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Central Conference of American Rabbis, chaplains, Emergency  
Placement Committee, 1946.



MINUTES OF MEETING  
JOINT COMMITTEE ON CHAPLAINS AND EMERGENCY PLACEMENT

Cincinnati, Ohio  
May 23, 1946

A meeting of the Joint Committee on Chaplains and Emergency Placement was held at the Netherland Plaza Hotel, Cincinnati, Ohio, on Thursday, May 23, 1946, at 10:00 A.M.

The following members of the Committee were present: Rabbis Barnett R. Brickner, Louis I. Egelson, Maurice N. Eisendrath, Abram M. Granison, Emil W. Leipziger, James G. Heller, Julian Morgenstern and Jacob P. Rudin.

Rabbi Brickner presided, and Rabbi Egelson recorded the Minutes.

Rabbi Brickner opened the meeting with an expression of appreciation to the members who came from out of town to attend this meeting, despite the impending railroad strike.

Status of Further Procurement of Chaplains

Rabbi Brickner reported on a conference in Washington on May 6, which a delegation from CANRA held with Chief of Chaplains of the Army, Luther D. Miller, with reference to a renewal of the commissioning of Jewish chaplains in order to have proper coverage for the needs of the Jewish men in the army. The delegation consisted of Rabbis Pool, Brickner, Levitsky, Simcha Levy and Lev. They have been authorized by CANRA to explore the advisability of going over the head of Chaplain Miller, if necessary, to reopen procurement. Rabbi Brickner reported that the Chief of Chaplains had stated that proper coverage was his responsibility, and he urged the committee not to go to higher authority at present, that he himself would take the matter up again with the War Department and see what can be done.

Rabbi Egelson amplified Rabbi Brickner's report by stating that on August 31, all the chaplains who will then have been in the Army two years will be eligible for release, and that all the Chaplains who are now in the Navy will be eligible for release by June 15. After August 31 there will be 27 men remaining in the Army who will not have served two years. In addition to those 27 men, 12 other chaplains had indicated that they will remain in the service a year longer, that is, until June 30, 1947. That will give us 39 Jewish chaplains in the Army. On the basis of a reported army of 1,500,000 in the United States and in the occupied areas, we would need at least 60 Jewish chaplains for moderate coverage.

Rabbi Egelson read a memorandum from Rabbi Lev, dated May 20, stating that the office of the Chief of Chaplains was now being confronted with a problem of a shortage of chaplains in other denominations, as well as in the Jewish group. There had been a news "release" wherein the Army was requesting an additional number of officers, including 300 chaplains.

Rabbi Heller pointed out that even though the problem seems to be a peacetime one, nevertheless there is an obligation upon us to see that the Jewish men in the army have spiritual care. He thought that



we should go over Chaplain Miller's head and take the matter up iwth his superiors.

Rabbi Morgenstern suggested that we request CANRA to send Chaplain Miller a copy of the memorandum of May 15, describing the conference with him in Washington, and ask him to confirm the report of that Conference. It was so ordered.

Rabbi Morgenstern suggested that some of the returning chaplains for whom pulpits could be obtained only with difficulty, might be interested in going back into the army for a period.

Rabbi Heller thought that this was not an ideal way of meeting the problem; that we must get men who are young enough to deal with young men. He suggested that it would be very valuable for the younger men now graduating from the seminaries to have the experience resulting from work in the chaplaincy.

Upon motion by Rabbi Morgenstern, it was voted that we circularize chaplains who are still in the service, as well as those rabbis who have left the chaplaincy and have not yet been placed, and ascertain whether they would be interested in remaining in the army, or reentering the army service.

#### Status of Placement of Returned and Returning Chaplains

Rabbi Brickner called on Rabbi Egelson to present a resume of the work of the Committee from its inception.

