Jewish community used anti-Semitic arguments to try to prevent one section of the Jewish community from taking any action. The Reich Chancellor could not have done any better.

15Administrative Committee Meeting, 5/31/32, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1932 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society.

Despite Adler's admonitions, the Preliminary Conference convened, and the delegates favored the calling of another conference in 1933, the establishing of a bureau to carry on further organizational work, and the pledging of necessary funds to cover the expenses. The delegates were persuaded to postpone the next conference until 1934.17

Adler need not have worried. Proponents of a World Jewish Congress were almost totally unorganized, and unsure of any cooperation from large Zionist organizations. At a meeting called to discuss the organization of an American Committee for a World Jewish Congress, the President of the Zionist Organization of America and the President of the Hadassah told Wise that Zionist support for such a venture would not be forthcoming in the near future, until the World Zionist Organization conferred.18 Indeed, even Motzkin identified the aims of the World Jewish Congress as being that of "the development of the Jewish National Home in

17 Administrative Committee Meeting, 9/8/32, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1932 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society.

18 Administrative Committee Meeting, 12/27/32, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1932 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society.
Palestine," in the hope that "this definition is sufficient to calm the scruples . . . of the Zionist Organization and the Jewish Agency. . . ."\textsuperscript{19}

Jewish communities in Europe experienced the same difficulties. Attempts to organize a Czechoslovakian National Committee for a World Jewish Congress met with opposition from local leaders. In Austria, no organized Jewish groups, except for some Zionists, were interested in the creation of a World Jewish Congress. Goldmann reported that some progress had been made in Great Britain, although the British Board of Deputies and the Anglo-Jewish Association were still opposed. Eastern European Jewry, by and large, was luke-warm to the idea.\textsuperscript{20} To rectify the situation, the Administrative Committee of the American Jewish Congress decided that a propaganda and education committee be created to spread the gospel for the World Jewish Congress idea.

The committee launched an effort to broaden the base of interest in the World Jewish Congress. While

\textsuperscript{19}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{20}"The Jewish World Congress, Preliminary Executive Committee, Berlin, Circular Letter #2," Goldmann to World Jewish Congress Executive Committee, 11/27/32, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 1, Zionist Archives and Library.
newspaper editorials, radio speeches, and personal appearances were important to the cause, the committee believed that a direct approach "to the various organizations which do not come within the scope of communal Jewish effort" had to be made. Thus, Jewish labor groups had to be contacted and convinced of the necessity of a World Jewish Congress. To be sure, it was these groups that had participated in the mass protest march against Hitler in March, 1933, and the committee opined that such groups would welcome a world gathering of Jewry. As one member stated: "In any case, the Congress will be nothing more than a repetition of the preliminary conferences unless the cooperation of the organizations representing the masses is enlisted." Moreover, Jewish Congress leaders envisioned using the London Economic Conference of June, 1933, as a platform to espouse the need for a World Jewish Congress.

The leaders of the American Jewish Congress were forced to reassess their position regarding the date of the second World Jewish Conference. Matters in Germany were worse than anyone had thought possible; the Jewish Congress...
was being pressed to join the boycott of German goods; and, Wise, at least, thought that the boycott would have much greater psychological impact if it were declared at a world Jewish gathering. Goldmann pressured Wise to reach some decision. He stated:

The main factor of the situation is the common conviction of all the members of our Executive Committee that the World Congress ought to be called for this year. . . . In all countries, especially in Poland, the stimmung for the World Congress has increased in a very high degree and all of us are convinced that if elections for the Congress would be arranged in October, hundreds of thousands of Jews would participate in them. . . .

If Wise were to wait until 1934, any number of things could happen to reduce the masses' participation in elections and reduce the authority and effectiveness of a World Jewish Congress.22 Wise opted for a World Jewish Conference Executive Committee meeting to be held in Prague in August, 1933.

Before the World Jewish Congress met, Wise attended the World Zionist Organization meetings and tried to persuade the Zionists to pass a resolution in favor of the World Jewish Congress. Two sources of opposition arose. One source was what Wise called the "professional

22Goldmann to Wise, 5/5/33, Nahum Goldmann folder, Bernard G. Richards Mss, Jewish Theological Seminary.
Zionists," who were fearful that a World Jewish Congress might impinge on the prestige of the Zionist Congress. The other source of opposition came from the laborites who believed that the time was not ripe for such a gathering. Eventually, a feeble resolution was adopted in favor of the World Jewish Congress idea.23

The World Jewish Congress Executive Committee meeting held in Prague was but a rehash of what occurred in 1932. While the East European Jews demanded a World Jewish Congress, they were not in a position to finance the venture. Bernard Richards noted:

It is as economically unsound as it is politically unwise for the American Jewish Congress to finance the organization of a World Jewish Congress. . . . [With] financial support coming only from one quarter the whole movement loses what is left of its representative and democratic character. . . . The idea that a popular and far-reaching movement has to be promoted and pushed by us sending Goldmann $500 a month will in itself raise many questions. . . .24

Indeed, the monthly expense soon forced the leaders of the American Jewish Congress to assess what already had taken

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24Richards (?) to Spiro, 9/28/33, in possession of Mrs. Ruth Richards Eisenstein, New York City, Archives of the Jewish Information Bureau.
place, and come to some decision vis-à-vis their attitude and actions toward a World Jewish Congress.

The Administrative Committee of the American Jewish Congress met on December 14, 1933. Dr. Samuel Margoshes presented the following resolution:

It is moved that the Administrative Committee . . . go on record, reiterating its faith in the necessity of a World Jewish Congress being held this summer and direct its Committee on the World Jewish Congress to proceed immediately with the preparations and plans looking to the holding of elections in the Spring of 1934.  

Lipsky, representing the Zionist faction within the Congress, opposed the resolution. He contended that the holding of elections in the spring and the convening of the Congress in the summer would be "disastrous for the purposes of the World Jewish Congress." He believed that such actions would only create a "fictitious organization of Jewry"; unless the Congress was to be organized with some understanding of discipline and order, "the whole matter would be nothing more than a farce." He then offered

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25 Administrative Committee Meeting, 12/14/33, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1933 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society.

26 Ibid. See also Verbatim Report of 12/14/33 Administrative Committee Meeting.
a substitute resolution calling for a "special conference of accredited representatives . . . to be held in the summer of 1934, to consider how, when, and in what form an agency shall be created to represent and act for the Jews of the world. . . ." 27

Margoshes retorted that Zionists were only represented in the Zionist Congress; that a World Jewish Congress would represent all factions within Jewry. Also, the Zionists, he assured Lipsky, need not worry that their aims would be blocked, for he believed that the Zionists would have more than enough strength within the World Jewish Congress to prevent anything inimical to their program. Others at the meeting claimed that Lipsky's proposal would never work, for the American Jewish Committee and other anti-nationalist groups would not participate nor would the Marxist labor groups who clung to the spirit of internationalism. The World Jewish Congress was not only a matter of "practical politics and practical program" but a "psychological crutch upon which down-trodden Jews could lean for comfort and strength." 28 Although no formal decision was

27 Ibid.
28 Ibid.
made, it was clear that a vast majority of the members present favored calling for elections.

While the Administrative Committee debated the issue, the American Jewish Congress Committee for a World Jewish Congress was busily preparing plans for the method of elections and the propaganda campaign. Margoshes, the chairman, believed that the elections should be by direct ballot, and that each voter should be asked to pay a ten cents voter's fee. When presented to the Administrative Committee, Lipsky objected to the plan; he favored elections based on the electoral system or through an electoral college. His opposition to the Margoshes method was nothing more than a delaying tactic; for later, the National Executive Committee of the Zionist Organization of America adopted a resolution calling for a postponement of the date for holding a World Jewish Congress. Lipsky found some allies within the Administrative Committee, notably Bernard Richards, who cautioned that the organization of a World Jewish Congress had to be done gradually and the Jewish public made aware

29 Administrative Committee Meeting, 1/9/34, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1934 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 3, Administrative Committee, 1934-1959, American Jewish Historical Society.
of its intended program. In view of the split within the Administrative Committee, Wise proposed that the World Jewish Congress be postponed, and that a group from the Jewish Congress meet with representatives of the Z.O.A. to reach agreement as to the best time for holding the World Jewish Congress.\textsuperscript{30} Wise's proposal was adopted; indeed, even advocates for the world gathering were pressuring Wise to postpone its convocation. Brandeis urged Wise and Julian Mack to postpone elections for a World Jewish Congress "because we are unready." He chastized the Congress leadership for its failure to organize the masses; he argued that the only task before them was to do "some elementary spade work that can be accomplished in a year." There was "considerable feeling" that the World Jewish Congress could not be held before the summer of 1936.\textsuperscript{31}

The scheduled meeting with the Z.O.A. was postponed; however, Wise sent Goldmann to Jerusalem to negotiate with the Actions Committee of the World Zionist Organization. All that the W.Z.O. would concede was that a World Jewish Congress

\textsuperscript{30} Administrative Committee Meeting, 2/14/34, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1934 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 3, Administrative Committee, 1934-1959, American Jewish Historical Society.

\textsuperscript{31} Kallen to Goldmann, 2/14/34, Stephen S. Wise Mss, Box 1001, American Jewish Archives.
Congress should be convened, but that a definite date should not be set.32 The W.Z.O. only strengthened Lipsky's position within the American Jewish Congress. Essentially, Lipsky echoed Brandeis' views. Why convene a World Jewish Congress if no one was interested? He even cited Goldmann's change in terminology from a "World Jewish Congress" to a "World Jewish Organization." He did not think that a World Jewish Congress could survive, and that if one was to be held, it should be held only to resurrect the almost moribund Committee of Jewish Delegations, which, in his opinion, was more than adequate to represent the interests of world Jewry.33

In essence, the dispute between Wise, Lipsky, and the non-Zionists who opposed the World Jewish Congress centered on the issue of which organization was to be the pre-eminent voice of and for American Jewry. Wise told the Jewish Congress Administrative Committee: "One thing must be done and

32 Administrative Committee Meeting, 4/10/34, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1934 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 3, Administrative Committee, 1934-1959, American Jewish Historical Society.

