



Abba Hillel Silver Collection Digitization Project

Featuring collections from the Western Reserve Historical Society and
The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives

MS-4787: Abba Hillel Silver Papers, 1902-1989.

Series I: General Correspondence, 1914-1969, undated.

Sub-series A: Alphabetical, 1914-1965, undated.

Reel
34

Box
12

Folder
834

Jewish Agency, including American Palestine Appeal, 1935.

American Palestine Campaign

OF THE

Jewish Agency for Palestine

IN CO-OPERATION WITH

PALESTINE FOUNDATION FUND (KEREN HAYESOD)

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS:

111 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK CITY

TELEPHONE ALGONQUIN 4-3600

HONORARY CHAIRMEN

CYRUS ADLER
HERBERT H. LEHMAN
JULIAN W. MACK
FELIX M. WARBURG
STEPHEN S. WISE

NATIONAL CHAIRMEN

WILLIAM M. LEWIS
LOUIS LIPSKY
JAMES MARSHALL
MORRIS ROTHENBERG
ELIHU D. STONE
NATHAN STRAUS

TREASURERS

JACOB H. COHEN
HARRY L. GLUCKSMAN
ABRAHAM LIEBOVITZ

CHAIRMAN,

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

LOUIS LIPSKY

CAMPAIGN DIRECTOR

ROBERT SILVERMAN

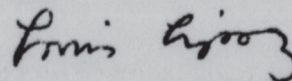
May 8, 1935

Dear Friend:

Enclosed herewith, for your information, is a detailed financial statement of consolidation activities to be carried out by the Keren Hayesod during the 1934-35 fiscal period.

As you know, the American Palestine Campaign is the fund-raising instrument of the Keren Hayesod in the United States, as well as of the Central Bureau for the Settlement of German Jews in Palestine.

Sincerely yours,



Louis Lipsky
Chairman

June 28, 1935

Judge Julian W. Mack
233 Broadway
New York City

Dear Judge Mack:

I have given much thought to the contents of your oral statement to me a fortnight ago with regard to the deliberations of the committee appointed by the Administrative Committee of the Jewish Agency. You informed me that the purpose of the committee was to consider the entire problem of gathering and disseminating the news from Palestine in the best interests of the Jewish people. The following conclusions were reached:

1. Your committee felt that it was not desirable that the control of the news service from Palestine be in the hands of one person.

2. However, it felt that it was equally undesirable that the control of news from Palestine be vested in the Executive of the Jewish Agency, because

3. In either case the impartiality of the service was not safeguarded.

4. Your committee was in favor of the appointment of a special committee, to be elected by the Jewish Agency for Palestine and the Vaad Leumi in Palestine, which should control the work of the Palcor.

5. The committee decided that Palcor should confine its work to the gathering of news in Palestine and that the J.T.A. should continue to give a general Jewish news service.

6. The committee felt that Palcor was doing its work well.

7. It also felt that the J.T.A. was rendering a valuable service to the Jewish Community, and that it should continue its work and merited the support of the Jewish Community.

I pointed out that it would be desirable if a clash with regard to the distribution of news could be avoided by utilizing the J.T.A. for this purpose, in order to avoid the continuation of the present method of commercial competition. I understood that this question would be taken up at the next meeting of the committee.

The resolution adopted by the Administrative Committee of the Jewish Agency, I understand, did not refer particularly to the J.T.A. However, since the committee is to consider how the news service from Palestine could best be regulated in the interests of the Jewish people, would this not include also the consideration of the question of whether the interests of the Jewish people could not be best served by an existing news service, the J.T.A., and whether your committee should therefore not pass on the question of whether the establishment of a new service was altogether necessary?

I wish to submit the following remarks with regard to the conclusions reached by your committee:

(a) Palcor was launched by the Executive without any investigation by that body with regard to the validity of the charges which had been levelled against the J.T.A., and without any attempt whatever to communicate with me and to explore ways and means to reach a satisfactory understanding with the J.T.A.

(b) In the very limited Jewish news field, there is no room for two news services, making a continuous competitive struggle unavoidable. The interests of the Jewish people can only be harmed by such a state of affairs.

(c) One of the main complaints against the J.T.A. is that it is a private and not publicly controlled enterprise. Nevertheless the Palcor service had been placed here in the United States at the disposal of Seven Arts Feature Syndicate. This syndicate disseminates the Palcor service to the Anglo-Jewish weeklies and thus the Anglo-Jewish weeklies which do not subscribe to the Seven Arts Syndicate do not receive Palcor news. In other words the Executive is backing one private enterprise against another. Without any desire to use derogatory language, it is merely a statement of fact if I point out that the Seven Arts Syndicate has never maintained an international news service like the J.T.A., and does not employ correspondents or receive cables from every part of the world. While it styles itself a world-wide news service, its news service consists of a re-hash of reports which have appeared in the general and Jewish press.

I wish to point out that with regard to the decision of your committee that Palcor should confine itself to Palestine, this decision could be easily circumvented if Palcor places its service at the disposal of another private syndicate.

