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MS-603: Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum Collection, 1945-1992.

Series C: Interreligious Activities. 1952-1992

Box 11, Folder 3, American Friends Service Committee, 1977.

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

date February 23, 1977
to Bert Gold
from Murray Friedman
subject

I am enclosing a copy of an exchange of correspondence between American Friends Service Committee leadership in Philadelphia and Quaker Life with regard to the September issue of Quaker Life.

Regards.

MF:r

Enclosures

P.S. The current refusal of Quaker Life to back off from its theological anti-Semitism and report of a "peripheral" anti-Semitism of a Midwestern editor of the AFSC conference in Washington, may provide an opening for dealing with the more limited issue of anti-Semitism apart from AFSC policies. Is anyone looking into the Inge Gibel memo on the anger of the "Jewish caucus" at the AFSC meeting?

cc: ✓ Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum
 Morris Fine
 George Gruen
 Mort Yarmon
 Harold Applebaum
 Richard J. Fox
 Paul S. Weinberg
 Jerome J. Shestack
 Rabbi Gerald Wolpe



American Friends Service Committee Inc.

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WALLACE T. COLLETT
Chairman

LOUIS W. SCHNEIDER
Executive Secretary

February 22, 1977

Mr. Richard J. Fox, Chairman
Rabbi Gerald Wolpe, Interreligious Subcommittee
The American Jewish Committee
1502 Fox Building
1612 Market Street
Philadelphia, Pa. 19103

Dear Mr. Fox and Rabbi Wolpe:

As you know, the American Friends Service Committee sent an article to Quaker Life magazine, outlining our recent conversations with you and expressing our viewpoint on Israeli independence.

This week I received the enclosed letter from Fred Wood, editor of Quaker Life, which we would like to share with you so as to inform you of the outcome of our effort.

We look forward to future contacts with you.

Sincerely yours,

Louis W. Schneider
Executive Secretary

LWS:at

cc: Murray Friedman, AJC
Fred Wood, Quaker Life
John Sullivan, AFSC

Enclosure: copy of letter to Louis Schneider from Fred Wood, 2/18/77



February 18, 1977

QUAKER LIFE

Louis W. Schneider, Executive Secretary
American Friends Service Committee Inc.
1501 Cherry Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19102

Dear Louis Schneider:

Dealing with all viewpoints prevalent about the Middle East with compassion and justice is probably impossible. I don't believe, however, that in last September's Quaker Life there is any suggestion that the State of Israel did not have the right to exist at this time in history.

As editor of Quaker Life, my aim is to be fair in dealing with all peoples and nations, especially in publishing articles dealing with the relationships among the ethnic, religious and social classes of the Middle East. From my position, I see nothing to apologize for in the September issue, particularly in the article written by Harold Smuck. Until I am convinced that the statements made in the September issue are not true, I have no plan to publish any article or statement suggesting a retraction. I assume that the American Friends Service Committee has made it clear to The American Jewish Committee that the AFSC does not speak for Friends United Meeting, Harold Smuck or Quaker Life.

How the American Service Committee wants to deal with The American Jewish Committee is for the AFSC to decide. Your letter to Richard J. Fox and Rabbi Gerald Walpe is your prerogative. Since The American Jewish Committee does not wish to engage in dialogue directly with me or Harold Smuck, I feel under no compunction to print the kind of article that you recently sent me.

Sincerely,

Fred Wood, Editor

FW/cwb

Rabbi Marc Laxenbaum

memorandum

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

date February 28, 1977
to Bert Gold
from Murray Friedman
subject An Approach to Dealing With American Friends Service Committee Leadership at Our Meeting on March 31

I have been giving some thought and have held extensive discussions with the Israeli Consul General in Philadelphia by way of attempting to make this meeting as useful as possible. The following, therefore, represents some preliminary thoughts for our staff meeting prior to March 31.

We should attempt to build on the openings created by the recent sharp Jewish reaction to the AFSC meeting in Washington, the defensive posture of the AFSC under the barrage, and our ability to play the role of the honest broker since we have not attacked the AFSC.

