



## The Abba Hillel Silver Digital Collection

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

Series 1: General Correspondence, 1914-1969, undated.

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

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Sobeloff, Simon E., 1955.

January 26, 1955

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Ext. 2

Solicitor General and Mrs. Simon Sobeloff  
4545 Connecticut Avenue  
Washington, D. C.

My dear Friends:

It would have given Mrs. Silver and me great pleasure indeed if we were free to attend the dinner which you are giving in honor of Governor and Mrs. McKeldin on the twenty-ninth of this month.

Unfortunately, I must be in Cleveland Sunday morning and occupy my pulpit. I have been away from the city for about two weeks in Florida, and it would not do for me to be absent again over the weekend of the twenty-ninth.

Please convey to Governor and Mrs. McKeldin my warmest greetings and all good wishes.

Most cordially yours,



FEBRUARY 18, 1955

TELEGRAM

~~WMNEK~~

SOLICITOR GENERAL SIMON SOBELOFF  
4545 CONNECTICUT AVENUE  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

THE TEMPLE MEN'S CLUB IS EAGER TO HEAR FROM YOU WHETHER YOU  
ARE FREE TO COME TO A COMMUNITY MEETING UNDER ITS AUSPICES  
SOME TIME IN APRIL. I TRUST THAT YOU MAY BE ABLE TO COME.  
IF NOT, I WOULD APPRECIATE THE SUGGESTION OF SOME OTHER  
PROMINENT MAN FOR THEIR PROGRAM.

WARMEST REGARDS,

ABBA HILLEL SILVER

*In honor of  
Governor and Mrs. McKeldin  
The Solicitor General and Mrs. Sobeloff  
request the pleasure of the company of  
Dr. Abba Hill Silver and Mrs. Silver  
at dinner  
on Saturday, the twenty-ninth of January  
at half after seven o'clock  
Pan American Room, Statler Hotel*

*R. L. V. P.*

*4545 Connecticut Avenue*



Office of the Solicitor General  
Washington, D. C.

March 2, 1955

Dear Dr. Silver:

It is with genuine regret that I must tell you that the Attorney General finds it impossible to accept the invitation to speak to your Brotherhood group in April. If it were possible to atone for my failure as an impresario by offering to serve as a virtuoso, I would do so; but I am jammed up in April with an active Court docket and other things which do not permit me to take on anything else. While I advise you to make independent efforts to find a speaker I will, nevertheless, continue my endeavor.

Sincerely yours,

Simon E. Sobeloff

Dr. Abba Hillel Silver  
19810 Shaker Street  
Cleveland, Ohio



Office of the Solicitor General  
Washington, D. C.

April 15, 1955

Dr. Abba H. Silver,  
19810 Shaker Street,  
Cleveland, Ohio

Dear Dr. Silver:-

I am enclosing two photographs of Judge Sobeloff for use in connection with your May 22nd meeting. If they are used with a credit line, please give credit to Mr. E. Allen Becker, the photographer.

When they have served your purposes, I shall very much appreciate your returning them as our supply of glossies is getting low.

Thanking you, I am

Sincerely yours,

Frances Lamb,  
Secretary to the Solicitor General.

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

15 April 1955

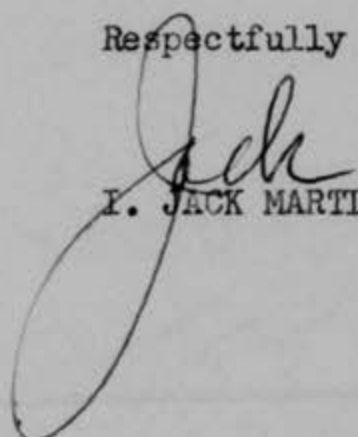
Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver  
The Temple  
1855 Ansel Road  
Cleveland, Ohio

Dear Rabbi Silver:

Enclosed is some biographical material on Judge Sobeloff which may prove helpful to you in the planning of your anniversary program.

May I extend to you my very best wishes on this occasion.

Respectfully yours,



E. JACK MARTIN

SIMON E. SOBELOFF

SOLICITOR GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES

Born: March 3, 1893  
Baltimore, Maryland

Education: 1909-1910 Baltimore City College  
Baltimore, Maryland

1911-1912 Loyola College, Baltimore, Maryland

1912-1915 University of Maryland Law School, LL. B.

Bar: 1914 Maryland

Experience: 3-1910-6-1910 United States House of Representatives,  
1910-1911 Washington, D. C.  
4-1911-4-1911 Page, Washington, D. C.

1912-1914 States Attorney, Baltimore, Clerk

1914-1917 Chief Judge, Morris A. Soper, Supreme  
Bench, Baltimore, Secretary

City of Baltimore, Maryland

1920-1924 Assistant City Solicitor

1927-1928 Temp. Deputy City Solicitor

1928-1931 Deputy City Solicitor

1943-1947 City Solicitor

1931-1934 United States Department of Justice,  
Baltimore, United States Attorney

1914-1954 Private Practice of Law, Baltimore

✓ 1952-1954 Maryland Court of Appeals, Chief Judge

Married - two children

Home address: 1809 Eutaw Place, Baltimore, Maryland





Office of the Solicitor General  
Washington, D. C.

