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"What is the Story Behind the Condemnation of the American Council for Judaism?" February-March 1954.

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## SERMON

### "WHAT IS THE STORY BEHIND THE CONDEMNATION OF THE AMERICAN COUNCIL FOR JUDAISM?"

Rabbi Herbert A. Friedman  
Temple Emanu-El B'ne Jeshurun  
2419 E. Kenwood Blvd.  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

March 5, 1954

I take as a text for the sermon this evening the story from the 32nd and the 33rd chapter of the Book of Genesis. The story of Jacob and Esau, two brothers, who hated and feared each other.

"And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, "We came to your brother Esau, and he is coming to meet you, and four hundred men with him." Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed.

Jacob prayed and said, "Deliver me, O God, from the hands of my brother, from the hand of Esau, for I fear him, lest he come and smite me."

And Jacob lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, Esau was coming, and four hundred men with him. Jacob divided his children unto Leah and unto Rachel, unto the two handmaids. He put the handmaids and their children foremost, and Leah and her children after, and Rachel and Joseph in the rear. He, himself, went on before the, bowing himself to the ground seven times, until he came near his brother.

Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept."

I suggest that we stop this spectacle of brothers fighting brothers in public or in private. I think this is a matter which concerns all of us most intimately for we are here tonight not out of peek or curiosity (except for those of you who gather wherever there is trouble for the thrill which they find in contro-

versy). We are gathered here largely out of an earnest desire to understand something which has occurred over a decade and more in the Jewish world and which has set brother against brother stringently, severely and seriously. For those who came anticipating joyous combate, there will be disappointment in what I have to say. If we have differences or misunderstanding, I want them discussed within our own peoplehood. No one ever gains the upper hand in this kind of fight, when it is carried on before the eyes of the world.

If we accept this as a premise then we can clear the air and attempt to seek to penetrate the inner and important meaning. What is the real nub of this quarrel. The real nub of this quarrel lies in the very word I used "peoplehood".

I should like to be historical and factual. I should like to try to explain to you what the fight is about without abuse or vilification. The whole fight revolves around an attempt to define the nature of the word "Jew" and the meaning of the concept "Judaism". There are two opposing points of view with regard to these definitions and meanings. One point of view we call the universalistic. One point of view we call the particularistic. There is a point of view which says that the important thing in Judaism is its broad universal application to all mankind. One point of view say that the only accurate definition is the particular group of people who call themselves Jews, who live and operate and function within a particular framework, with a particular set of habits and customs, with a particular set of aspirations which unite them in one peoplehood, with a particular language, etc., etc...

You may say, that this seems to be a tremendously abstract philosophical problem, to divide the community so radically. But, from such abstract ideas, there always flow the concrete situations. If you are one who believes that Judaism is a great universal religion and nothing more, then you are seriously outraged when Judaism attempts to express itself in a nationalistic form, a political form involving a land, a state, a flag, an army. You attack the effort to change what you consider to be broad universal concepts into tiny, petty, foolish, temperable, narrow concepts.

If on the other hand, you believe that Judaism is intimately a matter of a folk, a people, a nationhood, a brotherhood, a unity of a group of people who consider themselves bound together and can, therefore, express themselves any way they choose even politically, even nationalistically, then you attack those who attempt to thwart your political creation. The specifics flow from the definitions.

I am going to be using these words and I want you to know their meaning--the universal and the particular. I would like to talk tonight about the American Council for Judaism on the highest possible level. I would like to give it credit for the highest possible motives. I would like to take the best in it and attempt to see whether there is anything there with which we can agree. Whether there is anything, therefore, in its program which might be deemed meritorious.

The Council for Judaism stresses the universal approach to the problem of declining Judaism. It says that Judaism is a religion. And a religion only without any other overtone. It says

that its objectives are that Judaism is a universal religion which has depth, vision and appeal. That it needs no nationalistic accouterments or trappings. If we take its position most altruistically, we would say that the American Council for Judaism stands for a point of view which could be defined somewhat as follows: (and I shall attempt to define it as if I believed in it) Judaism's destiny is to be spelled out in the broad and liberal ideas of preaching the themes of one God; one mankind united as children of that God; one social ethic by which those children shall live; one prophetic zeal by which justice shall be achieved. These are the highest qualities of a religion whose destiny was established long ago at Sinai and whose suffering all through the centuries can be understood only in terms of a devotion to these timeless ideals and no other ideals. For only these ideals will lead to the Messianic future. Nationalism, statehood, Israel will never lead to the Messianic future. In these terms the present does not exist. There is only the past and their future. This view of Judaism is universal and there are many Christians who can call themselves Jews in these terms. This is the case for the universal position of the American Council for Judaism.

On the other hand, there is the particularistic or nationalistic position which looks upon Judaism as representing not simply a religion but in addition to that folk, people, nation, a host of words to describe additional concepts. This other view holds (and here is its important essence) that ideas and ideals of a universal religion do not exist in the abstract but they must exist in a particular group whose physical survival is indispensable.

