

SD on the Outcome of the Evian Conference Report of SD

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Re: Refugee Conference at Evian Report

General

As stated in a previous report regarding the conference at Evian, approximately thirty countries participated in the meeting. Absent, besides Germany and Italy, were Japan, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union. Poland and Rumania were not invited but sent observers. The conference opened, as planned, on 6 July. The chairman was the delegate of the President of the United States, former president of United States Steel Corporation, Myron C. Taylor; his co-chairmen were British Cabinet member Lord Winterton and Senator Henri Berenger, chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the French Senate. The principle of limiting the conference to a mere deliberation between governments was maintained. The representatives of German and Austrian Jewry, as well as the other delegates of private Jewish emigration organisations, were invited to appear before the heads of the delegations. According to the Jewish representatives from Austria, the following Jewish organisations were represented in Evian: the American Joint Distribution Committee, the Council for German Jewry, Ica, Hicem and the Jewish Agency. Like the Jews from Germany and Austria, they each submitted a memorandum with the propositions of each organisation for a solution of the Jewish problem. The League of Nations was represented by the General Secretary and the president of its Labour Commission... The position of the Conference regarding Germany was determined before the opening of the meetings by a statement by deputy Foreign Minister von Weizsaecker to the British ambassador in Berlin. To the latter's inquiry whether the government of the Reich would be willing to consider co-operation in the transfer of Jewish capital, von Weizsaecker responded, according to memorandum AA 83/29 8/7 of 8 July 1938, that he had to completely reject any collaboration with other interested countries in matters of the German Jewish question. This issue was an internal German problem and was not negotiable. As to the question whether Germany could ease the

conditions of transfer of Jewish capital - the answer had to be negative, as Germany could not be demanded to permit a transfer of its capital, accumulated by the Jews, especially after the war. German collaboration with the powers convening at Evian was therefore out of the question. In discussions with the Jewish aid organisations, they demanded that some concrete agreements on easing immigration conditions had to be reached, beyond the general declarations made by the different government delegates. The discussions focused primarily on measures for increased preparations for emigration, especially vocational restructuring and training for agriculture and crafts. In addition, questions of financing the emigration of Jews from Germany and creating possibilities for transfer of capital were discussed. The American delegates expressed their interest in establishing an intergovernmental committee that would conduct the necessary negotiations between the countries of origin and the countries of immigration. They stressed that in what regards North America, a change in immigration laws was out of the question, but that that from now on the full annual quota of 27,000 immigrants from Germany (including Austria) was to be filled. The condition, however, was that there would be a full guarantee [for the immigrant being able to support himself]. The government delegates pointed out that it was absolutely necessary that the immigrants have enough funds to support themselves on their arrival and be able to establish a new existence in their new country.

At the meeting with Lord Winterton, he stressed the importance of agricultural training for the realisation of emigration. Regarding developments in Palestine, which were not open for negotiation at the conference, he declared that the British Government adhered to the Balfour declaration. The lifting of the restrictions and the question of increasing Jewish emigration [to Palestine] will be decided in the autumn of this year after receiving the report of the partition commission. The British government was ready to allow approximately one hundred families to settle in East Africa. He finally declared that implementation of the conference's resolutions was conditional on the

negotiations with the German government on transfer of capital. Senator Berenger stressed that aside from general questions, France itself and its colonies could only provide limited options for immigration....

Results of the Conference: The Permanent Commission

The resolutions show that a practical and concrete result that would ease the question of Jewish emigration is not possible at the moment. The first resolution states only that an Intergovernmental Committee, seated in London, is to be established to continue the work begun by the Evian Conference. All the governments participating in Evian will be members of this Committee....

Results for German Jewish policy.

The statements made by delegates of all of the countries have clearly shown that the period of emigration policy being determined solely at the initiative of the German authorities has ended. At the same time, the many speeches and discussions show that with the exception of a few countries that can still admit Jewish emigrants, there is an extensive aversion to a significant flow of emigrants either out of social considerations or out of an unexpressed racial abhorrence against Jewish emigrants.

The future of the present emigration policy will therefore depend to a great extent on the decisions of the Intergovernmental Committee. However, as the German Foreign Office has already issued a statement rejecting any interference in the measures against the Jews in Germany and stating that the government of the Reich refused to permit the emigrating Jews to take larger shares of their capital with them, it has to be assumed that the emigration of Jews from Germany will steadily decline. The urgent task in the near future should therefore be to urge as many Jews as possible to emigrate under existing conditions, as long as there are no new decisions by the Intergovernmental Committee. It is, however, essential that there be enough foreign currency to promote this move. The discussions with the Reich Economic Ministry should therefore be concluded as soon as possible.

Submitted to SS Gruppenfuehrer Heydrich.

Source: *Yad Vashem Archive, 0.51/OSO/37 Berlin, 29 July 1938*