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American Council for Judaism, 1954-1956.



the American Council for Judaism

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ELMER BERGER

April 13, 1954

Dr. Abba Hillel Silver
The Temple
Ansel Rd. and East 105th St.
Cleveland, Ohio

Dear Dr. Silver:

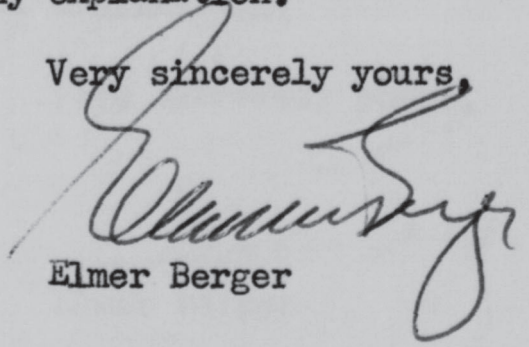
Several Clevelanders have called to my attention your Temple Bulletin for April 4, 1954, particularly referring to me the reprint of a letter, signed by Dr. Rylaarsdam, on page 2.

I am curious to know, if you would tell me, why this letter was published inasmuch as it has little accurate relevancy to anything the Council has said and particularly since there is nothing at all in your Bulletin to which Dr. Rylaarsdam's letter bears any relation.

I find it difficult to believe that, without any apparent reason, you felt some compulsion to inform your congregation about the Council. On the other hand, if you did feel some such compulsion, it seems to me only fair that you might have done so with a statement that carried some authority and responsibility rather than one written by someone with obviously nothing more than a remote knowledge of the problem with which the Council is concerned and the Council's position on any one or several phases of that problem.

I would really be grateful to you for any explanation.

Very sincerely yours,


Elmer Berger

EB:c

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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SPECIAL CONFERENCE NEWSLETTER



TWELFTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday
April 26, 27, 28, 29
1956

AMERICAN COUNCIL FOR JUDAISM

THE Twelfth Annual Conference of the American Council for Judaism which took place at Chicago's Sheraton-Blackstone Hotel, April 26, 27, 28 and 29, was characterized by a spirit of profound self-examination. There was an evident and generally unanimous conviction that new ways must be found to present hard facts to the vast majority of uncommitted American Jews for the purpose of winning them over to the Council viewpoint. At the same time, however, there was also evident a determination that new friends for the Council among American Jews must be secured only in ways that would not involve any compromise on the basic principles to which the Council has always been and continues to remain dedicated.

GREETINGS

The Conference was given a splendid send-off in the form of greetings from both the President of the United States and the Secretary of State. These messages, read to Council members attending the opening dinner session on Thursday, April 26, helped set the tone for a uniquely fruitful and constructive Conference.

In his message, President Eisenhower declared that factors affecting the crisis in the Near East call for American sympathy for all the people there.

"Tension and hostility in the Near East," he said, "require now more than ever before the pursuance of policies based on genuine friendship for all the peoples of the area. In our country's effort to help remove the shadow of war from this historic region, a more widespread understanding of the traditions and beliefs that animate its people will assist Americans to follow with perseverance a right and proper course."

President Eisenhower praised the Council's role in advancing the principles of a dynamic faith.

"The Council," the President wrote, "has contributed greatly to a better understanding of the cultural and moral and spiritual values of Judaism. In this year's deliberations, I feel confident, the Council will again add to our knowledge and appreciation of a faith ancient in years but of an enduring and dynamic vitality."

DULLES CALLS ACJ "CONSTRUCTIVE"

Secretary of State John Foster Dulles also warmly indicated approval of the work the Council does.

"We welcome efforts by individuals and organizations," Mr. Dulles wrote, "to demonstrate the fact that United States policy in relation to the Near East serves the interest of the American people as a whole. We appreciate the constructive manner in which your Council has given its support."

"May your efforts in the field of education and philanthropy be met with success. My best wishes for a useful and pleasurable Twelfth Annual Conference."

Warm and encouraging messages were also received from a host of other prominent Americans.

OPPOSITION

Their friendly view of the Council contrasted sharply, however, with the attitude taken toward the Council by the Chicago rabbinate. A letter from Rabbi Eric Friedland, President of the Chicago Rabbinic Association, and dated March 14, had called upon his constituents to offset Council publicity "by having every rabbi in every pulpit devote himself to the cause

of Israel and expose the unhistorical and illogical position of the ACJ."

Nationally, too, a form letter dated April 13 and signed by Rabbi Irving Miller as Chairman of the American Zionist Council urged the entire American Rabbinate to sign a statement about the ACJ. (Full text, page 6.)

The statement, Rabbi Miller's letter pointed out, "is intended to be issued not by the American Zionist Council or any other body, but by the rabbis who sign it. It is further suggested that all rabbis be asked to sign solely as individuals and not in any representative capacity."

Clarence L. Coleman Jr., in a letter addressed to all rabbis, expressed satisfaction at Rabbi Miller's request "to regard with deep seriousness the debate in which the Council is engaged."

This, Mr. Coleman wrote, "is precisely what the Council hopes American Jews will do... I am sure that before you either sign or refuse to sign the statement prepared by the Zionist Emergency Council you will examine the record of the Council at first hand, in order to be sure you possess all the facts."

PRE-CONFERENCE

The actual opening of the Conference was preceded by a luncheon of the National Executive Committee, on Wednesday afternoon April 25, and by three sessions during the following day—the First Annual Meeting of the ACJ Philanthropic Fund; and those of the National Advisory Board and the Resolutions and Nominating Committees.

Lessing J. Rosenwald, Chairman of the Board, called attention at the NAB meeting to "a new wave of hysteria among American Jews incited by Zionist propaganda and by non-Zionist collaboration."

"This," Mr. Rosenwald said, "is an effort to stifle full and free debate which might replace fallacies and false issues with facts. It is part of a campaign in which those who oppose Zionism are labelled as, or implied to be, anti-Semites. The result is to arouse anger among respectable Americans who rightly insist upon freedom of discussion of political issues—not a debate on religious or racial problems."

Mr. Rosenwald urged that the United States Government be permitted to make decisions affecting the Middle East "solely in the best interests of all its citizens—without regard to mass advice and pressures."

Leonard R. Sussman, addressing the NAB on the same occasion and, for the first time as Executive Director of the Council, cited the achievements of the Council during the year. Chief among these, he said, was the opening of new channels of contact and influence through the publication of Elmer Berger's book, *Who Knows Better Must Say So!* He described administrative changes last year made necessary by the stepped-up educational program. He said there had also been a change in procedures and attitude as a result of the Council's increased influence and responsibilities. He alluded to the increasingly aggressive program of the Council and spelled out problems to be faced in connection with the financial cost to the Council in the year to come.

THURSDAY DINNER

Howard F. Kahn, Chairman of the Chicago Chapter, welcomed Council members to the Conference at dinner Thursday. In the Mid-West Region, he said, the ACJ is "a vital entity."

"In Chicago," he pointed out, "the country's second largest city, there is a proportionately large number of Jews—a circumstance which in other cities has led to a virtual domination of every aspect of Jewish life by the ideology of Zionism. Yet—and I believe it is in large measure due to the energy and dedication of our members here—the Chicago Zionists are repeatedly caught off balance by our constant, aggressive assertion of our principles, whether it be in the area of public affairs, or religious education or philanthropy."

Mr. Kahn introduced Modie J. Spiegel, General Conference Chairman, and keynote speaker. Mr. Spiegel denounced the device of labeling critics of Zionism as anti-Semites. Such a tactic, he said, was designed to suppress discussion of vitally important issues.

"This campaign by Zionists and non-Zionist collaborationists to prevent full and free debate, to replace reason with hysteria and fact with false issue will not stampede us," he said. "It will anger respectable Americans who insist upon their right to separate political issues from religious problems. The existence of a peaceful Israel is included in everything responsible people have said or attempted to do about the problem of the Middle East."

FRIDAY

Friday morning members heard the Treasurer's Report and those of the Finance and Membership and Publications Committees. A panel discussion of all phases of Council policy followed.

Friday luncheon was highlighted by the presentation of Mr. Coleman's first Annual Report as ACJ president.

Mr. Coleman offered a three-point program of action by United States Jews to support an American approach to peace in the Middle East. He suggested that Jews who consider themselves "uncommitted" to Zionism are primarily responsible for contributing money that supports the Jewish Agency's propaganda warfare against the American Government and for placing the label of anti-Semite on those who view Middle East problems objectively.

"To debate the politics of Zionism," Mr. Coleman asserted, "is not even remotely to impugn our faith. To question the wisdom of a Zionist lobby which it has now been admitted, even by a President of the United States, exerted excruciating pressures on behalf of Zionist foreign policy, is not to inveigh against the equal American status of those of us who are Americans of Jewish faith. To beseech American politicians—in the interests of our country's welfare—to ignore the Zionist slander of a 'Jewish vote' is not to deprive American Jews of a single iota of American rights which, by our country's constitution God has endowed us with as He has endowed all of our fellow countrymen."