April 19, 1955

Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver,  
The Temple,  
E. 105th Street at Ansel Road,  
Cleveland 6, Ohio

Dear Dr. Silver:-

Judge Sobeloff asked me to write you that he would appreciate it if reservations could be made for him and Mrs. Sobeloff on Capital's Flight 429 leaving Washington at 7:05 p.m. on Saturday, May 21st, arriving in Cleveland at 8:57 p.m.; and on Capital's Flight 414 leaving Cleveland at 4:55 p.m. on May 22nd, arriving in Washington at 6:33 p.m.

Thank you for the reservations at the Wade Park Manor hotel. I am wondering if any plans have been made for someone to meet the Judge and Mrs. Sobeloff at the airport, or whether they should take a cab directly to the hotel.

Will you be kind enough to send the airlines tickets directly to me?

Thanking you, I am

Sincerely yours,

Frances Lamb,  
Secretary to the  
Solicitor General.

Cancel Mrs. Sobeloff's

ticket # 132-F

741784

ticket agent  
No. 69

Cancelled  
5/17/55

by phone



April 22, 1955

Mr. I. Jack Martin  
The White House  
Washington, D. C.

My dear Jack:

Thank you so much for your kind note of the 18th and for the biographical material on Judge Sobeloff that you sent me. I am grateful to you for the help that you have been. I know that we will have a fine meeting here and that the Sobeloffs will enjoy their visit with us.

It is some time since I have seen you. I am very eager to talk to you about quite a number of things, and I do hope that I shall have the opportunity of coming to Washington in the not too far distant future.

With all good wishes, I remain

Very cordially yours,

ABBA HILLEL SILVER

AHS:rms

May 1, 1955

Miss Frances Lamb  
Secretary to the Solicitor General  
Office of the Solicitor General  
Department of Justice  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Miss Lamb:

Enclosed are plane tickets for Judge and  
Mrs. Sobeloff for the agreed-upon flights.  
Hotel accommodations will be awaiting them on  
their arrival at the Wade Park Manor. They  
may expect to be met at the airport.

Needless to say, we are looking forward  
with pleasure to having the Sobeloffs with us.

Very truly yours,

(Mrs.) Ruth M. Sparrow  
Secretary to Dr. Silver

enclosures

OFFICE OF  
THE SOLICITOR GENERAL



May 16/5

Dear Rabbi Silver -

Thanks for the  
"Mi-Sheberach" published in  
Your Temple Bulletin.

I'll come to Cleveland -  
but anything I say there must  
be anti-climax.

Sincerely,

Simon E. Lovelock

OFFICE OF  
THE SOLICITOR GENERAL  
Re: May 22nd  
Cleveland



May 17, 1955

MEMORANDUM

Capital Airlines ticket for Mrs. Sobeloff is enclosed herewith for cancellation, as per conversation today with Dr. Silver's secretary.

*Frances Lamb*  
Frances Lamb,  
Secretary to Judge Sobeloff.

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## AMERICAN LOYALTY AND JEWISH IDENTITY

An Address Delivered by

The Honorable Simon E. Sobeloff

Solicitor General of the United States

at the 105th Annual Meeting of The Temple

Cleveland, Ohio

Sunday, May 22, 1955

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Address of Simon E. Sobeloff,  
Solicitor General of the United States,  
on the occasion of the 105th Anniversary  
of The Temple, Cleveland, Ohio -  
Sunday, May 22, 1955.

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Thanks to the persuasiveness of Rabbi Silver, I am privileged to join with you in marking the 105th Anniversary of The Temple. Members of this congregation need not be told how irresistible I found the full warmth and charm of Dr. Silver. I could not decline when he extended an invitation in your behalf, for I have long admired the strength and clarity of his mind, his courage and his shining idealism. The nation appreciates him as a foremost American and I feel honored to occupy the pulpit of this great teacher and statesman.

□ An anniversary like this beckons us to look back and to look forward. This year our search for an historic perspective of American Jewish life is quickened by the numerous celebrations marking the tercentenary of Jewish living on this continent.

□ In Jewish history, which is measured in millenia, a century may seem a short span, but it bridges more than half the stretch of time since the establishment of this nation.

□ It may be interesting to look back to 1850, the year that your institution was founded, and to glance at what was happening then, both among the general population and in our group. In 1850 President Millard Fillmore sat in the White House. Only the students of history can readily recall what he did there, and he seems to belong to a misty past. In our day, his Secretary of State, Daniel Webster, outshines him by far. The population of

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Soboloff

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the United States was perhaps one-seventh of what it is today, and there were only 31 states in the Union. The West Coast, which we now reach in a nonstop flight of a few hours, was largely an unknown wilderness. It was only a half-dozen years since a portrait painter, Samuel Morse, had invented his gadget and tapped out the first telegraph message. Like now, it was not a tranquil period, for the slavery issue was gathering force and approaching a crisis. Its bitterness was not to culminate in the Civil War until a decade later. Abraham Lincoln was a comparatively obscure lawyer in Illinois who had served one term in Congress. His great destiny was yet to be unfolded.

The 48'rs, as the refugees from repression in Germany came to be known, were arriving in America. Jews and non-Jews suffering from the dislocations following the German Revolution were streaming into the United States. Some of these doubtless were among the founders of this Temple. Despite startling differences in setting, the problems that confronted the people then were in some ways not unlike those we face today. These settlers were followed within a generation by great waves of escapees from East European lands, and the earlier arrivals gave fraternal help to the newcomers. They became integrated in the communities, joined this and other temples and synagogues, and helped to found and develop new communal institutions. Successive groups in turn aided newcomers through the years, and in our generation we have vivid memories of the rescue of some of Hitler's victims who sought a haven here.