For in the physical survival of that group will you have these ideals expressed. The physical survival of that group is to be guaranteed only by those attributes which set it off and distinguish it as a separate group.. A land, a language, a history, a destiny, all of which it holds in common with all of the members of the group whether they live in that central land or whether they be scattered across the face of the earth. They are all bound together in this folk, nation or people which constitutes the other definition of Judaism besides simply the religious.

I do not know whether this is clear to you, but to understand the rest of the argument you must understand these two definitions. Because the point that I will make to you tonight is this: The clue to understanding the Jew and Judaism is to realize that both of these definitions are true. The Jew wears both faces. He is both things and anyone who fails to appreciate this and insists upon defining the Jew in only one of his two dimensions is in historic error.

For the American Council for Judaism to \_\_\_\_\_ and cut off one whole aspect.-- the aspect of nationhood, of peoplehood, of brotherhood, call it what you will is a mistake so serious as to have brought that organization in conflict with the rest of the Jews. That is its error. An error so serious as to have brought upon its head outrage and indignation. An error so serious as to have brought upon the members of that organization feelings of persecution and complex because the rest of the community reacted so violently against them.

I would, however, in all fairness point out that there is an equivalent error in another assumption. For the Jew who takes the particularistic or the nationalistic approach to reduce Judaism to mere ritualism or mere chauvinism is equally grievous. Judaism can never be straight-jacketed by a state, by a flag, or an army which may from time to time be established by Jews. Theoretically, since we deal with this now on the highest possible level, (in viewing Jewish history) we must be entitled to say that the independent commonwealths which the Jewish peoples established from time to time, of which modern Israel is the third, are really only passing phenomena, which come and go; while the universal ideals of Judaism are timeless and indestructible. Theoretically, we could say that the Commonwealth of Solomon and David was only a passing phenomenon and that the Commonwealth of Akiba and Hillel was only a passing phenomenon and that the Commonwealth of Ben Gurion and Sharet is only a passing phenomenon. For the true and timeless universal things are the only things that are indestructible.

All through our history there has been this philosophical see-sawing back and forth. Never in our history did it take the intensity and the virulency which this philosophical fight has been waged in our generation the last 15 years.

If the American Council had ever maintained an attitude of defender of a great philosophical truth, the guardian of a pure idea, the protector of universal Judaism; if it had ever struck and maintained that pose without any degeneration in it, it would have had much high minded support.

Instead, the American Council turned into an organization with a vicious and negative program of attacking nationalistic

definitions at the lowest possible level of inventive. It had nothing positive. It lost almost all of its rabbinical support and I would interpellate here now to remind you that the American Council of Judaism was started by rabbis (93 reform rabbis) who believed in its high-minded approach to defend high philosophical truths against dilution and diminution and cheapening.

Very quickly, the rabbinical support evaporated and as it evaporated the organization deteriorated and as it deteriorated, it descended to the depths of very, very bad propaganda. As it descended, it began to trade with the enemy. As it began to trade with the enemy, it tried very hard to block Israel's birth and growth. It testified at the United Nations against the vote for an independent Israel. It testified at Congress against making loans and grants to the State of Israel. It descended to that. And finally it lost all reason. It compared Zionists with Nazis in their treatments of the Arabs. It called Zionists traitors and conspirators.

At that juncture, it stood condemned. Not by the Milwaukee Jewish Council, which issued a statement of condemnation, but it stood condemned by its own conduct. There has been much discussion this last week whether the American Council has 30 members, 50 members or 150. There has been much discussion whether the Milwaukee Council can profess to speak for 30,000 Jews or for 3 Jews. Neither statistic is important. None. It makes no difference if the American Council has thousands of members. It makes no difference if the Milwaukee Jewish Council speaks for hundreds of people, or vice-versa.

The significant thing is that the point to which it finally sank brought upon its head this, I think, sober and judicious statement which in its judiciousness also has a way of perpetuating the conflict because of the intemperance of terms which are laden with emotion. No Jew wants to be called an anti-Semite. No Jew wants to be called one who gives aid and comfort to Anti-Semites. And when other Jews are infuriated and frustrated to the point of making those allocations, the degree of sterility of the argument becomes apparent.

This has reduced itself to the matter of calling names. And all that can happen from now on is that each will think of better names to call the other. And there is no end to this. Nor is there anything fruitful in it. Where do we go from here?

I think it is agreed that there shall be an armistice. There shall be no further turning to the public press. There shall be no further fighting and vilifying. Let no one be guilty of this. I pray you. And, then let each of the advocates of the two approaches to Judaism temper his position. Let each one temper his position. And I would suggest to you how.