Rabbi Egelson stated that the Executive Board of the Conference, at its meeting in October, 1943, authorized the appointment of the Emergency Placement Committee. At its meeting in April, 1944, a preliminary survey was presented indicating that there would be about sixty chaplains who might need pulpits at the conclusion of the war. The Committee studied the various avenues of quasi-rabbinical work, and sent questionnaires to the chaplains asking them to indicate their preference for these types of activity. There was much correspondence with chaplains and with rabbis who were asked to make place for assistants. After V-E Day, it was learned that we would not have to implement our program at once, because the chaplains would be coming out from the service gradually. Last September and October we found that there was an increasing number of congregations requiring rabbis. Whether this was due to the growth of the Liberal movement, or whether the smaller communities were becoming financially able to maintain a rabbi, we do not know. But the fact remains that we now have a list of 51 pulpit vacancies and assistantships, and there are 38 chaplains and 8 replacement rabbis who will need pulpits. Thirty-three returned chaplains and replacement rabbis already obtained new positions.

Rabbi Egelson reported further that during the previous evening at a meeting of a sub-committee, consisting of Rabbis Brickner, Granison, Morgenstern and himself, when this report was presented, there was a very lengthy discussion and careful consideration of the problem, and the conclusion was reached that since the number of available pulpits exceeded the number of men desiring pulpits, there no longer was an



emergency. Therefore, we may well suggest that our Committee on Emergency Placement be discharged. The following resolution was drawn up by the sub-committee for presentation to this Committee:

"We recommend that the Emergency Placement Committee be discharged, for the following reasons:

1. There is no longer an emergency since there are more congregations than returned and returning chaplains.
2. We feel that the work of placing returned and returning chaplains can be better done by the rabbinical schools.
3. The functioning of a third placement agency, that is, the Emergency Placement Committee, involves duplication and confusion and does not result in the placement of additional chaplains.

It is understood that the rabbinical schools will give maximum preferential consideration to the rabbis who have served as chaplains."

Rabbi Morgenstern stated that the Committee had functioned adequately; that we have done everything that could be done; that perhaps the Emergency Placement Committee was unduly alarmed in contacting UNRRA, JDC and other organizations with the possibility of placing some of our men. That was an act of wisdom even though later circumstances proved that there was no need for it. He added that the Committee had done everything it could to keep the chaplain in the foreground, so that he might get preference wherever possible. "Those chaplains whose ambitions outrun their actual abilities will feel resentful against all of us."

Rabbi Rudin suggested a modification of the last paragraph of the resolution to read as follows:

"The rabbinical schools have given assurance that they will continue to give maximum preferential consideration to the rabbis who have served as chaplains."

Upon motion duly carried, it was voted to present the resolution at the next meeting of the Central Conference of American Rabbis as part of the report of this Committee.

In the interim it was suggested that the Committee continue to function as it has, since we have no right to anticipate the action of the Conference.

Rabbi Egelson presented a modification in the present procedure, as follows: If a graduate of the HUC communicates with the Secretary of the Committee, the Secretary will take up the matter with President Morgenstern and endeavor to arrive at a joint recommendation to a con-



gregation. Similarly, in cases of JIR graduates, the Secretary would communicate with Rabbi Granison before making a recommendation.

### Review of the Statement of Principles

Rabbi Egelson reported that he had been directed by the Chairman, Rabbi Brickner, to send a questionnaire to all Reform rabbis who had served or were serving in the chaplaincy and to the members of this Committee, asking them for their opinion regarding the duration of the rules embodied in our Statement of Principles. The questionnaire was sent out on May 2. At the date of the meeting (May 23) 16 replies had been received. Three rabbis felt that Principle #2 was no longer valid. The others all felt that the Principle should remain in effect for a certain length of time, but there was no agreement as to the length of time.

Rabbi Brickner pointed out that the Conference adopted the Statement of Principles two years ago, and that last year at the Atlantic City Conference, these Principles were reiterated.

Our procedure has been, when a pulpit was vacant, to write to that congregation, send a copy of the Statement of Principles, and request that preferential consideration be given to returning chaplains. By a directive from the President of the Conference, we were estopped from calling the congregations' attention to the fact that men they were considering would not have clearance from our Committee. We could only give this information to a congregation when such a request was officially made to us by a congregation.

Rabbi Heller suggested that this matter be brought up on the floor of the Conference for full discussion.

Rabbi Morgenstern pointed out that these Principles were adopted to protect the chaplains, and that we must implement them until the need for this protection ceases. That means giving our best efforts to assist the chaplain when he comes out of the service. Once he is placed, our responsibility ceases. He returns to the status of a rabbi and he stands on his own feet from then on. The fundamental principles should guide us until practically all the chaplains are out of the service.