(d) Your committee felt that it was not desirable that the control of a news service be vested in one person. A considerable number of the shares of the J.T.A. are held by Jewish communal leaders, and despite the idea entertained by the Executive, I am

not really the owner of the J.T.A., (a large part of the holdings which I personally possess being due to Mr. Warburg's having made me a present of \$20,000 worth of shares).

However, it is true that the management and editorial direction of the J.T.A. are in my hands. As I have pointed out previously, when a meeting of representative Jewish leaders took place eight or nine years ago and the establishment of a communal board was suggested, it was Mr. Louis Marshall who urged that the J.T.A. should be free of communal control, a viewpoint which was unanimously adopted.

The assumption of "one-man control" of the J.T.A. is fallacious. The J.T.A. serves a very large number of Jewish newspapers, adhering to a large variety of viewpoints and party affiliations, and has always had to guard itself against any bias in order not to lose some of its newspaper subscribers. This constitutes a natural control and check on the work of any news agency, which like the J.T.A. wishes to serve the press of a people. In all the seventeen years of existence, not a single newspaper has discontinued the service of the J.T.A. because of any partisanship it detected in our service. Even at this time, in spite of our conflict with the Executive, the majority of the official organs of the Zionist Organization are subscribers to the J.T.A., amongst them the official organs in Germany, South Africa, Czechoslovakia, etc.

No committee can be in effective control of a news service. Reports cannot pass through the hands of a committee before publication. Its efficiency would be hopelessly destroyed. In no enterprise is the vesting of authority in one person as necessary as in this work.

(e) Your committee felt that the news service should not be subject to the control of the Executive body, as this would constitute control by a political body. However, it seems to me that the appointment of a committee composed of representatives of the Administrative Committee of the Jewish Agency and of the Vaad Leumi would hardly change the situation. Such a committee would be composed of representatives of various parties. Inevitably a news service thus controlled would try to please every party represented on the board, would give a maximum of publicity to each of these parties and abstain from publishing any news that might be unfavorable or displeasing to them. Multifarious control would merely multiply all the undesirable features which are germane to a controlled news service.

The committee, which is contemplated with regard to Palcor, will be able to review reports only post factum. Its actual control will be in the hands of the Zionist Executive, as those who are in charge of Palcor are officials of the Zionist Organization,

are employed by them and will inevitably receive their direction from them.

As a matter of fact, what is required is not subjecting news service to any influence or control, but establishing stronger safeguards against tampering with the freedom and independence of the gathering and disseminating of news. Experience has proven that governments and powerful organizations make systematic and persistent efforts to direct public opinion. They flood the press with publicity that is calculated to enhance their prestige, and withhold news that may adversely affect their prestige. We are living today in an age of propaganda when most governments rule by its means. Independent news services are indispensable in enabling the public to obtain an objective and well-proportioned picture of situations as they develop.

Newspapers today are flooded to such an extent with skillfully prepared reports from official sources that propaganda penetrates even the most important newspapers more than is desirable for public interests. Every report that affects the interest of government or influential organizations is scrutinized by interested parties. Reports are frequently based on political considerations and not on objectivity. It is not the organization but rather the news service which is victimized or deliberately discredited whenever truth and party interest clash. Every statement emanating from so-called official sources receives the utmost attention on the part of the press. It is not true that any government or organization is compelled to establish a news service in order to reach the press effectively. Press departments invariably suffice, and it is in the public interest that the output of official press departments should not be the only material which should direct public opinion.

If the Washington Administration would in addition to the overwhelming amount of propaganda which emanates from every department, go a step further and establish a news service, there would be a general outcry from the public and the press against this attempt to exercise control of the news. I cannot emphasize enough that a controlled news service is against the best interests of the Jewish people.

The very elaborate machine for propaganda maintained by the Executive, the Keren Hayesod, Jewish National Fund, the many journeys taken on behalf of these organizations, has created a situation in which the Jewish public is propagandized in a one-sided manner. All activities that center about the official Zionist agencies are emphasized, while the work performed by PICA, the various economic corporations, and other organizations receive scant attention.

The establishment of Palcor is due to this desire of further strengthening this hold on public opinion and to shape it in accordance with the interest of the Histadruth which exercises a dominating influence in the Executive. This desire for a controlled news service was intensified in connection with the Stavsky case. The Labor Party instead of permitting justice to follow its judicial course, injected itself into the case. Before Stavsky and Rosenblatt were convicted, it was frantically endeavoring to convince public opinion of their guilt. The fact that the J.T.A. gave wide publicity to the statement of a man like Chief Rabbi Cook and his appeal for a defense fund for Stavsky and Rosenblatt was deeply resented. When newspapers in every part of the world severely criticized the manifesto issued by the Labor Party after the acquittal of the men, there was not a single echo of this protest to be found in the Palcor service. It is this kind of definitely biased service that is aimed at.

