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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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Consumers' League of Ohio, 1925-1926.



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THE CONSUMERS' LEAGUE OF OHIO

ELECTRIC BLDG.

700 PROSPECT AVENUE

CLEVELAND

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RABBI A. H. SILVER

MRS. HOWARD S. THAYER

MRS. HARRY WEMBRIDGE

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November 3, 1925.

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

My dear Rabbi Silver:-

The November meeting of the Consumers' League Board will be held at Goodrich House, 1420 E. 31st St., Tuesday afternoon, November 10th, at 3:00 P.M. Miss Gannett, our First Vice-President, has invited us to remain after the meeting for tea.

A few of the members of the Board have not yet made their pledge to the budget for 1926. We hope that if you have not been able to attend to this matter, you can do so before the Board meeting, so that we may have as full a report as possible of the status of the campaign.

Sincerely yours,

*Elizabeth S. Magee*  
Elizabeth S. Magee,  
Executive Secretary.

ESM/MF







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THE CONSUMERS' LEAGUE OF OHIO

~~ELECTRIC BUILDING 700 PROSPECT AVENUE~~

CLEVELAND 308 Euclid Ave.,

~~SUPERIOR 700~~ Main 3025

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January 29, 1926.

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MRS. HOWARD S. THAYER

MRS. HARRY WEMBRIDGE

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

Dear Rabbi Silver:

At the annual meeting of the Consumers' League of Ohio, to be held Friday, February 5th, the election of officers and board members for the ensuing year will take place. We hope very much that you will be willing to continue as a member of the Consumers' League Board. Will you kindly indicate your willingness to serve in this capacity by sending word to the Consumers' League Office as soon as possible?

Very sincerely yours,

Bertha C. Thayer

For the Nominating Committee.

A. R. Hatton,

Helen Phelan,

Mrs. Howard S. Thayer, Chairman.

yes!



COMMUNITY CHESTS IN OHIO

A paper written by Miss Amy Mahor of the Toledo Consumers' League and read at the National Consumers' League meeting in Boston, November 19th.

Mr. Norton of Detroit, Chairman of last year's Conference of Social Work at Denver, said, in his series of articles on Community Chests, that controversial causes like the Consumers' Leagues should be financed outside the Chests, and the assumption by most people is that they were so financed before any Chests were formed, and can as easily be so financed, still. This ignores all the differences which the very presence of a Chest in a city makes to organizations not included in it.

A. FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF ORGANIZATIONS NOT INCLUDED.

First, of course, the omitted organization is considered by the casual public to have some stigma, some crooked or careless book-keeping, some poor working or administrative methods. If you are not included in the Community financing there must be, they are apt to think, some very sinister reason, far from being a credit to you.

Secondly, even if the central administration of the Chest does not emphasize immunity from all but one appeal, many of the thousands of solicitors do promise immunity as part of their argument. This makes people irritated where they are approached for outside causes, later. Of course the name "Community" Chest is unjustifiable, when it includes only some of the Community efforts.

The solicitor comes to the house with a card on which is the quota assigned to the prospective giver; often he cannot afford to give that lump sum, and to other causes too. It takes great belief in a cause to have the courage to refuse to give that quota, year after year, and be stigmatized as stingy. One of our contributors had that refusal thrown at her in a very large public meeting. As some one said: "many people judge your value as a citizen by the amount you give," as published in the list, annually, by the Chest."-- You cannot hope to find many persons in the Community who believe in your cause deeply enough to stand all of this for its sake.

Thirdly, many people use their having given to the Chest as an excuse. As some one put it, "The Chest sews up the pockets of the Community."

Fourthly, the necessity of meeting the views of the Disbursements Committee, drives some of the organizations into work which appeals to that Committee rather than work which is more fundamental.

Fifthly, the organizations lose much independence and courage. In our city a class for field workers in the A.C. were told "now you see what happened to the Consumers' League because it meddled with wages: the Chest would not stand for any talking about wages." Before the War, it was the Social Workers' Club that introduced and worked for a Street Trades Ordinance, whereas, when the same subject was up two years ago, the workers



in two different settlements did not dare testify at the City Council meetings. The Chest did not say they could not do so, but they have no idea how far they dare go, and so stay on the safe side.

B. FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE COMMUNITY

Mr. Norton felt that now and experimental attacks on the problems of poverty et al ought to be financed outside the Chest, but it is a very difficult matter to get them started in a Chest city. Those new efforts are often the most precious promise we have, and to make them so difficult as to crush out many is a serious infant mortality of possible helps towards solution of many problems--

Secondly, it is much easier for Big Business to cut off funds from organizations objectionable to them; they could not reach the whole list of our contributors, in the old days, but they can reach five men on a Disbursements Committee.