Whether uncommitted Jews agree with the Council or not, Mr. Coleman called on them "to rise up in dignified, informed and intelligent protest against the leadership of organizations to which they do belong and repudiate this maze of allegations and guilt-by-association."

Mr. Coleman stressed that he was advancing anti-Zionist, but not anti-Israel principles. He branded as slanderous charges that the Council is anti-Israel. Such charges, he said, were "initiated and sustained because a free American debate would have unveiled the double-dealing with which Zionism has exploited the normal, religious fellowship of American Jews, so distorting it as to make it appear that American Jews are committed to the destiny and welfare of a 'peoplehood' separate from that of the American people; and a nationhood separate from that of the American nation."

Mr. Coleman said it was inconceivable that an American Council for Judaism could be anti-Israel—"not because we are Jews, but because we are Americans. Our Judaism, as we interpret it, suggests no special attitude toward Israel. Nor is one necessary in any American. For harassed as our country is with the leadership of the free world, simple expediency dictates we are not—and would not be—'anti' any country in which we might find support of any kind in our efforts to maintain and eventually to extend the frontiers of freedom."

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

April 20, 1956

Dear Mr. Coleman:

Please extend my greetings to the members of The American Council for Judaism as they assemble for their Annual Conference in Chicago.

Tension and hostility in the Near East require now more than ever before the pursuance of policies based on genuine friendship for all of the peoples of the area. In our country's effort to help remove the shadow of war from this historic region, a more widespread understanding of the traditions and beliefs that animate its people will assist Americans to follow with perseverance a right and proper course.

The American Council for Judaism has contributed greatly to a better understanding of the cultural and moral and spiritual values of Judaism. In this year's deliberations, I feel confident, the Council will again add to our knowledge and appreciation of a faith ancient in years but of an enduring and dynamic vitality.

Sincerely,

Dwight D. Eisenhower

THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

April 24, 1956

Dear Mr. Coleman:

Once again it is my pleasure to greet the members of the American Council for Judaism as they assemble for their annual conference. It was gratifying to me that I had an opportunity to discuss problems of mutual interest with the officers of the Council a few months ago.

We welcome efforts by individuals and organizations to demonstrate the fact that United States policy in relation to the Near East serves the interests of the American people as a whole. We appreciate the constructive manner in which your Council has given its support.

May your efforts in the field of education and philanthropy be met with success. My best wishes for a useful and pleasurable Twelfth Annual Conference.

Sincerely yours,

John Foster Dulles
John Foster Dulles

"Let it be clearly and emphatically understood then—not as a matter of sentiment or mere propaganda rejoinder to Zionist propaganda—we are not opposed to the existence of the State of Israel. We take that position as Americans—together with millions of our fellow-citizens who would not foolishly wish out of existence or work for the destruction of any other country still a part of the free world."

"The trouble with this answer, of course, is that for Zionism it is not enough. Zionism would give the impression that we must be *pro-Israel because we are Jews*. We say, if we are not anti-Israel, neither are we pro-Israel; nor are we either anti- or pro-Arab, *because we are Jews*. We are completely, inseparably committed nationally only to the United States; as we believe all American Jews must be, despite their refusal to disavow those individuals and organizations that would represent them otherwise."

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Highlight of the program Friday afternoon was a report delivered by Harold M. Miller, Co-Chairman of the Religious Education Committee. This was followed by a panel on the subject, "Broader Perspectives of a Growing Program."

In his report, Mr. Miller cited the production of five new textbooks as one of many evidences of increased accomplishment in the preceding twelve months. He noted that increased receptivity among American Jews to Council efforts "shows our co-religionists in this country becoming more and more aware that the fundamental concepts of Judaism as a faith of universal values which we espouse are basic to Judaism, no matter what the form of individual observance."

Among other achievements cited by Mr. Miller were:

(1) The opening of two new Schools for Judaism in Denver, Col., and East Rockaway, L. I., N. Y.

(2) The substantial growth of congregations of which previously organized Schools for Judaism became a part in Westchester County, N. Y., and Highland Park, Ill.

(3) The publication of a new monthly newsletter, *Education in Judaism*; the publication and distribution of *Inter-School Memoranda* and an *Interschool Information Bulletin*.

(4) Continued improvement in the quality and increased circulation of the magazine *Growing Up*, published twice a month, for children in Jewish religious schools.

(5) The annual Teachers' Institute, the third of which was held May 12 and 13 at the Hotel Moraine, Highland Park, Ill., "providing parent-teachers and congregational leaders an opportunity to counsel with some of the foremost religious educators of our country."

Friday evening Council members attended Sabbath services conducted in the hotel by Rabbi Richard E. Singer, of Lakeside Congregation for Reform Judaism. All who were present were moved by Rabbi Singer's inspiring sermon.

The Chicago Chapter played host later Friday evening at a reception at the Downtown Club of the Sherman Hotel.

SATURDAY

The Conference resumed at luncheon Saturday. The featured event was an address by Elmer Berger, ACJ Executive Vice President, entitled "Some Simple Facts." Dr. Berger charged that Zionism is *so eager for the support of so-called "non-Zionist" American Jews, it "consciously designs a very substantial part of its propaganda to hold this support and to prevent these people from joining forces with us."*

Dr. Berger said Zionists make these three false claims:

1. "...that Zionist foreign policy has been—and remains—in harmony with and committed to the foreign policy of the United States."

2. "...that Zionism is a humanitarian enterprise concerned only with people who, because they are Jews, are victimized by oppression or persecution."

3. That the American Council for Judaism is anti-Israel.

The people of the Middle East, Dr. Berger reminded his listeners, see Zionism as a part of the colonialism they detest. United States prestige was high in the area, Dr. Berger pointed out, because it had not participated in imperialist exploitation of the area there.

"Because, after the second World War, the United States backed Zionist pretensions to statehood," Dr. Berger said, "the disillusionment has been greater and its prestige has fallen even lower than that of the admitted colonial powers which the population of the area see and recognize for what they are. The simple facts of life are that the events in the Middle East itself have punctured Zionist propaganda. We can no more stake our future in the Middle East on Zionist propaganda claims for Israel than, in any sober evaluation, we could stake our future relations with Europe on French emotionalism about Germany."

Dr. Berger stressed that there is no need for American Jews to abandon the people of Israel in order to disavow the colonialism of Zionism.

"Nor," he added, "does an American policy of impartiality mean abandonment of the State of Israel. There is still room for legitimate interest by American Jews on a non-political basis in their co-religionists in Israel. And there is still room for American support for a normal Israel; a small, Levantine state entertaining no pretensions of a mission to dominate the rest of the area, either in its own right or as the self-confessed conveyor to the area of the American ideal."

Dr. Berger quoted Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion to document his contention that Zionism is concerned with humanitarian considerations only when they serve the major objective of state-building. He cited evidence that Israel had recently succeeded in having the Canadian Government abandon plans for facilities for bringing Israeli immigrants into the Dominion.

After Dr. Berger finished, I. Edward Tonkon, of Dallas, and D. Hays Solis-Cohen, of Philadelphia, were awarded scrolls by Council President Clarence L. Coleman Jr., in testimony of the esteem and affection of their friends and colleagues on the occasion of their respective retirement from the posts of National Vice Presidents, in accordance with the Council's by-laws.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Dr. Berger's address was followed by an afternoon session devoted to consideration of the Council's problems in the field of public affairs. Feature of this session was the presentation, by George L. Levison, of San Francisco, a Council National Vice President, of a report on our public affairs activities.

Mr. Levison cited the following highlights of the preceding 12-month period:

(1) Publication by the Council of Dr. Berger's book *Who Knows Better Must Say So!*, a compilation of letters written during a tour of the Arab states and Israel last spring.

"This book," Mr. Levison reported, "has evoked the enthusiastic approval of virtually every informed, responsible authority on the Middle East."

(2) Distribution by the Council of a letter by Dr. William Ernest Hocking, Alford Professor Emeritus of Harvard University, a letter Mr. Levison described as "a stirring appeal to candidates for American political office to divorce themselves from their subservience to Zionist pressures."

(3) Council moves to make it clear that the Washington meeting in January 1955 of the leaders of 17 Jewish organizations did not represent all the Jews of the United States.

(4) A meeting with Secretary of State John Foster Dulles by Clarence L. Coleman Jr. and other Council leaders for the purpose of outlining Council views as they relate to the effect on American Jews of Middle East policy problems.

(5) Expression of support by the Council for Mr. Dulles' appeal to keep the Arab-Israeli issue out of the 1956 Presidential election campaign.

