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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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Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1919-1920.

CCAR

MEMORANDUM OF CONFERENCE
Held on Monday, October 13th, 1919.

On Monday afternoon, October 13th, at the call of Rev. Wm. C. Emhardt, Chairman of the Advisory Board of the Department of Christian Americanization of the Protestant Episcopal Church and of Rabbi Leo M. Franklin, President of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, a Conference held in the library of Temple Beth El, Detroit, at which were present the following:

Rev. Wm. C. Emhardt, Chairman, Advisory Board,
Rev. Thomas Burgess, Secretary, Department of Christian
Americanization,
Rev. Robert Kreidler, Scranton, Pa.
Mr. George Zabriskie, Chancellor of the Diocese of New York
(Representing the Protestant Episcopal Church)
and

Rabbi Leo M. Franklin, President of the Central Conference
of American Rabbis,
Rabbi Samuel S. Mayerberg
Mr. Bernard Ginsburg
Mr. Isaac Goldberg
Mr. Fred M. Butzel
Mr. Day Krolik

The meeting was opened by Rev. Mr. Emhardt, who stated that the organization represented by him, was most anxious to clarify a situation that had caused pain and indignation to a large number of American Jews. He said that such a situation was due in part to newspaper misrepresentation bearing upon the attitude of the Episcopal Church toward foreigners and descendants of foreigners in general and toward Jews in particular.

He stated that there was no intention whatsoever to imply that Jews by the fact of their being Jews, were not intensely patriotic Americans and that any impression to the contrary was misleading. He stated further that it was not the purpose of the Episcopal Church to missionize among Jews who had not broken with the synagog, but inasmuch as religious anarchy leads to disrespect equally for the law of God and man, the church was justified in doing what it could among those sprung from Jewish stock, who had definitely broken away from their ancestral moorings. True Americanism could be builded up only upon the basis of a recognition of those ideals for which religion stands. Of course, any Jew holding to the belief that in the church, he could find greater soul satisfaction and a finer opportunity for self-realization than in the synagog, would not be refused.

In replying to this address by Rev. Emhardt, Rabbi Franklin stated that he appreciated the position of the Episcopal church as outlined. Moreover, that while he believed that the church would be entirely unsuccessful in winning converts even from among those who had broken with Jewish tradition and practice, he took no exception to the attempt on the part of the Christians to win them to their cause. He understood, he said, that it was part of the business of the churchmen to spread the gospel of the church and, to use their own phrase, "to win souls for Christ".

Rabbi Franklin cited examples of numerous so-called converts to the church, who were posing as ex-rabbis and whom the church had received with open arms, although even a cursory examination into their records, would have disclosed their unworthiness and the fact that they were simply preying upon the gullibility of the church people. He indicated that if out of the people of this type, the church could make good Christians, the Jews would certainly have no objection. He definitely protested, however, against any implication that the processes of Christianization and of Americanization are one. And he stated that the resentment against such implication on the part of Jews whose patriotism had been attested time and time again in no uncertain fashion, was fully warranted.

To this, the representatives of the Episcopal church fully agreed. A disclosure of the records of the Department of Christian Americanization proved definitely that the newspaper reports of the proposed program and budget contemplated by that Department had been exaggerated. Further addresses were made by representatives of both sides to the conference, in which the ideas outlined by Rev. Emhardt and Rabbi Franklin were further emphasized. The conference adjourned at 7 p. m., after a two hours' session. All parties felt that a better understanding had been arrived at and that the foundation had been laid for co-operation between the church and the synagog in matters relating to the Americanization of the foreign-born.

On the day following the conference, the following resolution was drawn up for submission to the general Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in session in the City of Detroit. On Thursday morning, October 16, it was unanimously and enthusiastically adopted by the House of Deputies and in the afternoon the House of Bishops gave it unanimous approval.

WHEREAS, the title "Bureau on Christian Americanization" has been misinterpreted by large numbers of American citizens, notably American Jews;

RESOLVED, That in authorizing a plan and budget for Christian Americanization, it is far from the purpose of this Convention to disparage or to criticize the notable American patriotism displayed by great numbers of our fellow citizens of foreign birth or parentage who profess other religious faith than our own; and we wish them abundant success in their earnest efforts to uphold and propagate the ideals of Americanism which in common with ourselves, they so loyally entertain; and we agree with them that the liberty which flows from obedience to the will of God is the only secure basis upon which free American institutions can be perpetuated.