33 Administrative Committee Meeting, 5/8/34, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1934 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 3, Administrative Committee, 1934-1959, American Jewish Historical Society.
that is to build the organization of a nation-wide democratic election." He opined that 500,000 votes could be obtained if the Congress proceeded to organize in order to create a World Jewish Congress. All effort should be concentrated on obtaining the vote of American Jewry in order to make the American Jewish Congress the "tribunal" of American Jewry. Until that was accomplished, all other plans should be held in abeyance. Thus, in his opinion, there was no need for another preparatory conference in Europe.

The Administrative Committee decided that national elections would be held on April 28, 1935.

The elections were to be for delegates to the American Jewish Congress who would then proceed to elect delegates representing the United States to a conference which

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34 Ibid. See also, Administrative Committee Meeting, 5/22/34, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1934 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 3, Administrative Committee, 1934-1959, American Jewish Historical Society.

35 An informal gathering did take place in Geneva in August, 1934. It was decided that the World Jewish Congress would convene in August, 1935. Morris D. Waldman, Secretary of the American Jewish Committee, stated that "all that Rabbi Wise and his fellow delegates have achieved is the untold harm of giving apparent validity to the allegations of those who believe the 'Protocols of the Elders of Zion.' Years of earnest endeavor cannot undo that harm." Quoted in The American Israelite, 8/30/34, p. 1.
would create a World Jewish Congress. Moreover, the following questions were to appear on the ballot in the form of a referendum:

1. Shall there be one representative national body to speak and act on behalf of American Jewry in the protection of Jewish rights and the safeguarding of general Jewish interests?

2. Shall a World Jewish Congress or assembly, composed of delegates elected by the Jews of each land . . . set up a representative international commission charged to speak and act in defence of Jewish rights . . . and to conduct the affairs of the Congress or assembly in the intervals between the sessions?

3. A Committee on Unification and Cooperation be appointed [sic] to negotiate with American Jewish organizations such as the American Jewish Committee, B'nai Brith, and the Jewish labor movement upon the following basis:

   If these organizations shall agree to cooperate in establishing and maintaining an executive body which shall be known as the Council of Jewish Delegations to represent the rights and interests of Jews before the League of Nations, and to enroll as members of this Council as part of the American representation thereon, then and in that event the Administrative Committee shall agree to submit the matter of summoning the World Jewish Congress to the Council of Jewish Delegations so constituted, all questions relating thereto to be decided by a majority vote.

4. It is understood that this proposal shall be submitted to the forthcoming session of the American Jewish Congress for ratification . . . .

5. The Committee on Unification and Cooperation is authorized to carry on its negotiations . . . with any or all of the organizations referred to, and to carry on such propaganda as it may consider
necessary for the promotion of peace and cooperation in American Jewry. . . .36

An analysis of the referendum shows that the leadership of the American Jewish Congress was either extremely naive or attempted to execute a mass public relations stunt. Number one asks American Jews to decide if they wanted "unity." Editorial after editorial expressed the hope that the competing Jewish organizations would come to some sort of *modus vivendi* and stop the bickering and in-fighting. Yet, this was never accomplished. The Joint Consultative Council was a case in point. Even in the face of such a threat as Hitler, the American Jewish Congress, the American Jewish Committee, the B'nai Brith and the Jewish labor movement could not agree on anything. For the Jewish Congress to think that a referendum would somehow smooth over the differences between it and the other organizations was sheer folly.

Number three was equally absurd. Given the response of the American Jewish Committee to the first World Jewish Conference, did the leadership of the American Jewish

36 Administrative Committee Meeting, 11/13/34, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1934 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 3, Administrative Committee, 1934-1959, American Jewish Historical Society.
Congress actually believe that Adler and the rest of the Committee would suddenly change their minds, abandon their anti-nationalist philosophy, and open their arms to the Congress? Moreover, the Jewish Congress leadership knew that the proposed Council of Jewish Delegations would not be accorded official status by the League of Nations, and that it would have to be content with being unofficial observers.\footnote{Nahum Goldmann, The Autobiography of Nahum Goldmann: Sixty Years of Jewish Life, (New York, 1969), pp. 136-139.}

Number five defies credibility. It seems that the Jewish Congress wanted its bread buttered on both sides. While seeking peace and cooperation with other American Jewish organizations, the Jewish Congress also wished to carry on propaganda for the establishment of a World Jewish Congress. Would the Jewish Congress have entered into any agreement with the B'nai Brith or the Committee if one of the conditions for peace and cooperation were the prohibition of a World Jewish Congress? Moreover, would peace and cooperation have been achieved if for some reason the B'nai Brith suddenly acquiesced to the Congress's position while the American Jewish Committee remained aloof? To be sure,
how did the Jewish Congress define "cooperation?"

The proposals were endorsed overwhelmingly by the Jewish Congress Administrative Committee. Even Lipsky endorsed the proposals, though one observer questioned whether he would try to sabotage the elections. As expected, the American Jewish Committee and the other anti-Zionist groups denounced the proposals. Cyrus Adler stated:

We have noted with grave concern . . . that such a Congress is to be a 'parliament of the Jewish people,' that such a Congress is to be 'sovereign,' and that it is to deal with 'the totality of Jewish questions, the problem of inner Jewish life, the representation before the nations of the world . . . .' Both as American citizens and as Jews we disapprove. . . .

The American Jewish Congress anticipated the Committee's reaction to the proposals, and did not hold out much hope for the other groups to submit themselves to majority vote concerning the World Jewish Congress. Indeed, many

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38Adler to American Jewish Congress 12/6/34, American Jewish Committee/American Jewish Congress. Joseph Proskauer was more emphatic: "We must fight. We cannot afford to let it pass by in silence. Our objective should be to undermine the movement, or, if possible, to smash it entirely. If we cannot succeed in doing this, we should try . . . to reduce the number of Jewish votes as to make the number negligible, and to make any claim that the resulting organization is representative of the Jews of America is ridiculous. It should be the function of the Committee to lead this fight—to lead, to inform, to educate Jewish opinion. We should be ready to cooperate with all others who share our views, but we must lead." See Naomi Cohen, Not Free to Desist, pp. 221-224.
members of the Administrative Committee hoped the negotiations between Lipsky, representing the Congress, and the B'nai Brith and the Jewish labor movement would fail. Since Lipsky was directly involved in the negotiations, and, if they were to fail, then, they believed, Lipsky would be "morally constrained" to join the World Jewish Congress movement wholeheartedly. Moreover, the rank and file Zionists would be much more amenable to joining the movement once they saw that the American Jewish Committee had tossed away the olive branch.\textsuperscript{39}

Advocates for a World Jewish Congress did not fully understand Lipsky's position, and thought that he could easily be manipulated. Lipsky was morally committed to elections for an American Jewish Congress, but found himself between the proverbial rock and the hard place in regard to the World Jewish Congress. He was politically obligated to the Zionist Organization of America, which had not yet fully endorsed the convocation of a World Jewish Congress. So Lipsky bided his time until the World Zionist Executive Committee came to a formal decision. But Lipsky's uneasiness over the World Jewish Congress must have seemed

\textsuperscript{39}Kallen to Goldmann, 12/18/34, Stephen S. Wise Mss, Box 1001, American Jewish Archives.
miniscule to Wise when the Rabbi learned of a conversation
Neville Laski of the British Board of Deputies had with
Louis Brandeis.

Laski visited with the Supreme Court Justice on Janu­
ary 3, 1935. Brandeis, alleged Laski, "entirely disap­
proved" of the World Jewish Congress. He thought it unnec­
essary, dangerous, and "would lend color to the arguments
based on the Protocols." Laski asked Brandeis to speak to
Wise about the undesirability of the World Jewish Congress;
Brandeis consented.40 Laski then visited Justice Benjam i:
Cardozo who was of the same opinion as Brandeis, and the
Justice allegedly promised Laski that he would press Bran­
deis to speak to Wise.41

Brandeis apparently spoke to Wise, for three weeks
later, Wise placed before the American Jewish Congress
Administrative Committee a resolution calling for the post­
ponement of elections to the American Jewish Congress, and,

40 Interviews at Washington, 1/3/35, Louis D. Bran­
deis folder, Stephen S. Wise Mss, American Jewish Congress
file, Correspondence, Section 7, American Jewish Historical
Society.

41 Ibid.
hence, the World Jewish Congress. Considerable discussion ensued. Labor organizations within the Congress supported Wise; however, they did not wish to see a postponement for more than six months. To meet the financial and organizational exigencies of the situation, the "Labor Bloc," as they called themselves, proposed that a national conference of the constituent organizations of the Congress be called for the purpose of creating proper machinery to ensure a successful election. In addition the conference was to deal with the American Jewish Congress's relationship to the World Jewish Congress. Opposition to Wise came from those who had advocated the direct method of voting. It was finally decided that a committee of five be appointed to prepare a formula on the whole question of elections.43

The committee of five decided that while the direct method of voting should be retained, no definite date for the election could be set because of the fact that $100,000 was needed to finance the election, and no one could raise

42 Administrative Committee Meeting, 1/29/35, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1935 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 3, Administrative Committee, 1934-1959, American Jewish Historical Society.

43 Ibid.
that sum of money in six months. Moreover, the World Zionist Organization had not as yet decided whether or not it would support a World Jewish Congress. Others claimed that even if elections were to be held in the United States for the American and World Jewish Congress, conditions in Poland, Roumania, Hungary, Austria, Italy, Germany, and the Soviet Union were not favorable for elections. Wise was of the opinion that the World Jewish Congress, if it was ever to meet, could not convene before the Summer of 1936.\textsuperscript{44}

Throughout 1935, the Congress accomplished little in regard to the holding of elections. Even after the World Zionist Organization gave its blessing to the World Jewish Congress, Lipsky remained luke-warm to the idea, for he still feared that the Zionist viewpoint would not prevail at such a gathering. Moreover, some observers alleged that Lipsky opposed the World Jewish Congress idea while the American Palestine Campaign was associated with the Joint Distribution Committee, and working together with that organization as part of the United Jewish Appeal. It was only after the Zionists split with the J.D.C., they alleged, 

\textsuperscript{44}Wise to Goldmann, 12/27/35, Stephen S. Wise Mss, Box 1001, American Jewish Archives.
that Lipsky came over to the World Jewish Congress idea in return for Wise's help in organizing a new American Palestine Campaign.45

To allay Lipsky's fears, the proponents of a World Jewish Congress resolved, in late February, 1936, that if such a Congress was to be organized, it would recognize the supreme authority of the Jewish Agency in all matters affecting Palestine migration.46 The results were dramatic. Less than a month after the passage of the resolution, Wise wrote Goldmann: "He [Lipsky] is as enthusiastic now as he was lukewarm before."47

Once Zionist support was assured, leaders of the World Jewish Congress movement sought support from non-Jewish organizations.

