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### **MS-4787: Abba Hillel Silver Papers, 1902-1989.**

Series I: General Correspondence, 1914-1969, undated.

Sub-series A: Alphabetical, 1914-1965, undated.

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American Council for Judaism, including 1943 statement of ACJ  
position opposing establishment of a national Jewish state in  
Palestine, 1943-1944.

*A Council for J.*

RABBI SAMUEL WOHL  
CINCINNATI, OHIO

March 12, 1943

(Private and confidential)

Dr. Abba Hillel Silver  
The Temple  
E. 105th St. and Ansel Road  
Cleveland, Ohio

Dear Dr. Silver:

I have received some information that the gentlemen of the American Council for Judaism will try to use the Convention of the Union, which is to be held soon in New York, as a forum for their views, believing as they do that the lay members of the Union are anti-Zionist. The program as sent out by the Union Office ignores the controversy.

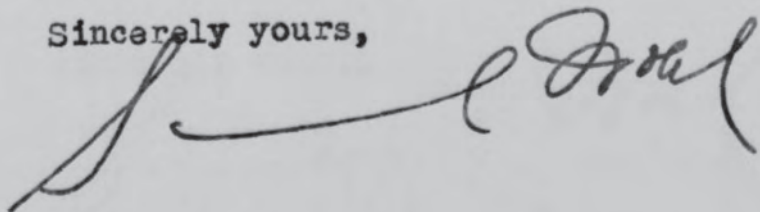
Some of the New York heavyweights, with their colleagues from Philadelphia and Baltimore, will be prepared to do all they can.

It has occurred to me that some of us ought to be equally prepared, - not only by attending all the sessions of the Convention, but to see to it that some of our laymen are of the type who will defend our point of view, and that no damage is done.

Since the selection of delegates is rather loose, and is generally done by appointment of the Presidents of the local congregations, you may see to it that certain people should go there, so that the Union may remain friendly to our cause.

With all good wishes to you and yours, I am

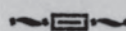
Sincerely yours,



SW:AS



# The American Council for Judaism, Inc.



RABBI ELMER BERGER  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
1001 KEYSTONE STATE BLDG.  
1321 ARCH STREET  
PHILADELPHIA 7, PENNA.

RECEIVED	
NOTED BY	REFER TO
AUG 30 1943	
ANSWERED	

August 27, 1943

The Editor  
Independent Jewish Press Service, Inc.  
207 - 4th Avenue  
New York, N. Y.

Dear Sir:

The enclosed release represents the official position of the American Council for Judaism, Inc., together with a listing of its officers and the endorsements of representative Jews from all over the country.

Together with the release I am enclosing the complete text of the Council's statement together with a list of some of the outstanding Jews who have endorsed its position.

Any consideration that you may give this release will be greatly appreciated.

Very truly yours,

Rabbi Elmer Berger, Executive Secretary  
THE AMERICAN COUNCIL FOR JUDAISM, Inc.



STATEMENT  
of  
THE AMERICAN COUNCIL FOR JUDAISM, INC.

The American Council for Judaism, Inc. was organized to present the views of Americans of Jewish faith on problems affecting the future of their own lives and the lives of world Jewry in the present hour of world confusion.

The Council reaffirms the historic truth that the Jews of the world share common traditions and ethical concepts which find their derivation in the same religious source. For countless generations, "Hear, O Israel, The Lord our God, the Lord is One", has been the universal cry that has united all Jews in trial and tribulation, in suffering, hunger and want, in despair - and in achievement. It is still the concept which distinguishes Jews as a religious group.

Racist theories and nationalistic philosophies, that have become prevalent in recent years, have caused untold suffering to the world and particularly to Jews. Long ago they became obsolete as realities in Jewish history; they remain only as a reaction to discrimination and persecution. In the former crises of Israel in ancient Palestine, the Prophets placed God and the moral law above land, race, nation, royal prerogatives and political arrangements. Now, as then, we cherish the same religious values which emphasize the dignity of man and the obligation to deal justly with him no matter what his status.

As Americans of Jewish faith we believe implicitly in the fundamentals of democracy, rooted, as they are, in moralities that transcend race and state, and endow the individual with rights for which he is answerable only to God. We are thankful to be citizens of a country and to have shared in the building of a nation conceived in a spirit which knows neither special privilege nor inferior status for any man.

For centuries Jews have considered themselves nationals of those countries in which they have lived. Whenever free to do so, they have assumed, and will again assume, full responsibilities of citizenship in accordance with the ancient Jewish



command, "The law of the land is the law". Those countries in which Jews have lived have been their homes; those lands their homelands. In those nations where political action was expressed through minority groups, the Jew, following the law of his land, accepted minority status, thereby frequently gaining an improvement over previous conditions of inferior citizenship. Such East European concepts, however, have resulted in a misunderstanding, shared by Jews and non-Jews, a misunderstanding which we seek to dispel. American Jews hope that in the peace for which all of us pray, that the old principle of minority rights will be supplanted by the more modern principle of equality and freedom for the individual. The interest of American Jews in the individual Jew in countries where the minority right principle prevailed is not to be confused with acceptance of this East European political concept.

As a result of the bigotry, sadism, and ambitions for world conquest of the Axis powers, millions of our co-religionists who had homes in and were nationals of other lands have been violently deported and made victims of indescribable barbarism. No other group has been so brutishly attacked and for one reason only - on the false claims that there are racial barriers or nationalistic impulses that separate Jews from other men.