"More and more one gets the feeling," Mr. Levison concluded, "American legislators are becoming aware that not all American Jews share the same, Israeli-oriented point of view. More and more, it may be, the myth of American Jews organized as an Israeli pressure lobby may be growing less potent and less dangerous as a result of our efforts."

SATURDAY EVENING

The high point of the Conference, the Annual Banquet, was preceded, on Saturday evening, by a reception. The hosts were Mr. and Mrs. Lessing J. Rosenwald.

Before the speaker of the evening was introduced, Lessing J. Rosenwald, Board Chairman, paid tribute to the extraordinary services to the Council—particularly in the field of fund-raising—by Henry S. Moyer. Following his remarks, he presented to Mr. Moyer an imported, hand-hammered, silver tray engraved as follows:

"To Henry S. Moyer, in deep and grateful appreciation for his selfless service to, and knowledgeable interpretation of the American Council for Judaism, from his grateful colleagues and friends in the Council. April 28, 1956, Chicago, Ill."

United States Representative Omar Burleson (D., Texas), a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, was the featured speaker at the Annual Banquet. Introduced by a fellow Texan, Jerome K. Crossman, of Dallas, Mr. Burleson declared that no solution of the Middle East crisis in the interest of the United States was likely as long as American policy for the area remained a political football on the domestic scene.

"It is time," he said, "for all candidates for public office in the United States—Republicans and Democrats alike—who have viewed this controversy as a convenient means of bartering for votes to realize that we have been callously playing politics with American national security.

"What I mean to say, above all, is that delicate negotiations which might lead to a just and equitable settlement of the complex problem in the Middle East can never be conducted against a background of bartering for a 'Jewish' vote which I do not believe exists; *the implied acceptance of which I believe to be a slander upon the integrity and the desire of Americans of Jewish faith to be part and parcel of the American people.*"

Mr. Burleson praised the Council's efforts.

"As a citizen of this great country," he said, "I am encouraged by the work, the attitude and the dedication to principle of the American Council for Judaism. As a United States legislator and a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, I am, if anything, even more keenly aware of the fact that you perform a great work, a much needed service. I think every man and woman of your group displays great courage in taking the position you do on so many questions of concern to all Americans. I know your task is not an easy one but I am deeply impressed by the fact that you have willingly shouldered the grave responsibility of attempting to inform not only Americans of the Jewish faith, but all Americans, that no international movement of a political nature represents all the people of the Jewish faith; that the national identification of people of Jewish faith is with their country of citizenship; and that Americans of Jewish faith are by no means unified behind a proposition which, according to certain well known propaganda media, suggests that American Jews need and want a homeland other than these United States with its equality for all who are its citizens."

The Texas Congressman traced his special interest in the problems of American policy for the Middle East to hearings two years ago before the House Foreign Affairs Committee. He was struck at the time, Mr. Burleson said, by testimony that funds sent to Israel from the United States for ostensibly charitable purposes, funds deductible from tax returns on this assumption, seemed to be finding their way into Israeli defense and military expenditures. He named Israeli bond sales and the collections of the United Jewish Appeal.

"I am not making any accusations," Mr. Burleson pointed out. "I

have little evidence of the extent—if any—to which the American taxpayer is without his knowledge or consent underwriting either the military power of the State of Israel or the pressure politics of the Zionist movement in the United States. I would hope, for the sake of our country and for all our citizens that it is possible for anyone to secure a detailed, fully audited breakdown, to the last dollar, of the ultimate disposition of the vast sums of money which are collected every year in this country in the name of philanthropy and which, to the extent that they are deductible from income tax returns, are subsidized by the American taxpayer.

"It may be that such an accounting is available. If it is, I have not seen it. I raise the question only to point out that publication of such an accounting is perhaps long overdue. I raise it in the fervent wish that my suspicions may be proven to be unfounded. I raise it in all sincerity, hoping at the same time that I may be forced to apologize for giving rise to fears which have no foundation whatever.

"I raise the question now, as I did in 1954, because of its very grave bearing upon our chances for reaching a settlement of the crisis in the Middle East. One of the factors which adds enormously to the difficulties we face in this area is the conviction shared by many of the Arab states that the United States Government is hopelessly subservient to Zionist pressures. One of the strongest indications, to the Arabs, that this is the case, is the fact that apparently no official of the United States Government dares to raise this kind of question in connection with what happens to the vast sums of money raised in this country and made available to the Israeli Government."

Once this question were clarified, Mr. Burleson commented, a compromise settlement for the Middle East might be expedited, a settlement "in the interests of American security, a settlement which would do justice to the Arabs and a settlement which would not 'drive the Israelis into the sea'—a widely held fear."

DEMONSTRATION

Following the delivery of Mr. Burleson's talk, there was a demonstration outside the hotel by local rabbinical students led by Burton Zeffren, 23. Pickets sang *Hatikvah*, the Israeli national anthem, carried signs crudely lettered with slogans attacking the Council and handed leaflets to guests leaving the hotel.

SUNDAY

On Sunday morning, Harry Snellenburg Jr., of Philadelphia, President of the American Council for Judaism Philanthropic Fund, reported that the Fund had approved five new grants. These grants, he said, will provide:

(1) A sum to assure continued help for a group of Jews in France who have come there from Israel. These people are described as "returnees" and are therefore ineligible for assistance from any other Jewish organization.

(2) A sum to assure continued help for a similar group in Belgium.

(3) A sum to provide for relief and rehabilitation of Jewish refugees in various European countries, in Israel and the United States.

(4) A sum to provide free legal aid for a number of victims of Nazi persecution, irrespective of religious faith, in presenting their claims to German indemnification offices.

(5) A sum to provide emergency relief for Jewish refugees in especially urgent cases in various countries.

In his report, delivered as Chairman of the Council's Philanthropic Committee, Mr. Snellenburg declared that there are no overseas relief or welfare facilities of American Jewish organizations available to many classes of needy Jews. He said adequate facilities were lacking for Jews who have left Israel, Jews who have left Arab countries for places other than Israel and those who still live—and plan to continue to live—in Arab countries.

In Israel itself, Mr. Snellenburg explained, domination of philanthropy by the Jewish Agency for Palestine makes it difficult to provide help for Jews in that country without subsidizing Zionist enterprises. A need exists in the United States also, he said.

"American Jews," he noted, "give millions of dollars each year in response to philanthropic appeals, and then permit their own educational, cultural and social institutions to suffer while the lion's share of those millions is exported to satisfy Israel's demands for money and manpower. . . . The American Council for Judaism Philanthropic Fund offers donors an opportunity to make charitable contributions that will be used wholly for charity and not spent for political purposes."

Sunday also saw the adoption of several significant resolutions. Both major political parties were placed on notice that the votes of American Jews can not be delivered by any person or group of persons. At the same time, smear techniques used in public debate on the Middle East were attacked and Judaism adhering to the universal values of a religious faith was described as an integral part of American democratic traditions.

The Conference closed after taking two important final steps:

(1) The adoption of a \$500,000 budget—the largest in the Council's history—adopted as a direct answer to Henry A. Loeb's appeal for enough funds to carry on the tasks which must be done in the year to come.

(2) The election of new officers to posts of leadership, including the choice of two new national officers—D. Hays Solis-Cohen, of Philadelphia, who became Secretary; and Maxwell Steinhardt, of New York City, who became Treasurer.

Henry A. Loeb, of New York City, and Modie J. Spiegel, of Chicago, were chosen National Vice Presidents.

Mrs. Maurice M. Goldman, of San Francisco, and Howard F. Kahn, of Chicago, were elected Regional Vice Presidents.

NEW NAB MEMBERS

Following is a list of Council members selected to the ACJ's National Advisory Board:

Frank Feffer, Sr., Phoenix, Ariz.; John J. Rosen, Phoenix; Gus Ottenheimer, Little Rock, Ark.; Harry W. Pfeifer Jr., Little Rock; Elise S. Levy, Beverly Hills, Calif.; Walter A. May, Jr., Beverly Hills; Maurice Reuler, Denver, Colo.; William Schenkein, Denver; E. Marshall Stiefel, Orlando, Fla.; Raymond M. Kuhr, Savannah, Ga.; Herbert Kahn, Chicago, Ill.; Max S. Sickel Jr., Highland Park, Ill.; Harry Blumenthal, New Orleans, La.; Mrs. George D. Berkett, New Orleans; La.; Alex Hamburger, Baltimore, Md.; Dr. Joseph L. Forbes, Detroit, Mich.; Lewis C. Frank, Detroit; George H. Goldstone, Detroit; Richard L. Simon, Great Neck, L. I., N. Y.; Mrs. Ellen Selden, N. Y.; Mrs. Frank Greenwall, N. Y.; David C. Finn, Dayton, O.; Mrs. Jerome H. Frankle, Youngstown, Ohio; Max D. Gumble, Columbus, Ohio; E. J. Meisel, Cleveland, Ohio; Alan Goldsmith, Portland, Ore.; Bert E. Reuler, Denver, Colo.; I. M. Scott, Jenkintown, Pa.; A. M. Loveman, Nashville, Tenn.; Mrs. Richard Livingston, Dallas, Tex.; Max Edw. Tonkon, Dallas, Tex.; Wallace Luchs, Jr., Washington, D. C.; Mrs. Harold M. Baum, Milwaukee, Wisc.; Mrs. Benjamin J. Birk, Milwaukee, Wisc.

