

JEWISH COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL
Monday, June 13, 1949
Minutes

A meeting of the Jewish Community Relations Council was held on Monday, June 13, 1949 at 2:30 P. M. in the Federation office. Mr. I. B. Finkelstein, Chairman, presided and the following were present: Mrs. Harry Kolber, Messrs: Isadore Keil, Morris Levenberg, Adolph Silver, Louis J. Finger, Wm. P. Frank, George J. Weiner, A. Roke Lieberman and Ben V. Codor.

The first item on the agenda dealt with a letter over the signature of Mrs. Benj. Ableman and Mrs. Frances Cooperstein asking Jews to vote for the Democratic candidate because he is pro-Jewish. Many calls were received in the Federation office from members in the community who were disturbed because the letter brought the religious and Palestine question into the campaign.

Mr. Finkelstein reported that after telephone consultation with the majority of the JCRC members, the attached draft (statement of policy) was mailed to the Jewish community. Mr. Herlihy was called and he seemed pleased that this was an individual's letter and not sent by a representative group of the Jewish community.

It was reported by Mr. Codor that two members of the JCRC Board felt that no action should be taken by the Council because they felt this involved freedom of speech and was an expression of an individual appealing for votes.

It was moved, seconded and passed that the action of the Chairman in mailing the card to the Jewish community expressing our disapproval be approved.

Mr. Levenberg suggested that we contact the leaders of the political parties and explain the position of the Jewish community.

Mr. Keil felt we should write a letter to the co-signers stating that they do not speak for the Jewish community and have no right to represent them. He questioned whether the individual has the right to involve a certain group in a political issue where a religious or ethnic group is not involved.

The Chairman suggested that a letter in which a resolution adopted by the Council condemning in very emphatic terms the action of these two women for injecting the religious issue in the political campaign be sent to them. He felt that this letter might be published in the Federation News.

A motion was approved that a letter be mailed to the Jewish community through the Federation News stating that we look with disfavor on certain acts which are not in accord with good community practice. It was further suggested that this letter be sent to Mrs. Cooperstein and Mrs. Ableman with further explanation of our position.

The Chairman suggested that a committee call on Governor Carvel to point out to him the fact that no one individual or individuals are authorized to speak for the Jewish group. But that if something does come to his attention that requires action, it might be called to the attention of the JCRC. He also felt we might call this to the attention of Mr. Bayard, Lieutenant Governor, and the chairmen of the political parties, as well as the mayor-elect. This contact would have to be in person and not by mail.

Mr. Frank pointed out that even though we know there is no "Jewish Vote" they do believe there is one and something should be done with this fact in mind. He felt a committee should be given the problem to study and report back to the Council.

A motion was approved that the matter be tabled until the next meeting and be studied by a committee appointed by the Chairman. It was suggested that the Chairman discuss the matter with the individual members of the Council and bring in a report at the next meeting.

The Chairman reported that he had received an anonymous letter from someone in the Jewish community who felt it was the "Federation list" that had been used. This letter censured Mr. Codor for giving the list for such use (see attached).

It was reported that in checking with people in the community, it was discovered that several contributors who are on our mailing list had not received the letter. The next largest list in the community would be the Y. M. H.A. which is about one half the size of ours, the "Jewish Voice" mailing list would be next and the B'nai B'rith next. These four agencies have lists of from 800 to 2,000 names. It is our impression that none of these lists were used.

The Chairman suggested that the anonymous letter be printed with an answer in the coming issue of the Federation News.

It was reported that we received a phone call from a member of the JCRC that Mr. Wm. Brodie had called on the new mayor for an ad in the "Jewish Voice" thanking the Jewish voters for their help in the election. Mr. Frank advised Mr. Hearn, mayor-elect, not to do anything about this. He also spoke with Mr. Brodie telling him that he felt this was not a good community practice. It was suggested that this be called to the attention of Mr. Krinsky and Mr. Brodie. It was felt that, although the ad was not given, because of the tenor of the request, we should advise the "Jewish Voice" that the thought behind printing such an ad is in bad taste.

Mr. Keil suggested calling Mr. Krinsky to a Council meeting.