The plight of those Jews together with millions of oppressed fellowmen of all faiths, calls for the profoundest sympathy and the unbounded moral indignation of all free men. The restoration of these broken lives to the status and dignity of men endowed by God with inalienable rights, is one of the primary objectives of the peace to come as expressed in the Atlantic Charter and the Four Freedoms of President Roosevelt. We believe that the Jew will rise or fall with the extension or contraction of the great liberal forces of civilization. By relying upon the broad, religious principles inherent in a democracy and implementing them wherever possible, we join our forces with those of all lovers of freedom; strengthened, in that we do not stand segregated and alone upon exclusive demands.



We ask that the United Nations secure the earliest feasible repatriation or resettlement under the best possible conditions of all peoples uprooted from their homes by the Axis powers, and that even in the face of obvious and discouraging obstacles the United Nations persevere in their efforts to provide immediate sanctuary for refugees of all faiths, political beliefs and national origins. We believe that wherever possible the forced emigres should be repatriated in their original homelands under conditions which will enable them to live as free, up-standing individuals.

For our fellow Jews we ask only this: Equality of rights and obligations with their fellow-nationals. In our endeavors to bring relief to our stricken fellow Jews, and to help rebuild their lives on a more stable basis, we rely wholly upon the principles of freedom, justice and humanity, which are fundamental to both democracy and religion, and which have been declared as the principles which shall prevail in the better world for which the United Nations are fighting. We ally ourselves with those who believe this war will not have been fought in vain, that the mistakes of the last peace will not be duplicated.

Palestine has contributed in a tangible way to the alleviation of the present catastrophe in Jewish life by providing a refuge for a part of Europe's persecuted Jews. We hope it will continue as one of the places for such resettlement, for it has been clearly demonstrated that practical colonizing can be done, schools and universities built, scientific agriculture extended, commerce intensified and culture developed. This is the record of achievement of eager, hardworking settlers who have been aided in their endeavors by Jews all over the world, in every walk of life and thought.

We oppose the effort to establish a National Jewish State in Palestine or anywhere else as a philosophy of defeatism, and one which does not offer a practical solution of the Jewish problem. We dissent from all those related doctrines that



stress the racialism, the nationalism and the theoretical homelessness of Jews. We oppose such doctrines as inimical to the welfare of Jews in Palestine, in America, or wherever Jews may dwell. We believe that the intrusion of Jewish national statehood has been a deterrent in Palestine's ability to play an even greater role in offering a haven for the oppressed, and that without the insistence upon such statehood, Palestine would today be harboring more refugees from Nazi terror. The very insistence upon a Jewish Army has led to the raising of barriers against our unfortunate brethren. There never was a need for such an army. There has always been ample opportunity for Jews to fight side by side with those of other faiths in the armies of the United Nations.

Palestine is a part of Israel's religious heritage, as it is a part of the heritage of two other great religions of the world. We look forward to the ultimate establishment of a democratic, autonomous government in Palestine, wherein Jews, Moslems and Christians shall be justly represented; every man enjoying equal rights and sharing equal responsibilities; a democratic government in which our fellow Jews shall be free Palestinians whose religion is Judaism, even as we are Americans whose religion is Judaism.

We invite all Jews to support our interpretation of Jewish life and destiny in keeping with the highest traditions of our faith. We believe these truths provide the basis for every program of a more hopeful future put forth by free men. To proclaim those views at this time, we believe, is to express the abiding faith, shared by a great number of our fellow Jews, that in the fruits of victory of the United Nations all, regardless of faith, will share alike. It is also, we believe, to render a service to the task of clarifying the hopes and the purposes for which this war is being fought by free men everywhere.



American Council for Judaism, Inc.  
1321 Arch Street, Philadelphia, Pa.

AUGUST 31, 1943

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

A statement appealing to the United Nations to "secure the earliest feasible repatriation or resettlement under the best possible conditions of all peoples uprooted from their homes by the Axis powers" was made public today by the American Council for Judaism, Inc., over the signatures of Lessing J. Rosenwald, Philadelphia, Frank Sulzberger, Chicago, Dr. Monroe Deutsch, Berkley, Calif., E. P. Adler, Davenport, Iowa, Joseph M. Bloch, Indianapolis, Dr. M. G. Seelig, St. Louis, Julius L. Stern, Wilkes-Barre, William Frank, Pittsburgh, William Ehrlich, Boston, Mrs. Sidney C. Borg, New York, Lincoln Gries, Akron, Ohio, Aaron Straus, Baltimore, George Oppenheimer, Kansas City, Dr. Samuel Goldenson, New York, Rabbi Irving Reichert, San Francisco, and other Jewish leaders from all over the country.

"For our fellow-Jews", the statement says, "we ask only this: equality of rights and obligations with their fellow-nationals". Along with this appeal the statement opposes the establishment of a national Jewish state "as a philosophy of defeatism" and expresses the hope "for the ultimate establishment of a democratic, autonomous government in Palestine wherein Jews, Moslems and Christians shall be justly represented; every man enjoying equal rights and sharing equal responsibilities; a democratic government in which our fellow-Jews shall be free Palestineans whose religion is Judaism, even as we are Americans whose religion is Judaism".

The statement was issued as a declaration of principles of the recently organized American Council for Judaism, Inc., formed "to present the views of Americans of Jewish faith on problems affecting the future of world Jewry as well as their own lives in the present hour of world confusion." The Council reaffirms the historic truth that the Jews of the world share common traditions and ethical concepts which find their derivation in the same religious source. For countless generations, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One", has been the universal cry that has united all Jews in trial and tribulation, in suffering, hunger and want, in despair -



and in achievement. It is still the concept which distinguishes the Jews as a religious group."

Decrying racist theories and nationalistic philosophies as having caused untold suffering, particularly to Jews, the statement declares that such theories "long ago became obsolete as realities in Jewish history and remain now only as a reaction to discrimination and persecution.