PUBLICITY

Publicity given the Twelfth Annual Conference in Chicago was even better than anticipated. The Council enjoys generally excellent press relations in that city. Detailed stories appeared virtually every day in every newspaper.

The news wire services—Associated Press, United Press and International News Service—in response to queries throughout the country sent generous stories about the Conference to subscriber newspapers in innumerable cities.

The New York Times had assigned Miss Emma Harrison, of its staff, to cover our sessions. Her stories averaged a column a day.

The Council also achieved considerable radio publicity. Members reported frequent spot and detailed news broadcasts over the local and network-affiliate stations.

A probable Council "first" was achieved in television coverage. Prior to the delivery of his speech on Thursday, Modie J. Spiegel read three of its most important paragraphs into a microphone and before a motion picture camera of the CBS network. The film of this material was televised the following day at noon.

One of the first evidences of interpretive—as contrasted to spot news—coverage was the appearance on Monday, April 30, of a column by John O'Donnell in New York's biggest-circulation *Daily News* devoted almost entirely to the Council and to the issue of the so-called "Jewish vote" which it had raised at the Conference. Mr. O'Donnell's column is also syndicated in newspapers throughout the country with a combined circulation of many millions of readers.

DAILY NEWS, MONDAY, APRIL 30, 1956

CAPITOL STUFF

By JOHN O'DONNELL

Washington, April 29.—When the influential Lessing Rosenwald, onetime head of Sears, Roebuck, and now chairman of the board of the American Council for Judaism, chided fellow Jews last week for putting "domestic political pressures" on President Eisenhower in behalf of Israel, the Administration breathed a sigh of relief.

But not for long. Back into the emotionally excited blood feud of Moslem and Jew in the Middle East, came the rebuttal of the American Zionists who pressed their demand for immediate arms

aid to Israel. Their spokesman in this capital on the same day that the anti-Zionist Jews had their meeting in Chicago was Cleveland's Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver.

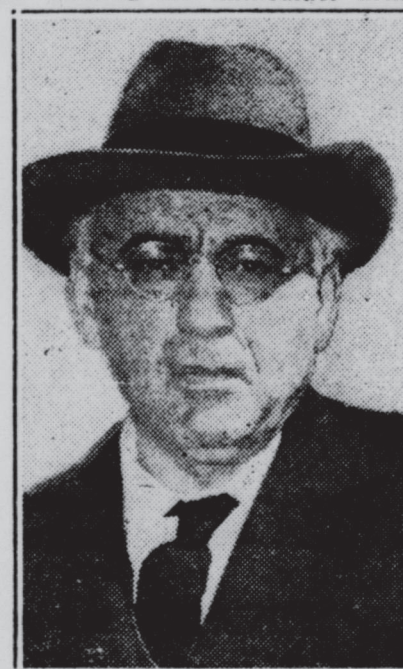
Rabbi Silver, just returned from Israel, had a 50-minute audience with President Eisenhower. As he left the White House steps he told reporters, "I will never be satisfied until there is a grant of defense arms"—by the United States to Israel.

At the same time, the White House and State Department had before them the Chicago declaration of the American Council for Judaism which stated that the memoirs of former President Truman "confirm that Zionist pressures—labeled as those of American Jews—were excessive; beyond all bounds of propriety. . . . A spectacle (of) American citizens advancing the causes of a foreign nationalism."

And the quote of Chairman Rosenwald:

"The question for American Jews is whether they are prepared to agree to the good faith of the people in the government of the United States and to support an approach which derives from American interest; or whether they are to be led and lectured to by the Israel ambassadors and Zionist adherents of Israel and intimidated by emotionalized slander into becoming a separatist block in American life pleading for an Israeli solution."

Promptly, Secretary of State Dulles sent a message to the Chicago meeting, telling the council that the State Department welcomed "the efforts of organizations" to demonstrate that our policy in the Middle East "serves the interest of the American people as a whole."



Rabbi Silver
Wants defense arms for Israel

"Never have so many tried so hard to squelch those they characterize as so insignificant."—With apologies to Winston Churchill

"The enclosed statement...is intended to be issued not by the American Zionist Council or any other body, but by the rabbis who sign it."—Rabbi Irving Miller, Chairman, American Zionist Council.

"We, the undersigned, members of the American Jewish rabbinate, wish to make the following observations with respect to the organization known as the American Council for Judaism. We do so with reluctance, and only after searching our conscience: but we do so in the conviction that we would be derelict in our high duty in the calling we follow if we failed to make the truth known.

"Realizing the full implication of our words, we state unequivocally that the American Council for Judaism has consistently misrepresented the Jewish people before the bar of public opinion; it has consistently maligned and impugned the integrity of Jewish institutions, organizations and causes; and it has consistently distorted the precepts of Judaism which it purports to serve.

"We assert that the Council is neither American nor Jewish in spirit or in concept. We call the attention of the American public to the fact that this group represents numerically an infinitesimal fraction of American Jewry. It has been repeatedly repudiated by the great Orthodox, Conservative and Reform communities in Jewish religious life. It has been repudiated by all major secular Jewish organizations.

"Judaism, we believe, has sufficient breadth and depth to embrace a wide range of varied points of view, but we declare that there is no room in Jewish life for Jews whose words and acts would result in the destruction of the State of Israel and in incalculable harm to the Jewish people.

"Most reprehensible of all the Council's slanders is the charge that American Jews who adhere to the ideals of Zionism are guilty of 'dual loyalty'! This is a lie which has long been the tool of anti-Semites; with contempt we see it revived today by those who call themselves Jews. It is not difficult to understand why the American Council for Judaism has received commendation for this vilification

from Gerald L. K. Smith, Conde McGinley, Merwin K. Hart and others long identified with anti-Semitic movements in America. Every fair-minded American knows that American Jews have but one political allegiance—and that is the United States.

"As loyal Americans interested in the survival of a dynamic democracy in a backward part of the world, we, the undersigned, will not be deterred from speaking up on behalf of Israel or of any other nation when we feel that principles of justice and morality have been violated. In doing so we are in the mainstream of the finest American tradition. We will not be deflected from exercising this right by a small minority, however vociferous, that finds evil in the honest expression of this anxiety.

"We view with contempt the Council's attempt to dissuade Americans from helping their fellow Jews and the State of Israel through contributions to the United Jewish Appeal and the Israel Bond Drive. If the Council is unwilling to aid in the rescue and rehabilitation of harassed Jews, let it at least not frustrate the efforts of those who would.

"As religious leaders, we cannot find in the Council's activities or in its statements, any indication that it really represents Judaism. The Council's philosophy is one of complete negation: it denies the existence of the Jewish people, rejects traditional Jewish religious ceremonies, the Hebrew language, and Zion itself.

"The Council's real goal is the complete disappearance of the Jewish people. In pursuit of this aim the Council not only attacks Judaism but America herself. For in its incessant drive for soulless 'conformity,' in its hysterical compulsion to efface what is Jewish from Judaism and what is permanent in the people of Israel, the Council seeks a monolithic America in which all cultural and spiritual variations are obliterated. This drive, which stems from insecurity and tragic self-hatred, does as great an injustice to America as it does to Judaism.

"We are certain that Americans of all faiths will reject this false and cowardly philosophy."

Full texts of all the major Conference speeches and resolutions referred to in this Newsletter are available on request. Simply use this coupon.

American Council for Judaism

201 East 57th St., New York 22, N. Y.

Please send me the full texts of the following Conference papers:

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Spiegel ☐

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Berger ☐

Levison ☐

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Burleson ☐

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This was the Council's most constructive Conference, with the widest publicity and the biggest tasks called for—but it all takes money. Send for additional copies of

this Newsletter to give to your friends, get them to enroll as members. Above all—do *your* share to help us achieve our goal!



the AMERICAN COUNCIL FOR JUDAISM

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1955

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ELMER BERGER

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Central Conference of American Rabbis
From: Rabbi Samuel Halevi Baron, A.C.J. Religious Director
Subject: Inquiries Regarding the Placement of Rabbis and
Directors of Religious Education

Dear Colleague:

During the past year or so, the Council has received a number of inquiries from presidents and board members of congregations seeking spiritual leaders and educational directors who are dedicated to classical American Reform Judaism. We have only too often not known whom to suggest or who might be interested.

At the moment, we know of several congregations which are actively seeking the services of a Rabbi, and of major congregations which desire a director of religious education. These latter openings are rather attractive positions and would provide an interesting challenge for the Rabbi or layman who qualifies.