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While it is true that the presence of our people on these shores traces back three hundred years, they came at first in small numbers. The period of heavy immigration and the flowering of Jewish life in America coincides roughly with the existence of your Temple.

The fame of this congregation under Dr. Silver's ministry stems from the resolute insistence that while it properly espouses its own interpretation of religion, its particular branch of Judaism, it is, nevertheless, mindful not to do so at the expense of the unity of the House of Israel. The harmony and the oneness of the whole people is of more importance than any limiting sectarianism.

To perform its full function, the synagogue must concern itself with every aspect of our fellowship -- religious, of course, but also every other proper interest of the people. This means not only the affairs of a congregation, but of K'lal Yisroel. Jews here are linked with Jews everywhere.

The world is learning a bitter lesson from the war and its tragic aftermath, namely, the falseness and folly of isolationism. Slowly the nations have begun to understand that the happiness of humanity cannot be achieved if mankind remains divided in separate segments, each living for itself and unconcerned for the welfare of others, and that the security, prosperity and progress of each depends in some measure on the fate of the others. Similarly, we Jews have always realized that there can be no isolationism in our affairs. The persecution of Jews in other lands, their struggles to escape, their cries for help, their efforts



at redemption and rehabilitation in the ancient and newly restored land of Israel -- these things cannot be matters of indifference to us. Membership in a temple or synagogue does not absolve us from our duty in these ~~other~~ areas; rather it should serve to stimulate us to recognize and perform that duty.

In Jewish tradition, as doubtless you have often been reminded, the synagogue is more than a house of worship. It is also a social institution -- a house of assembly, a community center, the pivot of communal, cultural life; and it is a house of instruction. This is to be interpreted, not in a narrow sense, not merely to require a parochial school for children, but facilities for the ever wider and nobler instruction and development of the members of the community, both young and old; for in the Jewish concept of education it is a continuing process that does not end until the individual's life itself is over.

To the perpetuation of Jewish life, education is absolutely indispensable. If members of a majority group grow up in ignorance of the meaning and worth of their religion and its doctrines, they, of course, suffer. They are diminished as human beings. Their life is not as rich as it might be, but their tendency is still to remain in their group because there is no pressure on them to withdraw. Members of a minority, however, who

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remain ignorant of their tradition, soon go adrift. They find it difficult to resist the disintegrating forces which beset a minority on all sides.

The effect on the unhappy individual is often disastrous, for it is difficult to take pride in an ancestry of whose history one is ignorant and to remain loyal to an affiliation one does not understand. Experience has shown too many unfortunate examples of Jews who are not educated to the meaning of their Jewishness, and to whom being a member of the Jewish people has no ~~significance~~ <sup>significance</sup> except as a symbol of restriction and discrimination without any compensating moral values. Such people are likely to become confused and unhappy because they are nearly always and everywhere considered and treated as Jews; they suffer such disabilities as may be visited upon Jews, whether social or otherwise; yet their suffering and frustration is for a cause which to them has no worth. Frequently, as we have seen, they develop spiritual and mental illnesses because they are engaged in a lifelong inner conflict, painfully seeking escape from an identity which should be ~~significant and~~ rich and noble, but which, because they have not been taught its worthwhileness, is empty of everything except unhappy connotations. What could be a blessing becomes for them a curse.

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Mention has been made of the tercentenary exercises which have been held here and in other cities. Deserved tribute has been paid by many good Americans of all faiths to the innumerable Jews and Jewesses who have contributed to our country's welfare and glory in war and in peace. Our people have indeed given their genius and talents, their labor and devotion to enhance the common treasure which America cherishes. We have made our contribution in the fields of government and public affairs, literature and science, art and music, industry and commerce, sport and philanthropy, thought and action, in war and in peace -- indeed, in every endeavor and every aspiration of this great nation.

Recognition of this is, of course, gratifying. It is not a breach of taste to note the historic truth, and we can at least sympathize with the pride of that Irishman who said, "We Irish are not a boastful people, but if we were inclined to boast, my, what a lot there would be to boast about!"

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As a group, as well as individually, we have been bountifully blessed by America's opportunities and glories, and we in turn have been a beneficial influence. In our group life we have, I think, furnished a worthy example which has enriched the character of American living. It is in order, in such an assembly as this, to note some of the specifically Jewish manifestations which have added to the vitality and the nobility of our American life. Not the least of these is that under the conditions of our American citizenship we have been applying the fundamental ethical and moral values of our heritage to the requirements of our group life, for we have been taught that an unjust and an ungenerous man is an abomination. This is what has given our philanthropies their unique quality and it accounts in large measure for our strong support of various causes and movements aiming at social justice.

In appraising our role in American history, there is a tendency either to minimize or to exaggerate. I shall try to draw a sketch in broad outline that avoids both extremes. In the first place, it should be noted that Jews came here for much the same reasons that attracted other people to these shores. All sought the freedom and the opportunities of the new world.