Let the American Council (for I shall take them first) assume the highest role for which it professes to stand. Let it not simply be against peoplehood, against Jewishness, against nationhood, against Israel. Let it not simply be against the other nationalistic interpretation, but let it be for the religion of

Judaism which it seeks to defend. Let it be for the universal ideals which it cherishes so highly and would protect. Let it also be for the only vessel in which those ideals can ever be preserved. The vessel which we call the Jewish people that gave birth to those ideals and passed them on to two other religions and must carry through those ideals to the end of time. Let the American Council be for the Universal truth of a universal religion and for the ideals as well as for the vessel, the people, the nation, the folk which bears those ideals. Let the members of the American Council come to Temple to worship God as part of the religion they so zealously defend. Let them practice in their homes the rituals and the ceremonies which is the only way we have of preserving in tact this group of people. Let them cease being minimized or escapist or simulationists if they ever were. Let them show by their Jewish conduct that their Jewish theorizing is correct.

And now to the other side. Let those of us who accept the nationalistic definition of the Jewish people remember that to save Jewish bodies, to keep this vessel in tact (which I keep talking about) without saving the Jewish spirit is also not enough. The slaughter of Jews in the 20th century would have been much greater if the State of Israel had not been established. This was God's provident hand. I think those of us, who participated in helping, have had the feeling some time during the past years that God's hand was on us. But, then those of us, who are sensitive, have a right to say that if that State for which we labored so hard, to which we gave so much in blood and treasure, ever just becomes another little state, if it ever just becomes just another little Balkan principality, then we may very well have sold our birthright

for a mess of potash.

I am convinced that this will never happen. I am convinced that Torah will once again flow from this place for all mankind. I am convinced that broad spiritual inspiration will emanate again from Israel to illumine the thinking in the heart of all mankind. I am convinced of this. But being convinced is not enough. As an insurance behind that conviction, I and every Jew who loves Judaism must work to prevent his State from ever becoming aborted, preverted into a political entity without a spiritual content.

Here then is the synthesis. I say that the merger should be made between those forces of Jewish life who would guard over our two faces. Any cleavage is false. It is doomed to failure. You cannot be just a universalistic Jew. You have amputated an important half. You cannot be just a secularist or a nationalistic Jew. You also have amputated an important half. The greatest universalists the world has ever seen are the magnificent prophets of our faith who lived and worked and created within the framework of a narrow tribal group in a tiny desert land. This is the intertwining, the broad universal bound up together with the narrow and the particular. Nothing exists in the abstract. The genius born always within the confines of any particular people, always bursts the boundaries of the group within which it is born and becomes a universal blessing to mankind.

We read tonight that even God needed a home --the most universal of all universals cannot exist without a focus or a locus. But you can build the finest home in the world for him and if the cloud and the glory does not enter it then it means nothing.

Jewish people without a dream, without a fulfillment of Israel would have remained eternally wandering in a universal wilderness. But the Jewish people having created a home which is empty and devoid of spirit shall also wander in a bankruptcy. These are the double dangers. This is the double interaction of the two great motifs and the two great themes. Let the talk cease. Let one or the other be correct. Israel without prophets is pulverized. Prophets without Israel is unthinkable. No prophets were ever born in the Babylonians in which our people lived, — scholars and poets — yes; prophets--no.

I would like the shrill, strident, intemperate, vicious voice of the attacks of the American Council to cease. I would like the shrill, strident voice of those of us who have condemned in the past and who condemn now also to cease. Let all be gathered back into the fold. Let all be gathered back into the fold. Together we can all watch carefully that the ethics and ideals will not be tarnished. That the nationalism which is good and necessary shall not become rancid.

When Jacob and Esau faced each other, they were afraid for they know not whether they would slay and they hesitated --and then they kissed and they wept. For each group matured and rose to an occasion. That Esau and Jacob turned not against each other in suspicion.

We will work together. We will work together for the saving of Jewish lives and Jewish people and we will do it by defending a Jewish State where people are free and secure. But we will also remember that to save the bodies is nothing if the spirit perish.

And we will work as we have always done in all the centuries of our existence to protect the great and timeless and indestructible truths which this people bears.

And if we do not do these two things together, then neither goal will ever be reached and we will perish on the sands as did Assyria, Egypt and Rome. Please understand with what we tamper. We tamper with our own destiny and we tamper with something quite mystic. The role which we play in the history of man and if we tamper with it too long and if we tamper with it too indiscriminately and if we tamper with it as children do without knowing what we fool with--then we shall do irreparable harm. I ask for peace. I ask for understanding. I ask for mutual work in mutual causes. And when there is no possible understanding of the the minds, I ask then for silence.

Amen.



27 Feb.

Milwaukee Sentinel

—THE MILWAUKEE

## Rabbi Pleads For Peace in Jewish Rift

A silencing of the "shrill, strident, vicious voices" that spoke up in the fight between the American Council of Judaism and the Milwaukee Jewish Council was asked Friday night by Rabbi Herbert A. Friedman.