"As Americans of Jewish faith we believe implicitly in the fundamentals of democracy, rooted as they are in moralities that transcend race and state, and endow the individual with rights for which he is answerable only to God. We are thankful to be citizens of a country and to have shared in the building of a nation conceived in a spirit which knows neither special privilege nor inferior status for any man.

"For centuries Jews have considered themselves nationals of those countries in which they have lived. Whenever free to do so, they have assumed full responsibilities of citizenship in accordance with the ancient Jewish command, 'The law of the land is the law'. Those countries in which Jews have lived have been their homes; those lands their homelands."

Expressing profound concern over the tragedy of European Jewry, the statement says, "As a result of the bigotry, sadism and ambitions for world conquest of the Axis powers, millions of our co-religionists who had homes in and were nationals of other lands have been violently deported and made victims of indescribable barbarism. No other group has been so brutishly attacked, and for one reason only -- on the false claims that there are racial barriers or nationalistic impulses that separate Jews from other men.

"The plight of these Jews together with millions of oppressed fellow-men of all faiths, calls for the profoundest sympathy and the unbounded moral indignation of all free men. The restoration of these broken lives to the status and dignity of men endowed by God with inalienable rights, is one of the primary objectives of



the peace to come as expressed in the Atlantic Charter and the Four Freedoms of President Roosevelt. By relying upon the broad, religious principles inherent in a democracy and implementing them wherever possible, we join our forces with those of all lovers of freedom; strengthened, in that we do not stand segregated and alone upon exclusive demands.

"In our endeavors to bring relief to our stricken fellow-Jews and to help rebuild their lives on a more stable basis, we rely wholly upon the principles of freedom, justice and humanity which are fundamental to both democracy and religion and which have been declared as the principles which shall prevail in the better world for which the United Nations are fighting."

Seeking to clarify the confusion that exists in many minds regarding Palestine, the Council differentiates between Palestine as a haven of refuge or a place of resettlement and the transformation of Palestine into a Jewish national state. "Palestine has contributed in a tangible way to the alleviation of the present catastrophe in Jewish life by providing a refuge for a part of Europe's persecuted Jews. We hope that it will continue as one of the places for such resettlement.

"We oppose the effort to establish a national Jewish state in Palestine or anywhere else as a philosophy of defeatism and one which does not offer a practical solution of the Jewish problem. We believe that the intrusion of Jewish national statehood has been a deterrent in Palestine's ability to play an even greater role in offering a haven of refuge for the oppressed and that without the insistence upon such statehood, Palestine would today be harboring more refugees from Nazi terror. The very insistence upon a Jewish army led to the raising of barriers against our unfortunate brethren. There never was need for such an army. There has always been ample opportunity for Jews to fight side by side with those of other faiths in the armies of the United Nations.

"To proclaim these views at this time," the statement concludes, "is to express the abiding faith, shared by a great number of our fellow-Jews, that in the fruits



of victory of the United Nations all, regardless of faith, will share alike. It is also, we believe, to render a service to the task of clarifying the hopes and the purposes for which this war is being fought by free men everywhere."

Officers of the American Council for Judaism, Inc., were announced as follows: Lessing J. Rosenwald, Philadelphia, President; Rabbi Louis Binstock, Chicago, Fred F. Florence, Dallas, Ralph W. Mack, Cincinnati, Rabbi Irving F. Reichert, San Francisco, [REDACTED] New York and Rabbi Louis Wolsey, Philadelphia, vice-Presidents; D. Hays Solis-Cohen, Philadelphia, Treasurer and Rabbi Elmer Berger, Philadelphia, Executive Director. The Council's headquarters are in Philadelphia.

*Among those who have endorsed the Council's platform are:*





ALABAMA

Adolph Weil, Montgomery

ARKANSAS

Noland Blass, Little Rock

Rabbi Ira Sanders, Little Rock

CALIFORNIA

Joseph P. Loeb, Los Angeles

Dr. Monroe Deutsch, San Francisco

Grover A. Magnin, San Francisco

Harry Camp, San Francisco

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Julius I. Peyser

FLORIDA

Rabbi Samuel H. Baron, Ft. Lauderdale

P. W. Zacharias, Jacksonville

Rabbi David Zielonka, Tampa

GEORGIA

Rabbi David Marx, Atlanta

Armand May, Atlanta

Sidney L. Wellhouse, Atlanta

Rabbi George Solomon, Savannah

ILLINOIS

Rabbi Abram Hirshberg, Chicago

Frank Sulzberger, Chicago

Harold Schradzke, Chicago

INDIANA

Rabbi Milton Greenwald, Evansville

Joseph M. Bloch, Indianapolis

Rabbi Maurice M. Feuerlicht,  
Indianapolis

IOWA

E. P. Adler, Davenport

KENTUCKY

Jay D. Weil, Lexington

Rabbi Joseph Rauch, Louisville

LOUISIANA

Herbert S. Benjamin, Baton Rouge

Rabbi Julian B. Feibelman, New Orleans

Leon Heyman, New Orleans

Eldon S. Lazarus, New Orleans

Charles Rosen, New Orleans

Leon S. Cahn, New Orleans

MARYLAND

Rabbi Morris S. Lazaron, Baltimore

Rabbi William Rosenau, Baltimore

Aaron Strauss, Baltimore

MASSACHUSETTS

Sidney Dreyfus, Boston

William Ehrlich, Boston

I. Marks, Boston

Irving Zieman, Boston

MICHIGAN

John J. Brazy, Flint

Lt. Myron Winegarden (j.g.) U.S.N.R.