Historically, we have never given ear to the timid and crimping counsel, which some misguided souls among us have preached, that we should refrain from any worthy and fruitful activities, public or private, which are open to others. Those who offer such advice think that by obscuring our presence we will avoid envy and hostility. They do not understand the plain lesson of experience that civic rights that are abdicated are like a limb that is immobilized, or a

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muscle that remains unused; it atrophies and eventually loses its function. Rather, the admonition should be to participate freely, to give all honor and encouragement to exemplary representatives in private enterprise and public service, and to insist with all our moral force on high standards of merit. That is the courageous and manful course. Flinching retreat is not what has preserved us through the centuries, nor would any group foolishly embracing such a course excite respect or consideration.

The very vitalism of Jews, both as individuals and as a group, is what our neighbors appreciate, for this is the quality that accounts so largely for their own phenomenal advance. The spirit of America will not countenance anything less than full and uninhibited sharing by all Americans in our economic, civic and educational life.

If you ask what principle underlies the success of our historic enterprise on these shores, I should answer that it is primarily our awareness that we do constitute a community. We have our divisions -- doubtless too numerous and too violent and often fantastically irrelevant -- but when the tumult and the shouting die we soberly recognize that the bases for bringing us together in communal association are immensely greater than the differences which tend to divide us. In such associations most Jews find satisfaction; for only a negligible few, obsessed by self-deprecation, is this awareness an unhappy one.

Unless we are resolved to adhere to the substance of our tradition as it fits into the frame of the American civilization, and to bear it nobly and if possible add to its beauty, there is no point to our celebrating anniversaries. Most American Jews have warm,

49017

affirmative feelings about their group life and its institutions. They cherish their past, which has been honorable and magnificent, and they would foster a future not less praiseworthy.

There are wide and interesting variations in the interpretation of the Jewish affiliation. There is no authoritarian definition; each defines it for himself. Theologically there is no norm or measure other than the conscience of the individual. For some, Judaism is the ancient tradition unchanged, and even they disagree as to what that tradition is. Others accept part and ignore part, and there is almost no set pattern in their selectivity in dietary practice, in degrees of Sabbath observance or non-observance, or in synagogue attendance. There are those who insist on Taryag, the whole Schulchan Aruch. Many are entirely removed from such practices, yet feel deeply their Jewishness, their loyalty to the Jewish people. They may nevertheless have a deep and sincere concern for the fate of fellow Jews here and elsewhere, contribute to Jewish institutions, philanthropic and cultural, and to the upbuilding of Israel. We have in our midst Zionists and some who say they are non-Zionists and yet contribute generously and labor valiantly to rebuild Zion. In the past we have had resounding debates about Congress vs. Conference; about Commonwealth and partition; about national budgeting; about McIver Reports; and about a host of issues, many of which the march of history has made irrelevant. When we think back about some of these violent factional arguments, in which estimable people lost their poise and good manners, is it not perfectly astonishing how often the participants are puzzled to recall just what it was that stirred them so deeply?

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There are even some Jews who are not touched by the main stream of Jewish living, yet manifest an attenuated affiliation by belonging to a Jewish center or synagogue bowling league, and others identify themselves with us merely by insisting that they shall be buried in a Jewish cemetery.

It is not for me to expound theories about who is right and who is wrong in this welter of diversities. Underlying all their differences there is nevertheless an essential unity. The notable point is that by and large they do identify themselves as Jews, take pride in being Jews, and wish earnestly for Jewish survival.

I speak for a broadly inclusive community concept--one that embraces more than philanthropy and defense of our good name, important as these efforts are. ~~I speak for a~~ <sup>Our</sup> view of ~~our~~ community life <sup>should be</sup> ~~that~~ <sup>broad enough to</sup> takes fully into account the things of the spirit, education and culture, and fraternal help to Jews in other lands. It is bewildering, for example, to listen to people who think it good Americanism to worry about Arabs and others <sup>peoples</sup> in every corner of the globe, but bad Americanism to show solicitude for the fate of the Jews.

We should deprecate the tendency of some to exalt a single organizational interest to the exclusion of others. It is natural for individuals to be concerned primarily with particular types of communal service or certain institutions, but if we are to have effective organization and bring advantage to the entire community we must think of these causes not as competitive but as interdependent. What happens to Jews abroad may, as we have unhappily experienced,

49067

directly affect us here; yet our ability to play our proper role does in the final analysis depend largely on the soundness and vigor of our American communities. We are morally bound to these causes, local, national and international.

A few amongst us are beset by doubts as to whether our American loyalty does not conflict with these concerns. It is important to understand what America expects of us and what it does not expect or want of us. American loyalty does not demand of Americans that they shall suppress the natural promptings of their hearts in philanthropy or in cultural or religious affiliations or activity. Nationalism, as America defines it, is not like that of the totalitarian regimes. American nationalism makes its demands of complete political loyalty, which we meet willingly in common with our fellow citizens. American patriotism, however, does not seek to stifle diversities in religion or the associated diversities in ancestral traditions and group living. When your father, or grandfather or perhaps an ancestor of an earlier generation was naturalized he renounced allegiance to all foreign princes, potentates, states, and sovereignties, but he was not told to empty his heart of sentiment and compassion and memories. Nor are we, their sons, expected to do so. These precious values one may retain without impairing his American patriotism. On the contrary, because of them he is a better, not a worse, American. These are sanctities which our free country esteems and protects. This is an essential feature of our freedom.

