

INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS: JEWS & CHRISTIANS:
REPORT ON MEETING BETWEEN REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
SOCIETY OF JEWS & CHRISTIANS OF JOHANNESBURG
& CAPE TOWN.

CAPE TOWN, MONDAY, 12TH NOVEMBER, 1945.

A consultation between representatives of the three Societies of Jews & Christians in Johannesburg, Bloemfontein and Cape Town respectively was held at Cherry's Tearoom on Monday night, 12th November.

There were present from Johannesburg Dr. Rheinalt Jones (Chairman, Johannesburg Society), Rev. A. W. Eaton (Joint Hon. Secretary), and Mr. G. Saron (Executive Committee). Bishop Howe Brown from Hoemfontein was unable to attend. The Cape Town Society had extended an invitation to all members of the local Council of the Society and those present included Bishop Lavis, Rabbi Abrahams, Dr. Skaife, Rev. Sears, Mr. Ben Fine, Mr. and Mrs. P.M. Clouts, Mrs. Movsovic, Mr. Friedlander, Miss L. Guinsberg, Mr. Lyon.

BISHOP LAVIS was in the Chair and called upon Mr. Saron to outline the development to date in connection with the International Congress. Mr. Saron referred to the various memoranda and communications which had been received from the Rev. W. W. Simpson, General Secretary of the Council of Christians & Jews of Great Britain. He reported that letters had been sent to Rev. Simpson indicating South Africa's willingness to participate in the Congress and asking that we should be kept posted without delay regarding all further progress made on the subject of the scope of the various Commissions. It was also reported that a cable had been sent to England expressing the view that the scope of the Commissions as envisaged in the memoranda was too vague and doctrinaire and urging that the fight against anti-semitism should be considered more concretely in the light of existing conditions.

Mr. SARON said that the purpose of that evening's consultation was to take a step further in the South African preparations for the participation in the Congress. He thought that they should dealing with the following subjects:

(a) The Commission's decision as to which of the Commissions should be set up in South Africa and who should be responsible for preparing the necessary drafts. He felt that it was necessary to establish methods of co-ordination between various societies because of existing difficulties and suggested that the machinery should be very flexible, the work should as far as possible be divided and Johannesburg should be responsible for co-ordinating it.

(b) Appointments of Delegates. In his view it was too early to decide now on the personnel to be invited. They should aim at a balanced delegation and should draw in people not now active on the Society who had a contribution to make. Preference should be given to persons of standing who would be able to advance the work after they returned from the Congress.

(c) THE S.A. CONFERENCE. It was felt that the delegation which is sent would be fortified if after the delegates had been chosen a Conference of selected persons in South Africa were held at which the various memoranda of the Commissions could be discussed and criticised, and a general mandate given to the delegation.

(d) In general Saron felt that a local sub-committee should be appointed (with power to co-opt) which should co-operate with similar sub-committee in Johannesburg and Bloemfontein, Johannesburg being responsible for co-ordinating the work.

DR. RHEINALT JONES said that he felt very strongly that especially in the light of the problems in South Africa the scope of the Commissions outlined in Great Britain was too vague and doctrinaire, and that we should urge those responsible for the Congress Agenda to modify it. Moreover he felt that if we were to benefit from the Congress or to be able to contribute something to it we should concentrate on the specifically South African aspects. Among these the following should be

brought out:

- (1) Economic causes - how poor whiteism was attributed to Jewish and other sections.
- (2) Cultural aspect - the Afrikaans fear of foreign cultures.
- (3) Racial Propaganda, e.g. Prof. Cronje's recent book which expounded racial doctrines not easily discernible from those of the Nazi Rosenberg.
- (4) The foreignness of the Jews.
- (5) The growth of the idea that democratic principles are not applicable to South Africa.

Amongst some of the methods that should be used for checking anti-semitism Dr. Jones mentioned the following:

- (1) Publicising the real causes of the depressed condition of the poor whites.
- (2) Getting propaganda across to less educated sections.
- (3) How Groups are to be approached.
- (4) The training of speakers.
- (5) The organisation of research.
- (6) Should the main attack be by way of political action.