Please do not think for one moment that I would have the temerity to be a party to any usurpation of the function or jurisdiction of our Conference's excellent Advisory Placement Committee, in whose individual and collective devotion, conscientiousness, and impartiality I have the greatest confidence. In view of the current official stands of the C.C.A.R. and U.A.H.C., however, the Council's adherence to the principles of classical American Reform Judaism, as expressed in the Pittsburgh Platform, has led like-minded congregational leaders to look to us for help.

Accordingly, the Council will be pleased to be of any aid and service, upon request, in bringing such congregational leaders together with interested Rabbis and religious educators. We shall therefore be glad to hear, informally and confidentially, from men who desire to make known their interest in participating in such discussions with a Temple representative. It is not necessary for an interested Rabbi or educational director to be a member of the Council; but we should naturally like to have a clear indication of his views, so that interested congregations may have an accurate understanding of his devotion to classical American Reform Judaism.

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.



the American Council for Judaism

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1950

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San Francisco

Executive Director

ELMER BERGER

Dear Friend:

As a rabbi, I am certain that you recognize your responsibility to obtain as much information as possible about the current crisis in the Middle East, about which every Jew in the United States should have a more complete and accurate understanding.

It therefore gives me great pleasure to forward to you herewith a copy of "Who Knows Better Must Say So!", a booklet of letters written from the Middle East by Rabbi Elmer Berger, Executive Vice President of the American Council for Judaism.

These letters contain on-the-spot impressions and analyses by Dr. Berger during the course of a recent two-month tour of Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel and Morocco. Although not in every respect reflecting the official policy of the American Council for Judaism, they provide, I believe, an invaluable insight into the countries, the forces, the people and the ideas behind the current crisis in the Middle East.

I myself found the originals of these letters most fascinating reading, particularly because they present factual information concerning the Middle East (including Israel) not generally available to American Jews, whose knowledge of the area is obtained largely through media of Zionist orientation. I believe that you will find the few hours of reading time required to be well spent, and I shall be very much interested in whatever comments you care to send me concerning your reaction to this booklet.

Yours very truly,

Clarence L. Coleman Jr.
President

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FACTS

FEBRUARY, 1956

Vol. II, No. 2

Rabbi Berger of the American
Council for Judaism

Page 71

Published by
THE ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE OF B'NAI B'RITH

RABBI BERGER OF THE AMERICAN COUNCIL FOR JUDAISM

THE American Council for Judaism was founded in 1943 by a group of reform rabbis for the avowed purpose of furthering the positive values of Judaism as a universal religion, and to defend those values against "nationalist" concepts as advocated by Zionism and its supporters and the encroachment of similar secularistic tendencies.

Ever since it came into being, the American Council has poured almost as much of its energy into attacking its Zionist opponents as it has into building a program to advance the positive values of Judaism.

"Instead of majoring religion," said Rabbi Louis Wolsey, one of the original leaders who later withdrew from the Council, "it put its full strength into a veto of Zionist ambitions." (National Jewish Post, May 28, '48.)

The Council became increasingly militant in the advocacy of its ideas. As a result, it was drawn into a contentious political arena. There, it fed a sustained controversy among American Jews regarding their role vis-a-vis the State of Israel. In that arena, the Council has been subjected to vehement attack, both by Zionist and non-Zionist Jews.

Controversy has further increased the Council's militancy. And in advancing its ideas it has adopted some methods whose propriety has been questioned by its critics. According to these critics, the course often pursued by the Council has played into the wrong hands—into the hands of Arab anti-Jewish propaganda and of the professional bigots in this country. The Council's critics maintain that it has time and again gone out of bounds and has provided both these forces with ammunition for attacking Jews—all Jews.

Berger's Tour

This phase of the Council finds its most complete embodiment in the personality and leadership of Rabbi Elmer Berger, its executive director for many years. Not all Council members endorse Berger's extreme views, but his leadership and influence have carried the Council into situations which have made it more and more vulnerable to criticism and attack.

Berger's trip to the Middle East last spring symbolizes what makes the Council subject to criticism and sums up the case against it.

Arrangements for his reception in the Arab states were well set in advance. Arab officials gave him a most cordial welcome on his arrival, hoping that what he would say would be useful propaganda. They set up press conferences for him and invited him to address the Arab people over the radio.

Berger did a good deal of talking, although he went to the Middle East to observe and listen. His pronouncements were broadcast—how accurately, we do not know—with much fanfare all over the Middle East.

Radio Ramallah (Jordan), reporting Berger's press conference in Jerusalem on May 22, quoted him as saying that the American Council for Judaism's members "do not believe in a Jewish state in any form, anywhere" and "consider Israel a Zionist state which they must oppose."

Radio Damascus (May 21) broadcast that Berger "stated that he had been very unfavorably impressed by the injustice that had been carried out by the Zionists in Palestine."

Another Arab broadcast said: "The Chairman (sic) of the American Council for Judaism, Elmer Berger, arrived at Damascus on May 17 for a week's visit. He will meet with leaders and persons who are active in the war against Zionism. Berger stated that he will return to the United States equipped with information which will enable him to carry on his war against Zionism." (Near East Broadcasting Service, Cyprus, May 17, '55.)

The same station the following day broadcast this: "The Chairman of the American Council for Judaism, Elmer Berger, who is at present touring the Arab states, advised the Prime Minister of Syria, Sabri El-Asli, at their meeting on the 17th, that the American Zionists are taking advantage of the weak Arab propaganda in order to spread poisonous statements about Arabs. He added that the Zionist movement is harmful not only to the Arabs, but also to the Jews themselves, as well as to humanity."

Berger's Letters

Berger's declarations were also reported widely in the Arab press. But the high point of what stemmed from his trip were the letters he wrote back home reporting his impressions and activities while on tour.

These were later published in New York by the American Council for Judaism under the title, "Who Knows Better Must Say So." (New York, Aug. '55.)

In a foreword, the Council says the letters are not "intended to delineate the policy of the American Council for Judaism," and that "in some places they range over problems and personalities which have never been within the framework of the Council's concern."

Nevertheless, the Council published Berger's letters under its imprint. It is a most significant document. It is an extreme polemical recital offered as an eyewitness account. A study of the document makes quite clear that Berger saw what he was prepared to see.

There is overdrawn sympathy in his descriptions of the Arab states and bitterness with the Zionists in his reports of visits to the Jewish communities in the Arab countries. His emotional impulses seem highly and quickly responsive to both his personal views and the information spoonfed him by government officials.

His account of a visit to the remnants of the Jewish community in Iraq is revealing. He plays down the full extent of the Iraqi persecution of the Jewish community, which totalled 135,000 people before they were forced to flee, about 125,000 emigrating to Israel.

Although Berger says he does not "mean to whitewash the Iraqi Government" in connection with this persecution, he greatly minimizes its responsibility. According to Berger, "it was due basically to the Palestine problem—plus—the highly emotionalized fund raising techniques in the United States which simply exacerbated beyond repair a situation all responsible people on the scene felt would normalize itself.

Berger Meets Cohen

In Cairo, where he ran across a Jewish journalist, Elias Cohen, Berger's pro-Arab bias led him into being duped. One can only surmise that Berger had no way of knowing that this Jewish journalist was the notorious police informer Elie Cohen, known to Egyptian Jews for many years, even during the regime of King Farouk, as a hireling of the Egyptian secret police, paid to spy on and denounce Jews. Cohen has denounced a great many Jews, and he has been held in the lowest repute in the Cairo Jewish community.

Berger describes his first meeting with him: "Today I had one of the most depressing experiences I have had for a long time. A Jewish journalist called and asked to talk with me. He is a fine man who works here for one of the news services. He is anti-Zionist and was—since long before the State of Israel. . . .

"This Jewish journalist, about whom I started to write this letter, has separated himself completely from the Jewish community—as have a number of others—because agents of the far-flung Zionist apparatus are able to exert pressure on the local leaders of the community. . . .

"I have asked this man to write us a story about Egypt's Jews and he has promised to do so. . . ."

Cohen's Story

Cohen proved excellent bait. He did not keep Berger waiting long, returning the next day with a carefully prepared document on the conditions of Jews living in Egypt. Berger accepted Cohen's story in toto and it appears in one of the early sections of his published letters. It opens:

"This statement was written for and handed to Elmer Berger by Elias Cohen (an Egyptian of Jewish faith), No. 1, Rue Gheit El Noubi, Charia El Geish, Cairo Egypt. (Here reproduced verbatim.)

"Subject: Report on the Jewish activities in Egypt's economic, commercial and cultural life during and after the Palestine campaign."

"Dear Sir:

"Seizing the opportunity of your visit to Egypt, I have the honor to submit the following report about the activities of the Egyptian Community in Egypt's economic, commercial, cultural and political life in Egypt, *for your own information.* (Editor's italics.)

