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

Series C: Interreligious Activities. 1952-1992

Box 45, Folder 1, Saliba, Philip [Archbishop], 1968-1971.

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

date March 1, 1971
to Marc Tanenbaum
from Milton Ellerin
subject Archbishop Philip Saliba

PERSONAL & CONFIDENTIAL

It is as yet too early to say whether or not my trip to Atlanta in search of documentation against Saliba was or was not successful. What is important now is the promised follow through. As I see it the most damaging allegations against Saliba for which we lacked proof were: (1) That his Bishopric was obtained by bribery, (2) That he is an atheist and sought his present position for political rather than religious purposes, (3) That he is of questionable moral character and a seducer of women, and (4) That within the last ten years he belonged to PPS, a pro-Fascist organization, and the Cedars of Lebanon, an alleged anti-Jewish organization headquartered in Lebanon.

I spent a long afternoon with an individual knowledgeable about Saliba's background. At this point let me say that he is impressive, credible and cooperative, attributes which may be helpful should we desire to take a certain course of action. More about that subsequently.

1. With reference to the allegation that he purchased his See, our source swears that there are witnesses to the actual transfer of money, one of whom at least will be willing to sign an affidavit to that effect.
2. With reference to the charges of atheism and his low moral character, hopefully we will soon have (a) letters in Saliba's own handwriting which set forth at length his innermost feelings, which reveal him to be a non-believer and a political operator; if our source follows through we should have these letters, most of which are in Arabic but a few in English, in our possession shortly.
3. Hopefully in the next few weeks we should have in our possession personal affidavits regarding his dishonesty and low moral character. Manifestly it is virtually impossible to get documentation concerning Saliba's alleged seductions; since there are only two parties to such an act one has to be willing to testify or furnish an affidavit. For the purposes of documenting these charges, however, some discreet inquiries will be undertaken by our source to see whether or not any of the women allegedly involved with Saliba would sign affidavits. Realistically, I don't think this line of inquiry will be productive but at least we are going to make the effort.

Marc Tanenbaum

March 1, 1971

4. Proof of Saliba's membership in and the nature of PPS and the Cedars of Lebanon organizations exist, if at all, in Lebanon. Our source promised to contact immediately friends in Lebanon who hopefully would be in a position to come up with that proof.

It is obvious from the foregoing that corroboration or documentation for the case against Saliba is yet to be obtained. I will of course follow the attempts to obtain the information very closely. I think it important that you and I sit down as soon as possible to discuss the advisability of having our informant meet face to face with the appropriate people at the National Council of Churches. As I indicated at the beginning of this memorandum he is impressive. More importantly he is willing to do so. One other factor - it may be possible additionally to arrange a face to face meeting with the NCC people and a rival bishop, bearing in mind that the NCC people are undoubtedly aware that there is a serious split in the Antiochian Christian community.

A word about Frank Maria. We were unable to develop anything useful on Maria. It appears that he is nothing more than Saliba's flunky who does his bidding as ordered. If this fact is of itself of some importance we can develop it further.

In any event, let's talk.

ME/1k

cc: Bertram H. Gold
Seymour Samet
Charles Wittenstein

Rough Translation from Arabic - published article in El Hayat (Beirut)
May 28, 1968

ARCHBISHOP SALIBA : "TALKING ACTION IN THE MATTER OF PALESTINE DOES
NOT LEAD TO A POSITIVE RESULT"

by the Special Representative of El Hayat:

Metropolitan Phillip Saliba, the Archbishop of New York and all of North America of the Syrian Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese, held a press conference in which he announced the establishment of a general Arab Conference in 1970 in the mother homeland, its goal the strengthening of the relations between the immigrants [i.e. Arabs who have immigrated into the United States] and the residents more and more. Also on this occasion a college will be dedicated near Deir Belmond which will be the first of its kind in the Arab countries. Archbishop Antonios Bashir has donated \$250,000 for its construction.