Rabbi Friedman made the plea in a sermon at Sabbath services at Congregation Emanu-El B'nai Jesurun.

"I suggest we stop this spectacle of brothers fighting brothers—in public or in private," Rabbi Friedman told an audience that filled the large temple. "If we have differences or misunderstandings, I want us to discuss these within our own peoplehood and not before the eyes of the whole world."

The controversy resulted when the American Council of Judaism was accused of "giving aid and comfort to the anti-Semite" in a statement by the Milwaukee Jewish Council. The American Council professes to be an anti-Zionist organization holding that nationality and religion are separate.

Rabbi Friedman asked each side to temper its position, explaining that the controversy resulted from a difference in the viewpoint of each faction about Judaism.

"If there can be no understanding of minds," Rabbi Friedman said, "let there be silence."

## Jewish Group Hits at 'Antis' Milwaukeeans Attack National Council for 'Intemperate Talk'

The methods of the anti-Zionist American Council for Judaism were condemned Friday by the Milwaukee Jewish council. The national group was organized in 1942 and opposed the creation of the Jewish state of Israel in Palestine.

The Milwaukee council, in a statement, warned members of the Jewish faith and "all good citizens of our community" that because it had gone beyond the "bounds of temperance and decency in discussion, the American Council for Judaism must be classified as an organization which gives aid and comfort to the anti-Semite and is unworthy of the respect or credence of men of good will."

The council, made up of individual members and representatives of the American Jewish congress, Jewish War Veterans and B'nai B'rith, is headed by Lawrence S. Katz, 4122 N. Newhall st., Shorewood. Katz said that the council represents more than 30,000 Milwaukee Jews.

### Has 150 Members

The Milwaukee chapter of the American Council for Judaism is headed by Jack Kahn, 4737 N. Wilshire rd., Whitefish Bay. Kahn said the chapter had 150 local members.

Kahn had not read the Milwaukee Jewish council statement Friday morning. He said, however, that from a "brief description of it, it sounds Zionist inspired."

[Zionism is the term applied to the modern Jewish movement to establish a national home for Jews in Palestine, the "land of Zion."]

"In recent months, they have tried to squeeze the council, have tried to silence our voice and have tried in every community to discredit us," said Kahn. "We will stand up to criticism on the basis of our precepts."

the American council's attitude on "whether we Jews who share the blessings of American citizenship must, or can in good conscience, disclaim responsibility for helping to provide a land of refuge and hope for distressed and persecuted Jews in other parts of the world."

The statement said that on this, as on every question of public concern, "every man is entitled to express his views freely and to answer to his own conscience for what he does or is unwilling to do."

### "Overstepped" Line

The Milwaukee Jewish council said that the present issue was "the overstepping of that line which separates legitimate argument and discussion, however vigorous, from illegitimate slurs and unwarranted imputations."

The statement contended that

official spokesmen for the American council "have by innuendo cast a cloud on the loyalty of American Jews who have demonstrated their sympathy with the people of Israel."

"Those same spokesmen have impugned the motives of literally millions of Americans, both Jewish and Christian, who believe that the state of Israel is the strongest hope for developing a democratic way of life and thus resisting the spread of communism in the middle east," the statement continued.

The Milwaukee Jewish council cited such "innuendoes suggesting the language of the anti-Semite" as "conspiratorial threat," "political obsession with the Jewish vote," and "have turned rabbis into puppets and made moral cowards of community leaders."

"Though insignificant in membership," the American Council for Judaism "is a potential threat to the good name of all the Jews," the statement declared.

It was pointed out that 90% of

the rabbis who originally led the American council had resigned, and that with that change, the program had shifted from a "religious to a political orientation." Failing to obtain "substantial support among the Jewish laity, it began to resort to more and more sensational methods of drawing attention to itself," said the statement.

Leaders of the Milwaukee Jewish council said that the statement was issued with regret and after long discussion. The Jewish council in Houston, Tex., took similar action against the American council last year, they said.

### "Anti-Zionist," He Says

He described the council as a "definitely" anti-Zionist organization. He said that in matters of middle eastern foreign policy, the American council supported the statements of Secretary of State Dulles and of Adlai E. Stevenson, 1952 Democratic nominee for president, "impartially," with "the best interests of the United States always in mind." Kahn said that some persons confused religion and nationality, and he said that the Zionist attitude "distorts religion by the inclusion of nationalism."

The Milwaukee Jewish council said it was not concerned with the American council's point of view regarding Israel, the Arab states or the middle east, or with

the American council's attitude on "whether we Jews who share the blessings of American citizenship must, or can in good conscience, disclaim responsibility for helping to provide a land of refuge and hope for distressed and persecuted Jews in other parts of the world."