Let me get to the bottom line first. Our efforts should be directed to getting the AFSC to modify its policies at least as reflected in the last communication to you and if this agreed upon by the AFSC, then there might be an exchange of correspondence between our two organizations. If this does eventuate, it might be possible for AJC to indicate that it would intervene with the Israeli government to assist the AFSC in the development of a project in Israel. This is something the AFSC has long wanted as a means of demonstrating its evenhanded policies in the Middle East. ^{ask PLO to} We should ask the AFSC to remove from its covenant prior to any negotiations any commitment to the dismemberment of Israel. It should urge the PLO to state explicitly its willingness to live side by side with an independent Jewish state.

In the last letter to Bert Gold, there was a heavy emphasis on the PLO. This has tended to exaggerate the importance of the PLO in the Middle East situation. We should urge them to focus less on the PLO.

In dealing with the problems of refugees, we should urge them to speak out within the context of the maltreatment of Jews in Arab lands. They should make explicit recognition of the fact that some 750,000 Jews were driven from Arab countries. Arabs who left Israel in 1948 numbered some 550,000.

Since there is so much hatred in the area and Israel is so small, the parties to direct negotiations should decide on defensible borders. This means that the AFSC should eliminate its requirement at this point that Israel withdraw from territories occupied in the '67 and '73 wars.

The AFSC should come out against a separate Palestine state. It is not a viable arrangement and can be controlled by extremist elements. The fact is that a number of the Arab nations seem to be withdrawing from this.

Con'd. . .

Bert Gold

February 28, 1977

We should urge a greater degree of sensitivity on the part of the AFSC to Israel's position as a means of greater evenhandedness. As an example, Consul General Naim pointed out that when an Arab woman was placed under house arrest, the AFSC called him three times to protest and threatened to picket. There has not been a similar response to the plight of the 400 Jewish women in Damascus who have few men to lean on and cannot marry. Why is the AFSC not aggressive on this point?

I hope the above will be helpful in getting us started.

MF:r

cc: ✓ Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum
Morris Fine
George Gruen
Mort Yarmon
Harold Applebaum



Robert Tanenbaum

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AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE
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March 2, 1977

Bert Gold

Murray Friedman

Last Fling at the September ^{issue}-Harold Smuck Article in Quaker Life

I fear I may be torturing this to death but I remain uneasy about no one having said anything publicly about the above which all of us feel was an anti-Israel and anti-Semitic issue.

The most recent letter of Fred Wood, editor of Quaker Life to the AFSC of February 18, 1977, has the following sentence: "From my position, I see nothing to apologize for in the September issue, particularly in the article written by Harold Smuck."

The fact that this remains unchallenged troubles me. In an oral discussion over the phone with Marc Tanenbaum some weeks ago, Marc, who had read through the entire issue, went down the line point for point showing how the September issue was intolerable. We made reference in our lengthy letter to the AFSC to one example, "Palestine -- 1976," written by Donn Hutchinson.

Even at this late date, why could we not publicly attack Fred Wood for his February 18 statement that he sees nothing to apologize for the September issue? Here is how I think it might be done in an outline of a possible news release.

1. The American Jewish Committee condemns Quaker Life for publishing an anti-Semitic and anti-Israel issue and indicating recently that it has nothing to apologize for.
2. We could cite Wood's letter to the American Friends Service Committee following a complaint by the American Jewish Committee to the AFSC with regard to the contents of the issue. (I would like to say as little as possible about the AFSC because they have not been guilty of saying the same things as Quaker Life and we are not particularly happy about the manner in which they have dealt with the Quaker Life issue.)
3. A strong statement by either you or Elmer Winter indicating that the September issue and particularly the Harold Smuck article were offensive to the Jewish community.
4. A number of paragraphs describing the contents of that September issue showing just how and why we make the charge that this issue was anti-Semitic and anti-Israel.

I think we can use the Fred Wood letter as an opening to get back to the September issue. It really bothers me that no one has publicly taken issue with the dreadful contents of a Quaker publication presumably devoted to the humanistic concerns of that movement and where the editor indicates he sees nothing wrong with what he has d

Con'd ..

Obviously, if there is nothing wrong, there is every reason to repeat this extraordinary performance. Should not a Jewish agency take issue with this?

I think it would even be indirectly helpful to us in our broader concern about the Quaker movement more generally since a specific attack on Quaker Life is bound to raise issues in the minds of people about Quaker activities generally with regard to the Middle East.

I promise to drop the matter after this but I would like to see some good reasoning as to why this matter should be left to disappear into obscurity. What do you think?

MF:r

cc: Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum
Mort Yarmon
Harold Applebaum

