



## 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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Cleveland Chamber of Commerce, AHS's resignation due to  
Chamber's advocacy of pen shop for labor and related  
correspondence and articles, 1922-1924.

4  
December eleventh, 1922

Mr. Munson A. Havens,  
S e c r e t a r y,  
Cleveland Chamber of Commerce,  
Cleveland, Ohio.

My dear Mr. Havens,

Please accept my resignation  
as a member of the Chamber of Commerce, to  
take effect the first of the year.

With kindest regards, I am

Very sincerely yours,



December eleventh, 1922.

Mr. Munson A. Havens,  
Secretary,  
Cleveland Chamber of Commerce,  
Cleveland, Ohio.

My dear Mr. Havens,

Please accept my resignation as a member  
of the Chamber of Commerce, to take effect the first  
of the year.

With kindest regards, I am

Very sincerely yours,

(signed) Abba Hillel Silver.





# The Cleveland Chamber of Commerce

Founded in 1848

NEWTON D. BAKER, PRESIDENT  
RICHARD F. GRANT, 1ST VICE PRESIDENT  
F. C. CHANDLER, 2ND VICE PRESIDENT  
GEORGE A. COULTON, TREASURER  
MUNSON HAVENS, SECRETARY  
C. R. JOHNSON,  
LABOR COMMISSIONER



February 26, 1923

Dear Member:

There's another angle to the high cost  
of building homes that we think should have the  
benefit of your thought and attention.

The message on the inside of this folder  
deals with that malignant thing,—crowded  
housing.

Please read it.

Very truly yours,

Committee on Labor Relations

by *Alexander C. Brown*  
Chairman



# High Building Costs Lead to Crowded Houses



You were told in our last message of John Smith, a capable, steady, thrifty mechanic, earning \$7 a day, who cannot afford to build a modest little home at present high building costs.

There are thousands today in Cleveland living in crowded houses, two or three families in one house. They want a home and could afford a home if building costs were reasonable.

For three rooms, in a house with another family, people are paying \$15 to \$20 per month in the least desirable sections of the city; for the same accommodations, in somewhat better sections, they are paying \$25 to \$35 per month.

Look with us, for a moment, into the home life of one of these families. A husband, a wife, two young children, a newly arrived baby, in three rooms, in a rundown house, on the east side, in a factory district. They share the house with another family and pay \$18 a month for rent. The wife cooks, washes, irons, sews in the kitchen, where the family lives most of the time. One bedroom for father, mother and the baby, and another dark room, never intended for a bedroom, for the children. No place for company but the kitchen. No

warm place, except the kitchen, for the children to play indoors. Is this fair to the mother? Is it fair to the children?

Of course they play out of doors—in the street—with automobiles and trucks constantly passing—never a moment that mother isn't in dread.

"Where there is no vision, the people perish." The vision of the founders of our country was a country with equal opportunity for life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. What vision has this family of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness?

Enough homes will not be built for such families as long as unreasonable building costs continue.

Under the closed union shop agreement between the Building Trades Employers' Association and the Building Trades Council, the supply of building labor has been reduced or restricted, costly restrictive practices have prevailed, and costs have risen to the point where home-building is impossible for the wage-earner. The chief obstacle in the way of lower building costs is this closed union shop agreement.

THE COMMITTEE ON LABOR RELATIONS.



## Restriction of the Supply of Labor

One of the direct results of the closed union shop in the building trades has been a restriction of the supply of building labor. This affects Cleveland as well as other parts of the country. This has been accomplished by rules and regulations which limit the number of apprentices; impose excessive initiation fees or dues; bar admission to membership; require use of working permits with non-members of a craft.

Here are the results of such policies as shown by the census of 1910 and 1920. Out of eleven trades in the construction industry, eight have decreased in numbers engaged during this decade. The figures below show the changes during this time.

<u>CRAFT</u>	<u>Number Employed</u>		<u>Decrease in Per cent</u>
	<u>1910</u>	<u>1920</u>	
Brick and stone masons	161,781	131,264	19
Plasterers	47,682	38,255	20
Painters, glaziers and varnishers, building	273,441	248,497	9
Roofers and slaters	14,078	11,378	19
Paper hangers	25,577	18,746	27
Laborers, building general and not specified	869,478	623,203	28
Laborers, road and street building & repairing	180,468	113,836	36
Stone cutters	35,731	22,099	38
Carpenters	817,120	887,379	9*
Plumbers and gas and steam fitters	148,304	206,718	39*
Structural iron workers, building	11,427	18,836	65*

\* Increase

In seven trades, there were less apprentices in training in 1920 than in 1910 as follows:

<u>APPRENTICES</u>	<u>Number Employed</u>	
	<u>1910</u>	<u>1920</u>
Plumbers and steam and gas fitters	9,903	7,386
Carpenters	6,069	4,805
Brick and stone masons	2,503	1,434
Painters and glaziers	2,262	1,616
Plasterers	669	398
Paperhangers	444	172
Roofers and slaters	304	250

Restricted immigration and failure of employers to train apprentices are also factors which have contributed to the shortage of building mechanics. Limitation of labor supply in the construction industry leads to unreasonable costs and other abuses. THIS IS NOT IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST.



Harcus

The Cleveland Chamber of Commerce

Founded in 1848

March 1, 1923

My dear Sir:

As you know your resignation is pending here at the Chamber. The directors, reluctant to accept it, have asked me to use any influence I may have to persuade you to withdraw it. This I am happy to do because, while I have not always agreed with the Chamber in the past and may not in the future upon some particular matter, I realize how little any of us can do, singly, for Cleveland and the incalculable value of our work when we coöperate

# The Cleveland Chamber of Commerce

Founded in 1848

in such groups for the practical realization of civic and social ideals.

The work of the Chamber is of a quality - in which we can all take pride, its effectiveness will be increased just as we can attract and retain in its membership the earnest and successful men who carry on the industry and commerce of the City.

I would deeply appreciate it if you could see your way to withdraw your resignation

Very truly yours,  
Wm. Conant Barker



March 1, 1922.

My dear Sir:

As you know your resignation is pending here at the Chamber. The directors, reluctant to accept it, have asked me to use any influence I may have to persuade you to withdraw it. This I am happy to do because, while I have not always agreed with the Chamber in the past and may not in the future upon some particular matter, I realize how little any of us can do singly for Cleveland and the incalculable value of our work when we cooperate in such groups for the practical realization of civic and social ideals.

The work of the Chamber is of a quality in which we can all take pride, its effectiveness will be increased just as we can attract and retain in its membership the earnest and successful men who carry on the industry and commerce of the city.

I would deeply appreciate it if you could see your way to withdraw your resignation.

Very truly yours,

(signed)

Horton D. Baker.



March 8th, 1923.

Mr. Newton D. Baker,  
Union National Bank Bldg.,  
Cleveland, Ohio.

My dear Mr. Baker,

Permit me to thank you for your kind letter of March 1st. I had no intention of making an issue of my resignation and therefore refrained from stating the reasons for it. Your letter however makes such a statement necessary.

I am not in sympathy with the position taken by the Cleveland Chamber of Commerce on the subject of the Open Shop and more especially of the propaganda which the Chamber has been conducting through newspapers and pamphlets to universalize it. I do not believe that it is the function of a Chamber of Commerce to become a propaganda agency for ideals such as are advocated by organizations of the type of the American Plan Association.

The desire on the part of the Cleveland Chamber of Commerce to serve the public would perhaps be less subject to question if the Chamber had shown a similar alacrity and apostolic zeal in ferreting out and exposing the abuses in the camps of employers, bankers, mortgage sharks and profiteers in our city.

As an association of employers the Chamber of Commerce is true to its mission, but it assumes to be a civic organization representing the interests of the public at large. As such it is decidedly partial.



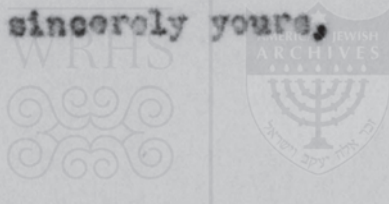
March 8th, 1923.

After your very stimulating and comprehensive correspondence with Mr. Compers on the subject of the Open and Closed Shop it would serve no purpose to go over the ground again. I am however enclosing herewith a brief summary of my position which was published some time ago in a Cleveland paper.

With kindest regards, I beg to remain

Very sincerely yours,

Enclosure.





March 8th, 1922.

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With kindest regards, I beg to remain

Very sincerely yours,

(signed) Abba Hillel Silver.

Enclosure.



## (Enclosure)

A Crusade is on foot to universalize the open shop. Manufacturers have organized locally and nationally and propagandists have been employed to establish the open shop. The sad condition of unemployment and the dire necessity of millions of men today are being exploited by the enemies of union labor.

In this attempt to destroy organized labor and to give organized capital complete control, the public is concerned vitally, for in the long run it is the public which pays the bill for every industrial dispute.

The protagonists of the open shop have appropriated the name American. Theirs is the "American Plan", implying that any other is un-American. All the talk about the open shop being American and patriotic is unmitigated balderdash and particularly pernicious at this time.

I believe the issue of the open shop versus the closed shop is not the real issue. It is only the projected issue. The real issue is collective bargaining and the right of the representation of labor in the management of industry.

In practice the open shop destroys the value and the effectiveness of all labor organizations. The open shop would destroy trade unionism in the United States.

Until some other agency is devised for the adequate protection of the working man, the trade union is a national necessity. It is the laborer's sole safeguard against exploitation.

The working man knows that all gains touching higher standards of living, better wages, better hours and better working conditions have been won solely through the efforts and struggles of organized labor, and he will fight in defense of his organization.

The right of labor to organize is, of course, beyond question. At a time when business men are organizing, when farmers have their unions, it would be folly to expect the working man to intrust his destiny to the service of altruistic employers.

From the point of view of public welfare, I believe the crushing of trade unionism would be a calamity of the first magnitude. I believe however, that union labor must begin a thorough housecleaning in order to regain the confidence and good opinion of the American people. It must fight not only the enemy without, but the enemy within; the irresponsible agitator, the demagogue, and, above all, the spirit that has been all too manifest in recent years of getting as much as you can and doing as little as you can.

The greatest enemy of organized labor is the man who loafes on his job. The crusade today against organized labor is ill-advised. Capital can gain nothing from it. It may work a great deal of harm. It may drive working men in sheer desperation into the ranks of radicalism.



Hareus

# The Cleveland Chamber of Commerce

Founded in 1848

March 9, 1923

Dear Sir:

Either late in February or early in March Mr. Baker wrote you a letter with regard to your pending resignation. In a hurried moment at the office this morning he mentioned that he had received no reply from you and asked me if I would ascertain whether you received his letter. If you did not receive it, I presume Mr. Baker would wish to write you again or telephone you about the matter.

Very truly yours,

*Maurice Hareus*

Secretary



*By that deed I have to thank them -  
I also - much in all America the  
fixed in our spot -*

March 20, 1923

The Editor,

Cleveland Citizen,

Cleveland.

Dear Sir: In the columns of the Cleveland Citizen of March 10, 1923, appeared editorial comment dealing with a bulletin issued by The Cleveland Chamber of Commerce to its members and a report in which labor relations in Cleveland factories had been surveyed.

*Frankly  
I have  
applied your  
figures to  
the  
numbers*  
*closed non-union*  
In commenting upon a recent report of the Committee on Labor Relations, which showed that of 759 industrial plants, there are in Cleveland 546 open shops, 126 closed non-union shops, and 16 closed union shops, the editorial notes that according to the report there are about eight times as many closed non-union shops as closed union shops in Cleveland, and then says:

"We repeat that the Cleveland Chamber of Commerce pretends to oppose the closed non-union shop, which it claims, preponderates overwhelmingly compared to the closed union shop, but we challenge anyone in this community to produce any booklet, leaflet or other literature that has been issued by this alleged neutral, open-minded business institution -- located on the Square, but is far from acting square -- that attacks the closed non-union shop."

The Cleveland Chamber of Commerce has been on record so many times publicly against the closed non-union shop that we are amazed that you have printed such a statement in your editorial column, although, knowing your fairness of mind, we recognize your entire sincerity. The following reports and documents, with dates, are here quoted in part as evidence of our public position against the closed non-union shop:

1. "Declaration of Principles", issued April 7, 1920, page 4, section 5, "Freedom of Contract".