Oct. 17th, 1919.

Rev. Thos. Burgess, Secy.,
Dept. Christian Americanization of the Episcopal Church,

Rev. Wm. Chauncey Emhardt,
Chairman, Advisory Committee,

Detroit, Michigan.

Gentlemen:

I beg to acknowledge with deep appreciation, your kind favor of even date, in which you advise me of the Resolution unanimously passed by the House of Deputies and unanimously concurred in by the House of Bishops.

I can think of no action on the part of your church organization that could possibly have been more effective in removing whatever misunderstanding may have arisen concerning the attitude of the Episcopal Church toward the Jews in America, than the passage of this Resolution. Such action on your part cannot but make for a kindlier sympathy and a more helpful understanding between the two great religious groups which you and I represent.

I am sure that the way has been opened to a closer co-operation in behalf of the social and moral well-being of those who have drifted away from church and synagog.

With the hope that God may bless your efforts, I beg to remain,

Sincerely yours,

Leo M. Franklin,

President
CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS

C O P Y

Detroit, Michigan,
Oct. 17th, 1919.

Dr. Leo M. Franklin, President,
Central Conference of American Rabbis,
Detroit, Michigan.

My dear Dr. Franklin:

It gives us great pleasure to inform you that yesterday morning, Thursday, October 16th, George Zabriskie, Esq., delegate from the Diocese of New York and Chancellor of the same Diocese, made a forceful speech to the House of Deputies, in which he acknowledged and commended the helpful efforts in the interests of Americanization put forth by the Jews of America, and at the conclusion of his speech, offered the following resolution:

"WHEREAS, the title "Bureau on Christian Americanization has been misinterpreted by large numbers of American citizens, notably American Jews:

RESOLVED, the House of Bishops concurring, that in authorizing a plan and budget for Christian Americanization, it is far from the purpose of this convention to disparage or to criticize the notable American patriotism displayed by great numbers of our fellow citizens of foreign birth or parentage who profess other religious faith than our own; and we wish them abundant success in their earnest efforts to uphold and propagate the ideals of Americanism which in common with ourselves, they so loyally entertain; and we agree with them that the liberty which flows from obedience to the will of God is the only secure basis upon which free American institutions can be perpetuated."

This was unanimously adopted.

The adoption of this resolution was subsequently announced to the House of Bishops, in which, upon motion, they unanimously concurred.

May we not assure you of the great pleasure it has afforded us to work with you in removing whatever misunderstanding may have arisen concerning the attitude of the Episcopal Church toward the Jews in America and of the joy with which we view the prospect of fuller and more fruitful co-operation in our efforts for the social and moral welfare of the unchurched of America? With best wishes, we are,

Faithfully yours,

Thomas Burgess,

Secretary of the Dept. of Christian Americanization
of the Episcopal Church

William Chauncey Emhardt,
CHAIRMAN OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF THE DEPT.

CCAR

December 5th, 1919

Rebbi Abraham Simon,
2802 Cathedral Avenue,
Washington, D.C.

My dear Rebbi Simon,

I regret exceedingly that
I shall be unable to attend the meeting of
the Committee on Marriage and Divorce, to be
held Tuesday, December 9th.

With kindest regards,

Very sincerely yours,

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March 5th, 1920.

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS:

It is almost a year since our Conference met in annual session and several months are still to elapse before the convening of our meeting at Rochester. It seems fitting, therefore, that the members of the Conference should be advised that during this long interval, the Executive Board and the Committees of the Conference have been actively at work upon the various and important tasks assigned to them.

It is not necessary to detail at this time, the many serious problems that have confronted your officers. The spirit of unrest that has attacked every phase of modern life has left its mark upon Jewry of the world over. All the dangers of a period of rapid transition have in one form or another confronted us. The economic, the social, and in some sense the political situation of the Jew in the Old World, has brought problems of no mean import to us here. We have tried to meet these problems as adequately as possible. A number of matters of great importance have had to be taken up with various national bodies and at least one with governmental agencies in this country. At a later time, the members of the Conference will be acquainted with the details of these various matters and the progress that has been made regarding them.

