



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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Lazaron, Morris, 1939-1940.

COPY

CLEVELAND, OHIO

Rabbi Silver

20-ejm-P

November 16, 1939.

Dr. Morris S. Lazaron,
1914 Madison Avenue,
Baltimore, Maryland.

My dear Doctor:

I hasten to extend my congratulations for your remarks appearing in the November 3d issue of The Synagogue Bulletin with respect to recent utterances of certain Zionist leaders. It was high time that someone of your standing and position had the courage to voice the sentiments of so many of us who are, of course, helpless against a well organized and eloquent minority.

Mrs. Joseph joins me in sending our greetings and best wishes.

Sincerely yours,

Frank E. Joseph.



30: VI:39

Dear Alba,

I do not like to have to write this
letter but I feel I must and want to let you
know how I regard Weizmann's projected visit.
I am deeply concerned about it.

Weizmann's visit cannot but be
invested with political significance and implications
the effects of which can only be harmful at this
time. I knew abroad I speak.

Surely you could not willingly permit yourself
to be used by the Agass group for their own purposes?
Nor the cause of Palestine which is near your heart.

This is no time for pursuit of a political
nation by American Jews vis-a-vis British
policy in a Jewish State.

I know you will accept this judgment
in the spirit in which it is offered — to lay
before you my own convictions on a matter
which I'm afraid are at variance with your own.

Harry

Morris S. Lazaron
1914 Madison Avenue
Baltimore, Maryland

December 8, 1939.

Dear Abba:

I am enclosing copy of my address over
"The Message of Israel Hour" last
Saturday evening.



Faithfully,



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

"TALKS ON THE TIMES: I. Address to Jews"

Address by Rabbi Morris S. Lazaron
"Message of Israel Hour"
December 2, 1939

First of all let me express appreciation to the National Broadcasting Company for this opportunity to set before the larger community the religious challenge to American life. I have looked forward eagerly to this series of broadcasts. The reception accorded me in previous years has been more than generous. It has been heartening and strengthening.

I shall be with you for five consecutive weeks. My general theme will be: "Talks on the Times". Next week will be an address to Christians. The following week an address to my fellow Americans. On December 23rd I shall give: "A Christmas Conversation" and the final talk on December 30th will be: "What of the Future?". Tonight I speak to my fellow Jews, though what I have to say may have interest for our Gentile fellow-citizens.

I say I speak to you. I do not pretend to speak for you. I leave that to others without any assumption of that angelic character which refrains from rushing in where others fain would tread. I speak for no organization or group but for myself alone. No one can speak for all Jews, though some may try to do so. We Jews differ just as our fellow-citizens of other groups on the basis of economics, politics, predilections and everything else under the sun. Strange as it seems even at this tragic moment in history when we are set upon by many enemies, there is little unity among us except in the desire we share with all humanitarians to do what we can to relieve the suffering abroad.

In this connection I salute the men who are meeting tomorrow in Chicago, marking the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the Joint Distribution Committee. This organization for relief, with a career of distinguished service, is one truly democratic organization in American Jewish life. It is linked to no program or philosophy; it eschews politics; it is bound to no class or group. Its one purpose is to feed the hungry, clothe the naked and take the friendless to some habitation. For that reason it claims the devotion and support of all

kinds and classes of Jews. It represents the Jewish spirit at its best as it goes forth to heal, to succor, to build and to bless. You will, I know, give it your continued and generous support.

Stunned by the cruel onslaught of fate, we Jews have tried to gather our scattered forces for relief. Bewildered and driven, we naturally seek warmth and comfort from each other; our sense of community identity and group consciousness is sharpened. And some Jews show a tendency to feel themselves a people apart. It is easy to understand this reaction from despair.

Yet I would point out with all the earnestness I can -- it would be fatal to Jewish life here and everywhere if under the pressure of the present need we build walls that isolate us from our fellow citizens. If it is true that never before have the forces of hate been so powerful against us, it is equally true that never before have there been so many voices raised in protest against our traducers, in the comradeship of brotherhood with us. What was once believed to be a question of only Jewish concern is now seen to be an attack on the foundations of civilization as we understand it, a sinister attempt to destroy all values. What is at stake is our cherished dream of freedom fashioned out of the heartache and the anguish of generations as they stumbled toward truth and beauty and holiness.

We Jews must look upon the present situation as an incident in the long anabasis of Israel. Israel's sorrow is but a segment of the world's sorrow. Our destiny is bound up with the destiny of the world and the solution of our difficulties is linked with the establishment of justice and peace for all peoples. Nineteen hundred years ago the death of one Jew gave to the world a vision of redemption that has heartened and redeemed millions. Who knows but that in the providence of God it is the destiny of the Jewish people today, by our patience under trial, by our unconquerable faith in the God of righteousness and brotherhood, to give to the faltering peoples another vision of redemption.