This document was printed in pamphlet form, mailed to the membership of the Chamber, and widely distributed throughout the United States as well as in Cleveland. The Declaration received both national and local publicity and editorial comment. Copies were mailed to each local union in the city.



"Freedom of contract of employment must never be impaired. However, employers should not so exercise this right as to discriminate in the employment or discharge of employees on the ground that they are, or are not, members of a trades or labor union.

*states a  
principle  
but never  
propagates it*

Employees should not require of their employer that employment be conditioned on membership or non-membership in a trades or labor union. Employees should not coerce fellow-employees to join, or refrain from joining, a trades or labor union."

2. A full page advertisement published in the Cleveland Plain Dealer and Cleveland News, October 21, 1920, entitled "The Open Shop is in the Public Interest":

"- - - The Cleveland Chamber of Commerce does not stand for the closed non-union shop, although many employers honestly believe that the closed non-union shop protects their industry and is, therefore, in the public interest. - - -".

"- - - We believe that your (referring to the public) opportunity for progress and happiness partly depends on the abandonment by employers of a closed non-union shop policy, and on the abandonment by the unions of a closed union shop policy."

3. A full page advertisement published in the Cleveland Plain Dealer and Cleveland News, April 29, 1921, entitled "The Open Shop is in the Public Interest":

"To Cleveland Employers:

The majority of you are in accord with the public's demand for the real open shop as defined above.

You realize, moreover, that the public interest will finally decide the question.

In furtherance of this open shop policy, we urge you not to discriminate against union or non-union men.

We heartily oppose both kinds of closed shops:

The closed union shop--where no non-union men can work;

The closed non-union shop--where no union men can work.

In the real open shop neither of these conditions prevails.

The national demand for the real open shop, aiming to root out the evils of the closed union shop, has led some employers to operate closed non-union shops, by refusing to employ any union men.

We believe the far-sighted employer condemns this practice.

The public interest demands that workers be permitted, if they choose, to join labor unions and enjoy the legitimate benefits of such membership; the closed non-union shop policy seeks to prevent their doing so.



The public interest demands an equal opportunity for all wage-earners; but the closed non-union shop policy is to refuse employment to union men.

The public interest demands that labor unions continue to exist insofar as they represent a practical means of securing constructive industrial reforms; but the closed non-union shop policy would destroy all unions.

The public interest demands industrial peace; but the closed non-union shop policy is an important cause of industrial enmity and distrust.

We strongly urge all employers at this time to show such fairness in their dealings with their employees as to defeat the arguments of the labor agitators who assert that an "open shop" is a closed non-union shop. The public needs your help in securing the real open shop ---."

4. A letter from W. B. McAllister, Chairman of the Committee on Labor Relations of the Chamber of Commerce, addressed to the Editor of the Cleveland Citizen, and published in the Cleveland Citizen on September 3, 1921. The second paragraph of the letter reads -

"The Chamber of Commerce does not wish to destroy trades unionism, but it is against the 'closed union shop' exactly as it is against the closed non-union shop. It stands for the 'real' open shop -- in which every worker's chance is as good as every other worker's chance, from which no worker is shut out because he has no union card."

5. A half page advertisement published in the Cleveland Plain Dealer and Cleveland News, November 18, 1921, entitled "An Open Letter to the Milk Drivers' Union":

The text of the "Declaration of Principles", section 5, "Freedom of Contract", given under (1) above was used in this advertisement.

6. A pamphlet entitled "Correspondence Between Mr. Samuel Gompers and Mr. Newton D. Baker", page 8, paragraph 3, Mr. Baker's letter of August 24th, 1922; page 18, paragraph 2, Mr. Baker's letter of November 23, 1922. Approved by board of directors December 13, 1922:

This correspondence was printed, mailed to the membership of the Chamber, sent to a large list of public officials, and ministers of Cleveland, sent to every local labor union in the city. It was printed in full in the Cleveland Plain Dealer, Sunday, December 31, 1922, and in part in the New York Times of the same date, and the American Federationist in the November, 1922, and February, 1923, issues.

"As I see it, there are three or possibly four positions which one may take. He may favor (1) the closed non-union shop, (2) the open shop, (3) the preferential union shop, and (4) the closed union shop. My mind reaches an instantaneous and final disapproval of the closed non-union shop. I think it is intolerable that a man should be denied the right to work at his trade because he elects to join a labor union and so associate himself with others in his craft

That  
not  
Steel Mills



in counsel and action for a betterment of his condition.  
The closed union shop seems to me equally objectionable.  
- - -"

"- - - With many of your observations I agree, and with none more heartily than your condemnation of those who, under the guise of an open shop policy, actually operate their industries as closed non-union establishments. It is not difficult to understand why workers are rejecting the open shop, when the image which they have in their minds of it is a shop closed to them and their associates. The Cleveland Chamber of Commerce finds no room under its declaration of principles for such employers, but, on the contrary, throws the whole weight of its influence against them and their practices."

7. A pamphlet entitled "Labor Relations in Cleveland Factories", page 4, last paragraph. Approved December 13, 1922:

This report was printed, mailed to the membership of the Chamber, sent to a large list of Cleveland public officials, ministers, and to every local labor union. The report received publicity in the local daily newspapers.

"The committee has excluded from the classification of open shop 35 firms and corporations which replied to the questionnaire that they operate on the open shop principle, but either qualified their own statement, or are subject to question on the part of the committee by reason of knowledge of their practice. It seems significant of progress that certain firms and corporations which your committee has reason to believe are discriminating against union labor, prefer not to disclose that fact frankly to the Chamber of Commerce. The attitude of the Chamber on this subject should be well-known, for it has been frankly stated: We regard the shop that excludes union labor as being against the public interest in exactly the same way as we regard the closed union shop."

Marked copies of the pamphlets and photostats of the advertisements are herewith enclosed.

Since we believe that the statements made in the editorial are unfair to the record of The Cleveland Chamber of Commerce, we would esteem it a favor if you would give space in the Citizen to this reply.

Very truly yours,

Chairman  
Committee on Labor Relations



I have not answered

your letter of the 12th

and I am sorry that I

did not answer it sooner

but I have been so busy

that I have not had time

to do so. I am sorry

that I have not been able

to do so. I am sorry

that I have not been able

to do so. I am sorry

that I have not been able

to do so. I am sorry

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# The Cleveland Chamber of Commerce

Founded in 1848

NEWTON D. BAKER, PRESIDENT  
RICHARD F. GRANT, 1ST VICE PRESIDENT  
F. C. CHANDLER, 2ND VICE PRESIDENT  
GEORGE A. COULTON, TREASURER  
MUNSON HAVENS, SECRETARY

March 28th, 1923

Cleveland  
Fifth City

Rabbi A. H. Silver,

The Temple,

Cleveland.

My dear Rabbi Silver: I have been engaged in court, of late, and my time at the Chamber has been limited. Please pardon so tardy an acknowledgment of your interesting letter of the 8th inst.

I like the downright manner of your attack upon the Chamber's policy, and I am sure you will like it best if I reply in an equally downright way. You say that you are not in sympathy with the position taken by the Chamber on the subject of the open shop, "and more especially of the propaganda which the Chamber has been conducting, through newspapers and pamphlets, to universalize it".

Referring to the first part of the paragraph: There are three kinds of shops - the closed union shop, the closed non-union shop, and the open shop. If you do not believe in the open shop, - which is the shop "in which every worker's chance is as good as every other worker's chance, the open shop from which no worker is shut out because he holds a union card, and from which no worker is shut out because he has no union card", - I say, if you do not believe in the open shop, then you must believe either in the closed union shop or the closed non-union shop. I will not indulge in an idle discussion of the closed non-union shop. Of course you do not believe in that. And, knowing you as well as I do, I do not see how you can believe in the closed union shop. You will have to tell me in so many words that you do before I believe that you do. The closed union shop, like the closed non-union shop, is absolutely against the public interest. I have argued this question at such length in the correspondence between Mr. Gompers and myself (copies of which you have received) that I will not inflict the argument upon you



A. H. S. 2.

again. But will you not answer me frankly this question: Are you in favor of the closed union shop?

Referring to the second (quoted) part of your paragraph: You recognize, of course, that if the Chamber of Commerce does believe earnestly and sincerely in the open shop, it is explicitly its "function" to work for what it believes in and try to make its beliefs effective. The Chamber of Commerce is not a chamber of resolutions, merely. It is a chamber of action, and I think you will agree with me, on second thought, that however much you may disagree with a policy, it is the Chamber's duty, having decided upon a policy, to endeavor to make that policy effective.

*but don't  
apply to  
whole policy*

I note your reference to the American Plan Association. I have no acquaintance with this association whatever. I suppose that I know personally some of the gentlemen who compose it. I have been informed of the labor policy of the factories represented by some of the members of its executive committee. I have not tested the accuracy of this information. But, if I am correctly informed, these factories are operated so nearly upon the closed non-union shop basis that I share your doubts about the ideals (as you call them) of such associations. I am compelled to emphasize the fact that my information with regard to these factories is second or third-hand, and may be inaccurate.

But if you knew of the ardent efforts of the same gentlemen who now compose the active element in the American Plan Association to prevent the Chamber of Commerce from having a program of labor relations, you would suspect, with me, that those gentlemen did not care to have the real open shop preached to this community with the sincerity and effectiveness with which the Chamber is preaching it.

I cannot agree with your statement of this Chamber's mission. The Chamber of Commerce is not an association of employers. It is a civic organization. It does not pretend to represent the public. But it tries, perhaps mistakenly at times, but always with sincerity, I think, to represent the public interest.



A. H. S. 3.

With reference to the next paragraph of your letter, it seems to me that two observations might be made - first, that you are not wholly familiar with the record of the Chamber in ferreting out and endeavoring to correct abuses of the character that you mention, and second, that it is not a sound argument against the validity of one policy to accuse the Chamber of dereliction in others.

*ought they not to be made public?*  
*to mention it*  
*rather than know the way out of it*

I have carefully read through the little pamphlet you were kind enough to send me as expressive of your views. This pamphlet seems to me, if you will permit me to be quite frank about it, to assume that the advocates of the open shop desire to destroy organized labor and to eliminate collective bargaining. I believe in labor unions and yet I believe in the open shop. I believe in collective bargaining, and yet I believe in the open shop. And I find that my associates in the Chamber of Commerce - the members of its board of directors, and its committee on labor relations - are in accord with my views, or rather, perhaps I should say, I am in accord with their views. And their views are representative of the great preponderating majority of the members of the Chamber of Commerce. In other words, it seems to me that the basic assumption of your pamphlet is inaccurate and results from the undeniable fact that there are employers and there are employers' associations who would use the slogan of the open shop as a hypocritical cloak to cover their efforts for the closed non-union shop. With such employers neither the Chamber of Commerce nor I have the slightest sympathy, and we have said so repeatedly and in the most public way. I enclose a letter to the Editor of "The Cleveland Citizen" written by Alexander C. Brown, the chairman of the committee on labor relations, covering this point. Please take the time to read it carefully.

*But the Chamber? Shall they?*

WRHS ARCHIVES

Having taken an assumption as your basis that I believe to be incorrect, your pamphlet goes on to denounce the open shop as though it were synonymous with the destruction of trade unionism. The Chamber of Commerce is in agreement with

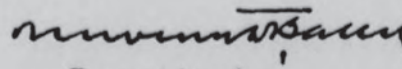


A. H. S. 4.

you that trade unionism should not be destroyed, that it has a useful field to fill, that it is necessary to the prosperity of the worker, and that any effort, however concealed in whatever specious disguise, that attempts to destroy trade unionism, is against the public interest. But we are for the open shop just as unqualifiedly. My associates in the Chamber of Commerce are joined with me in the belief that the hope of trade unionism for future growth and future usefulness rests on its abandonment of its monopolistic closed union shop policy. We are convinced that the failure of organized labor to make any real progress in recent years is due to the defection of public sympathy caused by the principle of the closed union shop and the evil practices resulting from it.

I have tried in this letter not to avoid any argument you have made, either in your letter or your pamphlet. If I have omitted any point, it is not intentional. Unless you have become convinced that the closed union shop is right in principle, I can see no reason for your resignation from the Chamber of Commerce - nor indeed should you resign in any event, for the Chamber is a many sided organization, and disagreement with one policy, even so important a one as this question of labor relations, should not necessitate your resignation. Tom L. Johnson disagreed with the Chamber of Commerce on many public issues, but he remained a member of it as long as he lived. Will you not do me the personal favor of reconsidering the question in the light of this letter and then advise me whether or not I may have your permission to withdraw your resignation.