Security is a word much heard these days. No Jew is really secure if he finds it necessary to look over his shoulder, as it were, to see whether his Jewishness is showing; if he has to say to himself, "Now, you are being too Jewish." He is truly secure only if he feels



entirely free in regard to his Jewishness and takes it in his stride, with no more embarrassment or trepidation than a Methodist feels, or a Quaker. A man is free inwardly as well as outwardly when he feels that he can be himself without fear or apology and without need to deny his identity or camouflage it or distort it to please his neighbors -- when he is not tense but breathes free.

The magnificent offer of America to its component elements is that they are free to be what they are; that a man need not fear being too Norwegian or too French, too Baptist or too Catholic. By the same token it is not America, but an inner malady, a derangement within a man that persistently raises the question, "Are you being too Jewish?" Those who understand and love America truly know that it is not a monolith, but a thing of many components and varied facets which enrich it in distinctive ways culturally and spiritually.

Americans understand by freedom not merely the right to be present and conform. The essence of freedom is to be free to be different without being molested. And this is only the beginning of liberty. Liberty will not be fully attained in our society until men can feel free to be orthodox or heterodox without danger of discrimination in employment opportunity, or restriction in the place where they may live, or even suffering social ostracism.

These, then, are some of our reflections as we mark the 105th Anniversary. Keep the Temple serviceable to the community, so that it may bring comfort and spiritual strength to the families of its members, train the young and guide them to become loyal men and women and good citizens of the Jewish and the general community. May it be a fountainhead of inspiration shedding its radiance widely and

49017

adding lustre to the spiritual crown of our people. See that it develops wholesome and informed and proud Jews and loyal Americans whose personalities are not shriveled and warped through ignorance and self-hate, but whose lives are enlarged and ennobled, uplifted and fulfilled by a tradition that brings them joy and self-respect.

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May 23, 1955

Solicitor General Simon Sobeloff  
Department of Justice  
Washington, D. C.

My dear Friend:

I hope that you arrived safely after your full and busy day here with us. I can't tell you how much your visit meant to our people. They were delighted with the opportunity of making your acquaintance and of receiving your stirring and profound message.

I am additionally grateful for the opportunity which it gave us to talk over some important matters. As soon as I have drafted the letter of which I spoke to you, I will send you a copy of it. I believe that the small, informal, off-the-record meeting that we talked about is most highly desirable and should be held as early as possible.

We are sending you in the next few days something made in Israel as a slight token of appreciation which we would like you and Mrs. Sobeloff to keep in your home as a reminder of our appreciation for a real service which you rendered.

With warmest regards, I remain

Most cordially yours,

ABBA HILLEL SILVER

AHS:mas

enclosures

OFFICE OF  
THE SOLICITOR GENERAL



5-25-55

Could you possibly provide me with the home address of Mr. and Mrs. Ralph <sup>David</sup> Hertz of Cleveland. We cannot seem to find it in the Cleveland directory.

Many thanks.

*Frances Lamb*

Frances Lamb,  
Secretary to Judge Sobeloff

2835 Drummond Rd.  
David Ralph Hertz

*Hertz*

OFFICE OF  
THE SOLICITOR GENERAL



May 27, 1955

Note to Dr. Silver's Secretary:-

Will you be good enough to let  
me have as many as you can spare of the  
first bulletin which repeats the  
Tony Lewis article?

Many thanks.

*Frances Lamb*

Frances Lamb  
Secretary to Judge Sobeloff

Dr. Abba Hillel Silver  
The Temple  
East 105th St. at Ansel Rd.  
Cleveland 6, Ohio



June 1, 1955

Miss Frances Lamb  
Office of the Solicitor General  
Department of Justice  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Miss Lamb:

I am returning herewith the publicity photographs of Judge Sobeloff that you sent us. Under separate cover I am sending you some copies of the Temple Bulletin which contains the Anthony Lewis article. Rabbi Silver would like to express his thanks to Judge Sobeloff for letting him have the copy of the address which he delivered here on May 22nd.

The home address of the Hertzels is 2835 Drummond Rd., Shaker Heights, Ohio. It is listed in the Cleveland directory under David Ralph Hertz.

Very truly yours,

(Mrs.) Ruth M. Sparrow  
Secretary to Rabbi Silver

enclosures

OFFICE OF  
THE SOLICITOR GENERAL



June 8, 1955

Dear Dr. Silver:-

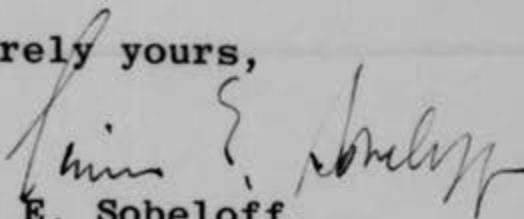
The Menorah and platter arrived and Mrs. Sobeloff will give them an honored place in our home.

We both express our appreciation to the Temple and to you.

I had a talk with Governor Adams. He wants to look into the matter further and will let me hear from him. Of course I will then communicate with you.

With warm regards to you and Mrs. Silver, I am

Sincerely yours,

  
Simon E. Sobeloff.

Dr. Abba Hillel Silver,  
The Temple,  
East 105th Street at Ansel Road,  
Cleveland 6, Ohio.

June 14, 1955

Solicitor General Simon E. Sobeloff  
Department of Justice  
Washington, D. C.