Flint

Norman Buckner, Pontiac

MISSISSIPPI

Rabbi Stanley Brav, Vicksburg

Henry Kline, Vicksburg

MISSOURI

Arthur J. Freund, St. Louis

Benjamin M. Loeb, St. Louis

Isadore Loeb, St. Louis

Aaron Rauh, St. Louis

Dr. M. G. Seelig, St. Louis

Ernest W. Stix, St. Louis

George Oppenheimer, Kansas City

NEW MEXICO

Rabbi Solomon E. Starrels, Albuquerque

NEW YORK

Gates B. Aufmesser, Albany

Marion R. Ascoli, New York

Mrs. Sidney C. Borg, New York

Rabbi Samuel H. Goldenson, New York

Arthur J. Goldsmith, New York

Henry S. Hendricks, New York

Alfred Rheinstein, New York

Rabbi Jerome Rosenbloom, New York

Rabbi Hyman J. Schachtel, New York

Prof. Elizabeth V. L. Stern, New York

Sidney J. Weinberg, New York

Ralph Wolf, New York

NEW JERSEY

Rabbi Solomon Foster, Newark

NORTH CAROLINA

Ceasar Cone, Greensboro



#### OHIO

Jerome Dauby, Akron  
Lincoln Gries, Akron  
Dr. Abraham Cronbach, Cincinnati  
Philip Meyers, Cincinnati  
Rabbi David Philipson, Cincinnati  
Rabbi Victor E. Reichert, Cincinnati  
Howard Krause, Cleveland  
Hiram Rivitz, Cleveland

#### OKLAHOMA

Rabbi Joseph Blatt, Oklahoma City  
Jack Israel, Oklahoma City

#### OREGON

Max S. Hirsch, Portland  
Dr. Laurence Selling, Portland

#### PENNSYLVANIA

Edgar W. Warner, Erie  
Mrs. Josiah Cohen, Pittsburgh  
Rabbi William H. Fineshriber  
Philadelphia  
Lionel Friedman, Philadelphia  
Jerome Louchheim, Philadelphia  
Morris Wolf, Philadelphia  
Isadore Krotzky, Scranton  
Julius L. Stern, Wilkes-Barre

#### RHODE ISLAND

Adolph Meller, Providence

#### SOUTH CAROLINA

Rabbi Samuel R. Shillman, Sumpter

#### TEXAS

Rabbi David Lefkowitz, Dallas  
Edward Titcher, Dallas  
Herbert Marcus, Dallas  
Max Mayer, Fort Worth  
Rabbi Henry Cohen, Galveston  
George S. Cohen, Houston  
Israel Friedlander, Houston  
Sidney Berkowitz, San Antonio  
Nat Goldsmith, San Antonio

#### VIRGINIA

Rabbi Edward N. Calisch, Richmond  
Joseph Forman, Roanoke  
R. D. Hofheimer, Norfolk

#### WASHINGTON

Charles Horowitz, Seattle  
Rabbi Samuel Koch, Seattle  
Alfred Shemanski, Seattle

#### WISCONSIN

Rabbi Samuel Hirshberg, Milwaukee



Memorandum Re Meeting of the  
American Council for Judaism  
held Monday Evening, Sept. 20  
at the Wade Park Manor in  
Cleveland.

The meeting was attended by approximately 90 or 95 persons. Of these I estimate there were from 15 to 20 known Zionists who belong to Zionist Organizations, and it appeared that there were several more of definite Zionist sympathies.

The platform was occupied by Lessing Rosenwald, Rabbi E. Berger, Howard Kraus, of Cleveland, and Milton Grossman, a Deputy Clerk in the Probate Court, who acted as Chairman.

Grossman opened the meeting and gave particular emphasis to the fact that the meeting was "spontaneous". He said that Kraus, who had written a letter to the editor of the JEWISH REVIEW AND OBSERVER, had sent a copy of the letter to the Philadelphia office of the Organization; that the office was highly pleased with his letter and advised him that they would be glad to send speakers to a meeting if he cared to arrange one in Cleveland. I believe that Kraus, who spoke later, said that he himself had requested such a meeting when he forwarded his letter to Philadelphia. At any rate, it appeared that Kraus and Grossman made up a list of 400 names which they forwarded to Philadelphia, and the office there sent 400 telegrams to these people inviting them to the meeting.

Rabbi Berger spoke first, and after some general references to the more desirable emphasis on Judaism rather than on politics in Jewish life, made the point that the position of the Council had already received wide acclaim from the non-Jewish world. It seemed to me that this was the principal point he desired to make, and argued that since any rights which would be granted the Jews after the war would be received from the hands of the non-Jewish world, it was highly important that we take a position acceptable to them. He attempted to prove his point by reading from an editorial which seemed to agree with the position of the Council, but he either failed to mention the publication in which the editorial appeared or I didn't catch it. Berger also expressed his disapproval of the statement of the Jewish Community Council which had appeared in the morning paper, particularly that part of it which "deplored" the activities of the Council, arguing that this was inconsistent with the ideal of free speech for which the war was being fought.

Rosenwald then delivered the principal <sup>address</sup> ~~ideas~~ of the evening. I had the impression that the greater part of his speech was in the nature of an apologia, and then he dwelt particularly on the Arab situation and the adverse effect not only upon all Jews but upon the Jews in Palestine of Arab objections to the Zionist program.



Rosenwald did emphasize that it was the obligation of every Jew to become interested in the question and deplored the fact that there were many who were ~~em~~pathetic. He did say, and this met with warm response, that if a Jew did not choose to join with them, it would be his preference that he become a Zionist rather than nothing.

Kraus spoke last and delivered what seemed to me a good old Anti-Semitic speech. He said that he had been confirmed at Rabbi ~~Berger's~~ Temple and was always under the impression that Judaism was to be a "diversion and recreation" and not the positive force which some people now wished it to become. This and other remarks created some rather ridiculous impressions and obvious inconsistencies, particularly with some of the things said by Rabbi Berger. Kraus also said, inadvertently it was later explained, that Judaism and Americanism were inconsistent and all of these things were later raised through questions from the audience.