Archbishop Saliba also mentioned that because of his sensitivity towards the Arab problem in general and the Palestinian problem in particular, he has established a special organization in Beirut which will use its energy to teach some of the awakened students. [see names below] In answering the questions of reporters Archbishop Saliba said that the Arab immigrants are engaged in large scale activities for the defense of the Arab case, but that their capabilities are limited by lack of adequate means. The most important needs are organization and money. He added that it is the duty of the Arab nations to contribute not less than 20 million dollars to establish information centers in U.S. cities. The Arab nationals who are in America will be in charge of these centers, because they know how to talk to the American mind and they can penetrate it.

In reply to another question Archbishop Saliba said that action limited to talking and speechmaking in the matter of Palestine cannot possibly lead to a positive result. "I have not seen since I came to the Middle East and after the period that followed the June 5 war any political or military strong planning to face the Israeli aggression and this calls for sorrow indeed."

Archbishop Saliba concluded by declaring that "there is a historical hatred on the part of the Jews toward Islam and Christianity to the same extent, and I believe that Israel will never be satisfied with the borders that she has reached now."

The Committee of the Organization for teaching Arab Nationalism consists of: Archbishop Elia El-Salibi (chairman); members: Archbishop Phillip Kurban, Archbishop Phillip Saliba, Dr. Constantine Zureiq; Architect Antoine Maalouf, George Medri (for Syria); Simaan Daood (for Jordan); Mansour Lahham (for America).



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S.F. Chronicle 9/22/70
A Voice in Behalf
of the Palestinians
By E. TANENBAUM, FINE, ELLERIN

Clip this
→ TANENBAUM
RUBIN
STROBER
H.T.

Dr. Frank Maria of Warner, N.E., a consultant in the science of human behavior, offered here yesterday a view of the Middle East crisis that he said is rarely seen or heard in any segment of the American news media.

This was a pro-Arab view.

"The great irony of Israel," he said, "is that the Israelis treat Christians and Moslems the way Hitler treated the Jews."

COUNCIL

Dr. Maria came here for a series of talks after attending a meeting in Phoenix of the general board, National Council of Churches, representing 33 denominations, including his own, the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Church of New York and All North America (oldest, he said, of the Christian sects).

The council's board, he said, passed a resolution submitted by him that said in part:

"We believe that unjustified actions of extremist groups should not blind world opinion to the plight of the Palestinian people; that their voice, grievances and rights should have full place in the negotiating process..."

CREATION

He said the creation of Israel was a steal and a slaughter, much as if millions of Asians had moved into the Southwest corner of England, including London, and forced the English to flee into the Scottish Highlands.

"They did not move into a desert and make it bloom, as they said," Dr. Maria said. "It had already been made to bloom, for centuries by the Palestinians, the world's greatest agriculturists."

He said the United Nations had twice, last year and the year before, unanimously passed resolutions demanding that Israel withdraw from Jerusalem, but that Israel blithely ignores the U.N.

WEAPON

"Israel's great weapon," he said, "is the fait accompli. She is taking the homes

of the Christians and Moslems — the predominant population of Jerusalem — and moving in Jews, and when the Jews predominate, she will say, 'what's all the fuss about?'"

"The only nations that support Israel in this crisis are the United States, Israel and Rhodesia."

Dr. Maria said he could not understand all the furor over the Palestinian guerrilla hijackings.

"The 300 passengers all said they had a great time and the pilots said it was a new experience for them," he said. "The American press made blazing headlines out of this, but never said a word over the years when Israel was slaughtering Palestinians by the million, or chasing them out of their homes."

News Circle, 6/74

Syrian Award to H.E. Philip Saliba

H.E. Metropolitan Philip Saliba in the name of the Archdiocese presented \$175,000 to Syria's President Hafez Assad as a symbolic participation in the common struggle for defending human rights and the pursuit of a just peace. President Assad to Metropolitan Philip: "Tell the American people we want peace not war, but peace and not surrender."

On April 14, 1974, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Philip Saliba, Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archbishop of New York and all North America, embarked on one of the most historic missions of his episcopate. Accompanied by a delegation of clergy and laymen, the Archbishop visited Lebanon, Syria and Jordan.

