

## American Zionist Emergency Council (AZEC)

Council created at the beginning of World War II to represent Zionist leadership in the United States, in case the activities of Zionist leaders in London and Jerusalem were to be restricted because of the war. The council's original members included representatives of the Zionist Organization of America and other American Zionist leaders.

Until 1941, the council had a weak and disorganized leadership. It did not protest the British White Paper of 1939, which placed further restrictions on Jewish immigration to Palestine. As long as the United States stayed out of the war, the council was afraid to sponsor the establishment of a Jewish fighting organization.

AZEC did not rescue Jews being persecuted by the Nazis; this was mainly done by the American Jewish Congress. AZEC's job was to deal with issues related to the Zionist movement and Palestine, such as immigration. One of its major responsibilities was to convince the American public of the importance of Palestine to the future of the Jewish people.

After the war, AZEC turned its attention to supporting the "illegal immigration" of Holocaust survivors to Palestine and lobbying the United States for a Jewish state. In 1949, AZEC became the American Zionist Council.