"EGYPTIAN JEWS: Egyptian and foreign Jews living in Egypt have always enjoyed complete freedom, freedom of religion, freedom of speech, and freedom of trade and commerce. . . .

"JEWS REPRESENTED IN THE EGYPTIAN PARLIAMENT: Contrary to what happened in Iraq . . . Egyptian Jews were enjoying their full rights, they were represented in the Egyptian Parliament during the Palestinian campaign. . . ."

And so this guileless presentation of obvious Egyptian propaganda goes on, section after section—"JEWS REPRESENTED IN THE CONSTITUTIONAL COMMITTEE; JEWISH CULTURAL LIFE; EGYPTIAN JEWS IN EGYPT'S ECONOMIC LIFE; JEWISH SOCIAL LIFE; JEWISH IMMIGRATION TO ISRAEL; DISCRIMINATION OF ARAB JEWS IN ISRAEL; FREEDOM OF ACTION AND FREEDOM OF RELIGION; ZIONIST PROPAGANDA IN EGYPT; BIGGEST MISTAKE OF BIG POWERS AGAINST WORLD JEWRY; JEWISH ACTIVITY IN EGYPT . . ." (pp. 14-17).

The purpose of including this transparent, elementary pro-Egyptian propaganda in the publication of the Berger letters escapes one. Even without knowing that Elias Cohen was a plant, Berger's naivete in accepting whole this obviously loaded stuff is astonishing.

(The Cohen statement appeared in the Nov. '55 issue of "The Scribe," an English-language publication financed by the Egyptian Government. And on Jan. 4, '55, Mohamed Habib, the press attache of the Egyptian Embassy in Washington wrote to Gerald Blank, publicity director for the American Council for Judaism: "In November, we had some correspondence with you regarding your booklet by Dr. Berger, 'Who Knows Better Should Say So.' I should like, now, to order 1500 copies at the price you mentioned, 35 cents each, when we spoke of purchasing 1000 copies. If there is a further reduction for an order of 1500, we should be glad to receive it, of course." All told, the Embassy distributed 5000 copies of the Berger letters.)

Egypt's Jews

At about the same time Berger was in Cairo, another observer, the American reporter, William Longgood, was making

FACTS

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a first-hand investigation of the conditions of Jews living in Egypt. His dispatch reads:

"Cairo's 26,000 Jews live in terror that there will be war with Israel.

"Their greatest horror is that they will be slapped into concentration camps. . . .

"In Cairo, I was told that following that border incident (El-Sabha), Egyptian police visited every building where Jews lived and took complete data on them: names, ages, occupations, etc.

". . . I checked with other Jews and the ones who trusted me enough to talk told virtually the same story about the fear prevailing among Jews in Egypt.

"They said discrimination has been increasing; that it was getting almost impossible for a Jew to get a job in Egypt and there is much unemployment among them. . . .

"Jewish youths getting out of school are said to find it almost impossible to get work. . . .

"A Jewish salesman recently went to submit bids on a government order. He was asked by the official in charge if he were a Jew. He said he was and was told, 'Then get out of here.'

"The Jewish hospital in Cairo, despite a desperate shortage of qualified medical help, recently was ordered to cut its Jewish personnel to 50 per cent of the staff. . . ." (N. Y. World-Telegram and Sun, Jan. 17, '55.)

The Dark Angel—Israel

Rabbi Berger discovered a serene light in the Arab states, but over his impressions of Israel hangs a dark haze. He transmits this sudden change immediately after he crosses the border into Israel. Here are some highlights of his impressions of Israel:

"The State and the Party are all-consuming. And at least some portion of the State's image is reflected in these armed children who are given rifles as their badges of authority and superiority.

"So have the People of the Book become the people of the Bren Gun and the hand grenade; and the place of Zion, from whence shall go forth the law, is an armory whence goeth forth, at the discretion of an adolescent, hot lead and the smell of powder" (p. 89).

"From Mt. Zion . . . we went to a *kibbutz* which, I think, is called Ramat Rachel. . . .

"The *kibbutz* really disappointed me. Here at least, I had expected to see 'the pride of Israel.' But this is a dismal, unkempt place. The fields are littered with tin cans and the skeletons of rusted and burned-out automobile chassis. We visited the communal hall which was really incredibly filthy . . ." (p. 83).

The government-subsidized Egyptian publication, "The Scribe," published lengthy excerpts from the Berger letters in the Sept. '55 issue. In bold type, the head reads—"A Rabbi Visits Israel." Paragraph heads bristle—"Kibbutz—incredibly filthy . . ."—"People of the Bren Gun. . . ."

One Berger extract appearing in the Egyptian periodical cannot be found in the Council's published version. It reads:

"There is a word I detest, but it has been running through my mind all day and I believe it most accurately describes the officialdom of this state. They—and everything they touch—are the most vivid examples of what is called 'Kike Business' I have ever seen. The State is always trying to be something which it is not. It claims to be the most advanced country in the Middle East. No one but Jews—who never go to other countries—believe it. Having seen them all I can vouch that it is not true."

Berger denied to the Anti-Demafation League ever having written this passage with the words "Kike Business." Gerald Winrod picked up the Berger excerpts from "The Scribe," fabrication and all, and printed them in the Jan. '56 issue of his anti-Semitic publication, "The Defender". This is just one fair sample of how both Arab propagandists and professional American bigots exploit Berger to attack his co-religionists.

Dr. Simon of the Ichud

Writing from Jerusalem May 28, Berger speaks with great warmth of three members of the Ichud, a small religious pacifist movement of old-line Zionists who favor cooperation between Arabs and Israel. This group believes that Arabs and Israelis should live together in one national unity. It has voiced opposition to border clashes and has recommended Israel's active contribution to the solution of the Arab refugee problem, including the repatriation of a certain number of refugees.

"I want to write of my talk yesterday afternoon with Rabbi Benjamin, Dr. Straus and Dr. Simon of the Ichud group," says Berger. "These people are the salt of the earth . . . these people are the conscience of Judaism in this country."

One of the three mentioned by Berger, Dr. Ernst Simon, comments "on the bad taste displayed here" by Berger, and adds:

"Had his reports from Israel been more objective and less hate-ridden, his enthusiastic reports from the Arab countries would have been far more credible, and he would have far better served the cause of disseminating objective information and increasing the mutual understanding which follows in its wake. . . .

"Even so, however, there is something to be learned from his reports. Thus it would seem that there are a number of large scale industrial, medical and social projects under construction in Egypt, and the same applies, though not quite on the same scale, perhaps, in other Arab countries. The position of the Jews in the Arab countries, too, does not seem to be particularly difficult. At any rate, there has been an improvement since the crisis of 1948-1950; may it continue so. I have never been an adherent of the Zionist 'catastrophe theory', and have always rejected the false hope of building our country on the ruins of Jews or non-Jews. For these reasons, I accepted Dr. Berger's reports on this point with satisfaction, although not without reservations.

"These reservations stem from the studied partiality which stands out of all the author's evaluations, and, I am afraid,

may also have vitiated his powers of observation. Many of those fine constructive projects which he saw in the Arab countries, Dr. Berger refused to observe in Israel; and even when he did observe them, he would not give them their due. This perverse attitude must have greatly puzzled even his Arab contacts—among them cabinet ministers and other high government officials—as he himself testifies: 'I had said over and over again in these Arab countries—I am not an Arab.'

"His scale of values is obvious. The highest rung is occupied by the Moslem and Christian Arabs, for whom he has virtually no criticism at all. They are followed by the Jews in the Arab countries, some of whom he accuses of maintaining their own school system. The bottom of the scale is reserved, needless to say, for the Israelis. . . . They—I mean we—are discussed almost exclusively in ironic quotes: the author talks of Weizmann and other 'moderates' (p. 44), of Jordanian 'incidents' (p. 58), and of a Jewish 'hero' who lost both his legs in the War of Liberation (p. 78). I would like to ask Dr. Berger publicly, and I would be glad to receive an answer to my question publicly, whether he would dare to speak in similar tones of scorn and derision of a war invalid of the United States or, for that matter, of any other nation—except Israel.

"This vicious and senseless mockery also detracts a great deal from the value of Dr. Berger's reported impressions—horrificing as they are—of conditions in the Arab refugee camps. . . ."

Dr. Simon concludes:

"Whatever the intentions of the American Council for Judaism and its executive director, Dr. Berger, there is one thing that ought to be clear to them beyond the shadow of a doubt: in the same way that hatred and contempt for the Arabs and an excess of Jewish and Israel nationalism prevent the advent of peace and draw us nearer to a 'preventive' war, so also a blind hatred for Zionism jeopardizes the prospects of peace and removes it still farther from our reach." (Tel Aviv daily newspaper, Haaretz, Dec. 16, '55.)