My dear Judge Sobeloff:

Under separate cover, I take pleasure in sending you twenty-five copies of the address which you delivered at the 105th Annual Meeting of The Temple on May 22nd. Since your manuscript lacked a title, I took the liberty of giving it one which I believe satisfactorily suits the principal ideas of your splendid message. Should you want any additional copies, my secretary will be very happy to send them to you.

With warmest regards, and hoping to see you in Washington over the weekend, I remain

Most cordially yours,

ABBA HILLEL SILVER

AHS:rms



June 21, 1955

Solicitor General Simon Sobeloff  
Department of Justice  
Washington, D. C.

My dear Friend:

From all sides I hear that Mr. Brownell's address was magnificent. I am delighted as I am sure you must be.

I am sailing on the first of July for Europe. It would be fine if we could have the talk about which we spoke prior to my departure. I shall be gone until the first of September.

With warmest regards, I remain

Most cordially yours,

ABBA HILLEL SILVER

AHS:rlh



Office of the Attorney General  
Washington, D.C.

June 23, 1955

Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver  
The Temple  
East 105th Street at Ansel Road  
Cleveland 8, Ohio

Dear Rabbi Silver:

It was most thoughtful of you to  
write me your letter of June 21 and I appreciate it.

I was sorry you could not be at the  
meeting Saturday evening but hope to see you soon.

Best regards.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Thomas B. Edwards", is written below the typed name. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized initial "T" and a long, sweeping underline.

## American Loyalty and Jewish Identity

An Address Delivered by

THE HONORABLE SIMON E. SOBELOFF

Solicitor General of the United States

AT THE 105TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE TEMPLE

Cleveland, Ohio

SUNDAY, MAY 22, 1955

THANKS TO THE PERSUASIVENESS OF RABBI SILVER, I am privileged to join with you in marking the 105th Anniversary of The Temple. Members of this congregation need not be told how irresistible I found the full warmth and charm of Dr. Silver. I could not decline when he extended an invitation in your behalf, for I have long admired the strength and clarity of his mind, his courage and his shining idealism. The nation appreciates him as a foremost American and I feel honored to occupy the pulpit of this great teacher and statesman.

An anniversary like this beckons us to look back and to look forward. This year our search for an historic perspective of American Jewish life is quickened by the numerous celebrations marking the tercentenary of Jewish living on this continent.

In Jewish history, which is measured in millenia, a century may seem a short span, but it bridges more than half the stretch of time since the establishment of this nation.

It may be interesting to look back to 1850, the year that your institution was founded, and to glance at what was happening then, both among the general population and in our group. In 1850 President Millard Fillmore sat in the White House. Only the students of history can readily recall what he did there, and he seems to belong to a misty past. In our day, his Secretary of State, Daniel Webster, outshines him by far. The population of the United States was perhaps one-seventh of what it is today, and there were only 31 states in the Union. The West Coast, which we now reach in a nonstop flight of a few hours, was largely an unknown wilderness. It was only a half-dozen years since a portrait painter, Samuel Morse, had invented his gadget and tapped out the first telegraph message. Like now, it was not a tranquil period, for the slavery issue was gathering force and approaching a crisis. Its bitterness was not to culminate in the Civil War until a decade later. Abraham Lincoln was a comparatively obscure lawyer in Illinois who

had served one term in Congress. His great destiny was yet to be unfolded.

The '48's, as the refugees from repression in Germany came to be known, were arriving in America. Jews and non-Jews suffering from the dislocations following the German Revolution were streaming into the United States. Some of these doubtless were among the founders of this Temple. Despite startling differences in setting, the problems that confronted the people then were in some ways not unlike those we face today. These settlers were followed within a generation by great waves of escapees from East European lands, and the earlier arrivals gave fraternal help to the newcomers. They became integrated in the communities, joined this and other temples and synagogues, and helped to found and develop new communal institutions. Successive groups in turn aided newcomers through the years, and in our generation we have vivid memories of the rescue of some of Hitler's victims who sought a haven here.

While it is true that the presence of our people on these shores traces back three hundred years, they came at first in small numbers. The period of heavy immigration and the flowering of Jewish life in America coincides roughly with the existence of your Temple.

The fame of this congregation under Dr. Silver's ministry stems from the resolute insistence that while it properly espouses its own interpretation of religion, its particular branch of Judaism, it is, nevertheless, mindful not to do so at the expense of the unity of the House of Israel. The harmony and the oneness of the whole people is of more importance than any limiting sectarianism.

To perform its full function, the synagogue must concern itself with every aspect of our fellowship—religious, of course, but also every other proper interest of the people. This means not only the affairs of a congregation, but of K'lal Yisroel. Jews here are linked with Jews everywhere.

The world is learning a bitter lesson from the war and its tragic aftermath, namely, the falseness and folly of isola-



tionism. Slowly the nations have begun to understand that the happiness of humanity cannot be achieved if mankind remains divided in separate segments, each living for itself and unconcerned for the welfare of others, and that the security, prosperity and progress of each depends in some measure on the fate of the others. Similarly, we Jews have always realized that there can be no isolationism in our affairs. The persecution of Jews in other lands, their struggles to escape, their cries for help, their efforts at redemption and rehabilitation in the ancient and newly restored land of Israel—these things cannot be matters of indifference to us. Membership in a temple or synagogue does not absolve us from our duty in these areas; rather it should serve to stimulate us to recognize and perform that duty.