Very truly yours,

  
President



April fifth,  
1923

Mr. Newton D. Baker,  
President, Chamber of Commerce,  
Cleveland, Ohio.

My dear Mr. Baker,

Permit me to thank you for your letter of March twenty-eighth and for the comprehensive way in which you reply to my communication.

You ask me whether I favor the closed union shop. I favor the complete organization of American workingmen in their respective trades. I believe that the public will be better served if it is under the necessity of adjusting itself to organized and accountable groups rather than to unwieldy and unorganized masses. I therefore favor a condition in industry which will induce organization by giving preference in employment to organized over unorganized men. I also favor real collective bargaining, through the chosen representatives of the men, whether these be of the particular shop involved or not; not a sort of collective bargaining, which makes the selection of the representative dependent upon the consent of the employer.

Strictly speaking, then, I do not favor the closed union shop. However, while not favoring it, I do not seek to destroy it where it now exists. Rather would I apply my energies to the organization of the 90% of American Labor which still remain unorganized. These masses are a real hindrance to the development of a code of group conduct and responsibility. When labor is completely organized, it will be completely controlled - if not by law, then by a sensi-



tized and directed public opinion, by competent leadership, which organization in time develops, and by the vast corporate responsibility of keeping men employed and content by keeping industry going.

You assume that if one does not believe in the closed shop, one must proceed at once to destroy it. That is a hurried conclusion. I do not believe in the Soviet system of Russia, yet I would do nothing to hurt it; for one readily can surmise what horrors would follow the collapse of the Soviet Government today.

What assurance can you give the organized men, say of the Miners' Union of the Central Competitive Field, that upon the voluntary surrender of the closed shop plank, they would not be forced by operators, whose cynical disregard of agreement was manifested not so very long ago, into the very conditions of serfdom from which they, by organization, escaped, and under which their fellow-workingmen in the Open Shop Fields of West Virginia are still suffering?

The closed union shop should not be destroyed nor fought. It should be made unnecessary by the organization of industry on the basis of the preferential union shop idea, and real collective bargaining.

You say you are a Trade Unionist. You say that the Chamber of Commerce believes that the Trade Union "is necessary for the prosperity of the worker"; "that any effort that attempts to destroy Trade Unionism is against the public interest". A Trade Unionist is one who believes in the ultimate organization of all workingmen in each trade. He works for that end, not by resolution only (as you say) but by action. What action has the Chamber of Commerce taken in recent years to stimulate the organization ~~the~~ organization into unions of the workingmen of Cleveland?



*closed*

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strikers or their unions, was eloquently silent here. Not only was there no action- there was not even resolution. The only action which you did take was to advise your membership to disregard completely the Ordinance passed by the City Council to regulate the employment of special guards during strikes, *and* to provide for the licensing of such guards; an Ordinance which, as you know, avoided much bloodshed in our community. Similarly was the Chamber silent in the cases of the Coal strike, where the President of the United States himself felt constrained to express his displeasure of the flagrant violation of agreement on the part of the Coal Operators.

I said in my letter that "the desire on the part of the Cleveland Chamber of Commerce to serve the public would perhaps be less subject to question if the Chamber had shown a similar alacrity and apostolic zeal in ferreting out and exposing the abuse in the camps of employers, bankers, mortgage sharks and profiteers in our City"; and you reply that I am not wholly familiar with the record of the Chamber in ferreting out and endeavoring to correct abuses of the character that I mention. What is the record and where is it to be found? You further say "that it is not a sound argument against the validity of one policy to accuse the Chamber of dereliction in others". No, not the validity, but the sincerity! When an organization sets out to represent the interests of the public at large, and then proceeds to ignore perhaps the most vital tasks affecting the public weal, and prominently centers its energies upon smashing Union shops, it decidedly lays itself open to suspicion.

You ask me to reconsider my resignation. I wish I could see my way clear to do so. I feel, however, that I cannot conscientiously lend my support to an organ--



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gnd

ization which has made such a labor policy its chief function. I shall, perhaps, find opportunities for co-operation in civic matters with you and the other ~~committeemen~~ of the Chamber, through other agencies and other channels.

With kindest regards, I beg to remain

Very sincerely yours,





March 28th, 1933.

Rabbi A.H. Silver,  
The Temple,  
Cleveland.

My dear Rabbi Silver:

I have been engaged in court, of late, and my time at the Chamber has been limited. Please pardon so tardy an acknowledgment of your interesting letter of the 8th inst.

I like the downright manner of your attack upon the Chamber's policy, and I am sure you will like it best if I reply in an equally downright way. You say that you are not in sympathy with the position taken by the Chamber on the subject of the open shop, "and more especially of the propaganda which the Chamber has been conducting, through newspapers and pamphlets, to universalize it".

Referring to the first part of the paragraph: There are three kinds of shops - the closed union shop, the closed non-union shop, and the open shop. If you do not believe in the open shop, - which is the shop "in which every worker's chance is as good as every other worker's chance, the open shop from which no worker is shut out because he holds a union card, and from which no worker is shut out because he has no union card", - I say, if you do not believe in the open shop, then you must believe either in the closed union shop or the closed non-union shop. I will not indulge in an idle discussion of the closed non-union shop. Of course you do not believe in that. And, knowing you as well as I do, I do not see how you can believe in the closed union shop. You will have to tell me in so many words that you do before I believe that you do. The closed union shop, like the closed non-union shop, is absolutely against the public interest. I have argued this question at such length in the correspondence with between Mr. Campers and myself (copies of which you have received) that I will not inflict the argument upon you again. But will you not answer me frankly this question: Are you in favor of the closed union shop?

Referring to the second (quoted) part of your paragraph: You recognize, of course, that if the Chamber of Commerce does believe earnestly and sincerely in the open shop, it is explicitly its "function" to work for what it believes in and try to make its beliefs effective. The Chamber of Commerce is not a chamber of resolutions, merely. It is a chamber of action, and I think you will agree with me, on second thought, that however much you may disagree with a policy, it is the chamber's duty, having decided upon a policy, to endeavor to make that policy effective.

I note your reference to the American Plan Association. I have no acquaintance with this association whatever. I suppose that I know personally some of the gentlemen who compose it. I have been informed of the labor policy of the factories represented by some of the members of its executive committee. I have not tested the accuracy of this information. But, if I am correctly informed, these factories are operated so nearly upon the closed non-union shop



basis that I share your doubts about the ideals (as you call them) of such associations. I am compelled to emphasize the fact that my information with regard to these factories is second or third-hand, and may be inaccurate.

But if you knew of the ardent efforts of the same gentlemen who now compose the active element in the American Plan Association to prevent the Chamber of Commerce from having a program of labor relations, you would suspect, with me, that these gentlemen did not care to have the real open shop preached to this community with the sincerity and effectiveness with which the Chamber is preaching it.

I cannot agree with your statement of this Chamber's mission. The Chamber of Commerce is not an association of employers. It is a civic organization. It does not pretend to represent the public. But it tries, perhaps mistakenly at times, but always with sincerity, I think, to represent the public interest.

With reference to the next paragraph of your letter, it seems to me that two observations might be made - first, that you are not wholly familiar with the record of the Chamber in ferreting out and endeavoring to correct abuses of the character that you mention, and second, that it is not a sound argument against the validity of one policy to accuse the Chamber of dereliction in others.

I have carefully read through the little pamphlet you were kind enough to send me as expressive of your views. This pamphlet seems to me, if you will permit me to be quite frank about it, to assume that the advocates of the open shop desire to destroy organized labor and to eliminate collective bargaining. I believe in labor unions and yet I believe in the open shop. I believe in collective bargaining, and yet I believe in the open shop. And I find that my associates in the Chamber of Commerce - the members of its board of directors and its committee on labor relations - are in accord with my views, or rather, perhaps I should say, I am in accord with their views. And their views are representative of the great preponderating majority of the members of the Chamber of Commerce. In other words, it seems to me that the basic assumption of your pamphlet is inaccurate and results from the undeniable fact that there are employers and there are employers' associations who would use the slogan of the open shop as a hypocritical cloak to cover their efforts for the closed non-union shop. With such employers neither the Chamber of Commerce nor I have the slightest sympathy, and we have said repeatedly and in the most public way. I enclose a letter to the Editor of "The Cleveland Citizen" written by Alexander C. Brown, the chairman of the committee on labor relations, covering the point. Please take the time to read it carefully.

Having taken an assumption as your basis that I believe to be incorrect, your pamphlet goes on to denounce the open shop as though it were synonymous with the destruction of trade unionism. The Chamber of Commerce is in agreement with you that trade unionism should not be destroyed, that it has a useful field to fill, that it is necessary to the prosperity of the worker, and that any effort, however concealed in whatever specious disguise, that attempts to destroy trade unionism, is against the public interest. But we are for the open shop just as unqualifiedly. My associates in the Chamber of Commerce are joined with me in the belief that the hope of the trade unionism for future growth and future usefulness rests on its abandonment of its monopolistic closed union shop policy. We are convinced that the failure of organized labor to make any real progress in recent years is due to the defection of public sympathy caused by the principle of the closed union shop and the evil practices resulting from it.



I have tried in this letter not to avoid any argument you have made, either in your letter or your pamphlet. If I have omitted any point, it is not intentional. Unless you have become convinced that the closed union shop is right in principle, I can see no reason for your resignation from the Chamber of Commerce - nor indeed should you resign in any event, for the Chamber is a many sided organization, and disagreement with one policy, even so important as one as this question of labor relations, should not necessitate your resignation. **Yon L. Johnson** disagreed with the Chamber of Commerce on many public issues, but he remained a member of it as long as he lived. Will you not do me the personal favor of reconsidering the question in the light of this letter and then advise me whether or not I may have your permission to withdraw your resignation.

Very truly yours,

(signed) **Horton D. Baker,**  
President.





April Fifth  
1923.

Mr. Newton D. Baker,  
President, Chamber of Commerce,  
Cleveland, Ohio.

My dear Mr. Baker,

Permit me to thank you for your letter of March twenty-eighth and for the comprehensive way in which you reply to my communication.

You ask me whether I favor the closed union shop. I favor the complete organization of American workmen in their respective trades. I believe that the public will be better served if it is under the necessity of adjusting itself to organized and accountable groups rather than to unwieldy and unorganized masses. I therefore favor a condition in industry which will induce organization by giving preference in employment to organized over unorganized men. I also favor real collective bargaining, through the chosen representatives of the men, whether these be of a particular shop involved or not; not a sort of collective bargaining, which makes the selection of the representative dependent upon the consent of the employer.

Strictly speaking, then, I do not favor the closed union shop. However, while not favoring it, I do not seek to destroy it where it now exists. Rather would I apply my energies to the organization of the 90% of American labor which still remain unorganized. These masses are a real hindrance to the development of a code of group conduct and responsibility. When labor is completely organized, it will be completely controlled - if not by law, then by a sensitized and directed public opinion, by competent leadership, which organization in time develops, and by the vast corporate responsibility of keeping men employed and content by keeping industry going.

You assume that if one does not believe in the closed shop, one must proceed at once to destroy it. That is a hurried conclusion. I do not believe in the Soviet system of Russia, yet I would do nothing to hurt it; for one readily can surmise what horrors would follow the collapse of the Soviet Government today.

What assurance can you give the organized men, say of the Miners' Union of the Central Competitive Field, that upon the voluntary surrender of the closed shop plank, they would not be forced by operators, whose cynical disregard of agreement was manifested not so very long ago, into the very conditions of servitude from which they, by organization, escaped, and under which their fellow-workmen in the Open Shop Fields of West Virginia are still suffering?

The closed union shop should not be destroyed nor fought. It should be made unnecessary by the organization of industry on the basis of the preferential union shop idea, and real collective bargaining.



You say you are a Trade Unionist. You say that the Chamber of Commerce believes that the Trade Union "is necessary for the prosperity of the worker"; "that any effort that attempts to destroy Trade Unionism is against the public interest". A Trade Unionist is one who believes in the ultimate organization of all workmen in each trade. He works for that end, not by resolution only (as you say) but by action. What action has the Chamber of Commerce taken in recent years to stimulate the organization into unions of the workmen of Cleveland?

