



Abba Hillel Silver Collection Digitization Project

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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, "C", 1945-1946.

COPY

DAVON OIL COMPANY
P.O. Box 1586
OKLAHOMA CITY 1, OKLAHOMA

March 16, 1946

Rabbi Morton J. Cohn
Temple Beth El
Ashland Avenue
Niagara Falls, N.Y.

Dear Rabbi Cohn:

I am in receipt of your letter of March 14. It will be entirely satisfactory for you to come down by plane. As soon as you have definite plane reservations, please advise me so that we can make our plans accordingly.

We do not have a Saturday morning service.

With reference to your inquiry as to when Dr. Blatt's successor would assume his duties, wish to advise that we would expect him to assume the duties sometime during the summer, just so it is in time to make preparations for the holiday services, and also for the starting of the fall Sunday School term.

Looking forward to seeing you, and with best wishes, I am

Sincerely yours,

[Signed]

Aaron M. Weitzenhoffer.

AMW:mk

COPY

DAVON OIL COMPANY
P.O. Box 1586
OKLAHOMA CITY 1, OKLAHOMA

March 18, 1946

Rabbi Morton J. Cohn
Temple Beth El
Ashland Avenue
Niagara Falls, N.Y.

Dear Rabbi Cohn:

Since writing to you on the 16th I have some information which I think needs clarifying.

I have been informed that you are a very ardent Zionist, and if that is the case, I do not think it would be worth your while to come down here, because our group would not consider a Zionist for our Temple.

I hope you will pardon my frankness. The only reason I did not mention this in my first letter to you was that I understood from Mr. Israel that you were not a Zionist.

Please let me hear from you by return mail.

Sincerely,

[Signed]

Aaron M. Weitzenhoffer.

AMW:mk
AMW:mk

COPY

TEMPLE BETH EL
ASHLAND AVENUE
Niagara Falls, N.Y.

RABBI MORTON J. COHN

March 21
1946

Mr. Aaron M. Weitzenhoffer
Daven Oil Company
P. O. Box 1586
Oklahoma City 1, Okla.

Dear Mr. Weitzenhoffer:

Thank you for your letter of March 18th, which I am answering at my first opportunity.

I cannot understand how anyone, discussing with me the subject of Zionism, could have deduced that I am a non-Zionist.

The invitation to visit your community and occupy the pulpit of Dr. Blatt came to me with no solicitation on my part.

It is beyond my comprehension how a Rabbi could be invited to occupy a pulpit with prescription a priori to his mental processes on any problem affecting the life and destiny of the Jewish people. Any so-called Rabbi who is willing, for material considerations, to blindfold himself to the crying need and historical imperativeness of harassed and tortured fellow-Jews to live a free and untrammelled existence in their religiously traditional homeland, ceases to be a leader in Israel and endangers the right of free speech in a free pulpit of a free country.

The historicity of the Jewish people cannot be impeded or perverted by the hysteria of false views propounded by false prophets.

I am sure you will find my answer as frank in kind as your missive.

Very sincerely yours,

Rabbi Morton J. Cohn

Temple Beth El

ASHLAND AVE.

NIAGARA FALLS, N. Y.

RABBI MORTON J. COHN

March 21
1946

Dr. Abba Hillel Silver
The Temple
E. 105th St. & Ansel Rd.
Cleveland, Ohio.

Dear Dr. Silver:

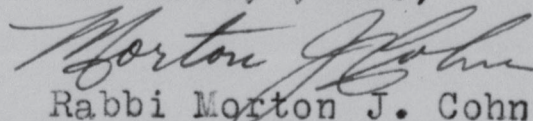
I am writing to you in your capacity as President of the Conference. The enclosed correspondence is self-explanatory.

In view of the recent Union Biennial which is still fresh in my memory, and the repeated "Song of Songs" which was to lead all parties to the Convention to live happily ever after, I await some elucidation on this remarkable immediate reaction in certain quarters.

