

# HENRY MONSKY IN ACTION IN SAN FRANCISCO

Aside from the war itself, the United Nations Conference at San Francisco is the best-covered event of our times. Even its Jewish angles are being covered by the daily press. We therefore assigned Bernard Postal, Director of the B'nai B'rith Information Department, to send us an exclusive report of special interest to B'nai B'rith. It was, of course, written long before the Conference was scheduled to end. Later developments will be published in our next issue.—*Editor.*

**By Bernard Postal**

SAN FRANCISCO

**T**HE MAN whose vision and initiative resulted in the creation of the American Jewish Conference more than two years ago, as the authorized spokesman of American Jewry before the nations of the world when they gathered to bind up the wounds of war and to build the post-war world, now sees the fruits of his labor at the United Nations Conference on International Organization.

From the day of his arrival in San Francisco on April 22 as the American Jewish Conference's official consultant to the American delegation, Henry Monsky, President of B'nai B'rith, has been engaged in planning and developing the program of action by a united Jewish front representing the American Jewish Conference, the Jewish Agency for Palestine, the Board of Deputies of British Jews, the Canadian Jewish Congress, the World Jewish Congress, and the DAIA, which speaks for Argentine Jewry.

This program has two objectives: first, to make those in positions of authority in all the delegations—but more particularly the American delegation—aware of the Jewish position in the world today; and secondly, to relate that position to the agenda of the United Nations Conference.

Mr. Monsky quickly ascertained that Palestine, as such, would not come before the San Francisco Conference.

Specific territorial questions were not on the agenda, which is limited to the task of creating the organic and basic law for the new international security organization. Territorial questions are being left for decision by the peace conference. Under such circumstances it would have been futile to press upon the delegates the entire program to which the American Jewish Conference and its associated bodies are committed.

The strategy developed was designed to concentrate all efforts on seeing to it that nothing should be done by the United Nations Conference that would prejudice existing or future rights of the Jewish people with regard to Palestine, and on pressing for amendments to the Dumbarton Oaks proposals that would assure mandatory observance of human rights by member states of the new world organization.

This program as of May 7th was being carried forward on three fronts:

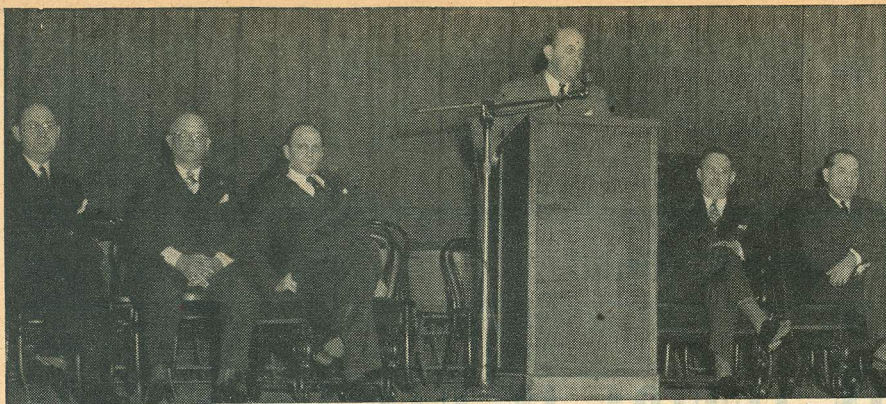


One of the daily sessions of the United Jewish Front at San Francisco. L. to r.: Maurice Bisgyer, Secretary of B'nai B'rith; Dr. Stephen S. Wise, representing the Jewish Agency; I. L. Kenen (behind Dr. Wise), executive director of the American Jewish Conference; Herman Shulman of the Conference; Louis Lipsky, executive committee chairman and Interim Committee co-chairman of the A. J. Conference; Henry Monsky, President of B'nai B'rith, consultant to the American delegation, and co-chairman of the A. J. Conference's Interim Committee, who presided; Dr. Nahum Goldmann, representing the World Jewish Congress; David Crossman, representing DAIA of Argentina; and Samuel Bronfman, president of the Canadian Jewish Congress.

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Soon after the opening of the United Nations Conference in San Francisco, the B'nai B'rith lodges of the Bay Area held a mass meeting addressed by President Henry Monsky. On the speakers' platform (above), l. to r.: Rabbi Morris Goldstein, Harry K. Wolff, Vice President of B'nai B'rith; Maurice Bisgyer, Secretary of B'nai B'rith; David Coleman, incoming president of District No. 4; Oscar Mathews, retiring District president; and President Henry Monsky.