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# Jewish Council Here Condemns American Council for Judaism

**Statement by Board of Local Group Classifies  
ACJ as One "Which Gives Aid and Comfort to  
the Anti-Semite and Is Unworthy of Respect"**

Charging that spokesmen for the American Council for Judaism "have impugned the motives of literally millions of Americans, both Jewish and Christian, who believe that the State of Israel is the strongest hope for developing a democratic way of life, and thus resisting the spread of Communism in the Middle East," the Board of the Milwaukee Jewish Council at its recent meeting adopted a statement condemning the American Council for Judaism for its methods. The methods described in the text of the statement included "innuendoes suggesting the language of the anti-Semite," "intemperate language and distortion of motives of Jews who disagree with them," and the "resort to more and more sensational methods of drawing attention to itself."

The statement was released by Lawrence S. Katz, president of the Milwaukee Jewish Council, to The Wisconsin Jewish Chronicle as the first vehicle to convey the local council's open and public censure of the Council for Judaism. The statement by the Milwaukee Jewish Council is believed to be one of the first and unprecedented actions in the Middle West in which an outright condemnation was voiced by a representative community organization of the activities of the ACJ.

The statement in full follows: "The Milwaukee Jewish Council is an organization which for fifteen years has worked to maintain and improve good human relations in our community; and therefore, is concerned with attacks which defame any group of people, whatever their race, color, religion or national origin.

Because of this responsibility we must refer to the organization called the American Council for Judaism and its activities. We wish to make it clear that the issue is not the point of view or platform of that organization, whether with respect to the State of Israel, the Arab States or the foreign policy of the United States in the Middle East; nor whether we Jews who share the blessings of American citizenship must, or can in good conscience, disclaim responsibility for helping to provide a land of refuge and hope for distressed and persecuted Jews in other parts of the world. Upon this, as upon every question of public concern, every man is entitled to express his views freely and to answer to his own conscience for what he does or is unwilling to do.

## Issue Defined

The issue, rather, is the overstepping of that line which separates legitimate argument and discussion, however vigorous, from illegitimate slurs and unwarranted imputations.

We have observed during the past five years, that with the resignation from the American Council for Judaism of ninety per cent of its original rabbinical leadership, its program has shifted from a religious to a political orientation. As it failed to obtain any substantial support among the Jewish laity, it began to resort to more and more sensational methods of drawing attention to itself. In press releases and in their speeches, official spokesmen for that organization have by innuendo cast a cloud on the loyalty of American Jews who have demonstrated their sympathy with the people of Israel. Those spokesmen have impugned the motives of literally millions of Americans, both Jewish and Christian, who believe that the State of Israel is the strongest hope for developing a democratic way of life, and thus

resisting the spread of Communism in the Middle East.

The statements of the American Council for Judaism include innuendoes suggesting the language of the anti-Semites — such as "conspiratorial threat," "political obsession with the Jewish vote," and "have turned rabbis into puppets and made moral cowards of community leaders."

Although advised by responsible Jewish community relations organizations of the pernicious effects of their methods upon good community relations, that organization has persisted in using these tactics.

## "Is Potential Threat"

Because of the use of intemperate language and distortion of motives of Jews who disagree with them, the American Council for Judaism has belied its own name; and, though insignificant in membership, is a potential threat to the good name of all Jews.

Accordingly, the Milwaukee

Jewish Council, consisting of representatives of the American Jewish Committee, the Jewish Labor Committee, the American Jewish Congress, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA and B'nai B'rith, together with members at large representative of a cross section of Milwaukee Jewry, feels impelled to condemn the American Council for Judaism for its methods, and to warn our co-religionists and all good citizens of our community that, by its transgression of the bounds of temperance and decency in discussion, the American Council for Judaism must be classified as an organization which gives aid and comfort to the anti-Semite and is unworthy of the respect or credence of men of good will."

## Copy Sent to Mr. Kahn

A local chapter, headed by Jack Kahn, estimated to number about 40 members, is in existence in Milwaukee. A copy of the Milwaukee Jewish Council's statement was sent to Mr. Kahn, according to a spokesman for the local Council.

The American Council for Judaism, in a self-described declaration "What Is the Council?" represents itself as "a national organization of Americans of the Jewish faith who believe the following: (1) Nationality and religion are separate and distinct. We reject any concept that all Jews outside Israel are in 'exile.' (2) The nationalism of Israel must be confined to the boundaries of that state. Its spokesmen, representatives, agencies and instrumentalities, agencies and instrumentalities. We are dedicated to extend the fullest philanthropic aid to our co-religionists and to suffering humanity everywhere. (4) No Jew or group of Jews can speak for, or represent, all the Jews in America."

Lessing J. Rosenwald is the national president of the Council.