In discussing the problem of the "Jewish Voice" posing as spokesman for the Jewish community, it was pointed out that all Anglo-Jewish papers sell themselves as public spirited agents doing a welfare job and deserving of community and philanthropic support. As their commercial value is negligible, they must of necessity seek support as community benefactors. It was pointed out that when asked, the Jewish Voice does not misrepresent its private ownership status; but when the paper is seen by the non-Jewish community, it is accepted as representative because of the name of the publication.

A motion was approved that Mr. Krinsky be invited to attend a meeting of the Council to clarify his position and that of the "Jewish Voice".

It was reported that on the other side of Westover Hills, a section of land was purchased by a realtor who is building a development there. Several people have brought to the attention of the office that Jews will not be admitted to this community. This was turned over to the Legal and Fact Finding Committee for further investigation and report.

Mr. Weiner also reported that a realtor was approached to buy some ground by a Jewish contractor. The realtor was willing to sell the ground only providing the contractor would enter into a gentleman's agreement that the houses built on this property would not be sold to Jews. The realtor claimed to be acting on the owner's wishes. The contractor refused to go along with this agreement and when the owner of the land was approached, he admitted that it did not matter to him who lived there but that he had been advised that if he sold to Jews, the value of the properties would depreciate. It was pointed out that this has come up in the past where

the realtor brings such things to the attention of the owners and convinces them. Mr. Weiner suggested that the problem be studied.

Mr. Finkelstein pointed out that it is unfortunate that the incident in the Westover Hills area is on property owned by Jews. However, the builders are a large outfit from New York, and he questioned whether anything could be done about it. He pointed out that there are some sections where Jews are not wanted and that nothing can be done about it since these areas have corporations and agreements in their contracts.

It was pointed out that the real estate men do not work as a unit and therefore, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to work with them. It was pointed out that the feeling that Jews depreciated the value of a house came from the fact that they had larger families a number of years ago. The information about this new section has not been verified and it may just be gossip. If the information is found to be accurate, it was felt that it would be the specific case of our contacting Mr. Shapiro, the owner, or someone important in the firm to discuss the matter with him.

In discussing the National Jewish Hospital, it was reported that several years ago this organization was a member agency of the Jewish Federation. At the same time they also solicited funds privately in the community. The Federation wrote to them stating that since they are doing this, their allocation would be withheld. The following year the matter was discussed with them and they stated they were not interested in re-joining the Federation because they felt they could get more through private solicitations.

Now, Mr. Leonard Kagel is organizing in this community a committee to sponsor the campaign for the hospital. A number of members of the Federation Board have received letters asking that they serve on this committee. The Federation group individually and collectively said they are not interested in joining a committee to solicit funds outside the Federation sponsored campaigns in this community.

Mr. Weiner felt that this is a problem to be settled between the Federation and the National Jewish Hospital. He felt it was not a problem for the JCRC.

It was felt by Mr. Weiner that this should be handled by the Federation. He pointed out that Mr. Kagel is familiar with the Federation work and should be contacted by them. He felt that the Federation must be preserved and this multiplicity should be discouraged since other agencies might withdraw from the Federation.

Mr. Finkelstein felt it was a local problem since it was being handled by Mr. Kagel in our community who was organizing the campaign.

It was pointed out that the hospital will try to sell itself to the Jewish community by getting prominent local non-Jews to act on the committee. In contacting the non-Jews, as well as the Jewish community, it will be a detriment to the more important needs since the people will give and especially the non-Jew who gives to one organization feels he is giving to all.

The Chairman pointed out that each of the agencies receiving funds from the Federation could raise more individually but their expenses would be greater and the purpose of the Federation would be defeated. He felt that we as the local Jewish community should not permit people to say they want a certain thing that would not be to the advantage of the over-all picture.

A motion was approved that we take action as the Council, and refer our action to the Federation as well as to Mr. Kagel.

The Chairman pointed out that there are two organizations in the community deserving of more active participation; namely, the National Conference of Christians and Jews and the Delaware Fellowship Commission. He felt that since we were instrumental in organizing the Fellowship Commission, it is our responsibility to see that it gets a great deal more support. He felt this problem should be referred to a committee for study.

The Chairman also felt that something should be done to get a better functioning set-up for the JCRC. He pointed out that there are many things that committees of the Council are supposed to discuss but are not followed through.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4 P. M.