Rabbi Heller indicated that there are three problems for our Committee to solve:

1. Are we in favor of abiding by Principle #2? It does not set a limit or the method of operation. There is only a very small number of men in the rabbinate to whom this Principle applies, and we may be very proud of that fact. He believes the Committee should reaffirm Principle #2, as expressed in our Statement.
2. How long shall this Principle be in effect? The time has not yet come for us to make a decision. The Committee should not be relieved of this responsibility until it feels that the time for



such a release has arrived.

3. How shall the Principle be implemented? We should recommend to the Conference that the Committee should be authorized to contact congregations that are considering engaging new rabbis and call attention to lack of clearance, even though there be no definite inquiry from the congregation.

Rabbi Granison stated that we are not a penalizing agency; that it is our responsibility to protect the best interests of chaplains in so far as it is practicable and reasonable. The JIR has never recognized the Principle of clearance as submitted by this Committee. One of the main purposes that prompted the adoption of Principle #2 was to stimulate men to go into the chaplaincy when chaplains were badly needed. That reason no longer applies. There is no procurement now. Rabbi Granison would have Principle #2 changed from a negative to an affirmative statement, namely, "maximum preferential consideration shall be given to chaplains in pulpit placement."

Rabbi Heller pointed out that the Principle was adopted as part of the effort to persuade men of their duty to enter the service. They were told that they would not be penalized or have their careers retarded because of entering the chaplaincy. When we said to the chaplain that he would not be penalized, we meant that we would protect him. We had no right to make these assurances to these men, unless we were willing to back up our promises to them.

Rabbi Morgenstern agreed that we must keep faith with the chaplains and carry out our promise to them. Were we to change this Principle in the slightest degree, the chaplains would say that we were trying to back out from our commitment to them.

Rabbi Rudin asked Rabbi Granison whether it is the consensus of all the Alumni of the JIR that the JIR does not agree with Principle #2.

Rabbi Granison responded that it was so voted by the Executive Committee of the JIR Alumni.

Rabbi Rudin expressed doubt as to the general approval of the JIR Alumni with the action reported by Rabbi Granison.

With reference to point #1 in Rabbi Heller's statement, it was voted that we indicate that we were asked to reconsider our Statement of Principles, that we sent out a questionnaire to the Chaplains and our Committee, and that we now reaffirm Principle #2.

Rabbi Granison asked to be recorded as voting in the negative.

With reference to point #2, it was voted that we should set no time limit for the duration of Principle #2.

Rabbi Granison asked to be recorded as voting in the negative.



With reference to Rabbi Heller's point #3, it was voted that we present to the Conference a statement of the action of our Committee whenever a pulpit vacancy occurs, and that in presenting the matter to the Conference we should indicate the divergence of opinion between the Executive Board of the Conference and our Committee regarding imparting information to a congregation which is considering <sup>engaging</sup> a rabbi who would not have the clearance of our Committee.

Rabbi Granison asked to be recorded as voting in the negative.

Rabbi Morgenstern suggested that in our initial letter to congregations having pulpit vacancies, we should add the following statement: We are ready to give the congregation information on the rabbis it is considering as to whether they have clearance or not. We have this information and we think the congregation should request the information from us in a sense of patriotic deference to those who have served our country.

The Committee voted to adopt this procedure, Rabbi Granison asking that his negative vote be recorded.

Rabbi Rudin expressed the thought that the cases of those rabbis who have definitely violated the Statement of Principles be called to the attention of the Conference with the recommendation that those men be not selected as officers, members of committees, readers of papers, etc.

#### Special Cases

The Committee considered a number of special cases of men who seemed to be violating our Statement of Principles.

#### Rabbi Nathan A. Perilman

It has been strongly rumored that Rabbi Perilman was being considered as a successor to Rabbi Goldenson. Rabbi Heller reported that Rabbi Perilman had been interviewed by three members of the Chaplaincy Committee at various times. The reason that he gave for refusing to go into the chaplaincy was that he could not get along on the differential that the congregation would pay him, since he would miss his perquisites. Rabbi Heller thought that representatives of our Committee should appear before a committee of Temple Emanu-El and present to them Rabbi Perilman's record.