We need at the earliest possible moment an expression of sympathy on the part of the American Committee on the Rights of Religious Minorities, the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ, and the Women's International

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45American Jewish Committee, 1935 (?), in possession of Mrs. Ruth Richards Eisenstein, New York City, Archives of the Jewish Information Bureau.

46Shultz to Wise, 2/3/36, Executive Committee Minutes, 1936 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 6, Executive Committee, 1916-1949, American Jewish Historical Society.

47Wise to Goldmann, 3/23/36, Stephen S. Wise Mss, Box 1001, American Jewish Archives. Wise also told Goldmann that he thought even Chaim Weizmann was ready to "flirt just a little with the Congress." *Ibid.*
League for Peace and Freedom. . . . It would be extremely effective if we could get outstanding American clergymen individually to endorse our movement. . . . This could be secured in the following way, provided you [Wise] could get two or three men like Leiper, Cadman, Cavert, J. H. Holmes, Fosdick, to join in a round-robin letter to the . . . clergymen . . . who denounced Nazism, . . ., and that the Jews, left defenceless and surrounded by their enemies, are united in an attempt to save themselves from utter destruction through a World Jewish Congress, the letter to culminate in an expression of sympathy with the plight of the Jews and their efforts at self-succor. . . .

For propaganda purposes, "writers of some status" were to publish articles on the World Jewish Congress in the secular, Yiddish, and Anglo-Jewish presses.48

48 Shultz to Wise, 4/15/36, Executive Committee Minutes, 1936 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 6, Executive Committee, 1916-1949, American Jewish Historical Society. Opposition to the World Jewish Congress came from the B'nai Brith and the American Jewish Committee. David A. Brown wrote Cyrus Adler: "The World Jewish Congress was an illegitimate child conceived in resentment, the frustrated ambition of one man, Dr. Stephen S. Wise, who for many years has manipulated, manoeuvred, schemed, to become the leader of the Jews of the world even though that leadership might lead the Jews to destruction. . . . [His] desire to be the 'king of the Jews' has been the driving force of all the effort and energy that have been used in connection with the building of the World Jewish Congress. . . . You are dealing with an individual who knows no rules, who will use a blackjack, dum-dum bullets, poison gas, and every unfair and unholy method to gain his ambition. You cannot fight him and win with a cap-pistol." Brown to Adler, 5/26/36, David A. Brown Mss, Box 2303 b, American Jewish Archives.
Lipsky's change of heart, while welcomed by Congress leaders, put the Congress in an awkward situation. The scheduled date for elections had been postponed indefinitely. Now that Zionist opposition to the World Jewish Congress was minimized, people were clamoring for elections. However, the Congress did not possess any electoral machinery by which the Jews of America could cast their ballots. Time was of the essence. The American Jewish Congress convention was scheduled for June, 1936, at which time the delegates would choose the World Jewish Congress delegates from the United States. Horace Kallen, a long-time member of the Congress, solved the dilemma.\(^\text{49}\)

Kallen's plan rested on the premise that every Jew was a member of some sort of Jewish organization.

Whatever its purpose, it served the individual Jew as the working organ of his interests as a Jew. In and through it he defines his stand, and gives effect to opinions, on Jewish issues. . . . Because of it, the individual, too weak to count for anything at all alone,

figures as a person and a power in the affairs of the larger Jewish community.

He likened the American Jewish Congress to the American Federation of Labor; the Congress was a confederation of organizations which functioned through its constituent groups and for them. It had no power that the constituent organizations did not delegate and no resources that they did not provide. Under his plan, all Jewish organizations were to be invited to send delegates to a local or regional conference which would elect delegates to the American Jewish Congress convention to be held in June, 1936, and pass on the suggestions sent to them from the national office of the American Jewish Congress.  

To those who charged that the indirect method of election abandoned the principle of democracy, Kallen stated that they rested their case on the substitution of slogans for fact. He noted that those who sought direct method of elections confused the essential nature of democracy with some of its obvious, conventional, "but much criticized methods and instruments." Not only would

proportional voting overcome the expense involved in the holding of an election, but would also meet the pressing need of time.51

Kallen's plan was adopted and the American Jewish Congress convention met on schedule. The sessions were devoted to the selection of delegates to the World Jewish Congress and to a discussion of what functions the World Jewish Congress should assume. The men elected as delegates--Wise, Julian Mack, Lipsky--were the leaders of the American Jewish Congress. The American Jewish Congress also prepared a model program for the World Jewish Congress. It believed that the World Jewish Congress should create a commission on political and civil relations, a bureau of research and information on anti-Semitism, an institute of economic research, a commission on migration, a committee on Palestine, a central bank, a commission on the World Jewish Congress Trust, and a commission on the extension of the responsibilities of relief and its management.52

51 Ibid.

52 "Resolutions on the World Jewish Congress adopted by the National Conference of the American Jewish Congress", 6/13/36, World Jewish Congress folder, 1934-1936, Horace M. Kallen Mss, YIVO. The Commission on Civil and Political Relations was to assume the functions of the Committee of
When the American delegates arrived in Geneva in August, 1936, they were told that the World Jewish Congress had two simple functions:

To symbolize and make a reality of the common resolution of the Jewish people to unite in defence of its rights; and to secure the cooperation of the various branches of this dispersed people in all matters of common interest. . . .

While the American delegation agreed wholeheartedly with this assessment, they believed that the model program

Jewish Delegations. Its task was to cooperate with individual Jewish communities in making representations to the League of Nations and/or specific governments. The Bureau of Research and Information on Anti-Semitism was to search out the sources, means, and uses of anti-Semitic propaganda. The Institute of Economic Research was to bring together and coordinate, through the method of voluntary cooperation, consultation, and organization, all existing agencies for the study and amelioration of the rapid changes in the economic status of World Jewry. The Institute was to be more than a clearinghouse of scientific information; it was to initiate and plan studies and proposals. The Commission on Migration was to direct and maintain a central office on migrations. The Committee on Palestine was to be the World Jewish Congress's liaison with the Jewish Agency. The Central Bank was to be organized on the principle of world-wide cooperative banks. The Commission on the World Jewish Congress Trust was to collect $200,000, the income from which would pay for the work and salaries of the other commissions and personnel. The Commission on the Democratic Extension of the Responsibilities of Relief and its Management was to "democratize" the relief agencies and the "process of relief," so that maximum participation and control could be maintained by the World Jewish Congress.

developed at their convention should be the foundation of the World Jewish Congress program. "The American program should be pushed because we will be called upon to finance the Congress."\textsuperscript{54} The American delegates were of the opinion that there were large numbers of capable, bright, and industrious refugee Jews who could work for the World Jewish Congress and make a large contribution to the Jews of the world. But the Americans did not have their way at the Congress. The East European delegates wished to discuss the thorny problem of relief, and not a great deal was accomplished except the establishment of two relief agencies which were to provide aid and information to would-be migrants.\textsuperscript{55}

Though many American delegates were elected to strategic posts on the Executive Council and the Administrative Committee, most of the work of the Congress was to be carried out in Paris or Geneva. The American delegates must have feared that without their influence on the day-to-day operations of the new organization, it would degenerate into nothing more than a financial albatross.

\textsuperscript{54} Isaacs to ?, 8/10/36, Nathan Isaacs Mss, Box 2726, American Jewish Archives.

\textsuperscript{55} The American Israelite, 8/13/36, pp. 1, 8.
Lillie Shultz, Executive Secretary of the American Jewish Congress, expressed the fears of many who attended the Geneva sessions. It was of the utmost importance that the American Jewish Congress establish a *modus operandi* with the World Jewish Congress bureau in Geneva and Paris.

It would be fatal at this stage to permit Europe to conduct the affairs of the World Jewish Congress without regular guidance from the United States, she wrote. The only thing that had happened since the end of the Geneva sessions was the appointment of a commissioner to investigate the work of the Economic Research Institute. Nothing was done or even contemplated about the staffing of the bureaus created by the Congress or the establishment of a program. She wrote Wise:

> I am afraid of two things: first, that a perfunctory effort as far as Europe is concerned will be made to implement the resolutions; secondly, that if the effort is more than perfunctory, we will find political appointments being made right and left. . . .

Little was being done to finance the new organization, to attract new members, or to exchange information on vital issues.

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56 Shultz to Wise, 9/22/36, (Memoranda, 1936-1943), Lillie Shultz folder, Stephen S. Wise Mss, American Jewish Congress file, Correspondence, Section 7, American Jewish Historical Society.

57 Ibid.
Indeed, those who opposed the creation of the World Jewish Congress could not have done a better job in stifling its work than those charged with making it a viable organization. Over two years lapsed since its creation; yet, Lillie Shultz could still write in a memorandum to Wise in late 1938,

We are spending a minimum of $36,000 a year on the World Jewish Congress, and we have never examined what the World Jewish Congress is doing in the light of present day needs. . . . It is conducting no program except an improvised one, and, . . . that as much money is being spent to pay expenses to delegates to meetings as to enactment of program. 58

The leadership of the American Jewish Congress participated in creating an organization whose functions were never clearly delineated. The World Jewish Congress was to be that organization which would speak for world Jewry; yet, many Jews denounced the new body as being the scheme of a man whose wish was to become "King of the Jews."

Indeed, the idea of a World Jewish Congress became intertwined with the petty bickering, political in-fighting, and conflicting philosophies of the Jewish Congress leadership as well as those of the American Jewish Committee, the B'nai Brith, and the Jewish labor movement. Once created,

58ibid. See also the memorandum dated 12/23/38.
the American Jewish Congress leadership became very dis-
traught over the direction or lack thereof that the World
Jewish Congress took. To be sure, it was the American Jew-
ish Congress that was paying a great majority of the bills,
and the leadership expected that, since this was the case,
they should have the right to provide "guidance" to the new
organization. The Americans, because they held the purse
strings, wished to tell the others what tune to play. The
"Uptown" Americans were telling the uninitiated what to
do, and the uninitiated did not wish to take their advice.