The pamphlet of the Committee of Labor Relations of the Chamber makes mention of 546 Open Shops in Cleveland, and of 136 closed Non Union Shops, as against 16 Closed Union Shops. The public knows of the persistent attacks which the Chamber has launched against closed union shops, such as those of the building trades, and of the manner in which it utilized an industrial conflict, like the Milk-Drivers' strike, or the Plumbers' strike for the alienation of public sentiment from the cause of the strikers. The public has yet to learn of any forceful and persistent action on the part of the Chamber of Commerce to fight the closed non union shop, which you say is absolutely against the public interest, or to establish real collective bargaining, or to encourage Trade Unionism by urging employers to give preference to union labor in their shops, or to combat organizations like the American Plan Association, which is seeking to destroy unionism, and which is therefore against public interest.

Why was the Chamber silent during the Steel strike in 1919? Here men were fighting for the right of collective bargaining, and for conditions of employment, which the report of the Commission of Inquiry of the Interchurch World Movement declared the sine qua non of decency, concluding their report with the statement "that conditions in the steel industry 'gave the workers just cause for complaint and for action', and that 'these unredressed grievances still exist'. They were not, as you know, fighting for the closed shop. Comparatively few strikes have been called for that purpose. Here was an opportunity for real service and for a real vindication on the part of the Chamber of its claim to impartiality. But the Chamber, which was very vocal in the case of the Building strike, and the Milk Drivers' strike, and the Plumbers' strike, and in each instance condemning the strikers or their unions, was eloquently silent here. Not only was there no action - there was not even resolution. The only action which you did take was to advise your membership to disregard completely the Ordinance passed by the City Council to regulate the employment of special guards during strikes, and to provide for the licensing of such guards; an Ordinance which as you know, avoided much bloodshed in our community. Similarly was the Chamber silent in the cases of the Coal strike, where the President of the United States himself felt constrained to express his displeasure of the flagrant violation of agreement on the part of the Coal Operators.

I said in my letter that "the desire on the part of the Cleveland Chamber of Commerce to serve the public would perhaps be less subject to question if the Chamber had shown a similar alacrity and apostolic zeal in ferreting out and exposing the abuse in the camps of employers, bankers, mortgage sharks and profiteers in our city"; and you reply that I am not wholly familiar with the record of the Chamber in ferreting out and endeavoring to correct abuses of the character that I mention. What is the record and where is it to be found? You further say "that it is not a sound argument against the validity of one policy to accuse the Chamber of dereliction in others". No, not the validity, but the sincerity! When an organization sets out to represent the interests of the public at large, and then proceeds to ignore perhaps the most vital tasks



H.B. R. 2.

affecting the public weal, and prominently centers its energies upon smashing Union shops, it decidedly lays itself open to suspicion.

You ask me to reconsider my resignation. I wish I could see my way clear to do so. I feel, however that I cannot conscientiously lend my support to an organization which has made such a labor policy its chief function. I shall, perhaps, find opportunities for co-operation in civic matters with you and the other good men of the Chamber, through other agencies and other channels.

With kindest regards, I beg to remain

Very sincerely yours,

( Signed ) Abba Hillel Silver.





April 11th, 1923.

Rabbi A.H. Silver,  
The Temple,  
E. 58th & Central Ave.,  
Cleveland, Ohio.

My dear Rabbi Silver,

Of course I value the frankness of your letter of April 5th, and I regret that fairly continuous court engagements have so clogged up my time that it was not possible for me to acknowledge the letter until today, and now I have ceased to be President of the Chamber of Commerce, and therefore have no right to speak in its name.

I shall, therefore, transmit your letter of April 5th to Mr. Grant, President of the Chamber, who will doubtless with regret regard it as final on the question of your resignation from the Chamber, although he may feel that he ought to send you some references to the record of the Chamber on the question of the closed non-union shop, to which I frankly feel your letter to be unjust.

And now, speaking quite personally, I want to express my own regret that you feel it impossible to continue your Chamber membership. No doubt there are members of the Chamber who for one reason or another believe that unionism is bad and who therefore desire to smash unions, but the labor relations policy of the Chamber must be dictatorial to them for it neither believes the one nor aims at the other. The large committee which worked over a period of years in the formulation of that policy had in it serious minded employers, public spirited lawyers, a professor or two of the social sciences, and I believe two representatives of the great railroad employees' unions. The execution of that policy is largely committed to the Labor Relations Committee; and after I had formed the Committee this year I was told that one member of the Chamber whom I had appointed on it operated the closed non-union shop. I asked him by letter frankly whether that information was accurate and upon his replying that it was, I as frankly told him that I felt obliged to discontinue his service on the Committee and replace him with another member against whom that objection did not obtain. So far as I know, the Committee now contains no single member who believes in or practices the closed non-union shop, and the utterances of the Committee have so carefully included an equality of emphasis in disapproving closed non-union ~~shop~~ and closed union shop, that I sometimes wondered whether this desire to be explicit did a little blunt the edge of the Committee's argument when addressed to a particular situation. I was a member of the Board of Directors of the Chamber for two years and during that entire time I never once heard a director express a belief or a desire that trade-unionism might be either smothered or injured; and when I ventured in my correspondence with Mr. Campers to express my own belief in trade unions and my earnest desire to see the movement equipped to go forward by an abandonment on its part of an untenable position, my associates on the Board not only approved but unanimously voted to print the correspondence as expressive of the views of the Chamber. The central principle, therefore, of the Chamber's position is sound, and my distress at your resignation is that we thus lose the supporting voice of one who believes with us in principle but departs from us on detail either of expression or emphasis, and so pro tanto (and a large tanto in your case) weakens the driving force of the Chamber's action.

I fear you and I would develop a robust difference of opinion on the subject of the unionisation of all workmen, if you mean that such unionisation by force either from employers or fellow-workmen would be justified. That I do not believe, nor do I believe that either employers or fellow workmen have a right to impose the penalty of industrial ostracism upon those who decline to join unions.



The shackles of modern civilisation have left us little enough freedom as it is, but to my mind restrictions upon liberty imposed by political authority in modern times are trifling at their worst as compared with the restrictions which are imposed upon individual workers by the unauthorised determinations of councils in which they are not represented and against which they have the protection of no constitutional guarantee, nor of any court of either law or equity.

Perhaps some time when fortune favors we may have an opportunity to talk over these things face to face. The presumptions which you and I naturally indulge in each other's favor will be a sufficient assurance to us both that we are trying earnestly to be right and to help.

Cordially yours,

(signed) Newton D. Baker.





NEWTON D. BAKER  
JOSEPH C. HOSTETLER  
THOMAS L. SIDLO  
FRANK E. STEVENS  
M. DE VAUGHN  
PAUL PATTERSON  
BENJAMIN F. FIERY

BAKER, HOSTETLER & SIDLO  
COUNSELLORS AT LAW  
UNION NATIONAL BANK BUILDING  
CLEVELAND

4 copies

April 11, 1923.

Rabbi A. H. Silver,  
The Temple,  
East 55th Street & Central Avenue,  
Cleveland, Ohio.

My dear Rabbi Silver:

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April 11, 1923.

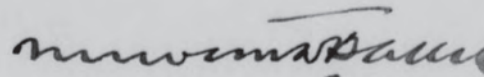
Rabbi A. H. Silver - #2

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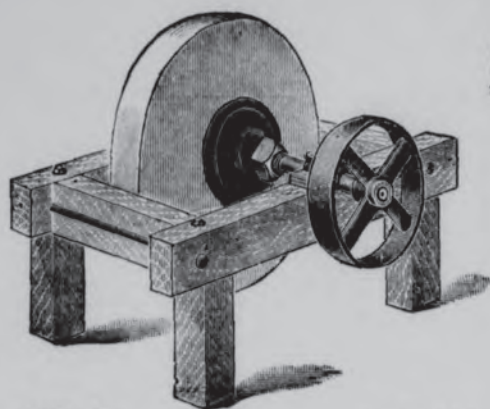
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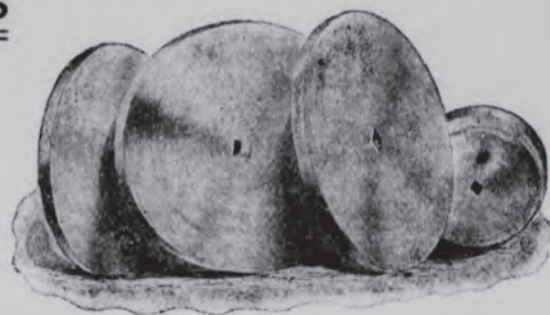


## INDEPENDENCE STONE WORKS

H. J. FAUDEL, Prop.

MANUFACTURER OF

GRIND STONES, SAWED FLAGGING,  
CONCRETE AND BUILDING  
STONE.



30

POST OFFICE: INDEPENDENCE, OHIO.

FREIGHT STATION: SOUTH PARK, OHIO.

INDEPENDENCE, O.,

April 24 1923

Rabbi G. H. Silver Cleveland

Dear Sir:- I read extracts  
in the Press last night and wish  
to congratulate you for such  
common sense utterances. It is the  
best common sense that I have seen  
in print in late years - are there  
any more like you where you live?  
If so we ought to form an association.  
Your remarks are good, only too  
mild - you ought to "hit harder"  
on this "raw" situation.  
I am just finishing a book entitled  
"Common Sense" I am most anxious  
to let you read the manuscript  
before I send it away. This book I  
believe fills 100% of the needs at  
the present day.

You are only about five miles from  
me - drive out and see me next  
Sunday. Respy Yours H. J. Faudel



# The Cleveland Chamber of Commerce

Founded in 1848

NEWTON D. BAKER, PRESIDENT  
RICHARD F. GRANT, 1ST VICE PRESIDENT  
F. C. CHANDLER, 2ND VICE PRESIDENT  
GEORGE A. COULTON, TREASURER  
MUNSON HAVENS, SECRETARY

April 14, 1923

Cleveland  
Fifth City

Dear Member:

You have received during the past several months a series of messages from the Committee on Labor Relations dealing with the effect upon Cleveland of the present closed union shop conditions in the building industry.

We have received a large number of communications from the members containing comments and suggestions.

The Committee is desirous of obtaining your opinion as to the value of the effort and your advice concerning continuance and extension of the work.

Please answer the several questions on the enclosed card, and return in the enclosed addressed envelope.

Very truly yours,

*Alex. C. Brown*

Chairman  
Committee on Labor Relations



Should the messages be continued? \_\_\_\_\_

If not, why? \_\_\_\_\_

If continued, what subject matter do you suggest? \_\_\_\_\_

Would you favor extension of this work to the public? \_\_\_\_\_

What methods do you suggest for presentation to the public? \_\_\_\_\_

(Signature) \_\_\_\_\_



Alexander C. Brown, Chairman,

Committee on Labor Relations,

The Cleveland Chamber of Commerce,

**Cleveland**  
*Fifth City*



BOTH PHONES



# Cleveland Federation of Labor

HEADQUARTERS:

2450 EAST NINTH STREET

CLEVELAND, OHIO



April 25, 1923.

Rabbi S.H.Silver,

Central & E. 55th st.

Cleveland, Ohio.

Dear Rabbi:-

The Cleveland Federation of Labor in conjunction with the Trade Union Co-operative League will hold a very important convention in this city at Moose Temple, 1000 Walnut ave., on May 5 & 6.

Many matters of importance to men and women in their consuming capacity will be before this convention for discussion and the officers in charge respectfully invite you to send fraternal delegates to this convention to participate in the many important matters to be discussed.

Trusting your delegates will be with us in this work in the interest and betterment of all our people, we remain,

Yours very truly,

*John S. Owens*  
Secretary,

Cleveland Federation of Labor.



# The Morris W. Kline Co.

ESTABLISHED 1908

## Insurance Service

44 PUBLIC SQUARE

Cleveland

April 26th, 1923.

Rabbi Abba H. Silver,  
c/o The Temple,  
East 55th & Central Ave.,  
City.

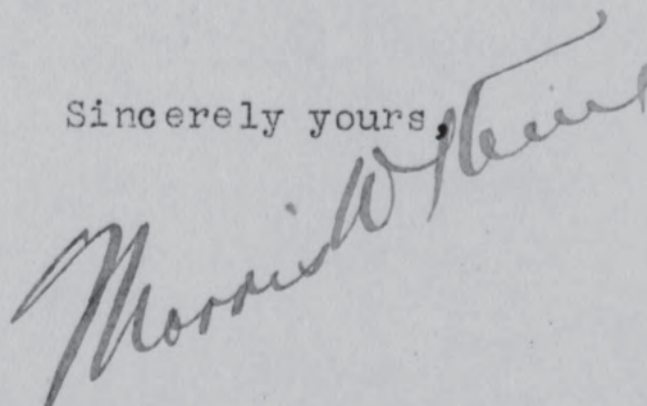
Dear Rabbi:

I have read the news-paper articles in reference to your resignation from the Chamber of Commerce and I am thorough sympathy with your attitude, and it was for this very same reason that I resigned several months ago.