Rabbi Eisendrath stated that he had received information which changes the aspect of the situation. The Board of Temple Emanu-El had requested Dr. Goldenson to stay on for two more years, until he reaches the age of seventy. Rabbi Eisendrath felt that if Rabbi Goldenson's retirement were publicly announced, and if it were apparent that Perilman would take his place when the pulpit became vacant, then we ought to take action.

Rabbi Heller thought that we have a perfect right to go to the congregation now and tell them the story; that the Central Conference of



American Rabbis has declared that a man who refused to go into the chaplaincy for insufficient reasons shall not take advantage of his civilian status to advance himself; that this is a case that the Committee ought to handle firmly.

Rabbi Brickner and Rabbi Heller suggested that we wait until the Conference takes action regarding contacting the congregations, that the delay of a month in this case will not matter.

Ahron Opher

Rabbi Egelson stated that Rabbi Opher, who had no clearance from our Committee, had been elected Associate Rabbi at Paterson, N. J. When the position at Paterson became open, we wrote the usual letter. Furthermore, Rabbi Gustave Falk of the New York office of the Union was in touch with the situation. We had heard that Rabbi Joseph Klein who was eligible for consideration was being considered by the congregation. When Rabbi Egelson was in New York recently Rabbi Falk told him that other men were being considered. The congregation did not ask us whether Rabbi Opher had clearance or not. When we knew he was being considered, Rabbi Egelson spoke to Rabbi Brickner, who suggested that we write to Rabbi Raisin. Rabbi Raisin replied that he could not do anything in the matter. Rabbi Egelson spoke to Rabbi Silver on the phone, and was informed that the Committee had done all that it was empowered to do.

Rabbi Granison suggested that in the future it should be the policy of our Committee that when no chaplain was being considered by a congregation, the name of a chaplain should be submitted.

Rabbi Eisendrath stated that Rabbi Opher had told him that he seemed to be under the impression that he had clearance.

Rabbi Heller stated that Rabbi Opher had given him definite reasons for not applying for the chaplaincy. One reason was that he had a son in Palestine who depended on him, and the other was that his congregation would break down if he left it, and that the congregation would not give him a differential.

Rabbi Rudin stated that Rabbi Opher had told him that one of the reasons for his not going into the chaplaincy was that his congregation had the policy of underpaying its rabbi on the ground that he was receiving much money from perquisites. Therefore, if Rabbi Opher went into the service, these perquisites would disappear, and his differential from the congregation would not amount to anything.

Rabbi Granison thought that Rabbi Opher genuinely felt that the congregation could not get along without him, and that if he left, the congregation would fold up and he would not have a congregation to which to return after the war.

Rabbi Heller added that he always felt that Rabbi Opher's case was a particularly difficult one to judge, and he thought of him as well-meaning.

It was the consensus that nothing could be done at the present time.



Rabbi Heller thought that in the future we must bear in mind that if we can get to the members of a congregational Board in time and state to them the facts in the case, no congregation will act against our Principles.

Judah Cahn

Rabbi Granison reported that Rabbi William F. Rosenblum had intended to be at this meeting and because he could not come, he asked him (Granison) to report. To the best of Rabbi Granison's knowledge, Rabbi William Schwartz, who had just returned from the chaplaincy, had resigned from the Lawrence, L.I., congregation under terms that were satisfactory to him. The congregation offered Rabbi Schwartz a sum of \$40,000 over a period of seven years. Rabbi Granison called up Rabbi Judah Cahn and asked him: "Are you sure Rabbi Schwartz resigned?" Rabbi Cahn replied that Rabbi Schwartz resigned and that the letter was in the files. Rabbi Cahn read to Rabbi Granison the letter of resignation which is appended hereto.

Rabbi Brickner read the following telegram which had just been received from Rabbi Rosenblum:

"Have interviewed Rabbi William B. Schwartz of Temple Israel, Lawrence, who reports he is submitting resignation to enter other work under arrangements satisfactory to him which I too consider generous. Granison has details. My opinion only question that can possibly come before committee if raised by some members of that congregation is whether or not Cahn has clearance from us. No one seems likely to raise that question."

