

77-460

COLLECTIONS OF CORRESPONDENCE AND MANUSCRIPT DOCUMENTS

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NAME OF COLLECTION: Mezes, Sidney Edward - Papers

SOURCE: Gift? 1934?

SUBJECT: Papers relating to the World War I group known as the "Inquiry"

DATES COVERED: 1917-1919 NUMBER OF ITEMS: ca. 1000

STATUS: (check appropriate description)
Cataloged: X Listed: Arranged: X Not organized:

CONDITION: (give number of vols., boxes, or shelves)
Bound: Boxed: 2 boxes Stored:

LOCATION: (Library) Special Collections CALL-NUMBER Spec Ms Coll
Mezes

RESTRICTIONS ON USE

DESCRIPTION:

This collection is separated into two parts. The first is a selection from the entire group of papers which was made and edited for publication by Ingram Bander who "discovered" the papers in a storeroom of City College of which Mezes was president from 1914 to 1927. These papers are arranged in seven general subject groups and are class-marked for their place in the general file. The second and larger group is an alphabetical file of letters and documents. In both sections the papers relate to the "Inquiry" group of World War I which was appointed by President Wilson in 1917 "to collect and collate data that might be needed eventually at a Peace Conference." Mezes was executive director of this group. Mezes was brother-in-law of Colonel Edward House and many of the letters are addressed to him

JAN 1955

SEE VERSO FOR CONTENTS OF COLLECTION.

Box 1: Catalogued correspondence: Balch, Emily Greene
Beer, George Louis
Bowman, Isaiah
Cross, Wilbur
Dodge, Cleveland H.
Duggan, Stephen P.
Filene, Edward A.
Frank, Glenn
Herrick, Robert
Lansing, Robert
House, Edward M.
Lindsay, Samuel McCune
Lippmann, Walter
Long, Breckenridge
Miller, Adolph C.
Phillips, William
Polk, Frank L.
Shaw, Albert
Shotwell, James T.
Simkhovitch, Vladimir G.
Taussig, Frank William
Young, Allyn A.

"Inquiry Papers" - 16 folders

Alphabetical Correspondence file: A - E

Box 2: Alphabetical Correspondence file: F - Z **Shelved off-site**

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These files consist of the papers of the late Dr. Sidney Edward Mezes relating to The Inquiry. They were discovered in 1934 in a storeroom of The City College (College of the City of New York) by the ^{undersigned} editor and with the consent of Mrs. Sidney Edward Mezes were in part photographically published in July, 1935, in a "Recordak" film, under the auspices of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and of the Joint Committee on Materials for Research of the American Council of Learned Societies and the Social Science Research Council. (The undertaking constituted the first use of the Recordak for the reproduction of historical research material.) The present collection is complete, as originally found.

Dr. Mezes, a brother-in-law of Colonel Edward M. House, was President of The City College from 1914 to 1927. When in 1917 President Wilson directed Colonel House to organize a group of scholars and experts who would serve "to collect and collate data that might be needed eventually at the Peace Conference" by the American commission to negotiate peace, Mezes was put in charge of the work as Executive Director under the supervision of Colonel House, "the Chief." A compact description of the operation, organization, and historical importance of The Inquiry (as this group of scholars was officially designated) appears in Dr. Mezes' own words in "What Really Happened at Paris: The Story of the Peace Conference, 1918-1919, By American Delegates," a symposium edited by Colonel House and Professor Charles Seymour (New York, Scribner's, 1921, Ch. 1), and it need not be repeated here. Apart from a few documents published in David Hunter Miller's great compilation of Peace Conference sources, "My Diary at the Conference of Paris, with Documents" (New York, privately printed, 1924) and the collection of George

Louis Beer's colonial reports in "African Questions at the Paris Peace Conference with Papers on Egypt, Mesopotamia, and the Colonial Settlement" (published under Beer's name, edited by Louis Herbert Gray; New York, Macmillan, 1923), it is believed that the film constitutes the first publication of Inquiry material, with the exception of one or two reports published as government documents.