DR. SKAIFE said that he endorsed the general approach of Dr. Jones and especially his criticism of the present scope of the Commissions. He thought that there were three aspects upon which they should concentrate:

(1) They must avoid giving the impression that the Jews are the reclused in the dark and they are there to defend them.

(2) They must insist upon the fundamental part which education can and should play in combatting anti-semitism and all forms of racialism. Every racist was proof of the failure of the education system. Our education was largely factual, learning facts which are later forgotten. This was a wrong emphasis. It should be changed to the training of character, to the cultivation of the spirit of good citizenship and the cultivation of the innate goodness of the children's nature. Furthermore wrong facts were being taught, e.g. in our history text books which have spread racist propaganda. The task of the educationalist was to strengthen and polish the veneer of civilisation which had recently shown to be so dangerously thin.

(3) Discriminatory Immigration Laws. Here in South Africa there are a handful of white people crying out for immigrants yet in practice we have racial quotas. We should welcome every European immigrant provided he conforms to certain qualifications of character and economic usefulness.

MR. B. FINE said that he agreed that we should formulate the problems as they present themselves in South Africa and that a South African Conference should be held.

MISS L. GUINSBERG said one of the great weaknesses in the schools was that the human imagination was left dormant. Children were not encouraged to put themselves into the shoes of other people.

THE REV. A.W. EATON suggested that various persons should be entrusted with drafting memoranda on the main topics mentioned, e.g. the economic side (Mr. Jones), the political implications (Mr. Saron), Education (Dr. Skaife), the problem of foreignness (Mr. P. Clouts).

Suggested that the World Congress might constitute itself into a world organisation with branches in the various countries. He was not sanguine on long term educational programmes, but he thought something active could be done for instance if education text books were pruned and racial statements directed against any community were eliminated.

RABBI ABRAHAM'S said that he was gratified on the unanimity of view that the conference should be much more practical. He believed that unless the Commissions are radically altered a good deal of time would be wasted. It was most important that the Commissions should be right. He agreed that the work should be entrusted to sub-committees and recommended that when they met a cable should be sent to London putting forth our own proposals regarding the scope of the Commissions. He agreed with Mr. Saron's suggestion that we should aim at drawing in persons who could make special contributions even though they were not at present active in the Society. He thought that Adv. Gerald Gordon who had been an Information Officer should be invited. As to the preparation of South African material he agreed that in order to expedite things individuals should be asked to prepare drafts on definite subjects and these could later be considered by the sub-committees. He felt a South African Conference should be held but only after the main work of preparing the memoranda and reaching conclusions had been done. These could be submitted to the Conference for modification and endorsement.

Rabbi Abrahams then proceeded to outline his own proposals for the lines along which the Commission should work. They were:

- (1) Racialism (and anti-semitism) in the field of education.
- (2) Racialism with reference to economics.
- (3) Racialism with reference to politics (This would include the question of immigration).
- (4) Religion (how to overcome the beliefs that the differential attach to other religions and how to get respect for the faith of other people)
- (5) Culture - the fear of national cultural groups in regard to other cultures.
- (6) Method.

Under each of the previous headings it would be necessary to lay down the methods by which this could be promoted. In addition however there would be place for a separate consideration of those methods which did not fall under the above, e.g. the establishment of an international organisation which would spread literature co-ordinate what was being done in other countries. Mr. Saron said that another topic about which Rabbi Abrahams had spoken to him could be added, viz. the study of the question of legislation against group libel - where the line was to be drawn against liberty and licence.

Rev. Eaton said that he welcomed the idea of a Commission dealing with religion. The religious differences between Jews & Christians must not be overlooked, and some Churches found it difficult to reconcile them. He believed that a lead should be given.

The meeting resolved that a cable should be sent overseas suggesting Commissions along the lines outlined by Rabbi Abrahams. It further resolved that this matter and others apertaining to South African preparations for the Conference and other local matters should be left to a sub-committee which would collaborate.

It was also agreed that Mr. Gerald Gordon should be invited to join a sub-committee.

The meeting of the subcommittee was called for 5.30 the next day.

The meeting terminated at 9.45 p.m.

CHRISTIANS AND JEWS WORLD CONFERENCE

Correspondence has recently been received from the Rev. W.W. Simpson, M.A., General Secretary, Council of Christians and Jews of Great Britain, in regard to a proposal for the holding of a world conference of Christians and Jews in July or August 1946.