▼ Conversations with experts and technical advisers attached to the American delegation were held to stress that safeguards to protect the existing rights of the Jewish people with respect to Palestine must be established in any mandates system or trusteeships plan to be created by the world security organization, and those instrumentalities must be created which will enable the implementation of those rights.

▼ Members of the American delegation and leaders of several of the important foreign delegations were contacted in a series of interviews.

▼ Regular meetings which members of the American delegation held with the consultants were utilized to press the same position. Mr. Monsky, on behalf of the American Jewish Conference, joined with 20 other consultants representing various civic, educational, religious and other groups in advancing proposals which led the American delegation to amend its own proposals so as to provide for the inclusion in the international charter being framed here of a bill of human rights which would be mandatory upon all member states.

This direct phase of the program carried on here was paralleled by an important public relations policy. The principle of safeguarding existing rights was first enunciated by Mr. Monsky at a public meeting sponsored by the Bay Area B'nai B'rith Council. This was followed by the publication of a 10-point program, summarizing the position of the American Jewish Conference. A joint memorandum, in the name of the Conference, the World Jewish Congress, and the Board of Deputies of British Jews, was subsequently made public. This, in turn, was followed by the release of the Jewish Agency's memorandum.

Before the American, British, and Australian proposals with regard to trusteeships and mandates were made public, Mr. Monsky and his associates had already placed the Jewish case before Secretary of State Stettinius and Commander Stassen in two separate memoranda.

The memorandum to Secretary Stettinius, to which the signatories were Mr. Monsky and his fellow co-chairmen of

the American Jewish Conference's Interim Committee, Louis Lipsky and Dr. Israel Goldstein, emphasized these points:

▼ That in any formula which the American delegation may propose, any plan for an international trusteeship in succession to the existing mandates system of the League of Nations be sufficiently flexible and broad in scope to permit within its framework of the solution of the Palestine problem in accordance with the underlying intent and purpose of the Balfour Declaration and the Palestine Mandate.

▼ That nothing should be included which would be inconsistent with or prejudicial to the special rights of the Jewish people under the Balfour Declaration and the Palestine Mandate, and all such rights shall be expressly reserved and safeguarded.

The position stated in this memorandum, submitted on April 30th, was endorsed by the American Jewish Committee. In a letter dated May 4th, its president, Judge Joseph M. Proskauer, wrote to Secretary Stettinius as follows:

"I have been favored with a copy of the letter of April 30th, 1945, addressed to you by the co-chairman of the Interim Committee of the American Jewish Conference on the subject of Palestine. The position of the American Jewish Committee about the final solu-

tion of the Palestine problem has been stated in our memorandum already filed with you. Nevertheless, regardless of our general position as there stated, we are glad to express our accord with the request of the Interim Committee that it be made affirmatively clear that no action of the San Francisco Conference would work to the prejudice of existing rights of the Jews in respect to Palestine or to the prejudice of existing rights of Jews to immigrate into Palestine."

Subsequently, the Jewish Labor Committee made a similar endorsement, thus further emphasizing the degree of Jewish unity that existed at San Francisco.

Meanwhile, Mr. Monsky was presiding and directing the daily—and often more frequent—sessions of the united Jewish front, which he had helped bring into being, after months of negotiation, in keeping with B'nai B'rith's tradition of furthering Jewish unity. He also presided at two press conferences, one for the Jewish press, and the other for the press of the world, at which the position of the American Jewish Conference and its associated groups was emphasized. (See page 298).

After the publication of the American, British and Australian proposals on trusteeships and mandates, meetings and discussions were held with a view to prevailing upon the American and British delegations to amend those proposals in order to bring them more into harmony with the recommendations of the Jewish groups. Carefully worked-out amendments to those proposals were in process of preparation for presentation to the American delegation and the United Nations Conference commission charged with the responsibility of formulating the final trusteeship plans.

Maurice Bisgyer, Secretary of B'nai B'rith, who is a member of the executive committee of the American Jewish Conference's Interim Committee, served for more than three weeks as the chief liaison officer between the united Jewish groups and leading United Nations Conference personalities. He was responsible for arranging fifteen important appointments between those personalities and delegations of the united Jewish groups. The writer served on the public relations committee of the united Jewish groups.



Henry Monsky, President of B'nai B'rith (standing, center) presents the case of the United Jewish Representation at a conference of all the consultants to the American delegation at UNCIO. Commdr. Harold Stassen, of the American delegation, is standing at left.