Rabbi Rudin, when asked to report his knowledge of the situation, stated that he was originally assigned to contact Rabbi Judah Cahn for the chaplaincy. He approached him in 1942, and was told that Rabbi Cahn's wife was expecting a baby, and that later on he would consider seriously going into the chaplaincy. However, Rabbi Cahn subsequently went into Hillel work instead of going into the chaplaincy. Then he declared that his service on the campus was as essential, if not more so, than if he were a chaplain. Then he was invited to serve as a replacement rabbi at Lawrence, L. I., and the congregation "fell in love with him." Judah Cahn has not made a single move to protect the dignity of the rabbinate. He never mentioned Rabbi Schwartz from the pulpit or indicated in any way that there was ever another rabbi in the congregation. The congregation telephoned Rabbi Schwartz when he was stationed in England and asked him to resign. When Rabbi Schwartz came back to this country and was at the hospital at Ft. Dix for treatment, the president of the congregation and a committee called on him and told him that he could come back to the congregation any time he wanted to, but that they preferred Judah Cahn. Rabbi Schwartz has never been officially welcomed back. He has not set foot in the pulpit since his return. Judah Cahn is responsible for that. Rabbi Schwartz's resignation was virtually demanded. Unless he submitted it, he would not receive the \$40,000. If he had not sent in that resig-



nation, worded so that the Board could send it to the whole congregation, they would have eliminated him without any consideration.

Rabbi Heller thought that a committee ought to be appointed to meet with the officers and Board of the congregation, but Rabbi Rudin replied that Rabbi Schwartz could not go back to that congregation, even if Rabbi Cahn were forced to leave.

Rabbi Morgenstern thought that we should investigate the matter as to whether or not Rabbi Cahn had been unethical; that a committee should be appointed to look into the matter, and that if it finds that there had been reprehensible conduct on the part of Rabbi Cahn, charges should be brought against him at the Conference.

Rabbi Granison thought that Rabbi Schwartz ought to be visited unofficially and consulted about this, and that nothing should be done without his knowledge.

Rabbi Morgenstern thought that this matter should be handled promptly, so that a report can be made to the Conference.

Rabbi Eisendrath expressed the thought that this situation was analogous to Hollywood in that Rabbi Cahn contravened our Principles by taking the place of his principal.

It was voted that a committee be appointed to investigate the matter and report to our Committee the day before the Executive Board of the Conference meets, in order that our Committee's report might be presented to the Executive Board. Such a Committee has been appointed consisting of Rabbis Rosenblum, Feldman and Maccoby, who are to investigate the whole matter and report to the Chairman of the Committee. But before taking the matter up with the congregation and Rabbi Cahn, the Subcommittee should interview Rabbi Schwartz and be guided by such interview, since otherwise Rabbi Schwartz's interests might be hurt.

Rabbi Morgenstern reported that Rabbi Henry Tavel who had just come out of the chaplaincy, is having some difficulty in his congregation at Wilmington, Delaware, and would like a change of pulpit. Rabbi Tavel is a gentle, quiet person. Our Committee could help him considerably by emphasizing to his congregation his splendid service in the chaplaincy.

Rabbi Brickner suggested that Rabbi Eisendrath visit the congregation and have a special ceremony for presenting the Chaplain Citation from the Union, and thus help to build up Tavel.

#### Program at the meeting of the CCAR

Rabbi Brickner reported that at the forthcoming sessions of the CCAR, Friday afternoon is to be devoted to the chaplaincy. Reports will be presented covering the work of the Committee on Chaplains as well as the Emergency Placement Committee. That will be followed by a symposium on: 1. The impact of the chaplaincy upon the chaplain, which will be presented in fifteen minute papers by Rabbis Milton



Rosenbaum and Alvine Fine, and 2. The translation of that impact in the life of the Synagogue, which will be presented in fifteen minute papers by Rabbis Earl S. Stone and Samuel M. Silver.

ADJOURNED

Barnett R. Brickner  
Chairman

Louis I. Egelson  
Secretary





REVISED REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON CHAPLAINS  
TO THE CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS

Colleagues:

Our present report deals with two subjects - (1) the procurement of chaplains and (2) our relationship to the Jewish Welfare Board. These two assignments came to us as follows:

(1) At the last meeting of the CCAR, it was voted that the Committee on Chaplains shall confine its duties to the procurement of new chaplains for the Army and Navy as the need for them may arise.

(2) The matter of our relationship to the JWB was transmitted to our Committee for consideration by the Executive Board of the CCAR at the meeting in October of last year.