Once more I would like to draw attention to the undesirability of a news service controlled by official bodies. When situations arise where public opinion has to be aroused against a policy or action of the Palestine Administration or British Government, an official news service would find itself very handicapped. It is true that in the past the Palestine Administration has even assumed that the J.T.A. was under the control of the Executive. With regard to the J.T.A., the Executive had at least the right to emphatically deny that it controlled the J.T.A. It will not enjoy this right if the news service from Palestine is placed under the control of a committee composed of members of the Jewish Agency and the Jewish National Council. It seems to me most valid, strategic considerations speak against such a course. Nor does it seem to me desirable that instead of an all inclusive general Jewish news service that there should be a special news service from Palestine.

I myself have at all times performed the work with the feeling of serving a trust of the Jewish people. Your committee was primarily guided by a consideration of how best the impartiality of a news service from Palestine could be safeguarded. While I still maintain that an uncontrolled news service is preferable to any kind of control, it seems to me that if a committee is to be appointed, it should not comprise members of various parties, but men who are above partisanship and who enjoy the confidence of the general public.

My concrete suggestions are therefore:

1. That Palcor should be transformed into the Press Department of the Executive. All its reports should be made available to all correspondents and news agencies free of charge, and the commercialization of the information service rendered by the Executive be avoided. As a matter of fact, news, statements and

reports issued by the Executive have always received the widest possible attention from newspapers.

2. If despite the above arguments which merit most serious consideration, the committee nevertheless feels that a news service should be publicly controlled, I would suggest that with regard to the work of the J.T.A. in Palestine, a committee be selected consisting of persons like Pinchas Rutenberg, Miss Henrietta Szold, and one or two others who have kept themselves free from identification with any particular party. I am prepared to transfer the voting power of the shares I hold in the Palestine branch of our Agency to such a committee, giving it the power of exercising supervision over the editorial work of our Agency.

3. I would be equally prepared to vest the voting power for similar purposes in a committee composed of persons who are above partisanship in New York as well as in London.

4. I would suggest that this arrangement be made for a period of five years in order to test its usefulness and efficacy.

May I in conclusion say that at this crucial time, when the Jewish situation has assumed grave aspects of unprecedented scope that a truly powerful news service enjoying the confidence of the press of the world, represents a fundamental need for our people. And that it is imperative in the best interests of our people that the present commercial competitive fight between two agencies be ended.

The proposals contained in this letter I trust will impress your committee as being impersonal in nature and entirely motivated by the desire to find a solution which would be constructive and serve the welfare of our people.

Sincerely yours,

JACOB LANDAU,
Managing Director

JL/F

July 25, 1935

Robert Silverman, Executive Director,
American Palestine Campaign,
111 Fifth Ave.,
New York, N.Y.

My dear Mr. Silverman: Re: your letter of July 19

In Rabbi Silver's absence I am taking the liberty of sending to you for your signature the treasurer's receipt covering Rabbi Silver's part payment to the 1935 Cleveland Jewish Welfare Fund Campaign of which the American Palestine Campaign is a subsidiary. Please return the receipt as soon as possible so that I may send it to Rabbi Silver who is now abroad and who is planning to attend the World Zionist Congress as a delegate of the Zionist Organization of America.

With best wishes, I remain

Very sincerely yours,

BJK

Secretary to Rabbi Silver.

AMERICAN PALESTINE CAMPAIGN

OF THE

JEWISH AGENCY FOR PALESTINE

INCLUDING

PALESTINE FOUNDATION FUND (KEREN HAYESOD)

100 EAST 42ND STREET, NEW YORK CITY

TELEPHONE ASHLAND 4-0920

HONORARY CHAIRMEN

CYRUS ADLER
HERBERT H. LEHMAN
JULIAN W. MACK
FELIX M. WARBURG
STEPHEN S. WISE

NATIONAL CHAIRMEN

ALFRED M. COHEN
WILLIAM M. LEWIS
LOUIS LIPSKY
MORRIS ROTHENBERG
ELIHU D. STONE
NATHAN STRAUS

TREASURERS

JACOB H. COHEN
HARRY L. GLUCKSMAN
ABRAHAM LIEBOVITZ

SECRETARY

CHARLES RESS

CHAIRMAN, BOARD OF DIRECTORS

LOUIS LIPSKY

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

ROBERT SILVERMAN

July 29, 1935.

Miss Bessie Kline
Secretary to Rabbi Silver
The Temple
Cleveland, Ohio.

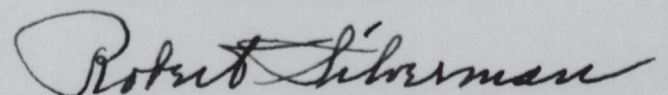
Dear Miss Kline:

I am returning herewith the partial receipt of the Cleveland Jewish Welfare Fund to Rabbi Silver, with a signed certificate, which Rabbi Silver may use to secure his credentials as delegate to the Zionist Congress.

With many thanks for your reply, I

am

Very sincerely yours,



Robert Silverman
Campaign Director

SB

WRHS
MR. MAX MYERS, Treasurer

The Jewish Welfare Federation

1900 Euclid Avenue — Room 605

CLEVELAND, OHIO