Early in the month of March, your President and a Committee authorized by the Executive Committee, is to meet in the City of New York with representatives of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America with a view to minimizing the activities of missionaries to the Jews. It is hoped that something tangible will result from this conference. On the other hand, conditions as they exist indicate that there is need for active and aggressive work on the part of Jews among Jews. Whether we like to confess it or not, too many of those who should be supporters of the synagogue are being enticed by the so-called new cults, or what is perhaps more to be feared, into a denial of all religion.

A constructive program for meeting this situation must be arranged by our Conference. We are not unmindful of this fact and our Committee on the Survey of Religious Conditions is busily at work studying the problem. It is planned to devote an entire day at the Rochester Conference to a discussion of the report of this committee and another day to a consideration of the problem presented by the unsynagoged.

Bearing upon the program to be presented at Rochester, we may say that it is planned to make it eminently constructive in character. While we shall not forget our obligation to forward scientific scholarship, we shall present to the members of the Conference for discussion, matters that are vital to the religious life of our people at this time. That such discussion may be most effective, it is essential that as many of our members as may possibly do so, should plan to attend the meeting at Rochester which will begin on the evening of Tuesday, June 29th.

A word to our Committees: If you happen to be Chairman of a Committee, you have been selected for that place because of your apparent readiness to serve the Conference and the cause of Judaism. We take it for granted, therefore, that you are actively at work and will present a full report upon the subject assigned you for investigation or upon the work committed to your care. If you happen to be a member of a Conference Committee, and have not heard from your Chairman as to the part assigned you in the work of your Committee, will you not take it upon yourself to communicate with him at once, telling him of your desire and readiness to serve?

If in any way, your President can be helpful to you, do not hesitate to command him. We must make the Conference the telling institution that it deserves to be in American Israel and this year above all years, we must be able to show worth while results.

Thanking you for your co-operation-

Fraternally yours,

LEO M. FRANKLIN,
President.

Rabbi Abram Simon, Ph.D.

2802 Cathedral Avenue

Washington, D. C.

3/31/1920

Rabbi Abba H Silver,
Cleveland,
My Dear Colleague:-

I regretted most & sincerely
your inability to have been present at
the Palestine Restoration Mass Meeting;
aside from the character of the meeting
itself, I had hoped to have a Conference
with you on your report of the Marriage ^{and}
Divorce Commission with reference to that
phase ~~of~~ which you have under study. I
hope that you have your paper ready
and will let me have it before the 1st
of May. I am most desirous of pre-
senting a creditable report to the
C. P. A. Session in Rochester.

Trusting to hear from you

and with hearty Passach greetings,
I remain,

Yours

Abraham



April Seventh
1920

Rabbi Abram Simon,
2802 Cathedral Ave.,
Washington, D.C.

My dear Rabbi Simon,

I am in receipt of your letter reminding me of my membership on the Marriage and Divorce Committee, and requesting that I have my paper ready for the first of May.

If I remember correctly, I sent in my resignation as a member of this Committee, either to Dr. Grossman or to Dr. Franklin.

I have done no work at all on the subject in the last two years and I am afraid that I shall not have the time to do any before the next Conference.

Regretting exceedingly that I cannot be of service to you, I beg to remain, with kindest regards

Sincerely yours,

Rabbi Abram Simon, Ph.D.

2802 Cathedral Avenue

Washington, D. C.

April 10, 1920

My dear Rabbi Silver:-

I cannot tell you with what keen disappointment I read your letter. I did not receive any word as to your resignation; otherwise, I would long ago have endeavored to secure some one to relieve you of your assignment. It is too late now for me to invite any one, but the report of our Commission will of necessity be incomplete and unsatisfactory. If you feel that you cannot continue on the work, will you mind sending me that part of it which I saw two years ago and which Prof. Lemberbach returned to you? I shall appreciate it.

With best wishes,

Remain

Yours truly
Abram Simon

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DEPARTMENT

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

55 FIFTH AVENUE
NEW YORK

May 14, 1920.

Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver,
c/o The Temple,
East 55th Street & Central Avenue,
Cleveland, Ohio.