## Growing Opposition Noted

A growing opposition towards the Council for Judaism has been extant in the Jewish community for some years. It reached a climax recently when on Jan. 27, Alfred M. Lilienthal, a prominent member of the ACJ spoke here before some 200 members of the Rotary Club at the Astor hotel. His appearance was not under the auspices of the Council for Judaism. In his address here, he followed the Council for Judaism line, claiming that the United States had embraced "a mos-

avored nation" policy towards Israel which threatened its own (the U. S.) and the world's security. Professing himself to the audience as a Jew, he decried "the threat of a Jewish vote" as influencing "politicians and policy in dealing with Israel."

The following evening, Mr. Lilienthal spoke before the Milwaukee Chapter of the ACJ at the Jewish Community Center.

In the wake of Mr. Lilienthal's speech — which Jewish members of Rotary described as anti-Zionist, anti-Israel and anti-Jewish — a meeting of representative leaders of the Milwaukee Jewish community was called by the Milwaukee Jewish Council. After high policy discussions by the ad hoc community group committee, which favored a public reprimand of the ACJ, the board of the Milwaukee Jewish Council formulated and approved the statement condemning the Council for Judaism.

#### Ad Hoc Committee Listed

The ad hoc committee included the following: Mr. Katz, Edward Prince, Rabbi Herbert A. Friedman, Rabbi Louis J. Swichkow, Elkan C. Voorsanger, Harry Kovenock, Bert C. Broude, Sidnev H. Sayles, Robert Gordon, Oscar Rozoff, Ben Barkin, Harry Bloch, Jr. and Richard Weil.

With the exception of Rabbi Friedman, Mr. Prince and Mr. Barkin, the members of the ad hoc committee are either members of the Milwaukee Jewish Council board or its staff.





# the American council for judaism

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### Executive Director

ELMER BERGER

March 9, 1954

Rabbi Herbert A. Friedman  
Congregation Emam-El B'ne Jesurun  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Dear Rabbi:

I enclose herewith a copy of a story from the Milwaukee Sentinel of March 6, 1954.

I would appreciate knowing whether this report quoted you correctly.

Sincerely yours,

*Gerald Blank*  
Gerald Blank  
Publicity Director

GB:ss

*1) suggest make Jew Council  
2) give more excerpts from document  
3) quote all my comments, not just newspaper story.*

*fall to Berlin*

## What is the Council?

A national organization maintaining an educational program dedicated to the universal tradition of Judaism and the increasing national, civic, cultural and social integration of Americans of Jewish faith. The Council affirms that: "nationality and religion are separate and distinct; our nationality is American; our religion is Judaism; our homeland is the U. S. A." Rejects the concept that the State of Israel is "The National Homeland of the Jewish people"; maintains that no Jew or group of Jews, including the spokesmen of Israel, can represent all Jews in America; and that the nationalism of Israel must be confined to its own boundaries.

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COPY

From the:

MILWAUKEE SENTINEL  
Saturday, March 6, 1954

RABBI PLEADS  
FOR PEACE IN  
JEWISH RIFT

A silencing of the "shrill, strident, vicious voices" that spoke up in the fight between the American Council of Judaism and the Milwaukee Jewish Council was asked Friday night by Rabbi Herbert A. Friedman.

Rabbi Friedman made the plea in a sermon at Sabbath services at Congregation Emanu-El B'ne Jesurun.

"I suggest we stop this spectacle of brothers fighting brothers — in public or in private," Rabbi Friedman told an audience that filled the large temple. "If we have differences or misunderstandings, I want us to discuss these within our own peoplehood and not before the eyes of the whole world."

The controversy resulted when the American Council of Judaism was accused of "giving aid and comfort to the anti-Semite" in a statement by the Milwaukee Jewish Council. The American Council professes to be an anti-Zionist organization holding that nationality and religion are separate.

Rabbi Friedman asked each side to temper its position, explaining that the controversy resulted from a difference in the viewpoint of each faction about Judaism.

"If there can be no understanding of minds," Rabbi Friedman said, "let there be silence."



# Pilgrim Congregational Church

2327 N. 52nd Street

Milwaukee 10, Wisconsin

REV. PAUL GIA RUSSO, MINISTER

Sunday evening.  
Jan 7 - 54

My dear Herbert:

Enjoyed myself tremendously on Friday evening.  
Impressed with your worship, and most grateful  
for your message. It was magnificently done.  
Its influence will be profound and for the good  
of all!

There comes a time in our lives when we begin  
to play the role of the father, more and more, while that  
of an aggressive or rebellious son diminishes. We are  
guardians of the entire family and must play the part  
of the understanding and compassionate father.

As Jack Kalin once said, "— if only he were not so  
damned good!" But I'm sure we both agree now  
that it's good that he is damned good.

We will get together soon and iron out some wrinkles  
to my edification.

Will ask the secretary of the Professional Men's Club,

Richard Krug who is Librarian at the Public Library -  
to send you an application for membership.  
You should be a member, and it is my privilege  
to recommend you. (\$20 first year, 12<sup>th</sup> thereafter).