It is therefore all the more important that our Judaism preserve the universals in its own nature. Jews must guard for their future and the future of their children against isolating themselves from their fellow-citizens physically or emotionally. The idea of a Jewish reservation in Middle Europe is the fantasy of a fanatic and diseased mind. When peace comes the status of the Jew must and will be decided in the European lands where he lives. It is impossible from any point of view to solve our problems by immigration. The Jew is a human being entitled to live anywhere as any other human being and to become a citizen everywhere so long as he observes the laws of the land. In the statement of this right and the struggle for it we are linked with the millions of lovers of freedom and workers for a juster world order in all the lands of earth.

It is our task and frequently, because of prejudice against us, it is a hard task - to enter more completely into the general community life; to take more than our share, perhaps, of the community burdens and obligations. Today many Jews do just this. We may not let go and be pressed back upon ourselves by those who hate us. If we are employers of labor we must be in the forefront of socially minded men who by a just and generous policy help to remove and resolve industrial difficulties. What matter if there be those who, if we are generous, will say: Radical Jews! God forbid it be said: Jews are oppressors. Let us keep our houses clean. We know that there are millions of our fellow-citizens who are alive to the knowledge that anti-Semitism is used as a front behind which designing men hide their attack upon our national unity. We must guard against the dangers of voluntarily ghettoizing Jewish life here. And numerous are our Christian friends who are ready to heal, to understand and to help!

As these lines are written there is some talk of a visit to this country by Dr. Chaim Weizmann, the distinguished President of the World Zionist Organization and the Jewish Agency for Palestine. I venture to suggest that this is most unfortunate. All Jews are bitterly disappointed at the possibility that even in Palestine the door may be shut to the wandering and homeless. We have given generously to make it

possible for thousands to go there. We are prepared to help send there as many refugees as conditions permit. However, Dr. Weizmann's projected visit is bound to have political implications with which I believe the majority of American Jews do not wish to have any concern. I would not, God knows, tear from anyone's heart any cherished hope nor leave it empty and desolate as it faces the cruel dilemmas of today. It is one thing to help refugees to go to Palestine; it is quite another thing to involve American Jews in the pressures of international politics as Jews at this particular time - or, for that matter, at any other time. We Jews in America have no political interests except those we share with the rest of our fellow-citizens to safeguard the integrity and freedom of the nation and to maintain the American way. With every consideration for the sincerity of the men behind this move, we must, in justice to our own position, voice the earnest hope that this visit will be dropped - or that any conferences arranged for the distinguished visitor, should he come, shall be sponsored only by those who are political Zionists or proponents of a world Jewish Congress.

We must not give way to the counsels of unwisdom or despair. Let us not forget at least this much has come out of the misery: the plight of the Jew lies now on the conscience of the world. And under the leadership of the government of the United States, thirty-two nations now stand committed to a policy of programmed resettlement. We have specific duties enjoined upon us by every instinct of our tradition.

The world has gone mad on nationalism. Famished peoples seek its emotional fanaticism as a way out through hate and war. It is of the essence of chauvinistic nationalism to hate the Jew because fundamentally the Jewish genius, like the Christian genius, is universalistic and humanitarian. In the face of the brutalizing nationalisms of our time we must cry out the universalistic message of Israel. Not to the hate cult, war cult of Communism - shown now to be cynical imperialisms - nor indeed to the prate cult, wait cult, hate cult of Fascism, no less ~~symmetrical~~ ^{cynical} - as witness Abyssinnia and Spain -- not to these belong the future. The future is with

the invincible dream of man - one humanity on earth as there is one God in heaven.

I summon you - not back, but forward to the faith of your fathers... to that religious philosophy of life which satisfies the mind because it is reasonable, which fills the needs of the heart because it sees goodness and God throughout the universe, which challenges the will because it conceives of man in his dignity and worth as a co-worker with God in the building of His Kingdom on earth! If ever in our long history we had a mission, my fellow Jews of America, it is now. We are the living protestants against the state cults of our times. So long as the Jew lives we will be a thorn in the flesh of tyrants, whether they be in the field of politics, economics or religion. "In every age tyrants rose up against us but God in His mercy redeemed us." So runs the plaintive, ancient chant. America needs the message of prophetic Judaism. We lift the banner of the invincible free spirit of man under God. This shall be our greatest service to America, our country, this noble land which under God shall more and more realize perfect freedom for all men, white and ~~xxx~~ black, rich and poor.

We want no distinctions save those that mark us as members of a great religious community to whose fellowship we would welcome all. I reject the aloofness of the sectarian; I want for Jews the aloofness of the saint! The one sets himself apart; the other is set apart by the essential character of his being. That is the real as it is the root meaning of holiness. The only criteria by which we would be known are those which characterize men who say they believe in God and live as if that belief were true, in the service of their lives to their fellowmen and to the country they delight to call their home.