In a letter dated the 18th July, 1945, addressed to the Hon. Secretary, the Society of Jews and Christians, Johannesburg, the Rev. Simpson writes :-

"Some months ago we received a communication from Dr. Clinchy, President of the National Conference of Christians and Jews in the United States, suggesting that it would be a very desirable thing to hold an International Conference of Christians and Jews at as early a date as the world situation made possible. This proposal, together with certain suggestions as to the matters to be dealt with in such a Conference, was carefully considered by the Executive Committee of this Council and approved in principle.

Subsequent discussions with representatives of the National Conference, both by correspondence and by personal contact, have led to the further elaboration of the proposal along the lines laid down in the enclosed memorandum, (copy of the enclosure is annexed hereto, entitled MEMORANDUM A) which was formally adopted by this Council's Executive Committee at a meeting held on June 5th.

Briefly, the proposal is that there should take place in this country "in July or August 1946 a Conference of up to 200 persons representative of the Jewish and Christian communities of the world to consider the responsibilities of those two communities as religious forces in the world situation consequent on the Nazi attack on civilisation. The issues to which this would appear to give rise are briefly indicated in the memorandum.

At a meeting held a few days ago, at which we had the advantage of the presence of Dr. Frank Aydelotte, Director of the Institute of Advanced Studies at Princeton University and Sub-Chairman of the Committee recently set up by the National Conference of Christians and Jews to consider plans for the Conference, it was agreed that I should write to you at once to ask you to be good enough to lay this matter before your colleagues and to invite your co-operation both in the work of the preliminary commissions and of the Conference itself. May I say at once that so far as the financial aspect of the project is concerned, our friends in America feel that it would be appropriate in view of the burden carried by Britain and other European countries during the War, if funds to cover the total cost of the Conference (including all travelling and hospitality expenses) could be raised in the United States. Although Dr. Aydelotte was not in a position to give any guarantee, he hoped that this might be possible.

The question of representation is not easy to determine and only the most tentative proposals have so far been made. These are based on the assumption that the Conference will be composed of 200 delegates and provide for 60 each from the United Kingdom and the United States of America, 45 from the continent of Europe (to be invited in their individual capacity) 10 from your own Society, 10 from the Canadian Conference of Christians and Jews and 5 from the Council of Christians and Jews in Australia.

Would you be good enough to let me know at the earliest possible date what are your reactions to these proposals,

(1)
whether..

"whether you consider the proposed allocation of places to your own organisation adequate and whether we may count on your full co-operation".

In a subsequent letter dated August 2nd 1945, the Rev. Simpson writes :-

"Further to my letter of July 18th., about the proposed World Conference of Christians and Jews, I am enclosing a memorandum (this is MEMORANDUM B annexed hereto) outlining the procedure which it is suggested should be adopted in the setting up of preparatory Commissions for the Conference.

Although there has not yet been time for a reply to my earlier letter to reach this country, I am sending this right away in the hope that your Committee will feel able to co-operate in the holding of the Conference, and because it is of the greatest importance that there should be as little delay as possible in getting the Commission work started.

It has been suggested that a joint Secretariat should be set up for the purpose of organising the Conference and I have been asked to act as the British Secretary. A representative of the National Conference of Christians and Jews in the United States will be appointed to work with me, and it is hoped that he will be able to come over to this country in the early autumn. For the time being, therefore, I should be grateful if you would address any correspondence connected with the Conference to me at 21, Bloomsbury Street, London, W.C.1".

11. 9. 45

MEMORANDUM A

A

Tentative Proposals agreed by the Executive of the British Council of Christians and Jews at its meeting on June 5th. 1945, for submission to the National Conference of Christians and Jews of America.

- I. GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE CONFERENCE
- II. SUGGESTED COMMISSION SUBJECTS
- III. LATER PREPARATORY STAGES AND NATURE OF FINAL REPORTS
- IV. CONFERENCE TIME TABLE AND PROCEDURE

I. GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE CONFERENCE1. Date and Place.

There would seem to be a consensus of opinion for the holding of the Conference in London at some date in the Summer of 1946.

2. Countries to be represented.

Whilst the primary responsibility for the Conference would rest with the American and British Council of Christians and Jews, the co-operation of every other known Council of Christians and Jews would be sought and delegations invited from the largest possible number of countries.