Come on a Monday noon and enjoy the fellows.

I have found it most agreeable these past twelve  
years - the only club in the city, other than the ministerial  
union, that I belong to.

AMERICAN JEWISH  
ARCHIVE  
If you decide to join - we shall go together and  
I shall introduce you to the group. Rolf Baron still  
belongs and comes occasionally.

I envy your opportunity for greatness among  
your people! I feel certain that you will  
perform!

universals —

Yours in the

Paul H. Rans

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March 6, 1954

Rabbi Herbert A. Friedman  
Temple Emanu-El B'ne Jeshurun  
2419 East Kenwood Blvd.  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

My dear Herbert:

I have today addressed myself to Lindsay Hoben who is the Chief Editorial writer of the Milwaukee Journal as alike to Bill Evue who is the publisher of the Capitol Times and the owner of Station WIBA in Madison, as per copy of letter enclosed. The sermon in mimeograph form were but recently delivered.

I shall hear you tonight on the subject which I think is hardly of sufficient import to warrant the "sturm and drang" that is being made touching it. I am as by now you must know, anything but a "sha-sha" Jew. I question the wisdom of giving this lunatic fringe the publicity which is the very thing they crave and thrive on. Had my opinion been asked, I would have tried to avoid not so much the findings of the Milwaukee Jewish Council as -- their publication.

I talk to you on another matter. You have been sent a copy of Chaim Greenberg's "The Inner Eye". I think you know that the Jewish Frontier hopes to distribute this really magnificent volume in libraries, universities, Hillel Foundations, etc., et al. To that end I promised Pinchas Cruso that Milwaukee would raise some money, and I am wondering whether I can't ask you to make a contribution out of your very personal charity fund towards this cause.

I remind you that the number of people that will understand are limited. I fortunately consider you one of those who know the why-for. Call me at your convenience.

Now, with real affection for you, I am

Very sincerely yours,

RAH:esg

ROBERT A. HESS

Encl.

ROBERT A. HESS  
BEN L. CHERNOV

LAW OFFICES OF  
**HESS AND CHERNOV**  
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MILWAUKEE 3, WIS.

March 6, 1954

Mr. William Evans, Editor  
The Capitol Times  
Madison, Wisconsin

My dear Bill:

I am enclosing herewith a copy of a sermon delivered by Rabbi Herbert Friedman last Friday, the 26th of February. Because it is so timely, I would like very much that you read it, but more than that, I am wondering whether or not time couldn't be given on WIRA since a tape recording of this talk was made during the sermon.

It avails us nothing, my dear Bill, to bemoan the times -- unless we do something about it. I have in mind a very definite program of doing, the which I would like to discuss with you at your leisure.

Sure, there will be criticism. There was criticism from some of the more conservative members of the Temple, but I would like to remind them as I remind myself that our prophets in the days of old, were the ones that lifted loud their voices against the iniquities prevalent in the land.

And I hold it alike an act of courage and decency on the part of Friedman to play the distinguished role of a voice crying out against the present danger.

I would like awfully much your reaction as to what is here suggested, and now, with my kind good wishes, I am

Very sincerely yours,

RAH:eng

ROBERT A. HESS

Encl.

March 4, 1954

Dear Rabbi:

Will you forgive, in advance, my presumption in writing about the subject of your sermon tomorrow. My justification is our prayer for the masters and teachers in Israel "... zeal, yet not without mercy."

I feel free to say this because I have passed through the stages of scorn, contempt, indignation, at the attitudes and methods of A. C. J., and have finally reached the mood of rachmones; yes, mercy for those who are unable to share in the security and inward peace that comes from fully understanding and accepting oneself as a Jew and from appreciating, as well as often differing from, one's fellow-Jews everywhere.

May the spirit of Amos descend on you, so that your voice may help to bring our people together, including those who would otherwise separate themselves from the community.

Sincerely,  
Harry Kovenock

To Rabbi Herbert Friedman

# M J C

## MILWAUKEE JEWISH COUNCIL REGIONAL OFFICE of ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE of B'NAI B'RITH

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February 25, 1954

Dear Friend:

Pursuant to the action taken by the Board  
of the Milwaukee Jewish Council at its meeting  
of February 9, 1954, the attached is being sent  
to you for your information and that of your  
organization.

Sincerely yours,

*Lawrence S. Katz*  
LAWRENCE S. KATZ  
President

LSK:rg

### STATEMENT

The Milwaukee Jewish Council is an organization which for fifteen years has worked to maintain and improve good human relations in our community; and therefore, is concerned with attacks which defame any group of people, whatever their race, color, religion or national origin.