Such a platform, made vital by its courageous application to contemporary problems, will give to our youth and ourselves a new hope and a new strength. And from the ancient altars there shall be drawn the sacred fire that shall light the way forward. We must build bridges over which we can go out to meet fair-minded people everywhere. Judaism is not a blood cult. It is a universal religion which knows no land or people or race. It is as wide as the reaches of the human heart and spirit as they sense the beauty of fellowship with man and ~~g~~ God.

December 12, 1939

Personal

Rabbi Horris S. Lazaron
1914 Madison Avenue
Baltimore
Maryland

Sir:

I have just read excerpts from a radio message delivered by you on December 2nd on "Message of Israel Hour", and from a two years' sick bed, which has left my mind absolutely unimpaired even though you might believe the contrary, I am impelled to say to you that, in my judgment, portions of that address, coming from one who was at one time a Zionist and who even now claims, if I am correctly informed, to be no anti-Zionist, are simply damnable, and therefore, of course, utterly unworthy of utterance by a rabbi, either to a Jewish, or in this case, to a non-sectarian audience.

I am sending a copy of this to Dr. Solomon Goldman, Dr. Jonah B. Wise, Dr. Abba Hillel Silver, and to your fellow Baltimoreans, Drs. Harry and Jonas Friedenwald. I may also send it to two or three other interested friends.

I refrain from following your example of broadcasting either by radio or even by letter to any of our non-Jewish fellow citizens, statements like this in reference to one who occupies your position; otherwise, a copy would go to Dr. Clinchy or to some other non-Jewish leader in the National Conference of Jews and Christians, inasmuch as your position in that organization might seem to make you a really representative American Jew and thus give added weight to the expression of your views.

Yours truly,

Abraham S. Sack

BALTIMORE HEBREW CONGREGATION
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

RABBIS:

MORRIS S. LAZARON
MORRIS LIEBERMAN

OFFICE:

1914 MADISON AVENUE
MADISON 6474

December 11, 1939.

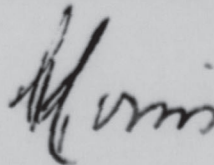
Dear Abba:

We are arranging plans to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of my ministry in the Baltimore Hebrew Congregation. The principal event will be a religious service Friday night, January 26th, at which there are to be only three speakers: Judge Eli Frank representing our local community, Clinchy representing the national scene. I want you to speak as my colleague, and I want no one else but you.

I know that this immediate situation may have upset you and, yet, we must each of us be loyal to his own convictions and certainly on that intimate and personal occasion I would want no one other than you. I would not want you to deal so much personally with the issues but merely to use whatever I may have done in my twenty-five years as rabbi here as a jumping-off place for whatever message you might feel should mark the occasion. We would want a twenty-five to thirty minute talk.

Please let me hear at your earliest convenience. With love from house to house,

Faithfully,



Rabbi Abba H. Silver,
The Temple,
105th Street and Ansel Road,
Cleveland, Ohio.

December 12, 1939

Personal

Rabbi Horris S. Lazaron
1914 Madison Avenue
Baltimore
Maryland

Sir:

I have just read excerpts from a radio message delivered by you on December 2nd on "Message of Israel Hour", and from a two years' sick bed, which has left my mind absolutely unimpaired even though you might believe the contrary, I am impelled to say to you that, in my judgment, portions of that address, coming from one who was at one time a Zionist and who even now claims, if I am correctly informed, to be no anti-Zionist, are simply damnable, and therefore, of course, utterly unworthy of utterance by a rabbi, either to a Jewish, or in this case, to a non-sectarian audience.

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Yours truly,

Abba Hillel Silver

Morris S. Lazaron
1914 Madison Avenue
Baltimore, Maryland

December 22, 1939.

Dear Abba:

I am very disappointed but I understand
your position.

WRHS


Sincerely,



Rabbi Abba H. Silver,
The Temple,
Ansel Road at 105th Street,
Cleveland, Ohio.

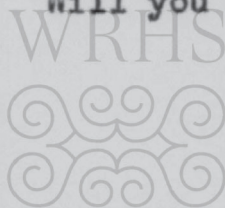
1759 UNION COMMERCE BUILDING
CLEVELAND

March 27, 1940.

My dear Doctor:

You are no doubt familiar with the enclosed pamphlet. Many of us are wondering whether you are in sympathy with the views therein expressed, and if so what we can do to further those views.

Will you kindly advise me?



Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "F. E. Joseph". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Frank E. Joseph.

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

April 24, 1940

Mr. Frank E. Joseph
1759 Union Commerce Building
Cleveland, Ohio

My dear Frank:

Please pardon the delay in answering your kind note of March 27. I have been out of the city a good deal of the time and my correspondence has lagged.

Thank you for sending me a copy of my brother-in-law's pamphlet. I read it with a good deal of interest. I am not in sympathy with many of the views expressed in it, but it would take too long to say it all in a letter. Some day when you have time, please come out to see me at my home or in my study, and I will be delighted to give you my reactions to the point of view represented in the pamphlet.

With all good wishes to you and Martha, I remain

Most cordially yours,

AHS:BK