3. Size and Composition of the Conference.

The figure of 200 has been named in America and accepted in London as a suitable number of delegates - subject to such modifications as may be found desirable on a closer examination of the elements needing representation. Emphasis has been laid upon the importance of the conference being largely composed of laymen and of its including both young men and women and men and women who are already eminent in public life. The importance of the youth element in the Conference, both as contributors to its thought and as spokesmen from the Conference to their own generation, has been strongly expressed in the British Council.

4. Length and Language.

The proposals which follow provide for two weeks of Conference, the first week being of a preparatory nature which might not require the attendance of all the official delegates. The object of the first week would be to prepare reports in which the findings of the preparatory commissions it is proposed to set up in each co-operating country are brought together and unified for submission to the full Conference of the second week. This allocation of time is based on the hope that the Conference will be carried in the one language (English), with provision for those who would be helped by translations to be grouped according to their language preference, with interpreters assisting them as the Conference proceeds. (The method is a well-tried one by similar conferences of an international character)

5. Proposed method of determining the programme and plan of the Conference.

The British Council submits the following sketch to the American Council and asks that the American Council will discuss it in all its aspects - both as to the range and definition of the subjects suggested for discussion and as to the procedures proposed for dealing with these subjects at the Conference and in the intervening year - and that they will send representatives to London in the September of 1945 with authority to discuss

all..

all these matters with the Executive of the British Council and to arrive at a definite plan.

6. Action between now and September

Meantime the British Council will enlarge its Research Committee so that it may be adequately representative of the lay interests involved in the Conference subjects, and will instruct it to examine the proposed subjects in rather greater detail to satisfy themselves that they are rightly analysed and well-calculated to yield important practical results. This is with a view to satisfactory decision of 7(a) which follows.

7. Action proposed to be taken in September

(a) Agreement to be reached regarding the programme and composition of the Conference; and the invitation to the other Councils to co-operate.

(b) The finalised programme thus reached to be sent to the Councils of Christians and Jews in South Africa and Canada and Australia with invitations to co-operate in the Conference and at once to constitute commissions and set them to work preparing sectional reports on any or all of the selected subjects.

(c) Similar requests to be presented to the British and American Councils.

(d) A provisional Council of Jews and Christians from European countries to be set up in London to secure preliminary contributions from the countries which they represent and advise as to the ways in which they shall participate in the Conference itself.

(e) Allocation of places at the Conference to the co-operating Councils and countries and preparation of suggestions regarding the composition of their delegations.

(f) Allocation of responsibility for all preparatory work.

II. SUGGESTED COMMISSION SUBJECTS

N.B. It is essential to recognise at the outset that, as the co-operation of Christians and Jews often ultimately involves questions of ethical and religious principles, they will approach their common problems with due regard to their own theological convictions. Accordingly in some aspects of their common purpose and tasks they will be able to agree up to a certain point, beyond which they may feel bound to differ. In all such cases it is held to be desirable and valuable to give full expression to the principles that are common to both faiths while clearly recognising the religious and theological differences which divide them. This point is felt by the British Council to be one of such vital importance that a correspondence on the subject between the late Archbishop Temple and the Chief Rabbi is appended to this document. (see page 10)

A. Fundamental Opposition of Christianity and Judaism to the Nazi Way of Life

Ethical principles common to the Christian and the Jewish faiths which have been violated by the Nazis. These include the recognition of fundamental value in every individual human being and of the need to express that sense of value in all the relationships in which men stand to one another in their social institutions, beginning from the family, and extending outward to every other realm, industrial, social or political.

../They..

They are to be examined in no abstract fashion, but in explicit relation to the Nazi practices which flout them. This is to give practical point and definite limit to the discussions of the Conference.

The elements common to these two faiths which give force to their opposition to the Nazi way of life. These are thought to merit very careful elaboration, having full regard to the caveat expressed at the head of this section.

B. The Tasks which confront the Conference

Good customs and institutions which have been overthrown in Europe. The structures which have taken their place. The wrong habits of mind thus induced. The false doctrines on which these wrong practices rest. The perversion of youth by which these results have been secured. A diagnosis based upon vivid documents from different parts of Europe. These to be gradually reduced by the Conference to more generalised form, so that they can provide a well-defined starting point for the constructive tasks with which the Conference is most concerned.

