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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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Levinson, Salmon O., 1934-1935.

October 18, 1934.

Mr. Salmon O. Levinson,
1 North LaSalle Street,
Chicago, Ill.

My dear Mr. Levinson:

Is there anything being done by your organization in connection with the coming of the DAWA Convention? I assume that the people of the Stevens Hotel have been seen. What was their reaction? Are the Jewish societies of Chicago continuing to patronize the Stevens Hotel? Are you planning any counter-demonstration during the DAWA Convention?

I see where the Friends of New Germany broke up the hearings of the Congressional Committee in New York. They are becoming thoroughly insolent and arrogant -- truly Germanic. They should be met with a far more aggressive opposition than heretofore. I should be very happy to hear from you.

With all good wishes, I remain

Very cordially yours,

AHS:EK

LEVINSON BECKER GILBERT PEEBLES & SWIREN
ATTORNEYS AND COUNSELORS

CABLE ADDRESS "LEBEC"
TELEPHONE CENTRAL 8130

ONE NORTH LASALLE STREET

CHICAGO

October 22, 1934

Dear Dr. Silver:

On my return from the east I find your letter of the 18th instant.

I can not get so worked up about the activity of the so-called "Friends of Germany" in this country as you and Untermyer seem to do. I have had recent correspondence with the latter on the subject.

Before going into the matter more fully, let me state that I can understand a fighting lawyer like Untermyer, who has not been accustomed to look at things judicially but from the point of view of the client or interest he represents. I at least ought to be able to sympathize with that point of view. Untermyer has done a great job. He has fought as perhaps nobody else might have fought. And he is entitled to tremendous credit in the campaign we are waging. I have so written him several times.

To me you are different. You have one of the finest minds, equipped with moral accessories, that I know in this country. I rather expect you, therefore, to have more mental poise and nearer to a spiritual outlook. This does not in any way affect the justice and efficacy of the individual boycott with which you know I have been so identified. But I do not think that you or I should carry our "aggressive opposition" so far as to dictate to receivers of hotels who their guests should be. I think we are fighting for liberty to the Jews, liberty to think and speak, liberty to enjoy and practice our own religion, liberty to assemble, liberty to enjoy the fruits of our own labor. We must not deny these things, therefore, to others. It seems to me to be a denial to attempt to prevent German Americans from meeting and expressing themselves within the law. If they violate the law we should appeal to the authorities. If we Jews push our rights to the plethoric point of dictating to others or restricting others, or denying rights to others simply because it is part of our campaign of warfare, we may justly come under the condemnation of Christians generally.

My second reason is that I can not see how the Friends of New Germany are making any progress here. They do not frighten me any more than the German activities and propaganda did during the war. Hanfstaengel is a good example of brilliant stupidity. It could not have been made to order better for a German graduate of Harvard to get a slap in the

Dr. Abba Hillel Silver

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October 22, 1934

face from the President of Harvard, which institution is not supposed to be any too tender of the Jewish race. More than that, every day, in all the newspapers, particularly the metropolitan ones, cablegrams appear emanating from Hitler Germany setting forth facts relating to the Lutherans, the Catholics, the Jews, union labor, etc., which are so appalling and so at war with every principle of freedom and justice entertained in this country that we see our public opinion crystallized against Germany fully as strongly as during the war. Nor could we purchase for millions of dollars the advertisement or propaganda that appears without a cent of cost in these daily papers. Such things are followed up in most of the press of the country by editorials, until Hitler has become a byword of cruelty, tyranny, and a poison to democracy and liberty.

You see, my dear Rabbi, I hold you in such high esteem and in such unusual admiration that I dislike to see you overflow the banks of reason and spirituality. I speak of course not in criticism but only in the candor which friendship permits. This is a dangerous move because my faults are many and my armor is vulnerable. But I indulge in the hope that you may be able to join with me in limiting the irritating and to my mind unfruitful details of our present fight. On all broad lines and on all important aspects, as you know, I am with you heart and soul.

And of course you are bearing in mind the distinction which is required now and again, between ^{what} an individual or group of individuals may do and what the government may do. For example, Sam wrote a powerful letter to Secretary Hull. I would not have written that letter, although it may do a lot of good solely from the point of view of the Jews. The reason I would not have written it is because Hull represents our government and when a government undertakes to interfere with another government in anything resembling a boycott or discriminative prohibitions it creates international friction. It is an emblem of illwill and it borders upon the breach of international convention. This is too often the gateway to war. And if war should arise out of an episode fomented or stimulated by Jews, we would be blamed for the war itself. The distinction between an individual and a national or sovereign boycott is vast and vital. Its runningmate is what antisemitism became in Germany a national issue, a national policy--a policy of the Hitler government. Thus it is distinguishable from antisemitism here in America or elsewhere.

I need not ask you to take this letter in the brotherly spirit in which it is written. I know you will.