I believe that the Chamber of Commerce attitude towards trade union, is entirely too one sided and that the open shop policy, as practised by some of the members of the Chamber of Commerce is nothing more than a closed non-union shop.

Believing that this publicity will open the eyes of the public, I remain,

Sincerely yours,



MWK/BM



April 28th, 1923.

Mr. Lionel M. Stern,  
881 E. 67th St.,  
Cleveland, Ohio.

My dear Mr. Stern,

Permit me to thank you for your kindness in having taken serious note upon several occasions of my attitude on the Labor problem. I am however surprised at your lack of good taste in assuming that your position is sound and practical while the contrary one is a result of what you sneeringly call "idealism", "flights of fancy", "poetic emotion" etc.

Perhaps an occasional perusal of a chapter on economics in any standard text book will help to give you a more comprehensive view of the problem and perhaps a little more modesty.

I wish I had the time to answer your letter in great detail. Unfortunately I have not and I rather doubt whether any new light can be thrown on the discussion at this particular time by our correspondence. I would however call your attention to item 7 in your letter which to my mind tells the entire story. Union labor has succeeded through organization in forcing wages up and the standard of living of the American workingman and union labor would do well to strengthen its organization so as to keep unscrupulous employers from beating them down to lower levels.

Very sincerely yours,

P.S. For the sake of  
completing the files of  
Mr. Baker and the American Plan  
Asso. I would suggest that you send them  
a copy of this letter



GEORGE HUNT INGRAHAM  
ARCHITECT  
2134 B. F. KEITH BUILDING  
CLEVELAND, O.  
MAIN 1852

April 28, 1923

Rabbi Silver,  
The Temple,  
East 55th & Central Ave.,  
Cleveland, Ohio.

My dear Mr. Silver:-

As a member of the Chamber of Commerce, I was very much interested in the views which you expressed in the News, a few days ago, as they are entirely in accord with the views which I have on the subject.

The committee of Chamber of Commerce are only bringing to light one side of the conditions which go to make up the High Cost of Building in this City. I admire you and your stand in the matter.

Sometime ago I was much interested in an address which you gave one evening before the Unitarian Church. At that time I had the pleasure of meeting you.

Yours very truly,

*George Hunt Ingraham*

GHI/MMW



# The Cleveland Chamber of Commerce

Founded in 1848

RICHARD F. GRANT, PRESIDENT  
EDWARD B. GREENE, 1ST VICE PRESIDENT  
EDWARD S. JORDAN, 2ND VICE PRESIDENT  
GEORGE A. COULTON, TREASURER  
MUNSON HAVENS, SECRETARY

May 2nd, 1923

Cleveland  
Fifth City

Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver,

Cleveland.

Dear Sir: The secretary is instructed to advise you that, at a meeting of the board of directors held today, your resignation as a member of this Chamber was submitted and accepted.

Very truly yours,

*Munson Havens*

Secretary



# The Colonial Iron Works Company

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STEEL, SHEET, PLATE AND STRUCTURAL WORK

CLEVELAND, O.

May 3rd, 1923.

Reverend A. H. Silver,  
%The Temple,  
Cleveland, Ohio.

My Dear Rabbi:-

Roof Trusses  
Small Buildings  
Column and  
Beam Work

Transmission  
Towers and  
Poles

Mine and Shop  
Structural  
Equipment  
Chutes and  
Housings

Hoppers  
Storage Bins  
Coal and  
Ash Bunkers

Heavy  
Shelving  
Doors  
Partitions  
Racks and  
Tables

Structural Steel  
for  
Cranes  
Hoisting and  
Excavating  
Machinery

Conveyor  
Grab and  
Dump Buckets

Truck  
Dump Bodies

Mine and  
Industrial Cars  
Gasoline Storage  
Tanks  
Smoke Stacks  
Flues and  
Breechings

Complying with the suggestion made in the post script of your letter of April 28th, I am sending a copy of your reply to The American Plan Association, to complete their files upon the subject as mentioned.

I regret to note that nonmention is made by you of my recognition of the universal economic law of supply and demand in relation to the price of labor as noted in items 3, 4, 5, 6 and 10, also that the second paragraph of your letter implies either a controvention of this law of economics or that my appeal in support of this law is erroneous and not based upon standard text book theories upon the subject.

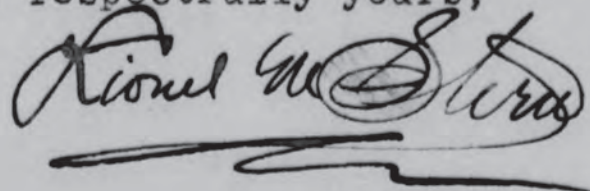
No mention is made by you of the recognition of my claims that a labor combine to force the price of wages up are unlawful and cannot be conceded by legal favoritism, without granting the same right to a production combine to force the price up of the product of that labor as noted in items 1, 2, 3, and 9 of my letter.

Both of which matters have been ignored for obvious reasons.

However, in view of the fact that you have stated that you doubt, whether any new light can be thrown on the discussion at this time by correspondence and have declared that union labor would do well to strengthen its organization we have come to the parting of the ways upon the subject and I shall leave my side of the question to be taken care of by others with whom I am in perfect harmony.

Regretting very sincerely that anything I may have said in my previous letter may have grated upon your sensibilities in which case I offer my humble apology, I am

Very respectfully yours,





May 3, 1923

Rabbi Silver

The Jew often seems to wonder why he is not wanted by any other people by any nation in the world.

Our position with Lenin and Trotsky & Russian is a fair example of what the Jew will do if given an opportunity.

The A.F. of Labor where dominated by Jews. will murder, assault, burn blackmail, intimidate &c starve, frighten &c into compelling by force



and exert an tactics  
the innocent, weaker  
unorganized, law-  
abiding citizen to do  
their bidding.

You have read what  
these Jews in Russia  
are doing in a religious  
way and yet your  
position here is just  
in line with their  
policy.

Are you in the pay  
of these wreckers of  
modern society and  
safety - or are you <sup>being</sup>  
only fooled for some  
motively??

Charles James



# CLEVELAND TOPICS

CLEVELAND, MAY 5, 1923

VOLUME LXIV, NUMBER 18

## Who Will Save Us?

A PROMINENT Cleveland rabbi resigns from the Chamber of Commerce because he resents the position of that body on labor subjects, and because he disapproves of the Chamber being active in the now almost universal movement to bring about open shop conditions. Nevertheless, the rabbi insists that he is in favor of the open shop. He has the hard-to-understand slant that the Chamber of Commerce should confine its efforts to such civic matters as concern all classes of Clevelanders alike and in the same manner, and that, on a question which divides Cleveland's population the chamber should take no sides.

We think that Rabbi Silver has a misconception of the true purposes and functions of a civic body. At least he is unique in one way, that he is the first man in Cleveland of any consequence to criticise the chamber for over-zealousness. Whether rightly or wrongly, that body in the past has drawn fire only in the form of complaint that it was too conservative. It is a matter of interesting speculation just what Rabbi Silver expects of a civic body. Would he have it passive and silent on the one great question which affects industry at the present time? Or would he have the chamber get along as he does, favoring the open shop as an abstract, academic question, but doing nothing about it?

\* \* \* \* \*

The open shop is nothing more than the principle of preventing any agency from closing a factory or place of employment against workers who belong to a labor union, or to workers who do not belong to one. Is the rabbi's idea of an open shop no more than a plant where union members are not barred, where union members are fully protected in their unquestioned right to employment, but where non-union men may shift for themselves, their rights a matter of nobody's concern? The rabbi, we fancy, would smile sarcastically at this imputation of defencelessness on the part of men who have no labor union behind them. Their employer, he imagines, will take good care of them. But how can employers safeguard the interests of non-union employes, if Rabbi Silver would deny them the privilege of taking any steps in that direction? If his heart is on the side of the labor union, the labor union which is against an open shop—he cannot, with his tongue only be for the open shop, when by his actions he embarrasses agencies like the Chamber of Commerce which are actively insistent upon the open shop. By so doing he sanctions the right of every employe to join a labor union, as we all do, but he moves to expose to labor union persecution all men who refuse to join.

"I'm for the open shop," he declares, in effect: "but I'd like to see you get it."

\* \* \* \* \*

Rabbi Silver is initially wrong when he denies the Chamber of Commerce the right to work actively for an open shop. If this is not a true civic question affecting every man, woman and child in Cleveland, and affecting all in the same manner, then sunshine is not a community matter. Deep in the Rabbi's heart he is opposed to the chamber because it is for the open shop, not because he regards the open shop as a question which, ethically, the chamber should leave alone. We do not believe that Rabbi Silver has examined himself sufficiently on this

point. Undoubtedly it has not occurred to him that he merely talks in favor of the open shop but acts in favor of labor union domination.

We wonder if the rabbi would have resigned from the chamber if it had worked actively for the defeat of some measure that he, also, disliked, such as, for example, the move to introduce religious instruction in our public schools? He would probably regard such a question as a civic one, and as such well within the ethical limitations of a purely civic body embracing men in all walks of life—except walking delegates. Yet perfectly good men, members of the chamber, too, differed on this subject. And we, too, would have agreed with Rabbi Silver if the chamber had opposed the injection of religion in the schools, and if the rabbi had endorsed the opposition. We cannot get over the suspicion that Rabbi Silver is guided more or less by a doubt of whose ox is about to be gored, in his estimate of what constitutes a civic question fit for the Chamber of Commerce's consideration.

\* \* \* \* \*

This is, apparently, to accuse Rabbi Silver of insincerity, and is a bit unfair, because, undoubtedly, he is not at all conscious of any inconsistency in his behavior. He is, therefore, sincere, because his conduct meets his conscience. His heart, however, has deceived his head. We offer him this diagnosis of his own case, this possible explanation of his equivocal position in favor of the open shop and in favor of the forces working to prevent it, in favor of the open shop, but opposed to the forces which are working to bring it about.

Personally we like the rabbi very much and admire him a great deal. We mention his case not because he has done any harm to the open shop movement, for he hasn't; in fact his expression endorsing the open shop, however, vague and inconsistent with his actions, is a valuable one, but we bring him up for discussion because his case is so typical of a multitude of good citizens who consciously or otherwise straddle this very great and vital question. His very desire to be fair, and the muddle he makes of interpreting that desire, furnish an illustration of a too general cloudiness on the whole open shop question.

To declare is not to bring about, as we pointed out above, and this large class of good citizens is misled into the delusion that, having once declared an industry open to all classes of men seeking employment, the thing is done. They forget, or do not realize, that to have an open shop it is first necessary to open it in fact, and then it is necessary to keep it open. To win a battle without injuring the enemy, on humanitarian principles, is commendable, but it also happens to be impossible. It takes some action to do away with the closed shop in industry, and some force. Prayer alone will not avail and any advocates of liberty and freedom in industry who believe otherwise are making a mistake that is fatal to the principle which they honestly believe they are favoring.

\* \* \* \* \*

Probably this minister does think that he believes in the open shop, a plant where there is absolute liberty and the preservation of liberty. Over against that fancied belief there is in his mind, as there is in the mind of all of us, the picture of many centuries of struggle by the underdog. He simply con-



# CLEVELAND TOPICS

FORMERLY CLEVELAND TOWN TOPICS

PUBLICATION OFFICE: 319 CAXTON BUILDING  
TELEPHONE CHERRY 1935

Entered at Post Office at Cleveland, Ohio, as second-class matter.  
Subscription for United States and its Possessions, \$3.50 Per Year.  
Canada \$4.50 Foreign countries \$5.00, Postage Paid, Payable in Advance.

CLEVELAND TOPICS is published weekly. It is sent out by mail and should reach subscribers in the city by the first delivery on Saturday morning. Notice of its failure to arrive on time will be appreciated by the publishers. On sale at all prominent news stands, book stores and Hotels in Cleveland, in New York City at the Waldorf, Hotel Imperial and Hotel Vanderbilt.