It is to be recognised that some of these wrong principles were already operative both in Germany and in other countries before the war, and that in the exigencies of war-time these false trends of thought and practice have further infected the world. To the extent that this is the case we may lack the insight and determination needed to eliminate Nazi practice. On the other hand, the poisonous and destructive nature of these evil principles has been so terribly demonstrated that it should be possible to arouse the spirit of practical determination to curb their operation effectively if not actually to eradicate them now.

The Method of the Commissions. The four commissions which follow deal with four special aspects of the constructive task with which the Conference is concerned. In each case, the examination involves the definition of the precise objectives which have to be sought in that field together with the various means by which they have to be sought. These means will include the following types :

Wrong customs and attitudes, either in private or public life, which it is necessary to repudiate.

Steps to secure their repudiation in public life by pressure upon governments and other organs of power in the community, whether by private representation or by public propaganda.

Steps to secure their eradication from our own borders. This will involve educational activity for each of us directed to the reassertion of our fundamental principles and a demand for the renewed acceptance of the appropriate norms of conduct by our individual members and congregations in better accord with them.

The responsibilities thus resting upon different sections of our membership - youth, women, clergy and ministers, laymen in public life, etc. (It will be important to see that all these elements are represented on the Commissions)

The opportunity for co-operation between the two faiths in dealing with these matters and the scope of that co-operation.

C. The Implications of Religious Freedom.

Freedom of worship and teaching for all religious bodies, including specifically the training of their own children. This

to be subject to the requirement that these freedoms are not practised in a way which is subversive of the equal rights of others and the maintenance of public order (a condition - quite compatible with religious freedom if public order is itself founded on righteousness).

The obstacles in the way of these concessions by governments. The limitations which religious bodies should accept and the ways in which they can make their activities positively contributive to public right.

The responsibilities toward the community which religious freedom involves.

The civil rights to which Church and Synagogue should lay claim for every man and woman, including the full privileges of citizenship without any discrimination on racial or religious grounds.

D. Social and Religious Co-operation in a diversified Community

The nature of the common ethos essential to social harmony.

The need for the exposure of suppressed antagonism, suspicions and fears.

The nature and method of the contribution of religion to that end.

The co-operation of the religious forces of a country necessary for the task.

The particular contribution which Jews and Christians can make in view of their common heritage of Scripture.

E. The Claims of Justice

What a civilised community owes to its members and what they owe to the community. Justice requires that every human being should as far as attainable be secure in certain elementary rights of life and opportunity. This includes the opportunity of self-fulfilment through suitable means to education, health and leisure.

Justice in its most restricted sense requires that the essential skeleton of all these human rights should be guaranteed in law or else they will not be honoured either in word or in deed. In the larger sense which the religious man must attach to the word, justice calls for a continuous effort to raise the standard of legal justice and enrich and fortify it by social practices which go beyond it. (The richer scriptural concept of righteousness).

In many countries the principle of justice has been well hammered out in the political and juridical fields. The standards in this field have been clearly defined in the past, though they need now to be re-covered in practice. By general consent, however, the field in which the standards of justice most need definition is the economic field, with which the main group of Commission E will be concerned.

The responsibility of the community to provide for all its citizens (on the condition of their playing their part in the common life) with the necessary material basis for a responsible personal family life expressed in terms of minimum standards of housing, income security, health services etc. How this principle stands related to the exigencies of the time in devastated countries and dislocated world trade. How it stands

related..

related to the motive of personal co-operation in the total life of the community.

Means to the elimination of practices which have grown up in an age of industrial tension in which the idea of justice in the regulation of industrial life was at least in doubt - practices of pilfering, malingering, cheating and evasion of mutual responsibility for honest co-operation.

F. Fidelity as the foundation of Public Life

This in the first place involves the rehabilitation of the principle of truthfulness in political propaganda, in every grade of adult or juvenile education and in all the agencies for the formation of public opinion, and the outlawing of every form of deliberate misrepresentation.

In the second place it requires the recovery or first attainment of habits of trustfulness and qualities of trustworthiness as between nations and parties which have been hostile to one another or at least unreliable in their mutual relations.