Thirdly, the coercion used is very distressing; plants are given 100% banners or are listed in the papers. An employee of a bank told me he had to give \$40, and pulled from his pocket a piece of paper where he had figured his budget:- "I pay this for rent, and I give this to my wife every week to run the house, and this is my insurance, and this is the interest on my note here at the bank -- I borrowed it to help my brother's family - he's out of work -- Now you can see my wages won't cover all that, and where's \$40 coming from?" When I suggested he refuse he said no, he must keep his job! Now surely it is a poor social economy not to do all we can to keep out of the dependant class all who are self-supporting, by dint of struggle and deprivation, and this policy of forcing them to contribute a specified sum, when we have no conception of the state of their budget, is rather short sighted, aside from the indignation one feels over the power to coerce, itself.

Fourthly, we have to face the fact, that under a Chest regime, the city can advance only to the social knowledge and vision of the men on the Disbursements Committee. The purse strings outline our horizon -- The Disbursements Committee are business men: the Committees of five who decided to discontinue our support was a coal merchant, an insurance man, a dry goods merchant, a bond dealer, and a glass manufacturer. They were supposedly "successful business men", and what time had they ever had to study social science, or actual conditions in the City? Moreover, business men, even when they do realize conditions or the value of certain methods, are not free to express themselves individually. Suppose the coal dealer wishes to drop an organization he dislikes, and that you, an insurance man, carry thousands of dollars of insurance on his coal yards, you won't oppose and anger him beyond a certain point! I do not mean to attach blame to them, but is it not a question whether any five men are wise and experienced and impartial enough to understand and direct the whole social program of a big city?

Fifthly, the Chest campaigns are so often not real education of the Public, but emotional appeals. One year the orphans at the County Home were driven about our city in a big truck, with banners, -- as part of the publicity drive.

Lastly, as an interesting guess, won't it all mean that the new and controversial work will fall to the share of the women's clubs, who are free, financially, but without paid experienced executives? And won't that mean that we shall have to wait, and be patient with their mistakes until they have caught up with what social workers have learned in the last twenty-five years?



February First  
1926

Mrs. Howard S. Thayer,  
The Consumers League of Ohio,  
308 Euclid Avenue,  
Cleveland, Ohio.

My dear Mrs. Thayer,

I shall be very glad to continue as a member of the Executive Board of the Consumers League of Ohio and the Nominating Committee is at liberty to present my name for re-election at the meeting to be held February 5th.

With kindest regards, permit me to remain

Very sincerely yours,



## HONORARY PRESIDENT

MISS MYRTA L. JONES

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PROFESSOR H. E. BOURNE

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EXECUTIVE SECRETARY



February 11, 1926.

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RABBI A. H. SILVER

MRS. HOWARD S. THAYER

MRS. HARRY WEMBRIDGE

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

Dear Rabbi Silver:

May I thank you for the  
first payment of your pledge to the work  
of the Consumers' League of Ohio for 1926,  
for which check in the amount of \$100.00  
was received February 3rd.

Very sincerely,

*Elizabeth S. Magee*  
Elizabeth S. Magee,  
Executive Secretary.



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ROOM 909

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CLEVELAND

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MISS MARIE R. WING

Non-Resident Members:

SENATOR J. F. BURKE, ELYRIA, OHIO.

DR. M. B. HAMMOND, COLUMBUS, OHIO.

July 6, 1926.

Rabbi A. H. Silver,  
The Temple,  
Ansel Road & E. 105th St.,  
Cleveland, Ohio.

Dear Rabbi Silver:

Since there will be no further meeting of the Board of the Consumers' League until fall, I am writing to let you know of the developments in the work of the League and the plans which are under way.

At the May meeting, a number of definite suggestions were made in regard to studies which might be undertaken by the League at this time, and a possible legislative program for the session of 1927. Among the topics suggested for study was that of accidents to minors in industry. During the National Conference of Social Work Mrs. Kelley urged us, if it was at all possible, to get the facts on accidents to children, since she thinks that Ohio should take its place with New Jersey, New York and Wisconsin in the most advanced legislation protecting children. This legislation is discussed in detail in an article in the June "Survey Graphic" - a reprint of which I am enclosing. Mrs. Kelley has also written an article on this subject for our July bulletin which you have doubtless seen.

In accordance with this suggestion, Miss Magee interviewed Mr. Kearns and Miss Moriarty while she was attending the meeting in Columbus of the Association of Governmental Labor Officials the first week in June. The matter was officially considered at a meeting of the Industrial Commission last week, and word has just come to us that they will be glad to give the co-operation necessary for the making of the study. This will mean furnishing the statistical data and opening the workmen's compensation records to us. The accident investigation, therefore, will be undertaken instead of the study of mothers in industry, as originally suggested.

It is planned during the early fall to have a small joint conference on legislation, including those state organizations which are interested in and ready to back legislation for women in industry. Among the questions which should be considered is that of extending the hour law to women workers in hotels. We are gathering some material on this subject preparatory to the conference.

Very sincerely yours,

*Alice P. Gannett*  
Alice P. Gannett, President.