The purpose of the trip was threefold: to attend the Spring Session of the Holy Synod of Antioch; to distribute scholarship aid from the Archdiocesan Foundation to Palestinian refugee students; and to visit the government of Syria and present the funds collected in the Archdiocese for Syrian Relief.

The delegation was greeted at the Beirut airport by governmental and religious leaders. Immediately His Eminence plunged into a relentless round of activities which began

Continued on page 11

Metropolitan Saliba... *news Circ, 6/74*

Continued from page 1



Visiting the President of Lebanon: (from left) Rt. Rev. Ellis Khouri; H.E. Souleiman Franjich, President of Lebanon; H.E. Metropolitan Saliba.

with a provocative press conference in Beirut. The Archbishop outlined to the press the purpose of his visit, his grave concern over recent events in the Middle East and chided the Arab leaders for the lack of an adequate Arab public relations program in the United States.

Proceeding to Damascus, Metropolitan Philip presented a check for \$175,000 to the President of Syria, Hafez Assad, in the name of the Archdiocese. His Eminence commented, "Mr. President, this amount is not valuable as a drop of martyr's blood shed for this country. But we want you to consider it as a symbolic participation in the common struggle for defending human rights and the pursuit of a just peace."

President Hafez Assad told Metropolitan Philip how impressed he was by his spiritual leadership and dedication to the cause of human dignity and urged His Eminence "to tell the American people that we want peace not war... but peace and not surrender."

In Lebanon and Jordan, His Eminence visited universities, colleges and schools distributing 50,000 Lebanese pounds in scholar-

ship aid to worthy Palestinian students from the Archdiocesan foundation in Beirut.

During his sojourn in the Middle East, Metropolitan Philip and his delegation were officially hosted by the governments, civic and religious leaders. All the visits and meetings were widely covered by the news media which left a profound impact on the people.

After the Archbishop met with President Hafez Assad, he was presented with the highest Syrian Award by the Deputy Foreign Minister of Syria. His Eminence responded: "This decoration should be given to the fighting soldiers on the Golan Heights." Upon conferring with the President of Lebanon, Souleiman Franjich, the Archbishop was decorated with the Cedars Gold Medal by Takidin Solh, Prime Minister of Lebanon, for his services to all the suffering peoples of the Middle East.

Having accomplished this portion of his mission, the Archbishop met with His Beatitude, Patriarch Elias IV, in Damascus and later attended the official sessions of the Holy Synod of Antioch and discussed many problems related to the future destiny of the Antiochian Orthodox Church in North America.

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The public announcement of the nomination of Bishop Philip Saliba to serve as a Vice-President of the National Council of Churches has produced a sense of shock and outrage among those who are acquainted with his membership in a pro-Nazi party, his anti-Semitic activity, as well as his personal behavior involving sexual immorality and embezzlement of church funds. The National Council of Churches is exposing itself to a national and international public scandal if Saliba is elected to this high office.

The following documentation against Philip Saliba is a set of letters that have been published in summary form in the "American Review of Eastern Orthodoxy", New York, Vol. 13, Number 3, March, 1967.

In addition, information comes from a clergy source who for many years was close to Bishop Philip Saliba, and who apparently has been privy to much inside information: Philip Saliba has been an active member in the pro-Nazi PPS (Parti Populaire Syrien), having joined the Party at an early age. He became a devoted follower of its founder, Antoun Saade. To intimates Saliba has expressed complete agreement with Saade's motto: "We have only one enemy, that is the Jews." Saliba attended the conventions and meetings of the PPS beginning in 1948 or 1949.

In 1955 and 1956, one year prior to his coming to the United States, Saliba joined an anti-Jewish Lebanese organization whose name, roughly translated, is "Every Citizen a Guard", which was led by Dr. Bechara Dahan. At the same time Saliba became a secret agent for Iraq, and was paid by the military attache of the Iraqi Embassy in Beirut, who was then Samraii.

Saliba came to Detroit and was a student from 1956-1959. In 1959, he became a priest and served in Cleveland until 1964. In Cleveland, Saliba made his home a refuge for militant members of the PPS including Captain Mahmoud Nehme of Syria, who was killed in Beirut in 1961 during an attempt to assassinate the President of Lebanon.