The Union and the Conference have committed themselves to support the returned chaplains, without any ifs and buts to their intellectual integrity.

Where do we go from here?

Cordially yours,


Rabbi Morton J. Cohn

RABBI SOLOMON B. FREEHOF, D. D.
RODEF SHALOM TEMPLE
FIFTH AND MOREWOOD AVENUES
PITTSBURGH, PA.

March 27, 1946

Dr. Abba Hillel Silver
The Temple
E. 105th St. at Ansel Rd.
Cleveland, Ohio

Dear Abba:

I am returning the correspondence which you sent me. I do not see that the Conference can do anything about it.

I was reliably informed that the congregation in Atlanta, Georgia, having had a strong anti-Zionist rabbi all these years, now no longer wants an anti-Zionist, because it does not wish to antagonize many of its members. It is conceivable also that some Zionist congregations will refuse to take an anti-Zionist.

It is hoped, of course, that the stand taken at the Union will remove this issue from the minds of Boards of congregations, but we have no ground upon which we can insist upon it...so it seems to me.

With best wishes, I am

As ever,

Sol

SBF:ls
Enc.

March 28, 1946

Rabbi Morton J. Cohn
Temple Beth El
Ashland Avenue
Niagara Falls, N.Y.

My dear Rabbi Cohn:

Permit me to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of March 21. I was deeply distressed, as you may well imagine, at the action of Mr. Weitzenhoffer -- bigoted and narrow-minded. I wish to congratulate you on the splendid and upstanding reply which you sent.

I am at a loss to know, however, what the CCAR can do about it. You realize of course that we have no authority to intervene in the internal affairs of the congregations. The autonomy of each congregation is respected not alone by the CCAR, but by the Union.

I am wondering how far Mr. Weitzenhoffer's position reflects the sentiment of his congregation and whether the attention of the Zionists in Oklahoma City should not be called to this fact. There must be a number of Zionists who are members of That Temple. I should be pleased to hear from you further in this matter.

With all good wishes, I remain

Most cordially yours,

AHS:BK

San Francisco, California
June 25, 1945

Rabbi Ferdinand H. Isserman
St. Louis, Missouri

Dear Ferd:

After carefully reading and re-reading the Report of the Justice and Peace Commission, I send this statement to you.

(1) I heartily approve of your desire that a full time executive director be employed by the Executive Committee of the Conference. Had such an official been in San Francisco these past two months, Judaism would be the gainer thereby. Attending the Peace Conference were representatives from THREE different Jewish groups. All three groups issued statements to the press, held in public conferences and - through their designated spokesman - delivered addresses to the general public. Had our Central Conference, one of the largest and most influential Rabbinical bodies in the world, through its accredited spokesman, issued a statement, it might have carried more weight than all others combined. A Rabbinical body has more right to represent Jewry than any other secular group. Very correctly does your report criticize the State Department for recognizing Jewish agencies "Purely secular in Character".

(2) I heartily approve every word your report utters on behalf of negroes but wish you had spoken with equal warmth and equal fervor for oppressed Jews. Do not misunderstand me. I am not one of the Rabbis you mention who, "for the first time", invite a negro to speak in the Temple. In 1914, Mrs. Coffee and I welcomed Booker T. Washington into our home as a guest and in 1929, we invited Garland Anderson, a talented negro dramatist, to a meal in our home prior to his delivering an address in Temple Sinai, Oakland, before a large audience. I rejoice that your Report stands up for negroes, but I plead for equal, if not more, support for Jews.