The Congress, at least, had the vision for a world
organization that might, in less troubled times, have had a
role in bettering the condition of many Jews. Failure of
the World Jewish Congress need not reflect unfavorably
upon Rabbi Wise or the organization which he led.
CHAPTER IX

THE AMERICAN JEWISH CONGRESS: DOMESTIC ACTIVITIES, 1918 TO 1945

The domestic activities of the American Jewish Congress throughout the period 1918 to 1945 almost always played a secondary role to that of the protection of Jews abroad and the defense of Jewish interests in foreign lands. Jewish Congress leaders realized that the plight of their co-religionists in Europe took precedence over a domestic situation which, however urgent, did not include the physical and economic destruction of American Jewish citizens. It was not until the Jewish Congress leaders realized that institutions of American government and the courts could aid in the preservation of constitutional rights that they acceded to a definite program in the domestic arena.

H. Pereira Mendes, a leading Sephardic rabbi in New York, shared the attitude of many Jews about their place in American society. Though not an assimilationist, he believed that a Jew, given the chance, would become as good
a citizen as his non-Jewish counter-part. The non-Jew had
to be shown that anti-Semitism was an aberration; the Jew,
given the proper environment, could and would make a posi-
tive contribution to American society. Thus, he argued:

I contend that our immediate duty . . . is to organize
. . . a campaign of education of public opinion in
favor of our people . . ., showing the injustice of his-
torical and present prejudices, showing how Jews in
favored environments or country have nobly contributed
to the upbuilding and prosperity of that country.¹

Mendes' arguments had one great fallacy. He believed that
anti-Semitism was an aberration; that only those who were
ignorant of the Jewish way of life were guilty of it. Yet,
he hoped that those same people who did not bother to
acquaint themselves with Jewish life and who practiced anti-
Semitism, would suddenly, if presented with the facts,
change their minds and accept their Jewish neighbor as an
equal. Mendes and other leading Jewish thinkers of that
period relied on what the author calls the "voluntary
approach." The anti-Semite would, upon investigation of
the facts, voluntarily change his ways. To be sure, the
extent of anti-Semitism in the United States made this
approach totally unsatisfactory.

¹Quoted in The American Israelite, 10/11/17, p. 4.
The early work of the American Jewish Congress in the domestic arena was greatly hindered by the situation of world Jewry. So much time and energy was devoted to combatting prejudice from the outside that efforts to "build up a constructive Jewish attitude from within, to appeal for Jewish ethics or ideals or to broaden the field of Jewish education . . . " were neglected. Indeed, as Bernard G. Richards noted, American Jewish Congress efforts to promote a viable domestic policy were like "sweeping back the ocean. . . . " The very composition of the Jewish Congress, moreover, prevented its leaders from taking any positive action. The Jewish Congress membership was a polyglot of organizations and interest groups whose conception of Jewish life and the role of the Jew in American society varied greatly. It was extremely difficult to persuade the many factions within the Congress to accept ideas which they believed were alien to their political, social, religious, economic, or cultural philosophies. To wit: in 1922, Dr. Mordecai Soltes, a leading Jewish educator, proposed to the American Jewish Congress convention that it formulate a program for Jewish schools. The resolution was tabled, but

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interest in it did not subside, and the Jewish Congress Administrative Committee once more debated the issue. Though the proponents of the resolution stated that it only asked the Jewish Congress to give impetus to general Jewish education, without injecting into it any religious or social opinions, the majority of the Committee once again voted to kill the resolution. As one member stated:

[I have] very much at heart the education of Jewish youth in this country, but the opinions of Jewish education are so varied, that it will surely cause dissonance in a body like the . . . Congress, which is comprised of all the different Jewish factions in the United States.\textsuperscript{3}

\textsuperscript{3}Executive Committee Meeting, 6/4/22, Executive Committee Minutes, 1922 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 6, Executive Committee Minutes, American Jewish Historical Society. In October, 1923, a similar resolution was introduced at the Jewish Congress convention. A committee on education reported that less than 25 per cent of the Jewish children between the ages of six and thirteen in the United States were receiving any kind of formal Jewish education, and it urged American Jewry to support "all understandings aiming to promote opportunities for Jewish education." The resolution was hotly debated by the Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform Jewish factions within the Jewish Congress. The Orthodox Jews feared the adoption of an educational curriculum created by the Reform rabbinate. Rabbi Paul Silber of Chicago stated that the adoption of the resolution by the Jewish Congress would cause the Orthodox Jews of the United States to "declare war" on the Congress. The resolution was sent back to committee where it was so watered down that all elements within the Congress voted for the revised version. See, \textit{The New York Times}, 10/17/23, p. 19.
Only those incidents which affected American Jews as Jews could be acted upon, and then only with great difficulty.

Another reason why the Jewish Congress did so little in the domestic arena was that its financial condition was poor. Instead of fighting for Jewish rights in the United States, from necessity far too much time was spent in the attempt to collect funds for the maintenance of the organization; even with continual fund-raising drives, the Jewish Congress was burdened with ever-increasing debts. Unlike the American Jewish Committee, the Congress had few men of wealth who could contribute great sums of money. Rather, the Congress relied on contributions from its constituent organizations, and Bernard Richards constantly harangued the member organizations to make good on their pledges.

The Congress must have a budget for its work of organization and must also be provided with sufficient funds wherewith to conduct its labors...; without such means, the whole force of our movement will be dissipated in collecting a paltry sum for the maintenance of our office.4

Even as anti-Semitic an organization as the Ku Klux Klan could not unite the Jewish Congress membership. In state and local elections campaigns in the Deep South the

4Executive Committee Report, 1923 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 6, Executive Committee, 1916-1949, American Jewish Historical Society.
Klan had terrorized Jewish merchants to vote for Klan-endorsed candidates. In late November, 1922, the Administrative Committee of the Jewish Congress adopted a resolution opposing the Klan, and plans were made to urge both the Democratic and Republican Party to include in their respective platforms a condemnation of that organization. Wise asked Samuel Untermeyer to serve on a committee of the Congress which was to lobby for the anti-Klan plank. Untermeyer refused.

In my opinion it would tend to promote political warfare over the odious . . . issue that is sought to be injected into the campaign. The struggle against . . . the Klan may with entire safety be left in the Protestant churches and clergymen [sic]. . . . The American Jew can well afford to treat their assaults with the silent contempt they deserve and to allow such sporadic outcroppings of bigotry and intolerance to exhaust themselves and to die the death that they deserve--as has been the experience of the past. It is an insult to our free institutions and to all right-thinking Americans, for us to act on the assumption that racial and religious fanaticism can ever secure a foothold in this fair land of ours.

He went on to state that more important issues faced American Jewry; besides, "no standard-bearer of any great political party will ever descend into the gutter to do battle . . . on the side of the enemies of our country. . . ."

Rather than take part in such a scheme, Untermeyer
threatened to resign from the Jewish Congress. Untermeier did not resign; neither did the Democratic or Republican Party condemn the Klan in their platforms.

Without a comprehensive plan of action, the Jewish Congress leadership could only exercise its influence in a negative way. No constructive plan of attack on anti-Semitism in the United States was formulated; thus, Wise and other Jewish Congress leaders could only protest after an incident had occurred. Moreover, many in the Congress still believed that an educational campaign against anti-Semitism was still the best approach to solve the problem. The Congress worked closely with the Federal Council of Churches in this endeavor; however, a lack of funds prevented the Congress from more active participation in the campaign.

The Congress was reduced to fighting anti-Semitism with a sling-shot. It protested the publication of an

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5Barondess to Wise, 7/21/24, Joseph Barondess folder #2, Bernard G. Richards Mss, Jewish Theological Seminary; The New York Times, 10/27/24, p. 19; Untermeier to Richards, 6/26/24, in possession of Mrs. Ruth Richards Eisenstein, New York City, Archives of the Jewish Information Bureau.

6Administrative Committee Meeting, 3/6/25, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1925 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society.
article by Burton J. Hendrick, "The Menace of the Polish Jew," in World's Week, in which the author apparently misrepresented the character and aims of Jews from Poland and other Eastern European countries. Richards requested equal space from the editor of World's Week, but was refused, and there the matter rested. On another occasion, a committee of students from New York University asked the Congress to extend a financial guarantee of the Junior Prom because non-Jewish fraternities refused to participate. A Jewish student had been elected chairman of the arrangements committee, and the non-Jewish fraternities had backed another candidate. The Congress leadership authorized the guarantee.

The Massena, New York incident typifies the negative character of Jewish Congress work in the United States in the late 1920's. On September 22, 1928, a Christian child was lost, and, after an exhaustive search, could not be found. That night a New York State trooper stopped and

7 Executive Committee Meeting, 2/11/23, Executive Committee Minutes, 1923 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 6, Executive Committee, 1916-1949, American Jewish Historical Society.

8 Administrative Committee Meeting, 1/27/25, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1925 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society.
asked a Jewish man if it was true that Jews used human blood at their holiday services. The Jew, not versed in the practices of the faith, stated that he did not know if such a custom was still practiced in Europe, but he was sure that the Jews of America did not follow it. He told the trooper to consult the rabbi at the local synagogue.

At 12:30 P.M., the state trooper called the rabbi and asked him to come to the police station to give some important information. When the rabbi arrived at the station, a mob had already gathered. The trooper asked the rabbi if he was aware that a child was missing; the answer was affirmative. The trooper then asked him if it was true that the next day was an important Jewish holiday. "A fast day?" Answer: "Yes." He was then asked if Jews used human sacrifice in the performance of the liturgy. At that point the rabbi jumped to his feet and yelled at the trooper: "I am not through with you yet. You will have to reveal the name of the party that gave you such information in order that he should be taught that he is not in Roumania or Poland."

The rabbi then went to the congregation and told it of the situation. It was later learned that the child had been found in the weeds about a mile from her home. The
leaders of the congregation did not want to drop the matter, and requested the aid of the American Jewish Congress in New York City.  

Wise wrote both the Mayor of Massena and the commanding officer of the New York State Police. He also telephoned Governor Alfred E. Smith, and urged the chief executive to conduct a formal investigation. This the Governor did, and, two days later, the Superintendent of the State Police summoned the state trooper to Albany for a hearing. The trooper confessed that it was the mayor's idea to foment the ritual murder libel. Subsequently, the trooper was indefinitely suspended for gross lack of discretion in the exercise of his duties and for conduct unbecoming an officer. The mayor apologized to the congregation, and the incident ended.  