This comment comes from a member of a group, the Ichud, for whom Berger speaks in the most laudatory terms.

Berger and Arab Spokesmen

American Jews, declares Berger in one of his letters, have been cut off "from a broad perspective and the objective facts" about the Middle East by the "iron curtain" of Zionist propaganda. There are two things that stand out in Berger's letters, his deplorable incapacity to take a broad perspective, and his inability to appraise information and sift fact from fiction. This is embarrassingly revealed by the previously described incident in Cairo, where Berger fell into the hands of Elias Cohen, the informer who earned his bread denouncing fellow-Jews to the Egyptian secret police.

However, Berger's remarks about a Zionist "iron curtain" in America sound very much like a statement made by Mohammed Fadhil al Jamali, Iraq's representative to the United Nations, who said:

"But will Zionist propaganda and Zionist economic and political pressure let this truth to be understood by the

world? The answer is 'no', and this is the tragedy of democracy. For the doors of knowledge and channels of information are to a great extent blocked by Zionist propaganda in the great metropolitan cities of the world . . ." (Nov. 26, '54).

Another Arab spokesman declared before a UN committee that "it is the one-sided pro-Zionist views of the radio and press in many countries which we have described as a fifth column in the democracies, democracies which pretend to be righteous and to solve the problem of the world. That is the fifth column." (Awni Khalidi, of Iraq, First Comm., Gen. Assembly, Apr. 16, '53.)

Over the years, Berger has expressed views strikingly similar to those voiced by Arab representatives to the US and the UN. Both Berger and the Arabs have leaped upon and tried to make the most of extremist statements that have at times come from Zionist sources on the subject of the Diaspora or on the subject of Israel's need for help from Jews throughout the world. They have bent to their own propaganda needs the statement of Ben Gurion that the problem is how to induce American Jews to come to Israel when "there is no whip cracking over their heads." Or the one of Benjamin B. Broude, president of the Zionist Organization of America, when he said that Zionists "can be depended upon to serve as the chief factor in mobilizing the resources, material, moral, political, of the whole Jewish people throughout the world in support of the State of Israel." Or of Dr. Nahum Goldman of the Jewish Agency, when he said Israel is a unique country in that "there is no other state in the world where nearly 90 per cent of the people lived outside of it."

Such statements, which have raised demurrers among many Jews, have raised in Berger and among the Arabs a feeling of self-justification for their own fanaticism and hates. Their reaction is worth a quick glance:

"**DUAL LOYALTY**" (Berger): "The thesis of the American Council for Judaism is that the Zionist-Israel axis imposes upon Jews outside of Israel, Americans of Jewish faith included, a status of double nationality." ("Four Articles on the 'Law of Return'.")

(Arabs): ". . . when an individual becomes a Zionist, he acquires a double loyalty; his allegiance is divided. . . ." (Syrian Ambassador Farid Zeineddine, TV interview, Dumont, Feb. 11, '53.)

(Berger): "There is the Zionist formula: It involves national identification with Israel. It involves prior national commitment to Israel and the welfare of Israel." (Pamphlet, "In Moral Indigation.")

(Arabs): "An American, an Argentine, a Russian or a Syrian Zionist, they are all one in furthering the aims of Zionism and Israel, be it to the detriment of the interest of their own country. This naturally creates mistrust. It naturally creates suspicion and apprehension between Zionist Jews and non-Jews. Thus Zionism breeds and enhances the growth of anti-Semitism. . . ." (Syrian Ambassador Farid Zeineddine, UN Gen. Assembly First Committee, Apr. 15, '53.)

"Far from solving the Jewish question, Zionism has brought additional problems for the Jewish people everywhere. It is

imposing upon them the onerous obligation of having a dual loyalty, one to the country in which they are citizens and the other to the State of Israel. . . ." (Farid Zeineddine, UN Gen. Assembly, Sept. 28, '53.)

The "JEWISH VOTE" (Berger): ". . . (the Zionist leaders) want a return to 'the good old days' when American foreign policy was formulated by both Democratic and Republican national committees bidding for a 'Jewish vote.' . . ." (ACJ News Bulletin, Aug. '54.)

(Arabs): "These pressure groups . . . use at times political men, Jews or non-Jews, men of political stature and influence, senators, deputies, publishers and so on. It ill behooves such men . . . consciously or unconsciously to serve Zionism against the legitimate interests of their country and its principles. . . ." (Syrian Ambassador Zeineddine, UN, April 15, '53.)

"Zionist propaganda and Zionist manipulation of Jewish votes in some states made the United States embark on a policy which culminated in the uprooting and homelessness of nearly one million peace loving Arabs. . . ." (Fadhil al Jamali, Economic Club of Detroit speech, Oct. 31, '55.)

"ZIONIST AGGRESSION" (Berger): "Our concern over the possibility of the Soviet Union releasing Jews from behind the Iron Curtain, I said, was because we felt that with Israel's Messianic complex of Zionist salvation it would organize them all for Israel. It would then call for Lebensraum and the Middle East would explode, for I was convinced the Arab states—now stronger than in 1948—would not stand for another aggression." ("Who Knows Better Must Say So.")

(Arabs): "However, Zionism as such is a political movement based on racial mythology. It has but one goal now and in future; expansion and aggression against the Arab

World. The Arab feeling against continuous Israeli aggression and colonial expansion is the reason for fighting Zionism as much as any other aggressive movement." (Newsletter, Iraq Embassy, Wash., D. C., June 1, '54.)

Berger apparently sounded so much like an Arab politician during his Middle East sojourn that one can understand why it had been necessary for him to say "over and over again in these Arab countries—I am not an Arab."

His unrelenting attacks on Zionists, and American Jews who support them, possess a quality that certainly matches, if it does not exceed that expressed by Arab emissaries to this country.

Thus, Berger is dissipating much of the Council's purpose. His propaganda excesses do not point the way to a constructive and practicable contribution to the crisis festering in the Middle East, or America's involvement in it.

The expressed aim of American foreign policy is peace and stability in the Middle East. This is also the desire of all Americans, Jew and non-Jew.

Berger's visit to this area of acute tension, and his partisan statements while there, only served to aggravate that tension and cannot be construed as constructive.

Berger's recent activities in the Middle East must be viewed against the background of a serious situation involving Jews, which is now developing in the United States. Arab propagandists in this country, acting on orders from their home ministries, are helping to foster a new growth of anti-Semitism. The old-line native professional anti-Semites are working alongside them. Unwittingly perhaps, Berger is one of their sources of ideas and encouragement. This is a matter that should distract him from his present course.

. . . From "CROSS-CURRENTS"

"The central purpose uniting the divergent countries of the Arab League is a determination to destroy Israel. A major task assigned to Kamil Abdul Rahim, director of their Information Center in the United States, is to help them achieve that goal. His plans for the Arab Information Center are ambitious; the Center can be invaluable in coordinating the lobbying of the Arab states at the UN and in Washington. Every public relations medium must be exploited—press, publications, radio, TV, and the lecturer's platform. Arab exchange students must be utilized. The American Friends of the Middle East must be used. And, of course, as we have now seen beyond a shadow of doubt, the unsavory assortment of American anti-Semites must be contacted,

cultivated, and traded with.

"Expansion of Arab Center activities will intensify but not change the basic propaganda themes; despite the Arab-Czech arms deal of September 1955, Arab countries will be painted in the United States as an anti-communist bastion; increased shipments of arms from the Soviet world to the Arabs will be justified as necessary to safeguard the Middle East against Israeli aggression; crocodile tears will be shed over the truly tragic plight of the Arab refugees who will be portrayed as victims of Israeli barbarism; Zionism will be simultaneously branded as a handmaiden of Western imperialism and Soviet communism; and, of course, the illusion of the Arab states as defenders of Christian holy places will not be neglected."

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Article Section

A JEW'S GUIDE TO A MIDDLE-EAST POLICY

By FRANK CHODOROV

ISRAEL is only part Israel, the rest being world-wide Zionism, and it is not certain which part wags which. Until this uncertainty is resolved, peace in the Middle East will be precarious, and American foreign policy will be in a similar state of turmoil.

That point is underscored in the little book just off the press, *Who Knows Better Must Say So*,* by Dr. Elmer Berger, Executive Vice President of the American Council of Judaism. It is a very informative and interesting book, despite the fact that it consists of a number of personal letters written by Dr. Berger during a recent visit to the Middle East, apparently without publication in mind. For a better understanding of the stories on that part of the world, which almost daily hit our newspapers, Americans will do well to acquaint themselves with the evidence of this book.

Rabbi Berger is not unprejudiced. The organization he represents is dedicated to the proposition that Judaism is a religion, nothing else, and that Americans who are of that faith are Americans, nothing else. That might strike the non-Jew in this country as self-evident and hardly worth mentioning.