The question period was much more lively, although the efforts of Rosenwald and Berger to answer questions seemed to me to be as pitiful as their principal presentations. It was significant to me that neither Berger nor Rosenwald made any reference to the old Anti-Zionist argument to the effect that Zionism and Americanism were inconsistent, and this argument was only developed by Kraus in his speech and by some of their sympathizers in the audience during the question period, principally by Morris Morgenstern, the attorney and legionnaire, by Hiram Rivitz and Al Haiman, the attorney.

When pressed for a positive statement Berger did reply that he would not categorically say that Zionism and Americanism are in conflict. Morris Morgenstern asked whether a legal state could exist with religion as its basis, to which Berger replied: "I think Zionism implies the creation of a state based on Judaism".

Someone asked Rosenwald why the Council did not argue its cause at the American Jewish Conference in New York rather than choose this method of spreading its propaganda. Rosenwald in attempting to answer became hopelessly confused. He did say categorically that "no one at the Conference spoke against Zionism", that Rabbi Wolsey was not permitted to speak and that "under their bloc system no one could present a minority report". Many persons jumped to their feet and objected, citing Proskauer's statement and Rosenwald finally yielded to Rabbi Berger who weakly explained that although Proskauer delivered, what he termed, a carefully considered statement there was really no definite Anti-Zionist position expressed at the Conference, and still seemed to infer that the Conference was packed by the Zionists and that the ~~opposite~~ <sup>opposite</sup> position was not given an opportunity to be expressed. Most of the audience seemed to resent not only the garbling of the facts, but the vague inferences made by the attempts to answer the question, and Phil Frankel rose to say that although he went "all the way down the line" with the Council's platform, he did not



consider himself a part of their organization and that the kind of statements that were made at this meeting made it difficult for him, and others who believed as they do, to join with them. He also corrected Rosenwald and insisted that Proskauer and others were given every right to state their position.

Rosenwald was asked to explain his connections with the America First Committee. I thought that he did well with a bad situation and at least did not evade the question and answered it quite frankly and directly. That is to say, he made it quite clear that it was all a horrible mistake on his part and appealed to the sympathy of the audience by explaining that it resulted in a breach of a long and close friendship between him and General Wood. He stated that he did believe at one time that the United States ought not to be involved in foreign wars, but had no suspicion of any anti-Semitic element in the program of the Committee, and that he resigned as soon as he discovered it. His break with General Wood came after Lindbergh's speech, when he called Wood long distance and asked him to state whether he agreed with Lindbergh's remarks, and was unable, after several efforts, to obtain an answer from Wood to this question.

I had no intention whatsoever of taking part in any of the discussion at the meeting until Hiram Rivitz arose to say that he would like the Chair to hear Mr. Al Haiman who had an interesting and important point to make. Haiman then arose and asked whether Rivitz's group had considered the point, and if not he urged immediate research on it, that during the agitation for an Irish Free State, the Attorney General of the United States rendered an opinion to the effect that an American citizen could not legally take part in a movement which sought the creation of another sovereign state. Both Rosenwald and Berger said that they did not know the answer to this question, and I was finally given the floor to reply. I said that I had not intended to take part in the discussion, but I could not remain silent when someone, by ~~in~~ference or ignorance, sought to imply that Zionism was in any sense a subversive movement and that people were jeopardizing their legal rights as American citizens. I traced the legal history of the Balfour Declaration, The Mandate, the Joint Resolutions of Congress, the statements of the Presidents of the United States, etc. Neither Rivitz, nor Haiman, nor anyone else rose to reply.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the audience was given a packet of literature, including Rosenwald's article in LIFE Magazine, an article by Al Segal, ~~reprints~~ of the NEW YORK TIMES' published statement of the principles of the American Council for Judaism, and an application for membership in the Organization. Kraus had stated that after these applications were received in Philadelphia, it was planned to call a meeting of those who had signed, elect officers, etc.



Following are some of the people that were present at the meeting: Saul Figenbaum, Jack Lampl, Ben Haber, Wilbur Steuer, Hy Mervis, Mr. & Mrs. Milton Stien, Morris Singer, the attorney, George Mayer, Jay Halle, Hazel Adler, Sam Tilles, Mr. & Mrs. Baruch Feldman, Mr. & Mrs. Ralph Wertheimer, Allan Klivans, Isador Grossman, the attorney, Hiram Rivitz, Hayden Kline, Phil Frankel, J. M. Ulmer, Ben Gordon, Al Haiman, Morris Morgenstern, Mr. & Mrs. Harry Affelder, H. J. Alperin, Oscar Brown, Alex Brien, Ed Schultz and his son Irving Schultz, Mr. & Mrs. Milton Halle, Eugene Halle with some companions, Arthur Dettlebach, Mr. & Mrs. Joe Newman, Morris Wolf, Norman Polster, Charles Auerbach, a Mr. Shinegold, Mr. Hurwitz and Abe Pickus, the fellow who calls Hitler and Mussolini long distance.

Irving Kane.

Rosenwald made a remark, during the question period when he was discussing the American Jewish Conference, which created the impression that Proskauer and his group were by no means through and that he (Proskauer) was calling a meeting on October 24th.



PORTION OF ADDRESS OF MR. LESSING J. ROSENWALD  
OF THE AMERICAN COUNCIL FOR JUDAISM, INC. GIVEN  
AT THE WADE PARK MANOR, CLEVELAND, OHIO, ON  
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 1943 AT 8:30 P. M.