The Massena incident is extremely significant, for it indicated to Jewish Congress leaders that a more thorough

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9 Administrative Committee Meeting, 10/3/28, Administrative Committee Minutes, 1928 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 2, Administrative Committee, 1923-1933, American Jewish Historical Society.

10 For a complete record of the correspondence, see Report of the Administrative Committee of the American Jewish Congress, in possession of Mrs. Ruth Richards Eisenstein, New York City, Archives of the Jewish Information Bureau.
approach to the problem of anti-Semitism in the United States was needed. At the 1929 Jewish Congress convention, several commissions were created to study the various barriers facing Jews in the United States and to make recommendations on how they could be removed. Commissions on economic discrimination and discrimination in American universities were established. Moreover, there developed within the ranks of the Jewish Congress a movement to "upbuild" Judaism, Jewish culture, and to strengthen the moral and spiritual values of American Jewry. The results of the studies revealed that Jews were discriminated against in employment, and that a majority of universities admitted Jews on a quota basis. However, little else was done, because the depression soon overwhelmed the country, and the Congress turned its attention toward the Hitler menace. The creation of the commissions and their subsequent reports must not be minimized, for it was the

\[11\text{ Bernard J. Richards, "Fundamental Motives in the Organization of Jewry," 10/19/30; Bernard G. Richards, "Conflicting Motives in American Jewish Life," 10/17/30, in the possession of Mrs. Ruth Richards Eisenstein, New York City, Archives of the Jewish Information Bureau.}

\[12\text{ Wise to Rubinow 1/8/32; Rubinow to Wise, 12/31/31, Stephen S. Wise folder #8, Bernard G. Richards Mss, Jewish Theological Seminary.} \]
first time that the Jewish Congress emphasized the importance of scientific and authoritative studies to combat prejudice. Also, a concerted effort was made to use those studies to direct and condition Jewish public opinion to a changing environment.

As fascist ideology spread in the United States, Jewish Congress leaders sought ways to stem the tide. It was decided at a Governing Council meeting in November, 1936, that a standing committee on defamation be created whose purpose would be to establish a national program to fight anti-Jewish defamation. The local branches of the Congress and its Youth Division aided in the gathering of materials which were used to prosecute anti-Jewish organizations, as well as to provide the newly created House Committee on Un-American Activities with information. Moreover, an educational campaign was planned to combat anti-Semitism through a radio forum in which Jews and non-Jews would participate; through a W.P.A. writers project devoted to a discussion of the Jews' contributions to American civilization; through a W.P.A. theatre project devoted to Jewish contribution to the United States, as well as those of all minority groups; and through the establishment of a speakers bureau "especially equipped to deal with the refutation
of anti-Semitic libels." It was also decided that the Congress would try to work with other Jewish organizations to stem the tide of anti-Semitism in the United States. A delegate from the Congress went to Chicago to attend a conference called by the B'nai Brith to attack the causes of anti-Semitism.13

Though the delegates were invited as individuals and not as representatives of any organization, the delegates adopted a resolution calling for the creation of a committee to study the problem of anti-Semitism in the United States. The Committee on Cooperation, as it came to be called, found that anti-Semitism in the United States was chronic and became acute under "certain provocative conditions according to time, place, and circumstance." In its chronic stage, anti-Semitism was a complex of psychological reactions to the word "Jew," which was fostered by religious and racial intolerance. Moreover, it was closely linked to nativism and xenophobia. Thus, in normal times the Jew was resented as an outsider, and resistance to his social acceptance, no matter how well he was liked as an individual, was manifested

in sporadic instances of economic discrimination. Under conditions of social stress, the Jew became the target of treatment "more impassioned and cruel" than dealt to other outsiders. The Committee opined that possibly this was due to the "peculiar psychological reaction to the Jew." Hence, the position of the Jew in the political, economic, and academic arenas came under suspicion, and a widespread tendency to treat the Jew as the "devil of the piece" and "to put him in his place" was manifested.\(^{14}\)

The Committee noted that each Jewish organization that engaged in anti-defamation work was not aware of the efforts of the other organizations, and, hence, duplication of effort occurred. It noted, however, that duplication of effort was not necessarily bad, for it believed that the problem was so pervasive that "efforts identical in nature may reach very different sections of the population." Waste occurred when one organization did not know what another was doing, and instead of reinforcing one another, time and precious resources were not being put to good use. To wit: different organizations held important meetings on the same

night, and though each meeting attracted a different con-
stituency, press and radio coverage given to one meeting
impaired that of the other.15

To meet the problem, the Committee suggested greater
cooparation between the organizations.

It feels that the problem must be dealt with by the best
methods that the social sciences and good business tech-
nique can provide. . . . Adoption of scientific methods
of coordination would not only eliminate the waste where
it occurs but would also mollify the conflicts and
active antagonisms engendered by the present situation.
. . .16

The Committee then proposed the following program for
cooparation: (1) to consult about sharing the work of
existing programs and practices so as to make them more
efficient; to arrange for a systematic exchange of informa-
tion among the organizations; to study the vocational dis-
tribution of the Jew in the national economy, and, on the
basis of this study, to establish a vocational guidance ser-
vice to be used by Jews about to embark on educational or
employment endeavors; to appoint a liaison officer to act
as a clearinghouse of information. The Committee on Coopera-
tion would concern itself with the elimination of the causes

15Ibid.
16Ibid.
of friction and irritation amongst the various organiza-
tions.17

The Jewish Congress endorsed the Committee on Coopera-
tion proposals. Yet, so great was the antagonism between
the major Jewish organizations that nothing ever came to
fruition. Each organization jealously guarded its autonomy,
and no one was willing to relieve itself of tasks which it
believed were too important to be left to an agency out-
side of its control.18

The American Jewish Congress also fought fascist
groups and Nazi sympathizers in the United States. The

17 Ibid.

18 Governing Council Meetings 6/22/37, 7/6/37, Stephen
S. Wise Mss, Box 87, Governing Council, 1935-1938, American
Jewish Historical Society. A similar plan was envisaged by
the American Jewish Committee. Richard Rothschild, an
advertising and public relations executive, was asked by
the American Jewish Committee to devise a plan to combat
anti-Semitism in the United States. Rothschild premised
his program on the assumption that the Committee would not
deal with "traditional anti-Semitism or the pressures exac-
erbated by business cycles," but would concentrate on "pro-
pagandized" anti-Semitism emanating from Nazi ideology.
His goals were to: (1) correct the misconceptions about Jews
as established by public opinion polls; (2) expose the Nazi
system; (3) test the efficacy of a direct attack on anti-
Semitism in one city; (4) investigate and take measures
against anti-Semitic groups; (5) instruct the Jewish com-
munity in techniques on how best to fight anti-Semitism;
and (6) create a "Jewish social service" which would carry
out the plan as a whole. See, Naomi Cohen, Not Free to
Desist, pp. 200-201.
Congress leadership directed its attention toward Father Charles Coughlin, "the radio priest." Through his radio broadcasts and propaganda organ, *Social Justice*, Coughlin ranted against the New Deal, Roosevelt's Jewish advisors, left-wing groups, and anything else that suited his fancy. In order to cope with Coughlin—and, more importantly, the menace to the democratic system—the Congress tried to refute his arguments. In New York City and wherever else the Jewish Congress was organized, volunteer workers were mobilized through the efforts of the Women's Division of the Congress. They stationed themselves at street intersections where Coughlin's paper was offered and sold the pamphlet "Father Coughlin--His 'Facts' and Arguments," the Jewish Congress's refutation of the Coughlin smears. Moreover, these volunteer workers stationed themselves outside of Catholic churches on Sundays to counteract the spread of Coughlinite material.  

The Jewish Congress also held conferences with Christian clerics; they were given material prepared by the Congress on how best to refute the arguments of Coughlin

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19Report of the Administrative Committee to the American Jewish Congress, 1940, pp. 61-63, American Jewish Congress Mss, Zionist Archives and Library.
and other fascist groups. In addition, a confidential weekly digest of the anti-Semitic press was prepared by the Congress research department and distributed to newspapers throughout the United States. Christian clergy were invited to join in the fight; the Rev. William Kernan of Bayonne, New Jersey, an ardent foe of Coughlin, was invited by the Jewish Congress to address groups of diverse faiths around the United States on the evils of "Coughlin-ism." Inter-faith councils were organized to promote understanding and harmony. Though it is not clear to what extent Jewish Congress efforts played in the demise of Father Coughlin as a political force, it appears that the campaign pursued by the Jewish Congress leadership was thorough, well planned, and executed very effectively.

By 1938, the American Jewish Congress had established numerous commissions to study the role of the Jew in American society. Commissions on law, civil rights, and economic statistics were authorized by the Jewish Congress; indeed, the main focus of Jewish Congress domestic work through 1940 was in these areas. The Bureau on Economic Discrimination had limited itself to the New York

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20 Ibid.
metropolitan area; however, it realized that economic discrimination was a national problem. Thus, the Congress employed field representatives to initiate studies on economic discrimination throughout the United States. Congress efforts were helping to open the doors to Jews and thus "strengthen the American way by upbuilding the opportunity for all regardless of race or religion." To supplement the work of the Bureau of Economic Discrimination, a commission on vocational guidance and a commission on law and legislation were created.

The task of the anti-defamation bureau was to assemble information on subversive organizations in the United States, and through the use of literature and propaganda, the Congress hoped to counteract their pernicious lies. Moreover, the anti-defamation bureau was to "keep Christian opinion free of prejudice by keeping that opinion informed." Though both the American Jewish Committee and the B'nai Brith were both active in this field, Congress leaders believed that their program was essential. Another function of the bureau was to help maintain interracial relations. The General Jewish Council, which was

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21 Ibid., pp. 405.
created in 1938 and composed of the four largest Jewish organizations in the United States, was supposed to do this particular job, but had not initiated any program due to philosophical differences among its members. Thus, the Jewish Congress, through its "Good Neighbor" program, implemented its race-relations program.\(^2\) By 1941, the prevailing opinion in Jewish Congress circles was, as one observer noted: "Fatalism kills research in social science and condemns people to 'Nirvana.' Research work has meaning only if we believe in man's ability to influence the march of events."\(^3\)

In late May, 1942, the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds submitted a proposal to the major American-Jewish organizations on combatting anti-Semitism. The proposal asked that these organizations deal with the problem of anti-Semitism on an integrated basis under the aegis of a single operating body composed of representatives of the four major Jewish organizations. The new body was to have the power to raise funds for its

\(^2\) Shultz to Wise, 12/23/38, (Memoranda, 1936-1943), American Jewish Congress file, Correspondence, Section 7, Stephen S. Wise Mss, American Jewish Historical Society.

