

WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS

Meeting of the Steering Committee

April 27, 2006
Teleconference

Minutes as approved by the Steering Committee at its meeting on July 19, 2006 in Buenos Aires.

Participants: Edgar M. Bronfman, Pierre Besnainou, Matityahu Droblas, Mendel Kaplan, Alexander Machevitch, Evelyn Sommer, Jack Terpins

Absent: Zeev Bielski, Eduardo Elzstain

Also attending: Israel Singer, Stephen Herbits.

Mr. HERBITS gave an update on matters since the New York State Attorney General's (NYSAG) report. Among their findings had been that WJC's accountants, Loeb & Troper, had "contributed" to some of the WJC's and American Section's institutional problems. He anticipated that proper understanding of this fact and an agreement with Loeb & Troper would mitigate the NYSAG's conclusions about individual and WJC blame. A second development included the payment by Messrs. Singer and Steinberg of substantial amounts in restitution of disputed expenses, that there remained outstanding issues with Steinberg and that a token amount is to be paid by Mr. Beker. This point reinforces the institutional, rather than the individual, aspect of the NYSAG's findings and recommendations.

Mr. HERBITS requested approval of the minutes of the prior Steering Committee meetings. He also noted his letter to the Management Committee of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry. Mrs. SOMMER suggested that the participants approve the procedure initiated by Mr. Herbits, in particular his letter to Australia, which was done.

Mr. KAPLAN moved that the minutes of the meetings of December 21, 2005, January 19, 2006 and February 7, 2006 be approved. The motion was approved.

Mr. HERBITS submitted a proposed calendar for upcoming 2006 WJC events. Mr. KAPLAN suggested that a few Steering Committee members discuss the issue of where to hold the next Governing Board privately before the next meeting of the Steering Committee.

Mr. HERBITS pointed to the recommendations regarding a new WJC pension plan that had been submitted in advance of the meeting to the Steering Committee, noting the difficulties in designing pension arrangements due to the multiple organizations that comprise the WJC in the US. The plan – a year overdue for the benefit of new

employees - had been duly researched and reviewed by the new excellent Director of Finance and Administration and now required enactment by the Steering Committee. Mr. KAPLAN agreed that the plan was essential and moved for its approval. The Committee approved the plan.

Mr. HERBITS put forth four Funding Proposals, noting that the funds were already included in the budget for 2006. These include:

a) The Conference of European Rabbis, with whom the WJC had been cooperating in the establishment of their office in Brussels. Mr. HERBITS recommended the approval of a matched budget from WJC and CER and hoped the European Jewish Congress would also cooperate with CER's operations.

b) The Atlantic Forum of Israel, important for understanding, providing information on and contributing to relations between Europe, North America and Israel, both on a governmental and non-governmental level. The WJC/EJC project would be headed by Dr. Uzi Arad.

c) The Foundation for Ethnic Understanding, established by Rabbi Marc Schneier, which has been most successful in the US and was now planning to extend its activities to the international arena. Mr. HERBITS hoped that the allocation would be approved and that it would result in good cooperation with the EJC.

d) The European Union of Jewish Students, a long-standing organization (headed by Maram Stern decades ago) has been supported by the WJC for many years and has now initiated new activities worthy of financial allocation.

Mr. BESNAINOU reported that he had met in Paris with the various organizations mentioned in the Funding Proposals and favored future cooperation between the EJC and them. Mr. KAPLAN moved that the allocations be approved and the Steering Committee so approved.

Mr. MACHKEVITCH announced that the president of Azerbaijan would be visiting the United States shortly and would invite Mr. Bronfman, Mr. Herbits and Mr. Singer to meet with him. He also referred to the upcoming trip to Moscow of the WJC leadership and expected to join the WJC there. Mr. HERBITS indeed encouraged his participation, as part of the overall plan to exchange inter-regional information and cooperation between the various WJC offices. The meeting in Moscow would be for a Limmud-FSU event, and will be attended by himself, Singer and Matthew Bronfman, the Honorary Chair of the Limmud event.

Mr. HERBITS reminded the Committee of its February 7 discussion on the organizational issues of Russian participation in the WJC and that the WJC delegation would be meeting with each entity there.

Mr. HERBITS informed the Committee that Cobi Benatoff had decided to leave the chairmanship of the WJC Finance Committee. To choose a successor, a Nominating Committee was appointed to be chaired by Mr. Kaplan.