My dear Silver:

I do not know whether I remembered to discuss with you the matter that I wanted very much to take up, but if I did not do so, let me briefly bring it to your attention.

It seems to me that the time has come for us to ask, politely at first, firmly in the end, that there be a discussion of the new state of things, as a result of the San Remo decision, by the Central Conference of American Rabbis, ~~at~~ the Rochester Conference. Heller agreed with me, and I am sending him and Martin Meyer, the letter to be written to Franklin. I thought that the four of us might send the letter. Please look it over and make any changes which commend themselves to you, and please send it back to me as promptly as you can.

I did not have a chance on Monday, to tell you how fine and beautiful I thought your word. It constituted one of the great moments of the Convention. At the following session, when I asked the members to indicate whom they would like to hear before the Convention closed, there was a roar for Silver, - but alas, you did not make it possible to satisfy the desire.

The letter is attached.

Faithfully yours,

Wise

SSW/MAC

May 14th, 1920.

Rabbi Leo M. Franklin,
c/o Temple Beth-El,
Woodward Avenue,
Detroit, Michigan.

My dear Dr. Franklin:

It has occurred to some of us that in view of the San Remo decision, which confers the Mandate over Palestine upon Great Britain, it will be the wish of many, and possibly all of the members of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, to consider the very important problems which face world-Jewry, as a result of that decision.

Even though the program may have been tentatively made up for the Rochester Conference in July, it has occurred to us that special provision should be made for the discussion of the duty which faces all of us in connection with the work to be done in and for the National Jewish Homeland in Palestine.

We should be very glad indeed, to have your thought on this momentous matter.

With fraternal greetings, we are

Faithfully yours,

SSW/MAC

ABBA HILLEL SILVER, RABBI
THE TEMPLE

The Temple, Cleveland

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TEL. ROSEDALE 1330

CCAR
BENJ. LOWENSTEIN, PRESIDENT
1323 WEST NINTH STREET

May 18th, 1920

Copy
Dr. Stephen S. Wise,
23 West 92nd Street,
New York City.

My dear Dr. Wise,

T
Of course I shall be very happy to sign the letter, although I am very skeptical as to the results. Even if Dr. Franklin should consent to have the entire subject presented, the action of that body would be such that I am afraid it would defeat the very purpose which we aim to serve. The champion talkers of the Conference will seize upon this opportunity to dwell again upon their patriotism and the political phase of Zionism &c. &c. If we succeeded in getting the resolution passed, it would be so tame and non-committal as to be of little value.

However, if you and Dr. Meyer and Dr. Heller wish to introduce the subject in counter-action to any adverse movement on the part of others, I am with you.

With kindest regards, I am

Very sincerely yours,

A. H. Silver

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May 20th, 1920.

Dear Colleague:

As you probably know you have been on the Committee for Solitation of Funds, but as the work of the Committee is purely formal I have not bothered you with matters which would merely necessitate unnecessary correspondence. I have sent out the usual letter appealing to Congregations and individuals, but the result has not been as good as in pass years. Many Congregations state that they are subscribing to the Union's Fund and as they claim that they are taking up the Pension Fund they are unwilling to subscribe to both. Now let us look the facts squarely in the face and make up our mind as to what kind of a report we should bring into the Conference. The Union Pension Fund is a thing all for the future and liable never to amount to anything. At first they claimed that they were distributing 26 1/2% of their money to the Synagogue Pension Fund but later evidently changed their plans and decided not to pay anything into the Pension Fund until after they had received \$250,000.00 for general expenses. Now it is evident that each year they will find it more difficult to carry on their campaign and raise their money and so the Synagogue Pension Fund will never succeed according to this plan. We must take a definite stand and either come out and say that we do not sympathize with the Union method of campaign and that we will carry on our campaign for funds independently - which means that we must definitely tell the Congregations that we put no stock in what the Union is doing, or we must discontinue our campaign; with the result of having dependents in the coming years, with no money to relieve their needs.