\(^3\) "Plan to Establish an Institute of Jewish Current Modern History," pp. 1-2, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 1, Zionist Archives and Library.
"civic-protective" program, and allocate these funds to established agencies. In addition it was to have its own staff and professional direction and deal exclusively with the problem of the defence of Jewish rights in the United States. The Jewish Congress was amenable to the proposal; however, the B'nai Brith's Anti-Defamation League was adamantly opposed, for it believed that it had done pioneering work in this area, and did not need any assistance. Samuel Margoshes of the Jewish Congress was also opposed; unity only meant a "recurrence of the paralysis which affected the activities of the Congress," and that it was impossible for four organizations representing four different ideologies to "tackle together" the problem of combatting anti-Semitism.

Though the Council's proposal failed to unite the four large Jewish organizations, the ideas presented by the Council struck a responsive chord in the Jewish Congress.

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24 Hollander to Sherman, 7/3/42, (Memoranda, 1936-1943), American Jewish Congress file, Correspondence, Section 7, Stephen S. Wise Mss, American Jewish Historical Society.

25 Administrative Committee Meeting, 1/19/43, Administrative Mss, Box 3, Administrative Committee, 1934-1959, American Jewish Historical Society.

26 Ibid.
membership. By November, 1943, the Congress established a Commission on Anti-Semitism whose task was to develop a national program to deal with the problem. The American Jewish Committee and the B'nai Brith opposed the formation of the new Commission on the grounds that it would just duplicate the work of the Anti-Defamation League. Joseph Proskauer of the American Jewish Committee noted that it was impossible to work with such a group as the American Jewish Congress because its philosophy was so "diametrically opposed to ours."27 Yet, the American Jewish Committee and the B'nai Brith finally relented to public pressure and joined in the creation of a National Community Relations Advisory Council.

The N.C.R.A.C. adopted as its program the following objectives:

1. To study, analyze, and evaluate the policies and activities of its constituent members;
2. To ascertain the areas of activities of the organizations and to continually inventory their proposals;
3. To serve as a coordinating and clearing agency for projects and policies so as to eliminate duplication of efforts and the avoidance of conflict;

27Executive Committee Meeting, 4/6/44, Executive Committee Minutes, 1944 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 6, Executive Committee, 1916-1949, American Jewish Historical Society.
4. To seek agreement on and to formulate policies. After the formulation and adoption of policies, the member organizations were expected to adhere to them and pledge not to engage in any activities opposed to such policies.

Before the ink was dry on the N.C.R.A.C. Charter, the constituent organizations began to subvert the newly created body. The Jewish Congress did not wish to be bound by the N.C.R.A.C. in its newly established social action program, and refused to submit its proposals to the newly formed agency.28

Jewish Congress leaders were not distraught over the ineffectiveness of the N.C.R.A.C. Its newly established Commission on Anti-Semitism (later to be known as the Council on Community Inter-Relations), headed by Dr. Kurt Lewin, Director of the Research Center for Group Dynamics at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, was one

28 Executive Committee Meeting, 4/6/44, Executive Committee Minutes, 1944 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 6, Executive Committee, 1916-1949, American Jewish Historical Society. See also, Sherman to Wise, 4/20/44, Irving Miller folder, Stephen S. Wise Mss, American Jewish Congress file, Correspondence, Section 7, American Jewish Historical Society. By 1952, the American Jewish Committee and the B'nai Brith had withdrawn from the still-borne organization.
of the vehicles which they believed would implement their social action program and attract new members to the Congress movement. The basic premise of the C.C.I. was to utilize social science research techniques in the fight against anti-Semitism. The dual objective of the Commission was to do research on all aspects of Jewish-non-Jewish relations and to deal on the practical level with the problem. "No action without research (evaluation), no research without action," was the motto of the C.C.I.

The program of the C.C.I. focused on the "group life" aspect of Jewish-non-Jewish relations as distinguished from the individual or the mass aspects of anti-Semitism; it involved a very different methodological orientation than previously used in researching inter-group relations. Hence, the work of the C.C.I. consisted of projects categorized as defence or short-range projects, medium range projects, and long-range projects. A short-range project was described as one which was undertaken because of a particular incident. Lewin stated that remediation of those incidents provided the researcher with an

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29 Executive Committee Meeting, 1/25/45, Executive Committee Minutes, 1945 folder, American Jewish Congress Mss, Box 6, Executive Committee, 1916-1949, American Jewish Historical Society.
excellent experience about the "nature and variety" of Jewish-non-Jewish friction, as well as keeping the researcher close to the everyday needs of the Jewish community. The medium-range projects, lasting usually from three to nine months, were devoted to finding the causes of a particular incident and to creating machinery and devising programs to alleviate the accompanying tension. Long-range projects were those which Lewin hoped would lay open the broader forces and factors underlying group friction and to develop and administer therapeutic action to deal with them. 30

Beside C.C.I., Jewish Congress leaders created the Commission of Law and Social Action by combining its commissions on law and legislation and economic discrimination. The moving force behind the new commission was Alexander Pekelis, a Russian born jurist, who emigrated to the United States after being forced to leave Germany. Pekelis believed that American anti-Semitism was fundamentally different than the classical, European varieties in

that the former had its source not in governmental restraints, "but in certain patterns of social behavior." It was not the federal government that directly deprived the Jew of his rightful place in American society; rather, the "forces of society itself." Anti-Semitism in the United States was "private or communal, not public or governmental in nature."³¹

Pekelis believed that Jewish autonomy would flourish in pluralistic America, not as an official institution recognized by governmental authority, but as a private group. To the extent that the government guaranteed to its Jewish citizens their basic right to preserve their minority characteristics, and to the extent to which the multi-national United States prevented various social units from destroying cultural autonomy, the Jew in America would be free to survive. Thus, Pekelis foresaw the success of the Jewish cause in America as being directly dependent upon "the traditional American aversion to a leveling of society."³² To achieve Jewish autonomy,

³²Ibid., p. 223.
Pekelis insisted that the American Jewish Congress be instrumental in the establishment of an alliance between liberal America and its oppressed minorities and American Jewry. "The . . . Congress must be--with all other progressive groups--in the vanguard of the battle for social progress, whether or not the individual issues involved touch upon so-called Jewish interests. . . ."33

The Commission on Law and Social Action program rejected the traditional methods of fighting anti-Semitism; to counter anti-Semitic propaganda by argument, the creation of "favorable climates of opinion with regard to Jews," or public education campaigns were not in the C.L.S.A. arsenal. Anti-Semitism was racism, and every act of intolerance or discrimination "had to be seen as an imperfection of the democratic system, as a violation of the civil rights of all Americans."34 Thus, the goal of C.L.S.A. was to outlaw every form of discrimination, whether it was directed against Jew, Negro, or Indian, was tantamount to appeasement. The ultimate objective of C.L.S.A. was to transform the practices and habits of

33Ibid., p. 242.

American society and to change public policy through the courts.

C.L.S.A. used five basic tactics to achieve its ends. One approach was to counter anti-Semitism and all other forms of discrimination by establishing public commissions whose responsibility was not only to give redress to a particular discriminatory act, but to require the offenders to cease their practices against all groups. The Fair Employment Practices Commission Act was the harbinger of such a commission; the C.L.S.A., however, broadened the commission idea to include all areas of civil rights. To wit: the Freeman Bill, enacted by the State of New Jersey, was the first comprehensive civil rights bill enacted by any state; the Freeman Bill was drafted by C.L.S.A. lawyers. Another approach used by the C.L.S.A. was the "test-case" technique whereby precedent-making judicial decisions were used to correct injustices. The Gideon Bible Case and the Stuyvesant Town Case in New York are examples of this technique. In cases not actively pursued by the C.L.S.A., the C.L.S.A. filed briefs as amicus curiae in support of other agencies and causes. Too, the C.L.S.A. filed suits against individuals or institutions which it alleged discriminated against people because of their race, religion,
or national origin. In effect, the C.L.S.A. became a "private attorney general; that is, it investigated and brought suit against those agencies which had broken the law." Finally, the C.L.S.A. worked closely with the Council on Community Inter-Relations to broaden the base of evidence in suits brought by the former. The social sciences were now being used to effectuate legal decisions.\textsuperscript{35}

Though the C.L.S.A. was very successful in court, its legislative record was not quite as good. Efforts to enact federal legislation dealing with housing, education, group libel, and discrimination in employment practices did not fare well. The Congressional elections of 1950 proved to be a disaster for American Jewish Congress efforts to pass legislation. The hysteria which swept the United States, typified by Senator Joseph McCarthy, forced the Jewish Congress to adopt defensive measures. The American Jewish Labor Council, a left-wing labor group, and the Jewish People's Fraternal Order, were expelled from the Jewish Congress because of their political and economic beliefs. Though the Jewish Congress continued to press for the dissolution of the House Un-American

\textsuperscript{35}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. vi-ix.
Activities Committee, the defeat of the Mundt-Nixon Bill, and President Truman's Executive Order requiring all federal employees to take a loyalty oath, the Jewish Congress and its allies could not stem the tide of public opinion. As one Jewish Congress executive noted:

"Opposition to communism has frequently been distorted into a campaign against liberal activity and persons associated with liberal movements, however remote in the past their associations may have been. . . . When destruction of personal careers and reputations by innuendo has been practiced with immunity, the organizations of positive action for the preservation of liberties . . . and rights have met with extreme difficulty and with virtually no success. . . . The fear which the repressive actions and atmosphere have bred has served to restrain liberal groups even from effective opposition to destruction of freedom and civil liberties. . . ." 36

The American Jewish Congress's domestic activities and programs almost always played a secondary role to the organization's protection of the civil and political rights of their co-religionists overseas. To be sure, the Jewish Congress was ill-equipped financially to sustain the overseas program as well as to initiate and maintain programs in the United States. Yet, the Jewish Congress leadership

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36 "American Jewish Congress; Supplement to Universal Jewish Encyclopedia," in possession of Mrs. Ruüh Richards Eisenstein, New York City, Archives of the Jewish Information Bureau.
was not unaware of the importance of its domestic program. The Massena, New York incident alerted Jewish Congress leaders to the fact that the traditional method of combating anti-Semitism in the United States--through educational programs, press and radio campaigns--was no longer an adequate method, and it began to emphasize the importance of systematic studies to gather data pursuant to action. The creation of the C.C.I. and C.L.S.A. were but two manifestations of this new approach to tackling an old problem.