KEY DESIGNATION: In the upper left-hand corner of each sheet there is inscribed one of the following symbols:

- | <u>KEY</u> | <u>Pertaining to or dealing with:</u> | Shelved off-site |
|------------|--|------------------|
| ACK | - <u>Acknowledgment of receipt</u> of letters, books, etc., | |
| CHE | - Efforts at <u>checking-up</u> or testing the reliability or competence of prospective or actual members of the Inquiry staff. | |
| COL | - <u>Colonial</u> matters. | |
| CON | - <u>The Peace Conference</u> in the more immediate sense; particularly, consideration of prospective Conference personnel. Most "CON" documents fall in the later part of the file. | |
| EHK | - <u>Professor Edward H. Krehbiel</u> , whose work with The Inquiry ceased after suspicions were raised concerning him. | |
| EMH | - <u>Edward M. House</u> , personal. | |
| GOV | - Relations of the Inquiry with government departments other than the Department of State. | |
| HPJ | - <u>Henry Pratt Judson</u> , who offered suggestions in respect to Balkan and Austro-Hungarian affairs. | |
| LIB | - <u>Library</u> and bibliographical matters; securing books and other publications for Inquiry use; cooperation with libraries, institutes, etc., in the collection of information. | |
| MIS | - <u>Miscellaneous</u> , not otherwise classified. | |
| POL | - <u>Policies</u> and programs: the texts of reports and treaty suggestions by Inquiry members, discussion of general principles, etc. | |
| PRO | - <u>Procedural and organizational functioning</u> of The Inquiry, texts of assignment outlines, etc. | |
| PUB | - <u>Publicity</u> and the lack of it. | |

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MEZES PAPERS

SEC - Securing and maintaining personnel.

SEM - Sidney E. Mezes, personal.

ST - Relations with State Department.

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It is hoped that these notations may serve as guides when reference is desired to documents relating to a particular subject. It should be added that there is of course no special virtue in these as against other possible designations, except that they were arrived at after some study of the entire file. Nor are they mutually exclusive, and the problem of classification of a particular document was not always easy to solve.

MISCELLANEOUS: A substantial part of the collection consists of carbon copies of letters sent out by Mezes, and his signature, although it does not appear on the copies, is to be assumed.

Among the later documents most of the incoming letters are in copied form rather than in the original. This is due to the fact that there were two headquarters for Dr. Mezes - the College and the American Geographical Society ("A.G.S." as it is sometimes referred to in these papers) at 3755 Broadway, New York City, where the Inquiry offices were located. Thus original letters were retained in one office and copies in another, and the A.G.S. appears to have received the originals in many such cases. The address 280 Convent Avenue, occasionally mentioned in these letters, is the official residence of the City College President.

Miss Adele Frank ("A.F.") was Mezes' secretary; Miss Fanny Denton was Colonel House's secretary. It should be noted that Dr. Mezes handled much of Colonel House's correspondence for him.

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The claim is not advanced that the collection is uniformly of great or even average importance; a good deal of it is admittedly of little significance to the present-day student. On the other hand, attention may well be directed to such important material as the letter of George Louis Beer to Mezes, 12/31/17 (B-1), - a letter which should constitute a valuable addition to the history of the mandate idea. For the nature of The Inquiry itself, Mezes' letter to Secretary Lansing, 6/10/18 (Robert Lansing) is of value, while Walter Lippmann's communication to the Division Chiefs, 12/11/17 (Walter Lippmann) throws a revealing light on the organization and procedure of The Inquiry, as do the letters from Oakley to Mezes, 12/31/17 (O-1), Mezes to Lane, 1/2/18 (Lane), and Mezes to Lansing, 4/22/18 (Robert Lansing). Professor A. A. Young's survey of the world's metal situation (A. A. Young), is an example of informative general material to be found here.

It should always be kept in mind, of course, that some of the Inquiry men who went abroad with the American Commission to Negotiate Peace at the Paris Conference had considerable influence in the drafting of the peace terms.

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November, 1935

Ingram Bander
INGRAM BANDER.

NOTE: A selected group of these papers was micro-photographed in 1938: "The 'Inquiry' Papers of Sidney Edward Mezes," arranged and edited by Ingram Bander, American Documentation Institute, Washington, D.C., pp. 390. Positive copies of the film can be procured from the Institute.

A descriptive essay on the papers and the film copy was supplied to the Journal of Modern History in the summer of 1938 for subsequent publication in that periodical.