Sincerely yours,

Salmon O. Levinson
Salmon O. Levinson

Dr. Abba Hillel Silver
Cleveland, Ohio

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Send the following message, subject to the terms on back hereof, which are hereby agreed to

November 22, 1934

PAUL HUTCHINSON, HOTEL RUSSELL, LONDON, ENGLAND

SUGGEST CONFERENCE APPOINT SUBCOMMITTEE TO PREPARE AND PRESENT TO ALL GOVERNMENTS AND TO LEAGUE SECRETARIAT AS BASIS FOR INTERNATIONAL LAW SOME CONCRETE AND COMPREHENSIVE PROPOSAL FOR RECOGNITION AND MAINTENANCE OF RIGHT OF NONCRIMINAL CITIZENS TO REMAIN IN THEIR HOMELAND AND ENJOY RELIGIOUS LIBERTY AND PRIVILEGES OF CITIZENRY SUCH RIGHTS MADE AMENABLE TO JURISDICTION OF WORLD COURT STOP WE CONSIDER THIS THE FUNDAMENTAL ISSUE OF BOTH CHRISTIANS AND JEWS IN TWENTIETH CENTURY CIVILIZATION

LEVINSON,

CHAIRMAN

THE QUICKEST, SUREST AND SAFEST WAY TO SEND MONEY IS BY TELEGRAPH OR CABLE

Resolution # 2

Whereas, it has become a recognized responsibility of the League of Nations to protect the rights of minorities, and

Whereas, under the policies of the Nazi government the precedent is being established that a government may, without bringing charges of crime or misdemeanor, deprive a minority of its citizens of political and civil rights enjoyed by the majority,

Now, Therefore, be it resolved, that this World Non-sectarian Anti-Nazi Council to Champion Human Rights, in session in London, England, bring this question to the attention of the League of Nations in the hope that future meetings of its Commission of Jurists for the codification of international law may consider this problem with a view to the adoption by the League of Nations of measures which shall provide, in a form which it shall determine, recourse to the Permanent Court of International Justice for the protection of the rights of minorities, wherever and whenever these may be threatened.

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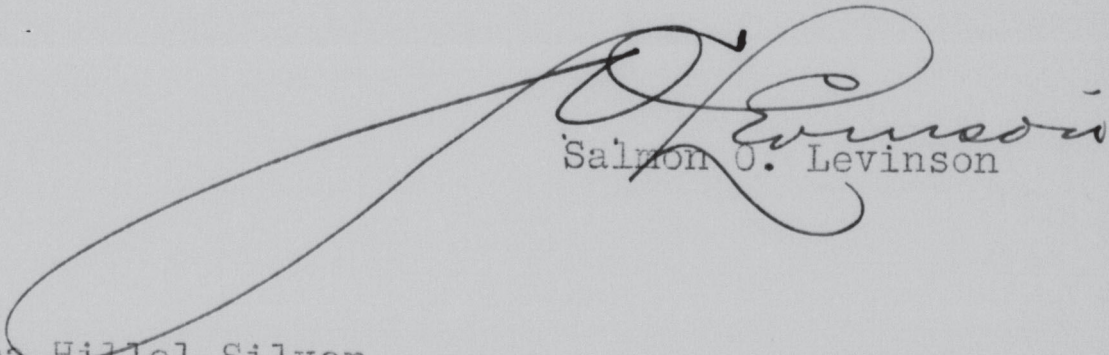
December 17, 1934

Dear Dr. Silver:

On November 22 I sent a cable to Dr. Hutchinson who was sent by our Committee to attend a recent London conference. I enclose copy and also copy of resolution just received, which was based on my cablegram.

Please give these papers sufficient study to see whether you do not agree with me that they contain the most vital issue arising out of the Hitler nightmare. Unless we know in this world what rights people have in their own homes and in their own homeland, we have a sorry world indeed. As I believe that good always should come out of evil, directly or indirectly, I hope some such provision may be inserted into the law of nations as here proposed. Thus, instead of spreading the disease of imitation under economic and religious temptation, we may be able to shut it off altogether in so far as nations are amenable to laws of their own creation.

Sincerely yours,



Salmon O. Levinson

Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver
East 105th St. at Ansel Road
Cleveland, Ohio

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enc.2

December 31, 1934.

Mr. Salmon O. Levinson,
1 North LaSalle Street,
Chicago, Ill.

My dear Mr. Levinson:

Let me thank you for your kind letter of December 17, and for copies of the cable and resolution which you sent me. I believe that your idea is very sound. Unfortunately the League in the last few months took a very decided backward step as regards the protection of the rights of minorities, first in the case of Poland which practically scrapped all her obligations under the minority treaties, without League censure, and secondly, in the Saar, where the League actually approved the arrangement entered into between France and Germany, whereby the Jewish group in the Saar will have one year in which to clear out or be subjected to all the discriminatory anti-Jewish legislation of the Third Reich.

I trust that you and your dear wife are well.
With all good wishes, I remain

Very sincerely yours,

AHS:BK