In Jewish tradition, as doubtless you have often been reminded, the synagogue is more than a house of worship. It is also a social institution—a house of assembly, a community center, the pivot of communal, cultural life; and it is a house of instruction. This is to be interpreted, not in a narrow sense, to require not merely a parochial school for children, but facilities for the ever wider and nobler instruction and development of the members of the community, both young and old; for in the Jewish concept of education it is a continuing process that does not end until the individual's life itself is over.

To the perpetuation of Jewish life, education is absolutely indispensable. If members of a majority group grow up in ignorance of the meaning and worth of their religion and its doctrines, they, of course, suffer. They are diminished as human beings. Their life is not as rich as it might be, but their tendency is still to remain in their group because there is no pressure on them to withdraw. Members of a minority, however, who remain ignorant of their tradition, soon go adrift. They find it difficult to resist the disintegrating forces which beset a minority on all sides.

The effect on the unhappy individual is often disastrous, for it is difficult to take pride in an ancestry of whose his-

tory one is ignorant and to remain loyal to an affiliation one does not understand. Experience has shown too many unfortunate examples of Jews who are not educated to the meaning of their Jewishness, and to whom being a member of the Jewish people has no significance except as a symbol of restriction and discrimination without any compensating moral values. Such people are likely to become confused and unhappy because they are nearly always and everywhere considered and treated as Jews; they suffer such disabilities as may be visited upon Jews, whether social or otherwise; yet their suffering and frustration is for a cause which to them has no worth. Frequently, as we have seen, they develop spiritual and mental illnesses because they are engaged in a lifelong inner conflict, painfully seeking escape from an identity which should be rich and noble, but which, because they have not been taught its worthwhileness, is empty of everything except unhappy connotations. What could be a blessing becomes for them a curse.

Mention has been made of the tercentenary exercises which have been held here and in other cities. Deserved tribute has been paid by many good Americans of all faiths to the innumerable Jews and Jewesses who have contributed to our country's welfare and glory in war and in peace. Our people have indeed given their genius and talents, their labor and devotion to enhance the common treasure which America cherishes. We have made our contribution in the fields of government and public affairs, literature and science, art and music, industry and commerce, sport and philanthropy, thought and action, in war and in peace—indeed, in every endeavor and every aspiration of this great nation.

Recognition of this is, of course, gratifying. It is not a breach of taste to note the historic truth, and we can at least sympathize with the pride of that Irishman who said, "We Irish are not a boastful people, but if we were inclined to boast, my, what a lot there would be to boast about!"

As a group, as well as individually, we have been bountifully blessed by America's opportunities and glories, and we

in turn have been a beneficial influence. In our group life we have, I think, furnished a worthy example which has enriched the character of American living. It is in order, in such an assembly as this, to note some of the specifically Jewish manifestations which have added to the vitality and the nobility of our American life. Not the least of these is that under the conditions of our American citizenship we have been applying the fundamental ethical and moral values of our heritage to the requirements of our group life, for we have been taught that an unjust and an ungenerous man is an abomination. This is what has given our philanthropies their unique quality and it accounts in large measure for our strong support of various causes and movements aiming at social justice.

In appraising our role in American history, there is a tendency either to minimize or to exaggerate. I shall try to draw a sketch in broad outline that voids both extremes. In the first place, it should be noted that Jews came here for much the same reasons that attracted other people to these shores. All sought the freedom and the opportunities of the new world.

Historically, we have never given ear to the timid and cringing counsel, which some misguided souls among us have preached, that we should refrain from any worthy and fruitful activities, public or private, which are open to others. Those who offer such advice think that by obscuring our presence we will avoid envy and hostility. They do not understand the plain lesson of experience that civic rights that are abdicated are like a limb that is immobilized, or a muscle that remains unused; it atrophies and eventually loses its function. Rather, the admonition should be to participate freely, to give all honor and encouragement to exemplary representatives in private enterprise and public service, and to insist with all our moral force on high standards of merit. That is the courageous and manful course. Flinching retreat is not what has preserved us through the centuries, nor would any group foolishly embracing such a course excite respect or consideration.



The very vitalism of Jews, both as individuals and as a group, is what our neighbors appreciate, for this is the quality that accounts so largely for their own phenomenal advance. The spirit of America will not countenance anything less than full and uninhibited sharing by *all* Americans in our economic, civic and educational life.

If you ask what principle underlies the success of our historic enterprise on these shores, I should answer that it is primarily our awareness that we do constitute a community. We have our divisions—doubtless too numerous and too violent and often fantastically irrelevant—but when the tumult and the shouting die we soberly recognize that the bases for bringing us together in communal association are immensely greater than the differences which tend to divide us. In such associations most Jews find satisfaction; for only a negligible few, obsessed by self-deprecation, is this awareness an unhappy one.

Self-deprecation

Unless we are resolved to adhere to the substance of our tradition as it fits into the frame of the American civilization, and to bear it nobly and if possible add to its beauty, there is no point to our celebrating anniversaries. Most American Jews have warm, affirmative feelings about their group life and its institutions. They cherish their past, which has been honorable and magnificent, and they would foster a future not less praiseworthy.