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LOUIS WOLSEY, CLEVELAND, OHIO

Dear Colleague....p. 2

I have personally put this matter squarely before the President of the Conference asking that he take it up with Rabbi Stolz, who is Chairman of our Committee which co-operates with the Union Synagogue Pension Fund. Perhaps Stolz can help us to work out some solution. There is no question but that the stand of the Congregation is absolutely just, we cannot expect them to contribute to two funds for the same purpose. The Union has been making the statement year after year that part of the money goes to the Synagogue Pension Fund and we must now meet the issue squarely and work out some solution. Have you any suggestion to offer which I could embody in my report as to some better way of carrying on this campaign? We have been very successful up to this year and have always raised a couple of thousand.

Let me hear from you promptly.

Yours truly,

Isaac Marcuson

FREE SYNAGOGUE
NEW YORK

STEPHEN S. WISE
RESIDENCE, 23 WEST 90TH STREET

May 20, 1920

Rabbi A. H. Silver,
Cleveland, Ohio

Dear Rabbi Silver:

Dr. Wise, who is not in town at present, asked me to send you a copy of the letter which he has addressed to Dr. Franklin, to which he signed your name, as per your letter, as well as the names of Dr. Meyer and Dr. Heller, and his own.

Sincerely yours,

Secy



cc AR
May 21, 1920

Rev. L. M. Franklin, D.D., President,
Central Conference Reform Rabbis,
Detroit, Mich.

Dear Rabbi Franklin:

It has occurred to some of us that in view of the San Remo decision, which confers the mandate for Palestine upon Great Britain, it will be the wish of many, possibly all, of the members of the Central Conference of American Rabbis to consider the very important problems which face world-Jewry as a result of that decision. Even though the program may tentatively have been made up for the Rochester Conference of July, it seems to us that special provision ought to be made for the discussion of the duties which face all of us in connection with the work to be done in and for the national Jewish homeland in Palestine.

We shall be very glad to have your thought on this momentous matter.

Sincerely yours,

Max Heller

Martin A. Meyer

Abba Hillel Silver

Stephen S. Wise

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May 24th, 1920.

Rabbi Max Heller
Rabbi Martin A. Meyer
Rabbi Abba H. Silver
Rabbi Stephen S. Wise

Dear Colleagues:

I beg to acknowledge your letter of May 21st, in which you suggest that it will be the wish of many - possibly all- of the members of the Central Conference of American Rabbis to consider the very important problems which face world Jewry as a result of the San Remo decision.

In reply, let me state that ample opportunity for the discussion of a matter of such importance will be given at the Rochester Conference.

With cordial greetings and regards,

Fraternally yours,

Sam. Frankel
President

May 25th, 1920

Rabbi Isaac E. Marcuson
810 Spring Street,
Macon, Ga.

My dear Rabbi Marcuson,

I am in receipt of your
circular letter of the 20th and am heartily
in accord with the thought contained therein.

I believe that the Synagogue and School Extension
is again trying to get a quarter of a million
dollars for letterheads and postage stamps and
is using the Synagogue Pension Fund as a bait.

I regret, however, that I am unable to co-operate
with you, inasmuch as I do not remember having ac-
cepted office on the Committee for Solicitation of
Funds.

With kindest regards, I am

Very sincerely yours,

August 19th, 1920.

Rabbi Felix R. Levy,
707 Melrose Street,
Chicago, Ills.

My dear Rabbi Levy,

I regret exceedingly that
I shall be unable to serve on the
Committee on Civil and Religious Mar-
riage Laws, or on the Committee on Re-
vision of the Union Prayer Book, to
which I have been appointed.

With kindest regards, I beg
to remain

Very sincerely yours,

Central Conference of American Rabbis
APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES

Rabbi

A H Silver
Cleveland Ohio

Dear Colleague:

I am pleased to inform you that the President has appointed you a member of the Committee
on Revision of Union Prayer Book
of which Rabbi T. Shlipson is chairman, for the year 1921

Please acknowledge your acceptance to me at once.

Fraternally yours,

J Henry

Date

8/12/20

Corresponding Secretary

Central Conference of American Rabbis
APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES

Rabbi

Dear Colleague:

I am pleased to inform you that the President has appointed you a member of the Committee
on Anti-Defamation League
of which Rabbi Simon is chairman, for the year 19 21

Please acknowledge your acceptance to me at once.

Fraternally yours,

Date

Corresponding Secretary