PROCUREMENT OF CHAPLAINS

The present status of the chaplaincy is as follows:

There are seven Army chaplains serving in the United States and eighteen overseas. In the Navy, there are two chaplains serving in the United States and one overseas. This makes a total of twenty-eight Jewish chaplains at present serving in the Army and Navy.

Of the eighteen Army chaplains serving overseas, eleven are located in Europe and seven in the Pacific. Many of these men will undoubtedly be discharged soon.

In the Veterans Administration, there are four full-time chaplains. This added to the twenty-eight mentioned above as serving in the Army and Navy, gives us a total of thirty-two rabbis serving as chaplains at the present time in the Army, Navy and Veterans Administration.

In addition thereto, there are one hundred and fourteen auxiliary chaplains serving one hundred and ninety-one Army, Navy and Veterans Administration installations in the United States.

We are officially informed that from forty to fifty full-time chaplains are needed for the Army and Navy. About thirteen chaplains would be sufficient for the European area. About seventeen men are needed for work in the Pacific area. The balance could very well be used in this country. Should universal military training be adopted as a policy of our country, the problem of procurement would be before us as a continuing one.

Your Committee has grappled with the problem of procurement of chaplains in recent months. The glamour of the war is over. Our rabbis are no longer eager to enter the service. Rabbis have to be approached for chaplaincy service on an altogether different basis.



Last year we were stymied in our efforts to secure chaplains by the fact that the War Department would not modify its regulations with reference to commissioning new chaplains. They declined permission to procure them from civilian ranks. As a result, members of the graduating classes in the various seminaries in 1946 were not eligible for the chaplaincy.

When the rules were changed this year, making it possible to commission men from civilian life, another effort was made to meet with the graduating classes of 1947. But, to date they have not answered the call.

All the rabbis of the various groups received a call signed by representatives of the various seminaries, rabbinical organizations and religious lay organizations to consider this problem in all its details. Our Committee suggested that CANRA ask the Presidents of the rabbinical conferences to refer to this problem in their presidential messages.

Our Committee further considered the plan of asking the various seminaries, when they enroll new candidates for the rabbinate in their schools, to make it a condition that the men, on graduation, give a few years to the chaplaincy before accepting a pulpit.

Of the forty to fifty full-time chaplains that we need, only six applications have recently been received. Of these six, two are from the Hebrew Theological College, one is from the Yeshiva Isaac Elchanan, two are graduates of the Jewish Institute of Religion and the other is a graduate of the Jewish Theological Seminary.

In passing, we would like to point out that there is still a need also for quite a number of chaplains to serve the various installations. But, this is not a matter for our Committee but rather for CANRA to handle because of the ecclesiastical endorsement required.

#### RELATIONSHIP TO JEWISH WELFARE BOARD

Your Committee devoted considerable attention to this subject. Recently, at CANRA'S request, the JWB proposed a new set of rules to govern the status of CANRA in its relationship to the JWB. Previously CANRA had been a sub-committee of the Division of Army and Navy Activities of the JWB. Now it has become an individual Division, one of the six divisions of the JWB. CANRA will have complete charge of procurement and endorsement of part-time chaplains, full-time chaplains and civilian chaplains.

The Rabbinical Assembly of America, as well as the Association of Jewish Chaplains, have adopted resolutions whose purpose it is to bring the work of CANRA under the exclusive auspices of rabbinic groups. The question of the primacy of the synagogue was discussed in detail at our Committee meeting.



Our Committee unanimously adopted the following Resolution, which we herewith present for the consideration of the Conference.

"Because we believe that the Jewish services to our men and women in the Armed Forces of the United States, and the Veterans Administration, are primarily of a religious character and should therefore be guided by the organized religious bodies, we recommend to the CCAR that it approve and inaugurate steps to create a commission of representatives of the rabbinic bodies now constituting the CANRA to study the full implications of this principle and the implementation of a program based upon it."

It will be of interest to the Conference to note that one of our most distinguished members and a Past-President of this Conference, Rabbi James G. Heller, has been invited to join with a group of ministers from other denominations for a month's inspection trip of our installations in Europe. We wish him a most fruitful and pleasant trip.

Respectfully submitted,

BARNETT R. BRICKNER,

Chairman