This must include a reference to the problems of punishment and retribution, and the part of religion in exercising a moderated if not a reconciling spirit, based on the principles of mutual recognition if not of mercy and forgiveness.

The general responsibility of religious communities for the strengthening of moral standards in every kind of social relationship. Means to the evocation of the right social motives and character in the public generally and especially in the training of youth.

III. LATER PREPARATORY STAGES AND NATURE OF FINAL REPORTS

1. Sectional reports from each participating Council of Christians and Jews (and supplementary studies of local situations, in appropriate instances, from European countries where there is no Council of Christians and Jews) to be received in London in final form at least six weeks before the holding of the Conference (or three weeks if sent in the necessary quantities) in order that they may be available in duplicate for all delegates on their arrival in Britain any time in the week previous to the week of Commission meetings.

2. Officers of the Commissions. The officers of the national or regional commissions concerned with any subject will together form a steering committee for the international commission dealing with that subject during the first week of Conference. From them will be chosen the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of these Commissions - with a due allocation of chairmanships to the different countries and regions represented in the Conference.

3. Nature of the Commission Reports to be prepared in the first week of Conference.

These reports to be in two sections, namely, a longer section in which each Commission surveys its whole subject and argues its conclusions, and a shorter section presenting the conclusions which it invites the full Conference to endorse.

4. Procedure in full Conference. The Conference would be asked to receive each report as a whole, to endorse or revise the specific recommendations made in its concluding shorter section, and to authorise the publication of the longer section with such adjustments as are called for in the course of the debate.

IV. SUGGESTED CONFERENCE TIME TABLE

Hours of meeting: It is assumed that there will normally be two major sessions each day from say 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., and 4 p.m. to 7 p.m., leaving opportunity for the intermediate work of sectional meetings, drafting, copying and redrafting of documents. (Monday, an Afternoon session only and Friday a morning session only).

FIRST WEEK

For members of the commissions (which would be composed of well-balanced contingents from Europe, America, the Near East, Britain and other parts of the British Commonwealth in which there is a Jewish population).

Monday afternoon and all Tuesday: A plenary session of all the commissions meeting jointly.

Wednesday, Thursday and Friday morning: Meetings of the commissions, meeting separately and concurrently.

Monday afternoon: Subject A. Introduced by speakers from each Council which has presented a sectional report (see items 7(b) and 7(d) in I). 15 - 20 minutes for each opening speaker.

Tuesday morning: Subject B. Introduced by speakers from each European country or region which has presented a report. 15 - 20 minutes for each opening speaker.

Tuesday afternoon: The Constructive Tasks of the Conference. Introduced by a speech by the Chairman or one of the vice-Chairmen of each of the six commissions, each describing the problems and aims of his own commission. Six speeches of 10 to 15 minutes each, followed by discussion directed to bring out the relation between them and demark their boundaries. Summed up by the Chairman of the whole Conference.

Wednesday, Thursday: Simultaneous session of the Commissions A to F.

Thursday evening: A meeting of the Youth representatives from all the commissions to draw together their common conclusions. Similar meetings for other cross sections of the Conference if so desired.

Friday morning: (Continuing into the early afternoon if necessary), each commission completes its report, if that has not been done already.

SECOND WEEK

The same times of meeting, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Monday afternoon: Public Reception and Addresses of Welcome. Short session to determine procedure and constitute the Conference.

Tuesday morning: Report of Commission A. Moved and seconded by its appointed representatives in speeches aggregating 20 - 25 minutes.

Tuesday afternoon: Report of Commission B similarly introduced.

Wednesday: Commission C and D.

Thursday: Commission E and F.

Each session on Wednesday and Thursday to be preceded by a short address on some major principle common to Christian and Jewish thought.

Friday: 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., with continuation until 4.30 p.m. if necessary: Review the conclusions reached in earlier sessions and adopt a general statement submitted by the officers of the commissions jointly and remit responsibility for the detailed revisions of the reports on lines consequential on the agreements reached in full Conference.

N.B.

Services for worship will doubtless form an important element in the Conference, but as these cannot be united activities, there is no set provision made for them on the above timetable. The Sabbath days between the two weeks of Conference and the unoccupied hours each morning and evening of the Conference days will afford ample opportunity for these services to be arranged in due course.