*These notes were taken  
and transcribed by  
Mr. John J. Meckler  
1107 Eddy Rd  
Cleveland Ohio -*



PORTION OF ADDRESS OF MR. LESSING J. ROSENWALD  
OF THE AMERICAN COUNCIL FOR JUDAISM, INC. GIVEN  
AT THE WADE PARK MANOR, CLEVELAND, OHIO, ON  
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 1943 AT 8:30 P.M.

MR. ROSENWALD:

\* \* \* \* \*

We oppose all philosophies that stress the racialism, the nationalism and the theoretical homelessness of the Jews as injurious to their interests. Those are a digest of the principles of the American Council for Judaism.

Now, it is true that the Jews have suffered more than any other group in central Europe. I think there is no doubt of it at all. Nevertheless, others have suffered so extensively that it would be impractical, even if desirable, to attempt to treat the Jewish problem as a separate issue. Problems must be met and solved where they exist. Primarily we must aim for equality of rights for the individual as we know those rights in a democracy.

We must strive for the four Freedoms. We should ask for no greater rights, but rights equal to those of his fellow nationals where a Jew resides. Rehabilitation and repatriation under these conditions is a first step.

Now I am going to give you just a few figures, and I can't vouch for these figures because nobody can. They



have been written up. They are probably as good an estimate as can be had today.

The principal reason I can't give you anything that is definite is because it involves that tragic population of central Europe, and nobody knows what that tragic population is today, and nobody knows what it will be tomorrow, so within limits I hope you will take these figures as at least an estimate of world Jewry figures, because I want to make a point from these figures.

There is probably a world Jewry population today of somewhere in the neighborhood of fourteen million Jews. Of these fourteen million Jews about three million of them are probably all that we can expect to be alive in central Europe today--three million of these fourteen million.

Probably about five million live in Russia and probably about the same number in the United States. That leaves about one million Jewish population scattered all over the world. What we are discussing in all probability is mainly the three million Jews in central Europe.

I think if you take the five million Jews in the United States you will find few, if any, who would like to migrate to Palestine, even if there was a national Jewish home there. They are perfectly satisfied to live under our form of government and our constitution right



here in the United States.

Likewise, in Russia, of the five million Jews today probably few would like to migrate to Palestine, under the government of the Soviets. That did not apply twenty-five years ago under the Czarist regime, but under the Soviet regime. I doubt if many Russians would like to migrate, which leaves basically the three million that we are discussing whose native land was in central Europe.

Now, numbers of these three million would unquestionably like to be repatriated in their own homeland. Others will never return to their native land because they cannot face the scenes of the horrors and blood which they have witnessed. Just how these three million will divide between those who wish to be repatriated and those who wish to migrate nobody knows.

For those who wish to renew their lives in their country of origin, we must strive, therefore, to return them to their countries under conditions of equality and without fear of ever again facing such a nightmare as they have passed through, and that is one of the principles we have adopted, an endeavor to see that each and every individual who desires to do so can be repatriated under full rights and having full responsibilities with any of his fellow nationals in the land of his birth.

Those who desire to emigrate must find new homes all over the world in which to begin life anew. I say that advisedly. Maybe I am wrong. Palestine is one



of the countries which unquestionably should be utilized for these refugee Jews.

Palestine has made a great record. It has expanded its population manifold. Although it started with a very small population, there now is about 500,000 Jewish citizens in Palestine. They have done marvels in agriculture. They have done well with science. They have their centers of learning such as the Hebrew university. They have developed fine research and they have, as the Zionists claim, made it a land flowing with milk and honey for the number of people who have settled there up to this time.

They have made a great record. I doubt if anyone could argue against that point. But one wonders how many Palestine can absorb and how quickly it can absorb them.

I think the Zionists claim that the number that can be absorbed is limited only by the will to do so. I believe others claim, and I believe, that there is a practical limit to the absorptive capacity of Palestine. Therefore, if the population which wishes to emigrate from their native lands is to be satisfactorily started in their new life, we must have available to them other centers where they can go and start life anew under conditions which are satisfactory, under conditions which give them equality of opportunity and responsibility.

From our point of view, even if Palestine alone



could conceivably take care of all of the refugees that may wish to migrate there, a national Jewish Commonwealth is impractical and undesirable. There is the point, I should say, at which we depart radically from the Zionists. We do not wish to see a national Jewish Commonwealth or a national Jewish State. ✓

From our viewpoint Palestine must be regarded from what we believe to be a practical point of view in its ability to take care of probably a very, very substantial number of refugees, and we feel that the emotionalism and the symbol which attracts so many people to the Zionist cause is insufficient to warrant the setting up of a national Jewish State there. ✓

What are some of the reasons why we believe this is inadvisable? What are some of the reasons we believe it is impractical? Not being a great student of history, although I have read some of it, I doubt if the Arabs would consent so easily to having a national Jewish State established on their lands. They have said so publicly. (1) They have taken great measures to register their opposition to an increase in the population, and have gone even further as it affects a national Jewish State. This is beyond a question of doubt. It has become a question of the whole Moslem faith.

Now I would like to just digress a minute to show the difference between Arabs and Moslems. As I



understand it, the Arabs are Moslems living in and around Palestine. The Moslems, however, constitute the great hordes of people who are nationals of countries extending all across North Africa, and even as far east as India; millions and millions of people who are Moslems, but not all of whom are Arabs by a long shot.

This subject has been aggravated in the Moslem religion far out of proportion to the little land that the Zionists wish for a national Jewish State. In a conference recently concerning Indian Moslems, which treated with internal conditions of India, and which took up practically all Moslem affairs within India, they came out with only one proclamation that affected Moslems outside of India, and that one proclamation was against the formation of a national Jewish State in Palestine.