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fuses all struggle with struggle, which is righteous; he over-estimates and misunderstands protest. It is a human weakness. He is liable to regard all struggle as struggle to be free, forgetting that there is no particular virtue in merely reversing things and exchanging one underdog for another.

Particularly does Rabbi Silver forget the community obligation, the social duty of both parties in a contest. It apparently does not enter into the rabbi's head that it is the public which suffers by the efforts of labor unions to bar from employment all save those who sign away their individual liberties to a labor union. It probably never occurs to Rabbi Silver and his kind, well-meaning though they are, that it is their beloved labor unions which are trying to close the shops, and that it is his outrageous Chamber of Commerce that is trying, against the mistaken efforts of men like himself, to keep them free and open.

Rabbi Silver probably does not believe this and it is his misfortune that he does not. He narrowly considers that the unions represent "the workers" (maybe they were once), that the "workers are the real producers" and that capital exists only for the purpose of wronging labor. His stand on the chamber's open shop policy denotes this absolutely, deny it though he may, even to himself.

We wonder if the church over which he presides could be depended upon to fight the battle for free employment and the open shop, after, in his zeal for the open shop, he has put the Chamber of Commerce out of the combat? Who, Rabbi Silver, will open employment in this country, after you and the labor unions have closed it to every man and woman except those who pay tribute of money, liberty and competence to the unions? Who better represents this community, the labor unions or the Chamber of Commerce, the unions standing for restricted personal liberty, insulated responsibility to the community, the gouging of the public by prices made high through strangled production and excessive wages blackmailed from the ever-paying public through strikes, or the chamber, representing men responsible to the public, supporting the public, doing the public's business and bearing the burden of the community?

Silver's stand is that the labor union may strike at random, organize to the teeth, bar from employment all men who refuse to pay tribute to them, and that the public may do nothing to prevent all this. He takes this stand when he denies to the Chamber of Commerce the right to oppose the closed shop. Had the chamber endorsed the closed shop, we wonder if the minister's indignation would have been so kindled.

\* \* \* \* \*

Rabbi Silver complains with unfeigned horror that the chamber is friendly to the American plan of employment. The American plan of employment is simply the American constitution's way of directing the relations between employer and employe. What is so wrong with the American way of doing things, the free and equal way of doing business between man and man that Rabbi Silver should fly into such a rage over it? The American plan is the open shop plan, pure and simple, nothing more and nothing less. Silver says he is for the open shop, yet shudders when he suspects the Chamber of Commerce of favoring the American plan, which is the honestly open shop. Any contention otherwise is untrue.

If Rabbi Silver suspects the American Plan Association of Cleveland of only pretended devotion to the open shop, and of being in fact at work for a shop closed to union members, he should state his objection in these terms. As a matter of fact, the American Plan Association is, like the Chamber of Commerce, working only for the genuinely open and free shop. The Association is an organization for that single purpose, it is true, and is commendably aggressive in trying to bring about that which Rabbi Silver only "favors". Heaven help a country made free from the closed shop of labor unionism through the standards and efforts of men like Silver. Silver fights for American conditions in American industries by sticking a



knife in the agencies that are doing the real work of fighting to regain them.

\* \* \* \* \*

Terribly evil, says the rabbi, of the American Plan Association, that this organization should stand for absolutely free and genuinely clean Americanism in industry. The American Plan Association asks nothing in behalf of its members (all of whom are employers) beyond that which is guaranteed by the constitution of the United States.

A fig from such notions, says Rabbi Silver, in effect. Such, in unmistakable terms, is the meaning of his stand against the American plan. He probably has the honest, if mistaken notion that the American plan is American only in pretense, that it in reality is a movement by employers for shops closed against labor union members, a charge usually made by unions. This is a mistaken idea, but even if it were true, and if it were true it would be un-American, we admit, wherein does Rabbi Silver find his justification for protest against closing shops to union members while he remains idle and silent in his attitude toward labor unions which try to and do close shops the other way round? He knows that labor unions are un-American and that they use violence of any sort to enforce a closed shop. Will he belabor them, or is he only offended when he suspects, mistakenly, that the American Plan Association is working for a closed shop, albeit of the opposite sort?

Again, if it be wrong for a Chamber of Commerce to stand for American conditions in industry, because this is not a civic matter and is not within the proper functions of a Chamber of Commerce, where does Rabbi Silver, pastor of The Temple, find his warrant for his own intrusion? We question his consistency, not his clear right to take part in the open shop controversy.

Again we offer a diagnosis of his condition for his own benefit: we suspect that the rabbi, as bright and able intellectually as he certainly is, does not know enough about labor unions through personal contact and experience with them, to have a very strong grasp of just what the struggle for an open shop really is. If he did, he would know that the open shop is not to be gained by "favoring" it, and letting it go at that.

Then, Rabbi Silver might argue, it is our belief that force and violence are justified as measures necessary to bring about true open shop, American shop conditions in America. Such an argument would be as biased as his conception of the American Plan Association. It is only his dear labor unions that slug and burn and maim and blind other men and that make an open, avowed gospel of violence to gain their un-American, illegal ends. Only, and Rabbi Silver may write this down in his book, if a labor union uses violence or intimidation and that violence can only be checked and met by similar measures, then we are for those similar measures.

To figure otherwise would be to grant only an assailant the right to shoot and to deny the person assailed the right to defend himself. Or is it proper for unions to attack and wrong for the man they slug to defend himself? This is Rabbi Silver's position when he would disarm the Chamber of Commerce and the American Plan Association, whose only offense is trying to protect the public from the closed shop tyranny of labor unions, and this by clean and legitimate methods.

We are sorry Rabbi Silver started this argument, but we think just this well of the earnest and truth-seeking young clergyman, that when he is ten years older a great many ambiguities which now obscure his views of this important public question will have been cleared up. Among other things he will know is this, that the American Plan is genuinely American, and will prevail ultimately.



JACOB GIMBEL, Honorary President  
LOUIS WOLF, President  
SAMUEL S. FELS, 1st Vice-President  
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# THE FEDERATION OF JEWISH CHARITIES OF PHILADELPHIA

*Sydenham Building*  
1512 WALNUT STREET

May 9, 1923.

Dear Rabbi Silver:

Heartiest congratulations upon the wonderful position you have taken relative to your membership in the chamber of Commerce. There are few men in the pulpit who have your courage and vision.

My best regards to you and your dear wife.

Cordially yours,

*Billikopf*

Rabbi A. H. Silver.



[May 1923?]

"Courtesy First"



# Hotel Winton

Prospect at East Ninth St.

Cleveland, Ohio.

A. H. Silver

Dear Sir:

Have been reading of  
your stand taken against  
the Cleveland Chamber of  
Commerce and your  
controversy regarding  
labor questions.

You state that you consider  
it outside the jurisdiction  
of this body to mix in labor  
conditions.

Don't you think it is outside  
of your sphere to interfere  
in business affairs as a  
minister it would be far  
more satisfactory to preach  
to your crowd to be a  
little more honest and





"Courtesy first"

# Hotel Winton

Prospect at East Ninth St.

Cleveland, Ohio.

have abiding instead  
of making our insurance  
rates prohibitive by  
fires and burglaries  
also the abuse of  
prohibition by  
bootlegging all of  
which is more generally  
carried out by your  
race or creed and  
the Italians than any  
others.

When a man of your high  
standing takes a stand up  
the kind it naturally sways  
the less intelligent and  
therefore starts trouble.  
Hence the labor unions  
running our country to a  
great extent to-day





"Courtesy first"

# Hotel Winton

Prospect at East Ninth St.

Cleveland, Ohio.

It would be of more benefit  
to the world in general  
if men of your very high  
standard in your faith  
would preach to your  
people to be  
abiding and  
the growing  
against the  
country for this reason  
The socialistic spirit which  
seems inborn in the Jew  
leads him into fields for his  
own benefit entirely and, then  
if not procurable resort to  
force and violence.  
There are so many of your  
race that are beloved  
by their Christian friends  
so you must admit







"Courtesy first"

# Hotel Winton

Prospect at East Ninth St.

Cleveland, Ohio.

it is not because they are  
Jews that the prejudice exists,  
it is simply from the  
fact that such a great  
number are unscrupulous  
in lines of business  
and therefore throw the  
stain on the name Jew  
and the smaller number  
of good in your race  
must suffer.

you can see from my  
review of conditions as  
they honestly exist that  
you have a bigger  
and broader work to  
do than stir up labor  
troubles as you would





"Courtesy first"

# Hotel Winton

Prospect at East Ninth St.

Cleveland, Ohio.

have enough on your  
hands if you could  
bring about a better  
feeling between the  
Christian and the Jew  
which gets more and more  
acute each day and if  
in the future any thing  
serious happens they will  
have no one to blame  
but themselves.

Am one that gets around  
among all classes and creeds  
and am placing this matter  
before you tonight as I  
find it and any good  
that I could do from  
my efforts would feel  
that I had accomplished





"Courtesy first"

# Hotel Winton

Prospect at East Ninth St.

Cleveland, Ohio.

something for humanity  
as large.  
I mean so disrespects to  
your cloth and hope  
you take it in the  
spirit in which it is  
meant to be conveyed.  
Respectfully  
Frank J. Johnson.



JOURNEYMEN  
PLUMBERS

**LOCAL UNION N°55**

FRANK J. MATHIS  
SECRETARY



OFFICE  
514 SUPERIOR BLDG.

**CLEVELAND, OHIO.**

JOHN McCRIDDEN  
BUSINESS AGENT

44

CLEVELAND, OHIO, June 15th 192  

Rev Abba H Silver,  
7600 Euclid Ave  
City.

Dear Sir:

As Secretary of the Journeymen Plumbers Union Local No 55.

I have been instructed by our membership to commend you, on the spirit you have shown in the late Chamber of Commerce controversy.

We as workers really appreciate the attitude you have taken in this matter.

With best wishes for your every success, We beg to remain yours sincerely.

THE JOURNEYMEN PLUMBERS UNION  
OF CLEVELAND OHIO

By Frank J. Mathis Secy



PAUL L. FEISS

CLEVELAND, O.

June 20, 1923

My dear Rabbi:

I presumed you would wish to have me advise you that the officers of the Chamber of Commerce have not the same impression that you have about giving publicity to the correspondence resulting from your resignation, and believe that your giving this publicity was not justified, not having given them the opportunity to discuss the advisability of doing it.

The impression I obtained from your talk at the Town Club was that you believed they acquiesced to this publicity. Mr. Havens advises me that both Mr. Baker and himself were entirely unaware of your intention to give the correspondence to the newspapers.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Paul L. Feiss', written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Rabbi Silver,  
c/o The Temple,  
55th & Central,  
Cleveland, Ohio



*Plumbers  
Union*

June 20th, 1923.

Mr. Frank J. Mathis,  
514 Superior Building,  
Cleveland, Ohio.

My dear Mr. Mathis,

Permit me to thank you and through you the Journeymen Plumbers Union Local No. 53 for their kind expression of sentiment. The pressing problems of our country today require fairness, tolerance and honesty in every group and every section of our population and to that end all true Americans must apply themselves.

With best wishes to the members of your organization permit me to remain

Very sincerely yours,



June Twenty-third,  
1923

Mr. Paul L. Feiss,  
2149 West 43rd Street,  
Cleveland, Ohio.

My dear Mr. Feiss,

I was rather surprised to receive the information contained in your letter of the twentieth. You state that Mr. Havens advised you that Mr. Baker was entirely unaware of my intention to give the correspondence to the newspaper. The reporter of the Press who first asked me for the correspondence was told that I would not publish it until Mr. Baker, then President of the Chamber, would give his consent. He thereupon called up Mr. Baker and obtained his consent. At least, that is what the reporter told me. I am getting in touch with him this afternoon and shall endeavor to get a written statement from him to this effect. Either Mr. Baker has forgotten this, or the reporter imposed upon me.

Mr. Havens was of course not consulted in the matter, as I had no correspondence with him at all.

Very sincerely yours,



COPY

*Chamber of Commerce*

Cleveland, Ohio.

June 25th, 1923.

A.H. Silver,

Cleveland, O.

Dear Rabbi:

Referring to our conversation of last Thursday.

I have talked with Mr. Cook and he states that Mr. Baker was consulted before any of his correspondence was published.

Mr. Baker's only restriction was that the last letter, which was written after his term as president, should be withheld.

I believe this will clear up any uncertainty which you may have.