11. 9. 45

9

MEMORANDUM B.

PROPOSED WORLD CONFERENCE OF CHRISTIANS AND JEWS

SUMMER 1946.

(B)

WORK OF COMMISSIONS

The suggestions contained in this memorandum are based mainly upon discussions between the Executive Committee of the Council of Christians and Jews (Great Britain) and Dr. Frank Aydelotte (Director of the Institute of Advanced Studies, Princeton University) recently in Great Britain as representative of the National Conference of Christians and Jews (U.S.A.), and upon more detailed discussions between Dr. Aydelotte and the Rev. Malcolm Spencer (Great Britain), who will be heading up the Commission work in preparation for the Conference.

(1) The Scope of Commission Work

Each country sending representatives to the Conference is invited to form a Commission on each of the six subjects set out in the Draft Programme under the letters A to F, with the exception of B, the subject matter of which will grow out of the work of the other Commissions.

Some countries may prefer to concentrate upon a few of the Commission subjects. It is hoped, however, that every country will take up subjects D and F, which may be expected to yield quite fresh results from study by joint groups of Christians and Jews.

In contrast with subjects D and F, in which the Conference breaks somewhat new ground, Commissions C and E deal with subjects on which in some countries organised groups may be already at work in both Christian and Jewish communities. There are in any case recognised experts in these matters and it is suggested that the task of Commissions dealing with C and E, is rather to draw on work already done than to duplicate it.

Whilst the Commissions will take note of any Christian or Jewish pronouncement that there is on their subjects, they will not be limited to that kind of material, but will on the contrary, draw on the best available minds to be found in either Christian or Jewish circles in the hope of breaking fresh ground in their work and giving the public a new lead.

(2) The General Structure of each Commission

It is suggested that each Commission should include at least the following three elements:

(a) A small nucleus including the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, who it is hoped will be able eventually to attend the Conference itself.

(b) A larger element of persons not in the first instance to be invited as members of the Conference, though this need not necessarily preclude their receiving an invitation at a later stage in consequence of their work on the Commissions.

(c) Individuals or groups who contribute to the work of the Commission though not members of it. Under this heading it is suggested that already existing groups of Christians and Jews in various localities may render particularly valuable assistance in connection with subjects D and F. It will be noticed that whereas one Commission will need chiefly the help of people versed in social philosophy or theology, another will depend on contributions of men in the business

(11)

world....

Memorandum B.
contd.

world or in the political world, while others will be of wider interest to all concerned with the forming of public opinion through the Press and public education.

(3) Procedure of the Groups up to the end of 1945.

It is suggested that the Chairman of each Commission (perhaps after consultation with his Vice-Chairman or even with the nucleus of his Commission) should prepare a statement to serve as the basis for his Commission's work. In this connection the following points should be carefully noted:

(a) Any such statement should indicate what the Chairman regards as the chief factors of the problem assigned to him, together with some suggestions as to directions in which clues may be sought for the solution of the problem.

(b) In some cases the Chairman may feel the need for some historical survey or philosophical pronouncements to serve as a basis for the constructive work of his Commission. In this connection it is possible that such a survey or pronouncement might be prepared centrally for use by all the Commissions.

(c) These initial statements by Commission Chairmen should reach the Conference Office in London as early as possible and in any case not later than mid-December. By that date the American Secretary of the Conference is expected to be in London and it will then be possible for a joint survey of the progress of the Commission work to be made. This may result in the supplementing of the earlier statements of the ground to be covered by the Conference or it might lead to concentration upon particular aspects of a subject in preference to others. In any case it is proposed to use the report as received as the basis for a further communication to co-operating countries regarding the scope of the work to be done.

(4) Procedure in 1946

It is suggested that the Commission work should be done between January and March or January and May, according to the convenience of each country and time required for communicating the results of each country's work so that it may reach London by the middle of June.

(5) Scale of Commission Reports

In the main it is recommended that reports intended for circulation to all delegates to the Conference should be reasonably compact. That will make their comparison and collations easier and will avoid putting too great a burden upon Conference members at the last moment.

On the other hand fuller supporting material on a larger scale will be of great value to those who form the Steering Committee of each Commission at the time of the Conference itself and copies will be made available for any members of the Conference who wish to follow up in greater detail, a matter that has interested them particularly.

