

J. Katz

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JPFO STATEMENT ON THE SCOPE AND PURPOSE OF THE AMERICAN JEWISH CONFERENCE

February 17, 1947

Mr. Henry Monsky, President  
American Jewish Conference  
521 Fifth Avenue  
New York, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Monsky:

We feel it is incumbent upon all interested organizations and individuals to make their contributions to the formulation of such a vital statement as the purpose and scope of the future organization now being discussed by the American Jewish Conference. We therefore take this opportunity to address an open letter to the members of the Interim Committee giving our views on the purpose and scope of the new organization.

The American Jewish Conference, or the new organization whose founding it is now discussing, because it is the most inclusive and representative organization yet achieved in this country, possesses within itself the potentialities of prestige and leadership in Jewish life such as no other group can hope to achieve. If the organization will take a course which is in the interest of the Jewish people of the United States, as well as abroad, it will be in a position to wield great influence and to become the factor in the life of Jewry that it should be.

In light of its great importance we maintain that the statement of purpose and scope should clearly present to the Jewish people the approach of the Conference to the most burning problems affecting the Jews of the United States and to their deepest aspirations. While in its broad outlines the statement of purpose and scope is constructive, we feel that it does not touch upon the special problems of our people with enough force and concreteness. The suggestions we make in this Open Letter aim toward the improvement of the statement along these lines.

The purpose and scope should include the need of immediate struggle against economic discrimination, against the quota systems in educational and professional institutions, and for the passage of laws against anti-Semitism and racial discrimination on a national and state scale.

We believe that the purpose and scope should not fail to state that the new organization will combat anti-Semitism in whatever form it may appear. Anti-Semitism feeds fascism, and fascism breeds anti-Semitism. Is it possible for a representative body which is to be the spokesman for American Jewry, to fail to even mention the struggle against anti-Semitism and fascism in its programmatic declaration? Will the statement not be strengthened with a definite declaration of the organization's program against the plague of anti-Semitism, which threatens every Jewish home in the United States?



The purpose and scope should also state that it will be the purpose of the organization to help coordinate more speedily the relief work here and abroad in line with the needs and desires of the people for rebuilding the Jewish communities destroyed by fascism.

As far as Palestine is concerned, we believe that the purpose and scope should state that the prerequisite for the development of the Jewish Yishuv in Palestine is the abolition of the British mandate and the establishment of a United Nations trusteeship under the Big Three; and that the Jews and Arabs should be given the opportunity to develop a free and democratic Palestine where the full rights of both peoples are guaranteed.

We believe that only in an independent and democratic Palestine will the Jewish Yishuv be able to realize its right and aspiration for a national existence and to develop a Homeland for the Palestinian Jews on the basis of self-government.

We also believe that the purpose and scope should include a program for strengthening Jewish community life in the United States. This is necessary in order to preserve and build our Jewish culture in line with the historic traditions of the Jewish people everywhere, and to enhance the contributions of the Jewish people to the life of the American nation as a whole.

Lastly, we believe that the statement should declare that the organization shall be built on the broadest democratic basis and shall become a progressive factor in Jewish life. Upon this is predicated its ability to become the true spokesman of our people on all the issues and problems that confront them in our country.

Sincerely yours,

(signed) Albert E. Kahn, President

(signed) Rubin Saltzman, General Secretary

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