In February, 1966, Bishop Bashir died in New York leaving \$1,800,000 in banks and bonds, all Diocesan money. With the assistance of Mansour Laham, a lay leader of the Diocese, Saliba became Bashir's successor by appropriating a large portion of the money left by Bashir, and by bribing the Bishops and Patriarch Theodosius VI in Syria and Lebanon to appoint Saliba.

While serving as a parish priest in Cleveland, Saliba's reputation as seducer of women was notorious in the Arab community. He is alleged to have had an affair with Adriane Fadel, daughter of a prominent Lebanese. Miss Fadel's father is reported to have threatened Saliba with a gun after having learned of Saliba's affair with his daughter. The report further suggests that Saliba committed adultery with the following women in his Cleveland parish: Eleanor Aburejelli, a Sunday School teacher, Elaine Deeb and Alsace George.

A clergy intimate asserts that Saliba "does not believe in God...in the Dogmas...in the Church as an institution." An informed source reports that today Saliba is using his exalted office to spread hatred against Jews and to urge Arabs in a Holy War against Israel. He seeks to replace native-born American priests and those of Greek or Slavonic backgrounds with Syrian Arab priests with experience in Middle East politics for the purpose of making them Arab propagandists in the United States.



Saliba's article was published in Al Rakib (the Beirut Monitor), No. 2701, September 15, 1969, entitled: "From New York, A Message Oh! Salah Eddin" (Saladin) urging the Arabs to Al-Jihad, to the Holy War against the Jews. (A copy of the clipping, published in Arabic, is attached.)

A translation of the article follows:

"Since the feet of prostitution touched the holy land, we have tasted, Oh, Salah, nothing but the taste of ashes.

Today is Al-Aksa, tomorrow the Holy Nativity (holy birth-place of Christ) and the day after tomorrow the Holy Sepulchre (Holy Tomb) that Omar has loved. The chronic hatred explodes in fire against all that is beautiful in both Christianity and Islam.

They burn Al-Aksa, and stain the land Christ has blessed with His blood, while we waste our time and amuse, humiliating ourselves at the steps of the United Nations, begging compassion from the nations of the earth, like dogs.

When the winds of the pride of the desert hit us, we meet in Khartoum or Cairo, to give a speech or make a statement, as we have not yet understood that on only one drop of blood of a martyr is more expressive of our right than one thousand speeches and a million of threats.

A demonstration in Damascus, A march in Beirut. A speech in Cairo and a statement from Riad, and that is all. This

is the situation with kings and presidents.

But the summit meetings, whether Arabic or Islamic, have been in vain and fruitless and will be, if we do not climb first that summit in our souls.

To what end this people will applaud and outcry "long live" for those who have betrayed them and sold out their honor? To what extent those peoples will bow to their whippers. (those who whip them).

What will we say to the martyrs of Kadissiah and heroes of Hattin (where SALAH EDDIN defeated the Crusaders) when the court of history will gather us together.

OMAR IBN EL KHATAB, KHALEK IBN EL WALID and TAREK IBN ZIAD, are in wrath and rebelliousness in their graves. I wish their bones would cry.

What will we say to the future Arab generations, Oh, Salah Eddin, when they ask us about Mohamed and the Calvary?

What will we say: ask the kings and the presidents? Ask the United Nations? Or ask Moscow, Washington, or London or Paris? What? What shall we say to the future Arab generations.

Will they believe what history will say about us? Will they believe that a bunch (sp.) of "wicked of the horizons" or

"odds of the horizons" (Remark: an Arab expression that means the Jews) have stepped on the necks of millions of Arabs. Will they believe that our battle with the enemy was a battle of riots, lies and meaningless speeches? A defeat in the fortieth, a defeat in the fiftieth, a defeat in the sixtieth and your God knows better what destiny has in store for us in the seventies.

Every Arabic face that lives this humiliating black period of our history deserves a thousand spits. The shame that is not washed away with blood, will be washed away with spits when we will meet, with the future Arab generations in the court of history."