It is intended that a Commission which makes use of contributory groups and persons in the course of its work, will incorporate their contributions in the one report which it forms for the use of delegates to the Conference. This does not of course preclude the possibility of incorporating some of this contributed material in supplementary statements.

(6) Commission Secretary

It is suggested that in each country there should be some one person who acts as General Secretary or co-ordinator for Commission work done in his own country. This should simplify communications.

11. 9. 45.

CONFIDENTIAL

REPORT ON A SURVEY OF ANTI-SEMITISM
IN SOUTH AFRICA

This survey had a two-fold objective: a) to assess the nature and extent of anti-semitism in South Africa and b) to gauge the reaction of liberals to anti-semitism.

The survey was conducted under the auspices of the Department of Psychology of the Witwatersrand University, and in planning it the investigator had the benefit of the advice of Professor I.D. MacCrone, of the Department of Psychology, and of Professor J.L. Gray, of the Department of Social Studies.

A. PROCEDURE

The following institutional sectors of South African society were chosen - the Universities, the Press, Trade Unions, the Army, the Church and the Political sector. In each sector a number of key informants were selected - men and women who were strategically situated, in the sense that they had their fingers on the pulse of public opinion in the circles with which they were associated. Among the informants were both English and Afrikaans speaking persons, anti-semites as well as liberals.

The investigator then proceeded to interview the informants. There were some doubts at the outset as to whether the informants would speak freely to an interviewer who was Jewish. But these doubts were soon dissipated. The co-operation extended by informants exceeded all anticipations. Of the 112 men and women approached for interviews only two did not grant the interviews requested. There were some informants who were more reserved than others, but on the whole they spoke frankly and freely. This applied to anti-semites as well as liberals.

The/...

The interviewer had in mind certain key questions on which he required information but the interview itself was never allowed to develop into a rigid interrogation. It took the form of an informal chat and the questions upon which specific information was required were slipped in as the conversation developed.

The informants were assured that their opinions would remain anonymous. No notes were taken during the interview. But when it was completed the investigator drew up a brief memorandum incorporating the essential information. The name of the informant was not attached to such memorandum and precautions were taken that his identity should not emerge.

The average length of an interview was an hour. With a number of informants it lasted much longer; with others less than that period. From a number of informants requests came for the investigator to act as an informant to them on the Jewish issue. (They were particularly interested in a previous investigation he had carried out on the reaction of Jews to anti-semitism.) To this request the interviewer acceded. He then met his informants a second, a third, even a fourth and fifth time. With a number of such informants, indeed, a relationship of friendship and mutual confidence was established and they did everything in their power to assist the investigation.

A systematic survey was made of four of the sectors - the Universities (Witwatersrand and Pretoria), the Press, the Trade Unions and the Army. In the University sector professors and lecturers were interviewed; in the Press sector, newspaper editors and other journalists; in the Trade Unions, Trade Union leaders; in the Army sector, mainly Education Officers. The survey in the political sector was not fully completed - the informants were mainly United Party parliamentarians and organisers. Time also did not allow for a full survey of the

Church/...

Collection Number: AD1715

SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTE OF RACE RELATIONS (SAIRR), 1892-1974

PUBLISHER:

Collection Funder:- Atlantic Philanthropies Foundation

Publisher:- Historical Papers Research Archive

Location:- Johannesburg

©2013

LEGAL NOTICES:

Copyright Notice: All materials on the Historical Papers website are protected by South African copyright law and may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, displayed, or otherwise published in any format, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

Disclaimer and Terms of Use: Provided that you maintain all copyright and other notices contained therein, you may download material (one machine readable copy and one print copy per page) for your personal and/or educational non-commercial use only.

People using these records relating to the archives of Historical Papers, The Library, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, are reminded that such records sometimes contain material which is uncorroborated, inaccurate, distorted or untrue. While these digital records are true facsimiles of paper documents and the information contained herein is obtained from sources believed to be accurate and reliable, Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand has not independently verified their content. Consequently, the University is not responsible for any errors or omissions and excludes any and all liability for any errors in or omissions from the information on the website or any related information on third party websites accessible from this website.

This document forms part of the archive of the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR), held at the Historical Papers Research Archive at The University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.