Because of this responsibility we must refer to the organization called the American Council for Judaism and its activities. We wish to make it clear that the issue is not the point of view or platform of that organization, whether with respect to the State of Israel, the Arab States or the foreign policy of the United States in the Middle East; nor whether we Jews who share the blessings of American citizenship must, or can in good conscience, disclaim responsibility for helping to provide a land of refuge and hope for distressed and persecuted Jews in other parts of the world. Upon this, as upon every question of public concern, every man is entitled to express his views freely and to answer to his own conscience for what he does or is unwilling to do.

The issue, rather, is the overstepping of that line which separates legitimate argument and discussion, however vigorous, from illegitimate slurs and unwarranted imputations.

We have observed during the past five years, that with the resignation from the American Council for Judaism of ninety per cent of its original rabbinical leadership, its program has shifted from a religious to a political orientation. As it failed to obtain any substantial support among the Jewish laity, it began to resort to more and more sensational methods of drawing attention to itself. In press releases and in their speeches, official spokesmen for that organization have by innuendo cast a cloud on the loyalty of American Jews who have demonstrated their sympathy with the people of Israel. Those same spokesmen have impugned the motives of literally millions of Americans,

both Jewish and Christian, who believe that the State of Israel is the strongest hope for developing a democratic way of life, and thus resisting the spread of Communism in the Middle East.

The statements of the American Council for Judaism include innuendoes suggesting the language of the anti-Semite -- such as "conspiratorial threat", "political obsession with the Jewish vote", and "have turned rabbis into puppets and made moral cowards of community leaders".

Although advised by responsible Jewish community relations organizations of the pernicious effects of their methods upon good community relations, that organization has persisted in using those tactics.

Because of the use of intemperate language and distortion of motives of Jews who disagree with them, the American Council for Judaism has belied its own name; and, though insignificant in membership, is a potential threat to the good name of all Jews.

Accordingly, the Milwaukee Jewish Council, consisting of representatives of the American Jewish Committee, the Jewish Labor Committee, the American Jewish Congress, the Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.A. and B'nai B'rith, together with members at large representative of a cross section of Milwaukee Jewry, feels impelled to condemn the American Council for Judaism for its methods, and to warn our co-religionists and all good citizens of our community that, by its transgression of the bounds of temperance and decency in discussion, the American Council for Judaism must be classified as an organization which gives aid and comfort to the anti-Semite and is unworthy of the respect or credence of men of good will.

February 9, 1954

## Zionists Here Attack 'Antis'

### Milwaukee Group Hits National Council for 'Intemperate Talk'

The methods of the anti-Zionist American Council for Judaism were condemned Friday by the Milwaukee Jewish council. The national group was organized in 1942 and opposed the creation of the Jewish state of Israel in Palestine.

The Milwaukee council, in a statement, warned members of the Jewish faith and "all good citizens of our community" that because it had gone beyond the "bounds of temperance and decency in discussion, the American Council for Judaism must be classified as an organization which gives aid and comfort to the anti-Semite and is unworthy of the respect or credence of men of good will."

The council, made up of individual members and representatives of the American Jewish congress, Jewish War Veterans and B'nai B'rith, is headed by Lawrence S. Katz, 4122 N. Newhall st., Shorewood. Katz said that the council represents more than 30,000 Milwaukee Jews.

#### Has 150 Members

The Milwaukee chapter of the American Council for Judaism is headed by Jack Kahn, 4737 N. Wilshire rd., Whitefish Bay. Kahn said the chapter had 150 local members.

Kahn had not read the Milwaukee Jewish council statement Friday morning. He said, however, that from a "brief description of it, it sounds Zionist inspired."

[Zionism is the term applied to the modern Jewish movement to establish a national home for Jews in Palestine, the "land of Zion."]

"In recent months, they have tried to squelch the council, have tried to silence our voice and have tried in every community to discredit us," said Kahn. "We will stand up to criticism on the basis of our precepts."

#### "Anti-Zionist," He Says

He described the council as a "definitely" anti-Zionist organization. He said that in matters of middle eastern foreign policy, the American council supported the statements of Secretary of State Dulles and of Adlai E. Stevenson, 1952 Democratic nominee for president, "impartially," with "the best interests of the United States always in mind." Kahn said that some persons confused religion and nationality, and he said that the Zionist attitude "distorts religion by the inclusion of nationalism."

The Milwaukee Jewish council said it was not concerned with the American council's point of view regarding Israel, the Arab states or the middle east, or with



A Milwaukee boy here this week, Arena by an old

## City's Transit Quiz Sp

### Board of 11 in Proposal Common Co

Establishment of a transit study commission an answer to Milwaukee transportation problems to the common council Mayor Zeidler.

The mayor announced his mission proposal last night. The proposal was ironed out with other city officials the last several days. Zeidler had his first assistant city manager prepare a resolution to submit to the common council. Ald. Mills (3rd ward), co-chairman, said that he would introduce the measure.

#### Board Is Out

As outlined in the commission would be public and government members. Public members include two persons of finance and two persons with business background; two non-resident public, and one representative of the mayor's office.

City represents the city attorney, a