(3) Your Report has many 'regrets' and I share every one of them. When you regretted the British attitude in Greece and the Levant, I wish you had added Palestine. You express regrets for unfair treatment to Belgians and Italians. I wish you had added the half-million Jews in Palestine and the countless thousands who are eager to enter Palestine. You did not express 'regret' but I wish you had, relative to the inviting Saudi Arabia and Argentina, into the Peace Conference, with Palestine, Loyal to the United Nations, left out.

was

while

Rabbi Ferdinand H. Isserman
St. Louis, Missouri

June 25, 1945
Page - 2 -

(4) Your Report speaks sympathetically and correctly for the Filipinos, the Mexicans, and the Nisei. Their problems cannot compare to the homeless and helpless Jews in Europe. I wish your Report had put more spirit into the plea for the million and a half wandering European Jews. The Report hopes that those who wish to return to their former homes, be helped. What Jew wants to go back to the country where the ghosts of the past would shock and horrify him? Most of these suffering co-religionists wish to travel to Palestine and I believe the Report should speak far more strongly on their behalf.

(5) Naturally, my next regret is that no mention is made about Zionism. The overwhelming majority of American Jews favor Zionism and, I believe, the majority of Conference members also favor Zionism. The Report asks for democratic rule in many lands. Why not ask for democracy in Palestine?

(6) I would enlarge, "We pray for the speedy end of the Japanese war", to include, "With the downfall of the enemy who attacked us at Pearl Harbor".

(7) Finally I have one blanket regret. This Report on many pages has no mention of Jews or Judaism. For example the paragraph about Franklin Delano Roosevelt is beautiful and nobly deserved. However it could have been written by a person of any creed. I believe that a Report on Justice and Peace by a Commission of the Central Conference of American Rabbis should be Jewish in spirit. I believe that a Rabbinical approach to the problem presages it. My Americanism is neither dwarfed nor distilled when I measure the success of our late President, not only in political and international terms, but also for his magnificent attitude toward our Jewish people.

Without adding further details, I feel that I cannot conscientiously sign the Report as now written. Pardon my disagreement, but I must respect my viewpoint, though I realize how much time and effort you put into this Report.

Respectfully yours,

(signed) R.I.C.

Rudolph I. Coffee

RICHARD A. MCGEE
DIRECTOR OF CORRECTIONS

OFFICE OF THE
JEWISH CHAPLAIN
FOLSOM AND SAN QUENTIN
STATE PRISONS



EARL WARREN
GOVERNOR

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Department of Corrections

RUDOLPH I. COFFEE
2400 BUCHANAN STREET
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

25 June 1945

Rabbi Abba Hiller Silver
Cleveland
Ohio

Dear Colleague :

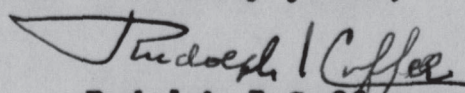
When this letter reaches, you will doubtless be our newly elected President of the C.C.A.R. I extend my hearty congratulations to the Conference and extend my sincere offer of co-operation to you.

Before I am re-named to the Peace and Justice Commission, I should like you to know my position, should you feel desirous of placing me for another year on that body. I refused to sign the draft of the Report sent to me by Chairman Isserman for reasons designated in the enclosed statement. He replied "Remember the conference agreement is to be neutral on Zionism".

I air-mailed him to Atlantic City that I would waive all other points, for the sake of acceding to his request, but I did want a Jewish note in the statement about President Roosevelt and I also wanted some addition to the unsatisfactory wording about the end of the war with Japan. It can be interpreted as a "soft" or a "negotiated" peace.

May your occupancy of the presidency bring to you the satisfaction of doing your best and carrying through your high ideals.

Most sincerely yours,


Rudolph I Coffee

Pardon for bothering you on
this detail for the post Conf.
Exec-Bd. I deal with
a ~~convention~~ subvention, Felix
Levy (Chairman of Subvention
subcommittee of Gups "Relief &
Subvention") will not be there
& I will be flying East on
Sunday. We want a subvention
for Rebels Jack A. Cohen
4702 Montross

Chicago Ill.
He has written (+ is in print)
a magnificent collection of the
Jewish material to the
book of Psalms. I saw it & it
is like Kasher to the Torah
(but brief). Jungberg highly
praises it. We want like
\$500 - but \$300 will do, would
you ask the Exec Bd for the
subvention?