But, to the well-organized and highly-financed forces of Zionism, the position taken by Dr. Berger and the American Council for Judaism is anathema; for they hold that Jews throughout the world, no matter what citizen-

ship they hold, and even though they be agnostics or atheists, owe first allegiance to the nation of their biblical forefathers. That is, they maintain that Judaism is not a religion but a political entity to which the members of the race are tied by blood and tradition to the end of time.

In effect, though they are careful to play down this logical conclusion, the Zionists impose a dual citizenship on all Jews, one in the country of their choice and the other in Israel. Some of these energumens go so far as to speak of an ultimate and total "ingathering" — of a migration of the 11,000,000 Jews in the world to the Promised Land.

This is a bit too much for those who contribute large chunks of money to Israel, out of an humanitarian impulse, and the "ingathering" theme is relegated to dreamland for the present. Besides, an area as small as that occupied by the Israeli, and with no known natural resources of importance, could hardly support eleven million people. The "ingathering" will have to be delayed until — well, that's what disturbs the neighboring nations.

For the moment, the Messianic Zionists insist that it is the duty of all Jews to finance the hardy pioneers, and their government, who are blazing the way on this inhospitable bit of earth which was wrested from the Arabs who overran it after the Dispersion. In their perpetual drive for money the Zionists stress the humanitarian, rather than the nationalistic,

*The Bookmailer, 118 E. 28th St., New York, N. Y. \$2.

purpose of Israel. Where else can the persecuted and dispossessed Jews of the world go?

That is a strong appeal. It has been worth billions to the fund-raisers since Hitler made inhumanity an instrument of national policy. To keep it alive, the Zionists make much of the number who migrate to Israel each year (which is about equalled, and some years surpassed, by the number who leave), and to keep the number up they carry on a constant recruitment campaign. Right now they are concentrating on North Africa where the nationalistic movements are making things bad for everybody, including Jews.

The impoverished will of course go wherever there is promise of improvement, and the Zionists are not short on promises; besides, transportation is furnished free. But, if the poor choose to stay where they are, no help is offered them; Zionists are not that humanitarian.

It is reported that the "take" of their collecting agency runs upward of \$50 million in this country alone. It requires more than an appeal to the heart to get that kind of money from a segment of American Jewry; a great many of the five million give nothing at all. It takes organization and methods that only callous crusaders can employ, methods that border on blackmail. How many Americans of the Jewish faith give because they subscribe to the Zionist line, how many give to avoid the economic and social sanctions that follow failure to meet the assessments laid on them, how many are immune even to the charge of being labelled "anti-semites" — should be recorded for the sake of American politicians. Perhaps the number of Zionists in this country is not much more than the group of activists for whom the "cause" does well.

DR. BERGER visited the countries being fulminated against by those anxious to hurry the fulfillment of Prophecy — Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. The propagandists have been doing a profitable job on these "backward Bedouins." Not only have they convinced many of their dupes that these "decadent" people are bent on destroying the Palestine beachhead gained at so much bloodshed, but the American press has been well taken in by the propaganda, and even the government seems to lend it some credence. So, he went to find out for himself.

He visited with prominent Jews in these countries and with responsible public officials. From the former, who seemed to be getting on well in the countries of their choice, he learned two salient facts that flatly contradict the anti-Arab propaganda; first, that there is no official or unofficial anti-semitism in these countries, and second, that these Jews consider themselves and are considered good citizens. They were proud to be "Arab Jews" — just as Americans of the Jewish faith are loyal Americans. (Much to the discomfiture of the professional Zionists.) Wherever he went, he was asked to bring back to America this message: We are Jews, not Zionists. Oh yes, there are agents of the world organization everywhere, but their influence is confined to those who will accept any ideology that is accompanied with the promise of a better living.

Even this influence, he was told, is waning as news from former emigrants filters back — that "Arab Jews" are being discriminated against by the dominant European element in Israel, that in fact a subtle "color line" has been drawn about them. Some return with their story of disillusionment, even though the Israeli government, which considers that its invest-

ment in bringing them into the country constitutes a sort of lien on their bodies, makes emigration more difficult than immigration.

The officials, Dr. Berger reports, were quite cordial to him and unreservedly expressed their side of the Israeli business. What he was told by the Minister of Interior in Cairo sums up the views of all the officials he met in all these countries. Dr. Berger quotes him as follows:

"There have always been three elements in any resolution of the Palestine question and two of them have always been subsidiary to the third. How many Jews could the land absorb without replacing the Arabs? There has always been the question of the sale of lands. How could this sale be controlled so that Arabs would not be landless and without means of livelihood?

"These two questions, however, have always been subsidiary to the basic question — with whom do we negotiate these issues? With the Jews of Palestine? . . . Or do we have to negotiate with world Zionism?

"We never had anything against the Jews in Palestine. But we could not tolerate a Palestine which belonged to *all* of the Jews of the world, who would be given rights at the expense of the Arabs of Palestine. . . . There is no peace possible if we are expected to respect the rights in *Israel* of the Jews everywhere in the world."

Getting down to cases, what the Arabs want to know is whether the Israeli (or, rather, the Zionists) will settle for the present borders, or whether they are consolidating their position in preparation for a grab of more real estate. Peace or war in the Middle East hinges on the answer to that question. It is apparent that the Israeli would rather not be forced to subscribe

to an answer, as witness their opposition in the UN to an international guarantee of the present boundary lines. The issue again is *Lebensraum*. For whom? For 11,000,000?

Putting aside their intransigence on this point, the Israeli are piling up against themselves a bitterness that is bound to increase with the years. This is the result of their treatment of some 900,000 Arabs who were pushed out of their homes in Palestine and are living, most of them, in camps, caves and huts on the barren lands along the borders, and getting along on the 7 cents a day allowed by an international relief agency. Dr. Berger describes their condition as worse until death came than that suffered by Jews in Hitler's concentration camps. These Arabs will never forget, as they look over the barbed wire fences, the sight of their former homes and lands being plowed up for some grandiose housing project. Their children will inherit the resentment expressed in these words by one of the victims:

"Why? Why do you Jews who were so victimized yourselves do this to us who are sitting with you in this room?"

THE NEW YORK RABBI finally did get into Israel, although it took some doing to get him in. Within twenty minutes after his arrival he found himself in charge of a guide and a chauffeur, one to see that he did not get in touch with any officials, the other to report on his movements. Therefore, his five days in the country amounted to little more than an officially guided tour. But one whose ears and eyes are trained will hear and see things that the most meticulous guide cannot obscure.

Looking beyond the advertised "achievements" of this subsidized nation, he learned that Israel is a thoroughly secularized state; that it

is far from being a shrine for religious Jews; that those who came here to worship are considered curios, with their own quarter, on exhibit for sightseers. And he saw that dark-skinned Jews — particularly the darker ones from Yemen — constitute a sociological problem for the dominant Western Jews; to them go the menial jobs and social ostracism.

In response to his remarks on the high cost of all these grand public works, he was told that Israel "is a partnership between us and the Jews of the world. The Jews of America have the money and we here are pioneering for the State which will revive Jewish life. Therefore, you make a serious error evaluating costs in terms of *our* wealth and natural resources. And in terms of the wealth and the resources of the *Jewish people*, the costs here are not exorbitant; and anyway, they provide funds for the State." This is nothing but a paraphrase of the fundraising speeches heard at rallies in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles; expense is unimportant; invest in the future of Jewry; give. Israel is a country built on handouts, with no disposition to become self-supporting and with little prospect of being able to do so.

And that, in an indirect though real way, is the problem that confronts Secretary of State Dulles in his efforts to maintain peace in the Middle East. In dealing with Israel he is not dealing with a conventional nation, seeking to preserve its identity through self-sufficiency, but rather with a world movement that is a blend of fanatical racism and tribalism, imbued with a sense of destiny that knows no bounds, least of all economic necessity. In reality, he is not dealing with the government of Israel but with American Jews. It is their condoning and

support of Zionism that is the threat in the Middle East.

That Mr. Dulles is not unaware of the situation was evidenced by his remark to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that the Israeli question should be kept out of our domestic politics. This was a subtle reference to the hidden ace which the Zionists depend upon in their crooked game: the threat of swinging the "Jewish vote." Whether there is such a solid voting bloc, and whether the Zionists control it, has never been ascertained.

It is a certainty that many good, loyal Americans of the Jewish faith would welcome a show-down, not only to register their loyalty to this country and against world Zionism, but also to loosen the grip the Zionists have on them. A counting of noses might relieve them of the onerous assessments levied annually on them by the Zionists.

At any rate, the Arab-Israeli imbroglio is one we should keep out of. The Communists, of course, will get into it, on either or both sides, for their business prospers by national and international troubles. The Zionists will not let a mere matter of ideology interfere with their plans, and the Arabs, in self-defense, will buy arms from anybody who will sell. Even if another war breaks out in the Middle East, how will our interests be served by intervention?

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