The Arabs are going to resist to the limit of their ability, and regardless of what the United Nations may say about it, in my own opinion the Arabs are going to resist in spite of the fact that the United Nations may come to some understanding. I don't think they will, and I will come to that in a moment, too. But the Arabs are going to continuously resist.

Therefore, I say it is impractical to say we are going to rout out the Arabs, put in the Jews and set up a national Jewish Commonwealth in a Moslem-Arab country without having a great deal of difficulty, and there is a strong possibility of having bloodshed.



I have my very grave doubts whether today the United Nations or Great Britain would entertain the idea of a national Jewish State. You may say, "On what grounds?" They are personal. I only know that since the development of modern global war, Palestine and the country surrounding Palestine has become a very important locality, important to all of the Allied nations.

It is a crossroads of North and South and East and West. It is at the end of the Mediterranean Sea. It is at the end of a pipeline that is in Palestine, and a great many geographic and political aspects of Palestine would make it, in my opinion, very doubtful that Great Britain or the Allied nations would consent to a national Jewish Commonwealth today.

I say that in spite of the Balfour Declaration. I would like to say a word to you about the Balfour Declaration, too. I guess all of you have read it. If you haven't, I have it right here. It is about three sentences, and from the day the Balfour Declaration was issued up until the present moment there has been considerable argument among all people concerned, including the original proponent of that, Lord Balfour himself, as to the meaning of "National Jewish State."

That term has never been thoroughly decided as to exactly what it means. I believe that most people today feel that what the Zionists are advocating is the



Balfour Declaration, but it isn't. The Zionists today are demanding the Balfour Declaration plus--and the "plus" is expressed in the so-called "Biltmore Platform," which includes control of immigration exclusively in the hands of a Jewish agency, the apportionment of lands and so forth. I have also got that here. If anybody wants to read that particular portion they may do so. Therefore, they are not talking about the same thing when they are talking about Balfour Declaration on the Biltmore Platform or the same explanation that was put on it in the Conference in New York two or three weeks ago.

If there are very substantial numbers of emigrants coming from Europe, Palestine is too small under its present borders to satisfactorily house and provide for the refugees of central Europe. The only way Palestine could be made large enough would be to expand the borders of Palestine, which then would be very much bigger than Palestine is today, and that, in itself, would cause additional hardship among the Arabs and the Moslems.

Now I would like to touch on one or two other points before I stop, and I am going to make it as short as I can and then let you ask questions, and try to answer them if I can.

We believe that the formation of a national Jewish State would be dangerous to the present settlers in Palestine and endanger the accomplishments which they



have already made. We believe the resentment of the Arab world and the Moslem world has been so wrought that any arrangement which was made so that Palestine should become a national Jewish State would endanger the half million Jews there. We believe it would become dangerous for prospective settlers, those from central Europe, at a time when it was needed most, which is also an important factor, because certainly when the war is over, and God speed the day, when the war is over, the first thing you will have to have is places throughout the world to migrate to, and if Palestine can't do that job, it will be useless as a place for settlement for a long time to come.

Now, along that same line, there are, at present, somewhere in the neighborhood of a quarter million Jews who are living in the land around Palestine. In Egypt, Iraq, Iran and so on there are about a quarter million Jews living as citizens of those countries. With minor exceptions they have equal rights with other nationals there.

Those who are familiar with the Near East tell me that immediately upon the establishment of a national Jewish State in Palestine there would be such resentment caused by the Moslem world that this quarter million Jews in the area surrounding Palestine would be made an additional homeless people and would have to seek refuge elsewhere, either in Palestine or other places, and there



is no sense, really, in bringing in a quarter million Jews from one part of Europe if you are going to make a quarter million Jews homeless from another. That does not solve any problem.

I will grant you probably the needs are greater in the case of a quarter million or more that might come from central Europe, but certainly if what I said is true, you would only be creating another problem by settling one problem.

There is one last point I would like to take up, and that is this, the Zionists in their sincerity have staked their all on Palestine. It is the only country that they desire, the only country that they wish, the only country where they wish to set up a national Jewish State. They have put all their eggs in one basket, and that basket is Palestine.

The question very reasonably comes up, What happens to this population of central Europe if that one basket fails to materialize? What solution have you for the Jewish problem if Palestine is not made a national Jewish state, if Palestine is not opened for refugees from central Europe? You not only have no place for the refugees to go to; you have likewise dashed the hope of those refugees to go anywhere.

To that point I think the Zionists are playing a dangerous game with the lives of the refugees from



central Europe, and one that should not be overlooked.

X I have tried to point out to you, badly, I know, but what is a sincere opinion on my part that the Zionist program, the program that was issued by the Conference some few weeks ago, is not the program of all thinking Americans. It is not the program that we all would like. It is the program of those who believe as the Zionists do. It is not the program of those who do not believe as the Zionists do.

X I should like just one more minute of grace to explain one thing to all of you. What I have said here I have said with a pretty thorough understanding of this one fact, that there are in this country three different groups of Jews in particular categories. There are those Jews who believe implicitly as the Zionists do. There is a group of Jews who believe just as implicitly that the Zionist solution is not the best. And there is a third group which, for want of a better name, is a group which is apathetic as to what happens. Or, if they are not apathetic, they do not wish to particularly become embroiled in the discussion.

What I have said tonight and what I intend to say in the future is not in any way an attempt--even if I wanted to attempt it, I could not do it--to try to bring anyone from the Zionist camp to my way of thinking. It is an attempt to present to those who feel as we do



that we are trying to form a small group that can talk as we do. It is an attempt to tell those who are apathetic to this thing that this problem is not one where they can sit idly by and say it is of no interest to them.

If I can convince some of those people that our program is one which has better opportunity for the suffering Jews, I should like to have them join us, but I would just as soon--I won't say just as soon; I will modify that--if I can't do that I would like to convince them of the fact that they ought to become Zionists, because I don't believe that there is anyone in this country today who can sit idly by and say, "This is a problem that does not touch me or interest me."