There are wide and interesting variations in the interpretation of the Jewish affiliation. There is no authoritarian definition; each defines it for himself. Theologically there is no norm or measure other than the conscience of the individual. For some, Judaism is the ancient tradition unchanged, and even they disagree as to what tradition is. Others accept part and ignore part, and there is almost no set pattern in their selectivity in dietary practice, in degrees of Sabbath observance or non-observance, or in synagogue attendance. There are those who insist on *Taryag*, the whole *Schulchan Aruch*. Many are entirely removed from such practices, yet feel deeply their Jewishness, their loyalty to the Jewish

people. They may nevertheless have a deep and sincere concern for the fate of fellow Jews here and elsewhere, contribute to Jewish institutions, philanthropic and cultural, and to the upbuilding of Israel. We have in our midst Zionists and some who say they are non-Zionists and yet contribute generously and labor valiantly to rebuild Zion. In the past we have had resounding debates about Congress vs. Conference; about Commonwealth and partition; about national budgeting; about McIver Reports; and about a host of issues, many of which the march of history has made irrelevant. When we think back about some of these violent factional arguments, in which estimable people lost their poise and good manners, is it not perfectly astonishing how often the participants are puzzled to recall just what it was that stirred them so deeply?

There are even some Jews who are not touched by the main stream of Jewish living, yet manifest an attenuated affiliation by belonging to a Jewish center or synagogue bowling league, and others identify themselves with us merely by insisting that they shall be buried in a Jewish cemetery.

It is not for me to expound theories about who is right and who is wrong in this welter of diversities. Underlying all their differences there is nevertheless an essential unity. The notable point is that by and large they do identify themselves as Jews, take pride in being Jews, and wish earnestly for Jewish survival.

I speak for a broadly inclusive community concept—one that embraces more than philanthropy and defense of our good name, important as these efforts are. Our view of community life should be broad enough to take fully into account the things of the spirit, education and culture, and fraternal help to Jews in other lands. It is bewildering, for example, to listen to people who think it good Americanism to worry about Arabs and other peoples in every corner of the globe, but bad Americanism to show solicitude for the fate of the Jews.

We should deprecate the tendency of some to exalt a single organizational interest to the exclusion of others. It is

natural for individuals to be concerned primarily with particular types of communal service or certain institutions, but if we are to have effective organization and bring advantage to the entire community we must think of these causes not as competitive but as interdependent. What happens to Jews abroad may, as we have unhappily experienced, directly affect us here; yet our ability to play our proper role does in the final analysis depend largely on the soundness and vigor of our American communities. We are morally bound to these causes, local, national and international.

A few amongst us are beset by doubts as to whether our American loyalty does not conflict with these concerns. It is important to understand what America expects of us and what it does not expect or want of us. American loyalty does not demand of Americans that they shall suppress the natural promptings of their hearts in philanthropy or in cultural or religious affiliations or activity. Nationalism, as America defines it, is not like that of the totalitarian regimes. American nationalism makes its demands of complete political loyalty, which we meet willingly in common with our fellow citizens. American patriotism, however, does not seek to stifle diversities in religion or the associated diversities in ancestral traditions and group living.

When your father, or grandfather or perhaps an ancestor of an earlier generation was naturalized he renounced allegiance to all foreign princes, potentates, states, and sovereignties, but he was not told to empty his heart of sentiment and compassion and memories. Nor are we, their sons, expected to do so. These precious values one may retain without impairing his American patriotism. On the contrary, because of them he is a better, not a worse, American. These are sanctities which our free country esteems and protects. This is an essential feature of our freedom.

Security is a word much heard these days. No Jew is really secure if he finds it necessary to look over his shoulder, as it were, to see whether his Jewishness is showing; if he has to say to himself, "Now, you are being too Jewish." He is

finds



truly secure only if he feels entirely free in regard to his Jewishness and takes it in his stride, with no more embarrassment or trepidation than a Methodist feels, or a Quaker. A man is free inwardly as well as outwardly when he feels that he can be himself without fear or apology and without need to deny his identity or camouflage it or distort it to please his neighbors—when he is not tense but breathes free.

The magnificent offer of America to its component elements is that they are free to be what they are; that a man need not fear being too Norwegian or too French, too Baptist or too Catholic. By the same token it is not America, but an inner malady, a derangement within a man that persistently raises the question, "Are you being too Jewish?" Those who understand and love America truly know that it is not monolith, but a thing of many components and varied facets which enrich it in distinctive ways culturally and spiritually. a

Americans understand by freedom not merely the right to be present and conform. The essence of freedom is to be free to be different without being molested. And this is only the beginning of liberty. Liberty will not be fully attained in our society until men can feel free to be orthodox or heterodox without danger of discrimination in employment opportunity, or restriction in the place where they may live, or even of suffering social ostracism.

These, then, are some of our reflections as we mark the 105th Anniversary. Keep the Temple serviceable to the community, so that it may bring comfort and spiritual strength to the families of its members, train the young and guide them to become loyal men and women and good citizens of the Jewish and the general community. May it be a fountainhead of inspiration shedding its radiance widely and adding lustre to the spiritual crown of our people. See that it develops wholesome and informed and proud Jews and loyal Americans whose personalities are not shriveled and warped through ignorance and self-hate, but whose lives are enlarged and ennobled, uplifted and fulfilled by a tradition that brings them joy and self-respect.