Furthermore, the Jewish Congress broadened its horizons; no longer did it concern itself solely with the defence of Jewish rights in the United States. Now, the abridgement of any group's rights was to be considered as a potential assault upon the rights of American Jewry.
CHAPTER X

CONCLUSION

The American Jewish Congress was an institution born out of the American-Jewish community's desire to aid its brethren in Europe during and after World War I. Many American Jews believed that the cataclysmic events of 1914 and the subsequent carnage, squalor, and disease provided them with an opportunity—albeit tragic—to rectify wrongs perpetrated against the Jews of Europe for centuries. Many hoped that out of the misery created by the combattants might rise, like a phoenix, post-war harmony, brotherhood, contentment, and tranquility.

World War I also heightened the already existing tensions, controversies, and rivalries within the American Jewish community. Newly arrived immigrants and recently naturalized citizens from Eastern Europe and Russia believed that they were being excluded from the decision-making process by German-Jewish Americans who funded programs and institutions vital to the entire community. Not
only did they feel excluded; they also perceived—rightly or wrongly—that the "Uptown" Jews were condescending and patronizing in their dealings with them. America, to those newly arrived citizens, was the land of opportunity, and, more importantly, of democracy. How then, did they ask, could those who controlled the funding mechanisms be allowed to deny them participation in decisions which affected not only their destiny in the United States, but the future of their fellow Jews still in Europe? If, indeed, the war was "to save the world for democracy," then why should they not be able to practice what was being preached?

The proponents of an American Jewish Congress saw the establishment of that institution as the vehicle by which American Jewry could plan its future. Indeed, "democracy" to men such as Stephen Wise, Louis Brandeis, and Bernard Richards, meant public awareness and control. Though Wise and other advocates of a Jewish Congress would have relied on planners to devise the ways and means for a project, the ultimate decision of what way to achieve an objective would have rested with the Jewish body-politic, and not in the hands of a few men—however able or public spirited.

The Jewish Congress, moreover, was to serve as a clearinghouse for the exchange of ideas, and as an
institution which would be the structure for the orderly and effective expression and advancement of Jewish interests. The multitude of Jewish organizations—each, more often than not, more concerned with its own survival than with the public interest—prevented the Jewish community from using the resources at its disposal in the most efficient and effective manner. A central authority was needed to apportion tasks to the various organizations and thus avoid conflict and duplication of effort. Moreover, hyperbole and distortion would be excluded from the various organizations’ public pronouncements, for there would be no more competition for precious funds. The Jewish public would now be able to judge reasonably and soberly policies and programs.

The American Jewish Congress was elected in June, 1917, and finally convened after the cessation of hostilities in December, 1918. Though its delegation to the Paris Peace Conference did yeoman work in the establishment of elementary political and civil rights for those Jews in the defeated, newly created, or enlarged states of Europe, when it returned the Jewish Congress adjourned sine die. Many Jews, however, thought that the Jews of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union were still in peril and that the rights accorded them by the signatories at the Paris Peace
Conference were not worth the paper on which they were written. This was one of the reasons why proponents of a Jewish Congress decided to re-establish the institution on a permanent basis.

Proponents of a permanent institution were dismayed to learn that much of the American-Jewish public was not so intensely interested in their project as it had been prior to the World War. Enough support was gathered, however, to reorganize the Jewish Congress in 1922. The new organization was immediately beset with financial difficulties. The protection of Jewish rights in the United States and overseas was expensive, and Jewish Congress leaders continually tried to find ways to support their activities.

Moreover, financial considerations affected policy formulation. American Jewish activities in the defense of Jewish rights in Roumania is an example. Roumania had a long history of anti-Semitism. Though obligated by the Treaty of Berlin of 1878 to accord minorities civil, political, and religious rights, the State did nothing to protect its Jewish inhabitants from anti-Semites and even aided anti-Semitic groups in denying Jews their just due. Roumania reluctantly signed the treaty of peace at the end of World War I, and was forced to include as part of its
organic law specific guarantees of freedom of religion, speech, press, education, and language to its Jewish minority. Yet, Roumania continued to flaunt its obligations.

Jewish Congress leaders tried to help their co-religionists in Roumania in such a way that would also relieve the financial woes of the Congress and attract new membership. Wise and others on the Jewish Congress Administrative Committee went against the advice of William Fildermann, one of the leaders of Roumanian Jewry, and sent to Roumania a fact-finding commission consisting of prominent Christian clergymen. Although Fildermann told the Administrative Committee that the commission was not needed--in fact, it might prove harmful--the Jewish Congress went ahead with the project anyway. Wise and Leo Wolfson of the United Roumanian Jews of America saw the fact-finding commission as a "dynamic event," one which would bring to the Jewish Congress a tremendous amount of press coverage, and, hopefully, a renewed interest in the Jewish Congress by the Jewish public.

Domestic political considerations vis a vis other American Jewish organizations more than once influenced Jewish Congress decisions. The boycott of German goods
and the movement for the creation of a World Jewish Congress are examples of this phenomenon. The boycott of German goods was a movement initiated by organizations outside of the American Jewish Congress. While many Jewish Congress members were sympathetic to the aims of the boycott, the leadership did not believe that the time was appropriate for such a tactic. Indeed, Wise and Bernard Deutsch took steps to thwart the boycott. Jewish Congress leaders, however, miscalculated the popular appeal of the boycott among the Jews of America, notwithstanding objections to the boycott by such groups as the American Jewish Committee and the B'nai Brith. To be sure, the favorable reception given Samuel Untermeyer by the Jewish public was one of the main reasons why the Jewish Congress formally decided to join the movement. However, Jewish Congress leaders were never enthusiastic about the boycott. Some doubted its effectiveness; Horace Kallen argued that even if every Jew in the United States actively participated in the boycott, the German economy would not suffer to any appreciable extent.

Once the decision was made to boycott German goods and services, the Jewish Congress argued with Untermeyer's organization about what role the Congress would play in
the movement. To what extent would the parvenu Congress control the disbursement of funds and the planning and execution of policy? "Parity" became the watchword of the Jewish Congress leadership; if Untermeyer refused to accept the Congress's position, then the Congress "would go-it-alone." But "going-it-alone" meant expenditure of funds which the Jewish Congress leadership was not willing to allocate. Joseph Tenenbaum, chairman of the American Jewish Congress Boycott Committee, repeatedly asked the Administrative Committee for additional funds to carry on the boycott; he even threatened to resign if supplementary funds were not forthcoming. Yet, the Jewish Congress leadership was still unwilling to expend resources on a project which it believed had very little chance of success. In fact, the Administrative Committee had decided that other tactics should be used to combat Hitler, and while it paid lip-service to the boycott, it did not allocate substantial sums for the project.

Jewish Congress leaders were also influenced by domestic political considerations in their decision to establish a World Jewish Congress. After the cessation of hostilities and the signing of the peace treaties, many Jewish Congress leaders, who had earlier urged the
convocation of a World Jewish Congress, lost interest in the project. Financial exigencies contributed to loss of interest; the Congress could hardly pay its monthly bills, let alone expend time and money on a project which held out little hope for success. When Jewish Congress leaders finally decided to lay plans for the creation of a World Jewish Congress, one of the leading arguments enunciated was that it would "infuse new blood into our American Jewish Congress."

A plan espoused by Abraham Goldberg and accepted by the other members of the Administrative Committee showed how very cautious the Jewish Congress was in this matter. Only organizations that could be expected to respond favorably were to be invited to a conference to discuss the creation of the World Jewish Congress, and the Jewish Congress took pains to inform the prospective conferees that their organizations were under no financial obligation. When Richards argued that the whole idea of a World Jewish Congress should be postponed, he was overruled because the "Jewish Congress would look foolish."

Indeed, Jewish Congress leaders used the creation of the World Jewish Congress as a way to establish the American Jewish Congress as the "tribunal" of American
Jewry. The proposed referendum endorsed by the Adminis-
trative Committee was an incredible public relations gim-
mick. The questions and statements to be put to the Jewish
public were designed by the Jewish Congress in such a way
that would put opposing organizations--namely, the Ameri-
can Jewish Committee and the B'nai Brith--in a bad light.
To be sure, the Jewish Congress leadership already knew
what the responses of these two organizations were to the
entire issue.

Once the World Jewish Congress had been created,
American Jewish Congress leaders became very distraught
over the way in which it was being operated. Since the
American Jewish Congress was funding a substantial part of
the new organization's budget, it believed it had the right
to provide "guidance" to the World Jewish Congress. Indeed,
Jewish Congress leaders sounded like the "Uptown" Jews
when talking to the lowly "East-Siders." The uninitiated
Europeans, like the upstart East-Siders of New York, did
not relish the idea of being guided by their more fortunate
brethren from the United States.

The tragic events of World War Two revealed how
dependent the American Jewish Congress was on Rabbi Stephen
S. Wise. Though he disagreed occasionally with then
Governor Roosevelt of New York, his political allegiance to the man from Hyde Park was almost unshakable. When F.D.R. became President, Wise had the utmost faith that Roosevelt would do something to alleviate the situation of German Jewry. Yet, Roosevelt--always the consummate politician--acted only when it was politically feasible. Wise, though not happy with the President's policy of inaction toward Hitler, did not denounce F.D.R.; he realized that the monumental domestic problems facing the new administration far outweighed foreign policy considerations. The Rabbi of the Free Synagogue urged the President and others in the Administration to aid the suffering Jews of Germany without stirring up a political hornet's nest which might have jeopardized New Deal legislation or have infuriated the Congress which held as sacrosanct the quota system. Thus, Wise had to fight for a modification of President Hoover's Executive Order of 1930, and ever so gently persuaded the Administration to allow the admittance of German-Jewish children into the United States.