I am hopeful that they can see my point of view. If they don't, I hope that they will get the point of view that they will express themselves, and it is to those two groups, the ones that believe as we do and the ones that up to the present time have not considered this a problem which merits their thought and attention that I address myself, and that I hope we will be able to form a body of at least thinking Jews who subscribe to the principles that I have read to you in the digest of principles. Thank you very much.

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THE AMERICAN COUNCIL FOR JUDAISM, INC.

1001 Keystone State Building

1321 Arch Street

Philadelphia 7, Pa.

July 31, 1944

Chief Justice George W. Maxey  
Supreme Court of Pennsylvania,  
462 City Hall,  
Philadelphia, Pa.

Dear Justice:

The press has recently reported your acceptance of the Chairmanship of the Pennsylvania Chapter of the American-Palestine Committee, the latter being described as "a non-sectarian body formed to express American friendship for the re-establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine."

Since only the highest humanitarian motives could have prompted you to add on to the manifold burdens of your high office also this one of Chairmanship, we cannot but congratulate you on principle. However, we feel it is our duty to apprise you at the same time that the Palestine question is a very moot one among Jews themselves, and much more than the question of sheer philanthropy is involved in it.

The American Council for Judaism, for instance, is emphatically opposed to the latter-day agitation aiming at the conversion of Palestine into a Jewish Commonwealth. The Council does not oppose, of course, the right of Palestinian Jews to create for themselves homelike conditions there. But it strenuously opposes as undemocratic, and hence as un-American, the right of Jews to stamp that country with the religious or racial connotation of their own group, in that way create in the non-Jewish element there the sense of not wholly belonging in their own homeland.

We therefore feel that, especially in the new capacity which you so generously assumed, certain facts concerning Jewish claims on Palestine should be made available to your Honor. Either Mr. Lessing J. Rosenwald or I, or both of us, would be happy to confer with you at your own appointed time and place. In the meantime, we take the privilege of enclosing a few items of literature which we hope you will peruse during moments, particularly the items we marked.

We believe we are serving the good and welfare of our common American citizenship in thus contributing toward the clarification of a tangled subject. Believe me to be,

Very sincerely yours,

EIMER BERGER  
AMERICAN COUNCIL FOR JUDAISM



SUPREME COURT of PENNSYLVANIA

JUDGES' CHAMBERS

COPY OF REPLY FROM CHIEF JUSTICE  
MAXEY TO LETTER OF MR. ELMER  
BERGER OF THE AMERICAN COUNCIL  
FOR JUDAISM, INC.

Scranton, Pa.  
August 2, 1944.

Mr. Elmer Berger  
Philadelphia, Pa.

Dear Mr. Berger:

I have your letter of July 31st in reference to my acceptance of the Chairmanship of the Pennsylvania Chapter of the American-Palestine Committee.

You are correct in assuming that "only the highest humanitarian motives could have prompted" me to take on this additional burden.

I note your statement as follows:

"The American Council for Judaism, for instance, is emphatically opposed to the latter-day agitation aiming at the conversion of Palestine into a Jewish Commonwealth. The Council does not oppose, of course, the right of Palestinian Jews to create for themselves homelike conditions there. But it strenuously opposes as undemocratic, and hence as un-American, the right of Jews to stamp that country with the religious or racial connotation of their own group, in that way create in the non-Jewish element there the sense of not wholly belonging in their own homeland."

I am not concerned with "The Jews stamping" Palestine "with the religious connotation of their own group." I am not interested in the Jewish-Arab problem, as I take it for granted that this problem will after the war be adjusted amicably.

What I am interested in now is keeping a place of refuge open for those Jews in Europe who have seen their brethren and their children murdered by Hitler and Himmler and their Nazi henchman. I am convinced that Palestine is the best refuge for the down-trodden European Jews, and if I can assist in any way in keeping open Palestine and the roads to Palestine, for the tens of thousands of Jews who are struggling to escape the cruel fate which Hitler has already imposed on over 3,000,000 Jews, I will feel amply rewarded for all my labors in this undertaking.



If either you or Mr. Rosenwald wish to confer with me at Scranton, you may do so. I doubt that any practical good would result therefrom. If you came here to see me on this matter, I would invite Mr. A. B. Cohen and other local Zionists to meet me at the same time. The only result would be a debate between the Anti-Zionists and the Zionists. No good would be accomplished by that debate.

I have already received several letters from Jews throughout the state thanking me for accepting the Chairmanship of the American Palestine Committee for the State of Pennsylvania.

Very truly yours,

GEORGE W. MAXEY





A. B. COHEN

SCRANTON, PA.

August 7, 1944.

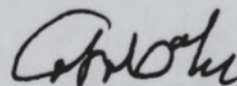
Dr. Abba Hillel Silver  
Cleveland,  
Ohio.

Dear Dr. Silver:

I herewith beg to enclose  
a copy of a letter which Justice Maxey  
has received from the American Council  
for Judaism, and also his reply.

I thought you might be  
interested.

Sincerely yours,



A. B. Cohen

ABC:BB

Encs. -2.

P.S. Address communications to:

Chief Justice George W. Maxey  
First National Bank Building  
Scranton, Pa.



*A Council  
for Judaism*

August 14, 1944

Mr. A. B. Cohen  
Scranton  
Pennsylvania

My dear Mr. Cohen:

I was happy to receive the communications which you sent me and enjoyed particularly the reply of Justice Maxey to Berger's drivel.

You are doing excellent work and I congratulate you most heartily.

Very cordially yours,

Abba Hillel Silver

AHS:EG