Respectfully,

(Signed) H. F. Ranney



**COPY**

Cleveland, Ohio.

June 25th, 1923.

A. H. Silver,

Cleveland, O.

Dear Rabbi:

Referring to our conversation of last Thursday.

I have talked with Mr. Cook and he states that Mr. Baker was consulted before any of his correspondence was published.

Mr. Baker's only restriction was that the last letter, which was written after his term as president, should be withheld.

I believe this will clear up any uncertainty which you may have.

Respectfully,

(Signed) M. F. Ranney



Cleveland, O.

June 25, 1923.

A. H. Silver,

Cleveland, O.

Dear Rabbi:

Referring to our conversation of last Thursday.

I have talked with Mr. Cook and he states that Mr. Baker was consulted before any of his correspondence was published.

Mr. Baker's only restriction was that the last letter, which was written after his term as president, should be withheld.

I believe this will clear up any uncertainty which you may have.

Respectfully,

M. F. Ramsey



June 27th, 1923.

Mr. Paul Feiss,  
Joseph & Feiss Co.,  
Cleveland, Ohio.

My dear Mr. Feiss,

Following up the information contained in my last letter, I beg to enclose a letter which I received this morning from Mr. H. F. Ranney of the Cleveland Press. The letter is of course very clear and definite. Baker's last letter to which the writer refers was to my knowledge not published.

I would therefore like to have you find out for me where Mr. Havens got the information that Mr. Baker was not consulted about the publication of the correspondence; whether it was Mr. Baker who had told him that or whether Mr. Havens was drawing upon his imagination. I am under the impression that Mr. Havens has given this wrong information to the board of the Chamber. I feel that the board should be informed of the fact and I would appreciate very much if you would bring this fact to the attention of the board. If you have any hesitancy in the matter please let me know and I shall myself communicate directly with the president.

Very sincerely yours,



PAUL L. FEISS

CLEVELAND, O.

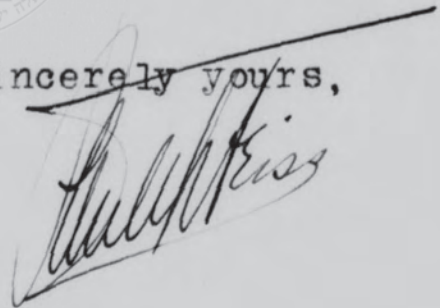
June 28, 1923

My dear Rabbi:

It seems to me that the matter referred to in our correspondence had better be taken up directly between you and the Chamber.

I am sure that Mr. Havens' impression is, no doubt, based upon wrong information. Why not write to him direct, advising him of my having spoken to you and giving him the same information you have given me?

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Paul L. Feiss", written over a horizontal line.

Abba Hillen Silver, Rabbi,  
The Temple,  
E. 55th St. & Central,  
Cleveland, Ohio



C O P Y

July 1st, 1923

Mr. Munson Havens,  
The Cleveland Chamber of Commerce,  
City.

Dear Mr. Havens,

I have your letter of July 9th and have read the three letters and the carbon copy of a letter which you therein enclosed. I return them for your files herewith.

Fortunately, my recollection of what took place with regard to the publication of this Silver-Baker correspondence is confirmed by Mr. Brainerd, who sat within hearing of my end of the ~~same~~ telephone conversation and who is sitting by me now as I dictate this to verify the accuracy of our joint memory of it. I was called on the telephone by a voice which said to me that the speaker was a press reporter; that Rabbi Silver had given him the Silver-Baker correspondence with reference to the Rabbi's resignation from the Chamber of Commerce and he desired to know of me whether he had my permission to publish it. I expressed to him great surprise that he had the correspondence and told him that so far as my letters were concerned, some of them had been written while I was President of the Chamber of Commerce; they were, therefore, official and the only person who could give authority for their publication was Mr. Grant, the President of the Chamber; that I had no right to give any such authority; that some of the letters were written by me personally after I ceased to be President of the Chamber of Commerce; that over that I had full control and that I refused to authorize its publication. I do not recall that I was told that Rabbi Silver had imposed my consent as a condition precedent to the use of the letters but I was told that he had given them to the reporter who had them in his possession at that time. I certainly did not intend by anything I said to give the slightest authority for the publication of the letters and as I remember my language, I did not give any such authority. My feeling at the time I was called on this subject was one of irritation and I feel sure I conveyed something of that feeling to the reporter by the curt and positive way in which I spoke to him on the whole subject.

As you know, I have never had any conversation or correspondence with Rabbi Silver on this subject so that any impression he got that I had consented to the publication of the letters, he got from others. The possibility of a misunderstanding



(2)

on the subject would have been avoided if the Rabbi had called me on the telephone and asked me whether or not I had any feeling on the subject. Had he done so, I would have told him that I preferred not to have the correspondence published because I regarded it as incomplete and also because having left the Presidency of the Chamber, I would not have felt free to authorize the publication.

If I have not adequately covered the situation in this note, I will be very glad either to write further or to see you and talk the matter over with you and Mr. Brainerd.





July 6th, 1923.

Mr. Munson Havens,  
Cleveland Chamber of Commerce,  
Cleveland, Ohio.

My dear Mr. Havens,

On June 20th I received a letter from Mr. Paul Feiss, a copy of which I am enclosing herewith. In this letter Mr. Feiss states that you advised him that both Mr. Baker and yourself were entirely unaware of my intention to give the correspondence which I had with Mr. Baker, relative to my resignation from the Chamber of Commerce, to the newspapers. I felt certain that you were under the wrong impression, for the reporter of the Press who first asked me for the correspondence was told that I would not give it to the newspaper until Mr. Baker, then president of the Chamber of Commerce would give his consent. The reporter then called Mr. Baker and obtained his consent. Upon receipt of Mr. Feiss' letter I requested the reporter to put in writing what he had told me over the phone. I am enclosing herewith a copy of that letter.

You realize therefore, that you were not correctly informed concerning the matter and that you gave Mr. Feiss the wrong information. I wonder whether you did not give similar information to the president and officers of the Chamber of Commerce. If so, I would appreciate very much if you would correct the impression at your earliest opportunity. I shall be obliged for an early reply.

With kindest regards, I am

Very sincerely yours,



# The Cleveland Chamber of Commerce

Founded in 1848

RICHARD F. GRANT, PRESIDENT  
EDWARD B. GREENE, 1ST VICE PRESIDENT  
EDWARD S. JORDAN, 2ND VICE PRESIDENT  
GEORGE A. COULTON, TREASURER  
MUNSON HAVENS, SECRETARY

July 9th, 1923

Cleveland  
Fifth City

Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver,

Cleveland.

Dear Sir: I am in receipt of your letter of July 6th enclosing Mr. Feiss' letter of June 20th and Mr. Ranney's of June 25th. The essence of this correspondence is that you entrusted to a reporter for the Cleveland Press the mission of securing Mr. Baker's consent to the publication of your correspondence with him, and are now assured by Mr. Ranney of that newspaper that Mr. Baker's consent was obtained by the reporter. I send you this note by way of acknowledgment, simply, and will reply more formally after I have made an inquiry or two.

You are correct in thinking that I have informed the President of the Chamber, the directors of the Chamber, Mr. Feiss, and others, that the correspondence was given to the Press for publication without Mr. Baker's consent. If I have been in error, I will make the fullest correction you could possibly desire.

Very truly yours,

*Munson Havens*  
Secretary



July Tenth,  
1923

Mr. Munson A. Havens,  
Secretary. Chamber of Commerce,  
Cleveland, Ohio.

My dear Mr. Havens,

Permit me to acknowledge receipt of your letter of July ninth. I am pleased with the information contained in your letter, that if you find that you have been in error, you will make the fullest correction.

There is one sentence, however, in your letter which is ambiguous. You say, "the essence of this correspondence is that you entrusted to a reporter for the Cleveland Press the mission of securing Mr. Baker's consent to the publication of your correspondence with him". This may have an implication which would not be true to the facts in the case. I entrusted no such mission to any reporter. Upon being asked for the correspondence, I said that while I had no objection to having it published, the consent of Mr. Baker would first have to be procured by the newspaper which desired to publish it. This, you will realize, is a different story altogether.

With kindest regards, I am

Very sincerely yours,



July 10, 1923

Mr. Munson Havens,  
The Cleveland Chamber of Commerce  
City.

Dear Mr. Havens:

I have your letter of July 9 and have read the three letters and the carbon copy of a letter which you therein enclosed. I return them for your files herewith.

Fortunately, my recollection of what took place with regard to the publication of this Silver-Baker correspondence is confirmed by Mr. Brainard, who sat within hearing of my end of the telephone conversation and who is sitting by me now as I dictate this to verify the accuracy of our joint memory of it. I was called on the telephone by a voice which said to me that the speaker was a press reporter; that Rabbi Silver had given him the Silver-Baker correspondence with reference to the Rabbi's resignation from the Chamber of Commerce and he desired to know of me whether he had my permission to publish it. I expressed to him great surprise that he had the correspondence and told him that so far as my letters were concerned, some of them had been written while I was President of the Chamber of Commerce, they were, therefore, official and that the only person who could give authority for their publication was Mr. Grant, the President of the Chamber; that I had no right to give any such authority; that one of the letters was written by me personally after I ceased to be President of the Chamber of Commerce, that over that I had full control and that I refused to authorize its publication. I do not recall that I was told that Rabbi Silver had imposed my consent as a condition precedent to the use of the letters but I was told that he had given them to the reporter who had them in his possession at that time. I certainly did not intend by anything I said to give the slightest authority for the publication of the letters and as I remember my language, I did not give any such authority. My feeling at the time I was called on this subject was one of irritation and I feel sure I conveyed something of that feeling to the reporter by the curt and positive way in which I spoke to him on the whole subject.

As you know, I have never had any conversation or correspondence with Rabbi Silver on this subject so that any impression he got that I had consented to the publication of the letters, he got from others. The possibility of a misunderstanding on the subject would have been avoided if the Rabbi had called me on the telephone and asked me whether or not I had any feeling on the subject. Had he done so, I would have told him that I preferred not to have the correspondence published because I regarded it as incomplete and also because having left the Presidency of the Chamber, I would not have felt free to authorize the publication.



-2-

*Brainard*  
If I have not adequately covered the situation in this note, I will be very glad either to write further or to see you and talk the matter over with you and Mr. Brainard.

Cordially yours,

(signed) Newton D. Baker



Copy of letter from  
Mr. Baker to Mr. Havens.



# The Cleveland Chamber of Commerce

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EDWARD B. GREENE, 1ST VICE PRESIDENT  
EDWARD S. JORDAN, 2ND VICE PRESIDENT  
GEORGE A. COULTON, TREASURER  
MUNSON HAVENS, SECRETARY

July 11, 1923

Cleveland  
Fifth City

Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver,

Cleveland.

Dear Sir: I enclose a copy of a self-explanatory letter from Mr. Baker. In the light of Mr. Baker's statements, I do not feel that I can withdraw the statement made to Mr. Feiss, and others, that Mr. Baker and myself were entirely unaware of your intention to give the correspondence to the newspapers. I shall, however, say to Mr. Feiss, and to others, that I have your assurance that you gave the correspondence to the Press with the qualifying instruction that the newspaper was to secure Mr. Baker's consent before publishing it. Before doing this, I will appreciate it if you will inform me whether you would regard this as a satisfactory adjustment of the matter insofar as it concerns you and me. Insofar as the matter concerns yourself and Mr. Baker, and yourself and the Cleveland Press, of course I have no personal duty.

Very truly yours,

*Munson Havens*  
Secretary



July twelfth, 1923

Mr. E. E. Cooke,  
City Editor,  
Cleveland Press,  
C i t y.

My dear Mr. Cooke,

On June 25th I received a letter from Mr. M. F. Ranney of your office, answering some questions I put to him relative to the publication of my correspondence with Mr. Newton D. Baker, on the occasion of my resignation from the Chamber of Commerce. In this letter Mr. Ranney writes that he had talked with you and that you said to him that Mr. Baker was consulted before any of this correspondence was published, and that Mr. Baker's only restriction was that the last letter which he had written after his term as President expired should be withheld.

This morning I received from Mr. Munson Havens, Secretary of the Cleveland Chamber of Commerce, a copy of a letter from Mr. Newton D. Baker, a copy of which I am enclosing herewith.