The President refused to be committed to a course of action. When one segment of the American-Jewish community vociferously urged Roosevelt to "take action," he retorted that the Jews of Germany had advised him that he
should do nothing and that reports of anti-Jewish excesses in Germany by the American press were greatly exaggerated. Thus, he acted only when he believed it was in the interest of the United States to act. His recall of the American Ambassador to Germany after Kristallnacht was politically acceptable to almost all of the American people and it "unofficially" conveyed to the Reich the Administration's displeasure and disgust with Hitler's atrocities against the Jews. F.D.R. allowed his subordinates and political associates to condemn the Third Reich and to devise ways and means to counteract Nazi foreign policy; Secretary of the Treasury Morgenthau's initiatives in 1938 to impose countervailing duties serve as an example of this Rooseveltian tactic.

When the United States entered the war on December 8, 1941, scattered reports of systematic Nazi murder of Jews and other "subhumans" had already been discussed amongst diplomats and knowledgeable observers. But American policy did not substantially change. "Dr. New Deal" had been replaced by "Dr. Win the War," and the United States Government showed the same insensitivity toward the victims of Nazi annihilation as it had prior to Pearl Harbor. Though Roosevelt promised a delegation of the leaders
of American Jewish organizations in December, 1942, that the perpetrators of the crimes would be held accountable for their actions after the war, he did not offer them anything more concrete. Indeed, the prevailing opinion in Washington and Allied headquarters was that nothing should be done which would lengthen the war. To be sure, Wise agreed with this policy. When pressured to denounce the President for his unwillingness to alter strategy or tactics so that the Jews of Europe could—perhaps—be saved, Wise refused.

Wise was placed in a "no-win" position. The American Jewish Congress leadership placed almost total responsibility for saving European Jewry on Wise's shoulders. He was Roosevelt's friend; he was the President's political ally. If Wise had parted ways with Roosevelt, to whom could he have turned? No other viable alternatives were available to Wise; all he could do was to plea for help for his European brethren and hope that someone would come to the rescue. But the Administration did not choose to listen and the cries of anguish went unanswered. The President of the American Jewish Congress was the Jewish Congress's shtadlan, but, unlike those who had previously played that role, Wise was unable to gain concessions for
his people.

"Defense of Jewish rights"--the Jewish Congress's raison d'etre--had been drastically modified by the Holocaust. Jewish Congress leaders perceived the need for a more broadly based attack on discrimination and prejudice. Indeed, the American Jewish Congress leadership adopted the principle of "collective security"; an assault on anyone's constitutional rights was now just cause for the Jewish Congress to come to the defence of the injured party or group. Originally, the American Jewish Congress was limited by its by-laws to deal only with issues that affected Jews as Jews; no act of discrimination which affected solely Negroes, orientals, or other minorities in the United States could be pursued by the Jewish Congress.

Jewish Congress leaders had seen the tragic consequences of appeasement; the western democracies had shut their eyes to Nazi aggrandizement and expansion, and had hoped that the insatiable appetite of the Third Reich would be satisfied. But such was not the case. Wise and other Jewish Congress leaders must have equated the American Jewish Congress with the western democracies, and were determined not to make the same mistake in the domestic arena. Thus, infringement of anyone's rights--Jews or non-Jews--
was cause for concern by the Jewish Congress. Through its Commission on Law and Social Action and the Commission on Community Inter-relations, the American Jewish Congress began to attack discrimination and the causes of prejudice through the courts, the use of social science research techniques, legislation, and continued public education. The Jewish Congress had traversed the artificial construct of combatting only anti-Semitism and recognized the fact that prejudice affects everyone, not only the unfortunate few.

Created as an institution to defend Jewish rights in the United States and abroad, the American Jewish Congress was only partially successful. But it gave to a segment of the Jews of America hope that the suffering of their brethren in Europe would be alleviated; events and personalities conspired to frustrate many of those hopes.
BIBLIOGRAPHY
Manuscript Collections

(1) YIVO, New York City

A. American Jewish Congress Mss--This collection contains much material on the movement for a Jewish Congress. Letters, memoranda, pamphlets, and committee meeting minutes abound. An extremely useful source.

B. Jewish Congress Organization Committee Mss--This collection contains mostly pamphlets, newspaper clippings, and notices of meetings. While not overly abundant in scholarly material, it provides the researcher with a "feeling" of what the movement hoped to accomplish and a "flavor" of what the Jewish community in New York City was like in the years 1914-1917.

C. Horace M. Kallen Mss--A massive collection, also available on microfilm at the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati, Ohio, it contains the letters, memoranda, etc., of one of the leaders of the American Jewish Congress. An extremely valuable source for the researcher.

D. Joseph Tenenbaum Mss--This collection is of great value to the researcher in that it contains an immense amount of information on the Jewish boycott movement in the 1930's.

E. Isaac Hourwich Mss--The Hourwich papers contain some useful material on the early Jewish Congress movement.
F. World Jewish Congress Mss--This collection contains much material on the formation of the World Jewish Congress and its activities during World War Two. Much of the material found here can be obtained elsewhere.

G. William Edlin Mss--A small collection, it contains the papers, letters, minutes of meetings, and newspaper clippings about the American Jewish Congress.

(2) American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati

A. Stephen S. Wise Mss--This collection contains photostatic copies of letters written by and to Stephen Wise. For those interested in the Jewish Congress and the life of one of the great American rabbis, this collection is of inestimable value.

B. American Jewish Congress Mss--This collection is extremely small and was very disappointing. It contained little that could not be found elsewhere.

C. Samuel Untermeyer Mss--This collection contains a great deal on the Jewish boycott movement of the 1930's, and Untermeyer's leadership in that movement. It was extremely useful in depicting the clash between Untermeyer and Rabbi Stephen Wise.

D. Abraham H. Cohen Mss--A rather disappointing collection of pamphlets, newspaper clippings, and some magazine articles about the American Jewish Congress.

E. Henry Berkowitz Mss--An extremely useful collection in studying the anti-Zionists at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919.

F. David A. Brown Mss--This collection has much valuable material on the fight between the J.D.C. and the American Jewish Congress in the 1920's over the Crimean Colonization Project and relief activities in general. It also contains some material on the opposition to the World Jewish Congress movement.
G. David Philipson Mss--Philipson, an ardent assimilationist, opposed the creation of the American Jewish Congress. For those wishing to study the anti-Congress movement, Philipson's papers provide excellent source material.

H. Philip S. Bernstein Mss--This collection contains the correspondence of Rabbi Bernstein with Dr. Stephen S. Wise. Not very useful.

I. Joseph Barondess Mss--This collection was most disappointing. It contains some correspondence between Barondess and Dr. Wise, and a letter of resignation from the Jewish Congress by Barondess.

J. Non-Sectarian Anti-Nazi League-Jewish War Veterans of the United States--Contains some useful information on the beginnings of the Jewish boycott movement in the 1930's. Much of the material contained herein is old newspaper clippings, copies of the League's newsletters, and hundreds of letters of inquiry about the boycott.

K. Dickstein Committee Mss--The forerunner of the infamous House Committee on Un-American Activities, it contains very little useful information about the American Jewish Congress. Much of the material in the collection are examples of anti-Jewish propaganda.

L. Richard Gottheil Mss--This collection contains the correspondence of Professor Gottheil with Dr. Stephen S. Wise. Much of the correspondence deals with Zionist activities, although some material sheds light on the early American Jewish Congress movement.

M. Jesse G. M. Bullowa Mss--This collection contains very little information pertaining to the American Jewish Congress. It does, however, have some useful material on the American Jewish Conference and the World Jewish Congress.
N. Joseph Gootman Mss--A rather substantial collection, it contains some interesting material on the American Jewish Congress, particularly, literature put forth by the Jewish Congress. Gootman's letters to other Congress members do not add very much.

O. Jacob X. Cohen Mss--Much of the material contained herein deals with Cohen's work regarding social justice and discrimination in employment and education in New York City.

P. Max Heller Mss--This collection contains much information on the American Jewish Congress. A must for scholars.

Q. Boris Bogen Mss--This collection, like the David A. Brown Mss, contains much useful information on Jewish relief activities in the period 1919-1935. Like Brown, Bogen was very much opposed to American Jewish Congress attempts to influence Jewish relief activities.

R. Nathan Isaacs Mss--This collection contains some useful information on the fight for a World Jewish Congress. It also contains copies of reports, memoranda, and published reports of the World Jewish Congress.

(3) American Jewish Historical Society, Waltham, Mass.

A. American Jewish Congress Mss--This collection is the most important source of information on the American Jewish Congress. It contains all of the minutes of the Administrative Committee, the Executive Committee, and the Governing Council of the American Jewish Congress for the years 1922 to 1950. An invaluable source of information.

B. Stephen S. Wise Mss--This collection contains almost all of the letters, memoranda, and memorabilia of Rabbi Stephen S. Wise. An extremely important source of material pertaining to the American Jewish Congress.
(4) Jewish Theological Seminary, New York City

A. Bernard G. Richards Mss--The Richards Collection is rich in material dealing with all phases of Jewish Congress activities. Most valuable are nine folders of letters to and from Stephen Wise, three folders of letters to and from Judge Julian W. Mack, and numerous letters, telegrams, and other correspondence between Richards and important members of the Jewish Congress leadership. An extremely valuable source of materials.

(5) Zionist Archives and Library, New York City

A. American Jewish Congress Mss--This small collection contains some valuable material on the creation of the institute for Jewish Affairs. Other materials found herein are readily available in other manuscript collections.

(6) American Jewish Committee Library, New York City

A. American Jewish Committee Mss--The complete archives of the American Jewish Committee are contained herein. The collection contains material showing the interaction between the Committee and the Jewish Congress during the Hitler period. A magnificent collection of materials; an extremely invaluable source.

(7) Ruth Richards Eisenstein Private Collection, New York City

A. Archives of the Jewish Information Bureau Mss--This collection was assembled while Bernard G. Richards was affiliated with the Jewish Information Bureau. It contains letters and other correspondence of Richards with many leading figures in the Jewish Congress leadership, reports, committee meetings, newspaper clippings, and magazine articles. The most important documents concern a draft of a history of the American Jewish Congress written by Richards on the back of some used stationery. An extremely important source of materials.
(8) Columbia University

A. Bernard G. Richards Oral History Interview--In this interview Richards reviews events and personalities in Jewish life, the Zionist movement, and the American Jewish Congress.

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