This letter gives a totally different version. Mr. Baker states - "I certainly did not intend by anything I said to give the slightest authority for the publication of the letters and as I remember my language I did not give any such authority". This clearly needs some explanation. Again Mr. Baker says - "I was called on the telephone by a voice which said to me that the speaker was a press reporter; that Rabbi Silver had given him the Silver-Baker correspondence with reference to the Rabbi's resignation from the Chamber of Commerce and he desired to know of me whether he had my permission to publish it". This is astounding information, for your reporter was not given the correspondence until an hour or two after your office informed me that you had obtained the



Mr. E. E. C. 2

permission from Mr. Baker.

Evidently there is some bad confusion here and I would appreciate it very much if you would send me a detailed account of your version. It is highly important that this be done.

Thanking you very kindly, I beg to remain

Sincerely yours,





July twelfth, 1923

Mr. Munson A. Havens,  
Secretary, Chamber of Commerce,  
Cleveland, Ohio.

My dear Mr. Havens,

I am enclosing herewith copy of a letter which I have just sent to Mr. Cooke, City Editor of the Cleveland Press. Upon receipt of his reply, I shall answer your letter of July eleventh in greater detail.

Mr. Baker's letter, a copy of which you sent me, establishes one fact - he was consulted about the correspondence prior to its publication and his permission was requested. Mr. Baker maintains that he refused the reporter permission to print the correspondence. The Cleveland Press maintains that Mr. Baker granted the permission. Mr. Baker, however, does not deny that a reporter of The Press did solicit his permission to print the correspondence.

The statement, therefore, which you made to Mr. Feiss and the Directors of the Chamber, that the correspondence was given to The Press for publication without Mr. Baker's consent, and that Mr. Baker was entirely unaware of my intention to give the correspondence to the newspaper, is inaccurate.

Assuming that the correspondence had been given to The Press for publication without thought of consulting Mr. Baker, what could have prompted the newspaper to solicit Mr. Baker's permission. Mr. Baker's permission was requested by the Press for one of two possible reasons; either I had made that a condition precedent to the publication of the correspondence, or the Press did not wish to assume the responsibility for the publication without Mr. Baker's authorization. If the former is true, ~~then emphasis is likely to be~~?



Mr. M. A. H. 2

If the latter is true, it seems hardly likely that The Press, having been refused the permission which it had solicited, should have proceeded to publish the correspondence anyhow. I am seeking further enlightenment upon this matter.

For your benefit, permit me to state categorically, that The Press did not have the correspondence when Mr. Baker was consulted. It was an hour or two after The Press had informed me that Mr. Baker had given full consent, that I permitted The Press to send down a reporter to my office to get the correspondence.

Very sincerely yours,

AMERICAN JEWISH  
ARCHIVES



THE CLEVELAND PRESS  
EDITOR'S OFFICE

July 23, 1923.

Rabbi Abba Silver,  
The Temple,  
E. 55th-st and Central-av.

Dear Sir:

Concerning the situation which has arisen over publication of the correspondence between you and Mr. Newton D. Baker, I would like to make these two points clear -

FIRST, that we did not have the correspondence in our possession at the time our reporter talked to Mr. Baker about releasing it. You may recall that you had informed us you would not make it public without Mr. Baker's consent.

SECOND, that when we later called you, informing you that Mr. Baker had indicated he was not opposed to our publishing the letters, excepting the one written after he turned the office of President of the Chamber of Commerce over to Richard F. Grant, we sincerely believed that this was true. Our reporter interpreted his remarks to mean that he was concerned only in the non-publication of the last letter. This letter we took pains not to publish, in keeping with his expressed wish.

Sincerely yours,

Max B. Cook

City Editor.



THE GLEN SPRINGS  
WATKINS, N. Y.

July 26, 1923.

Mr. Munson B. Haven, Secty.,  
Cleveland Chamber of Commerce,  
Cleveland, Ohio.

My dear Mr. Haven:

I have just received the inclosed from Mr. Cook,  
Editor of the Cleveland Press, who has been on his  
vacation. This letter explains my position I be-  
lieve, in full.

I would appreciate it very much if you would read  
the inclosed letter of Mr. Cook's to the Board of the  
Chamber, and that you would inform those to whom you  
previously conveyed the information, that I did not  
give the correspondence to the newspapers without first  
having been assured that Mr. Baker has consented to  
its publication.

I am sending a copy of Mr. Cook's letter to Mr. Baker.  
With kindest regards, I am

Sincerely yours,



THE GLEN SPRINGS  
WATKINS, N. Y.

July 26, 1923.

Mr. Newton D. Baker,  
First National Bank,  
Euclid Avenue,  
Cleveland, Ohio.

My dear Mr. Baker:

I feel that a note of explanation is due you, especially after reading a copy of your letter which Mr. Haven sent to me. Upon receipt of it, I got in touch immediately with Mr. Cook, Editor of the Cleveland Press. The letter is self explanatory.

I regret exceedingly that the Cleveland Press misunderstood or misinterpreted the clear intent of your statement to its reporter. It was an unfortunate oversight on my part that I did not get in touch with you by phone, to varify the reporter's statement to me, but his words were so positive and definite, touching your pleasure in having this correspondence published that it did not occur to me that any misunderstanding was involved.

Trusting that you are well, I beg to remain

Very sincerely yours,





The Glen Springs  
Watkins Glen, N. Y.

COPY

July 23, 1923.

Rabbi Abba Silver,

The Temple,

E. 55th St and Central Avenue,

Dear Sir:

Concerning the situation which has arisen over publication of the correspondence between you and Mr. Newton D. Baker, I would like to make these points clear -

FIRST, that we did not have the correspondence in our possession at the time our reporter talked to Mr. Baker about releasing it. You may recall that you had informed us you would not make it public without Mr. Baker's consent.

SECOND, that when we later called you, informing you that Mr. Baker had indicated he was not opposed to our publishing the letters, excepting the one written after he turned the office of President of the Chamber of Commerce over to Richard F. Grant, we sincerely believed that this was true. Our reporter interpreted his remarks to mean that he was concerned only in the non-publication of the last letter. This letter we took pains not to publish, in keeping with his expressed wish.

Sincerely yours,

(signed) Max B. Cook

City Editor.



# The Cleveland Chamber of Commerce

Founded in 1848

RICHARD F. GRANT, PRESIDENT  
EDWARD B. GREENE, 1<sup>ST</sup> VICE PRESIDENT  
EDWARD S. JORDAN, 2<sup>ND</sup> VICE PRESIDENT  
GEORGE A. COULTON, TREASURER  
MUNSON HAVENS, SECRETARY

July 30, 1923

**Cleveland**  
Fifth City

Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver,

The Glen Springs,

Watkins Glen, New York.

Dear Sir: I am in receipt of your letter of the 26th inst., together with a copy of a letter to you from the city editor of the Cleveland Press, dated July 23rd. In accordance with your wish I will inform the directors and others - there were very few - to whom I talked with regard to the incident of the Baker-Silver correspondence, that you did not give the correspondence to the Cleveland Press without first having been assured by the Cleveland Press that Mr. Baker had consented to its publication.

Very truly yours,

*Munson Havens*

Secretary



July 30, 1923

Mr. Paul L. Feiss,

Cleveland.

Dear Paul: In correspondence between Rabbi Silver and myself with regard to the publication of the Baker-Silver correspondence, it has been made clear that Rabbi Silver did not give the correspondence to the Cleveland Press for publication by that newspaper until he had received the assurance of the Cleveland Press that Mr. Baker's consent to the publication of the correspondence had been given.

I am writing this to you in order to alter any impression I may have given you, to the contrary. Mr. Baker had not given his consent to the Press; in fact, appears to have most peremptorily declined to do so.

But Rabbi Silver was unquestionably led to believe that the Press had secured consent.

I do not know to what degree this corrects my previous statement to you, but, to whatever degree it is in correction, the correction should be made in justice to Rabbi Silver.

Very truly yours,

Munson Havens (Signed)  
Secretary



# The Cleveland Chamber of Commerce

Founded in 1848

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EDWARD B. GREENE, 1<sup>ST</sup> VICE PRESIDENT  
EDWARD S. JORDAN, 2<sup>ND</sup> VICE PRESIDENT  
GEORGE A. COULTON, TREASURER  
MUNSON HAVENS, SECRETARY

October 20, 1923

**Cleveland**  
Fifth City

Rabbi A. H. Silver,

Cleveland.

Dear Sir: Mr. Newton D. Baker has been asked to serve as chairman of a committee on arrangements for the Lloyd-George luncheon Tuesday. Mr. Baker was requested to suggest his own personnel for the committee. He has suggested your name, among others. I therefore have the pleasure of tendering you appointment on this committee, and of sending you herewith a ticket to the luncheon.

I am told there is very little for the committee to do, as the arrangements have largely been suggested by those in charge of Mr. Lloyd-George's visit to Cleveland.

Very truly yours,

*R. F. Grant*  
President



October 22nd, 1923.

Mr. Richard F. Grant,  
Cleveland Chamber of Commerce,  
Cleveland, Ohio.

My dear Mr. Grant,

Permit me to thank you and  
Mr. Newton D. Baker for the privilege  
you extend to me to serve on the committee  
on arrangements for the reception of  
Mr. Lloyd George. I shall be pleased to  
serve.

With kindest regards, permit  
me to remain

Very sincerely yours,



# The Cleveland Chamber of Commerce

Founded in 1848

RICHARD F. GRANT, PRESIDENT  
EDWARD B. GREENE, 1ST VICE PRESIDENT  
EDWARD S. JORDAN, 2ND VICE PRESIDENT  
GEORGE A. COULTON, TREASURER  
MUNSON HAVENS, SECRETARY  
C. R. JOHNSON,  
LABOR COMMISSIONER

March 31, 1924



Rev. Abba H. Silver,

The Temple,

Cleveland.

Dear Rabbi Silver:

The County Commissioners have asked the Chamber of Commerce to organize a Citizens Committee to conduct a campaign of public education in order that a favorable vote may be secured on the proposed city-county building on the Mall.

To this end we request you to be present at a meeting Friday, April 4th, at 4 P. M., in the Chamber of Commerce library, for the purpose of forming a citizens committee to promote the passage of bond issues for the purchase of a site for a city-county building upon the Mall and for the erection of a suitable building thereon.

By Order of the Board of Directors.

*R. F. Grant*  
President

*Munson Havens*  
Secretary



# The Cleveland Chamber of Commerce

Founded in 1848

EDWARD B. GREENE, PRESIDENT  
D. C. WILLS, 1<sup>ST</sup> VICE PRESIDENT  
B. D. QUARRIE, 2<sup>ND</sup> VICE PRESIDENT  
D. D. KIMMEL, TREASURER  
MUNSON HAVENS, SECRETARY

April 29, 1924

**Cleveland**  
Fifth City

Rabbi A. H. Silver,

Cleveland.

My dear Rabbi Silver: On May 6th Cleveland is to be honored by a visit from Baron de Cartier, the Belgian Ambassador to the United States.

This gentleman is coming to Cleveland in the interest of the famous Louvain Library and during his stay the Chamber of Commerce wishes to tender a luncheon in his honor and in recognition of the work which he is doing.

You are therefore cordially invited to meet with our distinguished visitor at luncheon at 12:30 o'clock, in the Chamber of Commerce library, on Tuesday, May 6th.

I hope you will be able to attend and will so advise me.

Sincerely yours,

*E. B. Greene*  
President



when you resigned in 1914  
opened to <sup>I</sup> methods of considering  
public policy. You stated -  
that "I cannot feel that  
I am acquitting myself  
(myself) by continuing a  
member of the Chamber & thus  
premiering a part of the apparatus  
where weight can be so  
used" I <sup>am inclined to</sup> agree with the  
position you then took -

Chamber of  
Commerce



I wish I could see any way clear to  
do so. I feel however, that I cannot come.  
but my support is an org. which has made  
such a large policy its chief function. I shall  
~~find~~ <sup>find</sup> ~~you~~ <sup>you</sup> for ~~your~~ <sup>main</sup> ~~work~~ <sup>work</sup> with you & the  
good men, Ch. in other ~~org~~ <sup>org</sup> ~~agencies~~ <sup>agencies</sup>, & other  
other channels —

Very sincerely, yours —



Ordinance of Q. City Council - regulating  
employment of special guards during strikes,  
providing for licensing of such guards.

Sep. 1919.

Yours. Com. on Labor Relations - approved of  
advice given by your legal counsel -  
to "disregard it completely"  
which avoided bloodshed in the  
private guards - strike guards