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

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

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Wolsey, Rabbi Louis, social justice, CCAR, UAHC, 1927.

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TOCH BROTHERS

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NEW YORK

CABLE ADDRESS
ADJUNTADOR
A.B.C. AND BENTLEY
FIVE LETTER CODES

Jan 26, 1927

My dear Doctor:--

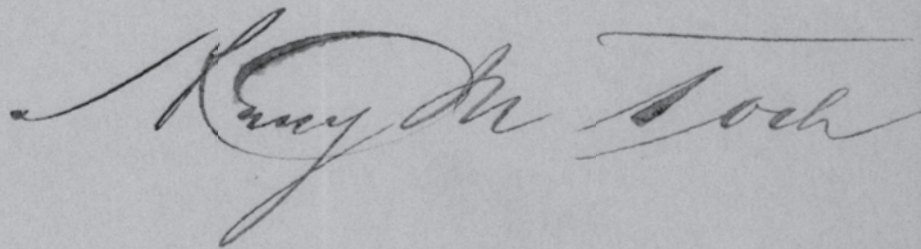
I wish to take this opportunity, to again thank you for your courtesy in showing me through your marvelous Temple, and I am glad to tell you that I mentioned the outstanding facts at a meeting which we had at Temple Emanu-El the other evening. The future of Judaism in this country is assured not alone by such wonderful organizations, as I have seen in your city, but by such able leaderships of which you are one of the outstanding figures.

Personally, I was pleased to see you at the meeting at which I was asked to preside, and bring proof not alone to you but to all assembled of how your reference to the Synagogue while in New York in a recent lecture impressed me. I hope you were satisfied with what I had to say at that meeting.

With kindest regards and best wishes, I am

Yours very truly,

HM:M



Rev. Dr. Abba H. Silver
The Temple,
105 St. & Ansel Road
Cleveland, Ohio

Wolsey -

Social
Justice

U.A.M.C.

LOUIS WOLSEY
Rabbi

SYNAGOGUE

Broad and Mount Vernon Streets

CONGREGATION RODEPH SHALOM

RABBI'S OFFICE

1400 JEFFERSON STREET

PHILADELPHIA

January 25, 1927

Benjamin F. Teller Memorial School

S. W. Cor. Broad and Jefferson Streets

Bell Telephone, Stevenson 7194

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

Dear Abba:--

Mr. Jacob W. Mack tells me that he was seated in front of you at the time of the Union's discussion of the Social Justice program, and that you made the statement to your neighbor that during my entire career in Cleveland, of eighteen years, I had never once spoken in favor of Social Justice, nor raised my hand to serve the striking workingman.

If you made this statement, I want this letter to enter a vigorous demurrer. I have manuscripts in my barrel to show the contrary. Furthermore, before your coming to Cleveland, I had interceded with the employers in the Cloak and Suit industry for the ending of the very serious strike which took place in Cleveland many years ago. Even before I came to Cleveland, my position on the question in Little Rock, Arkansas, was consistent with my record of the last two years.

If this was the motive of your disappointing failure to support the platform at the Cleveland Convention, I must confess my surprise that the principle of Social Justice was to be regarded or disregarded by you on personal grounds. Even if the statements you are reported to have made, were true, I could not understand why you should make Social Justice the sufferer so far as your own co-operation is concerned.

I watched your vote on the several articles of the platform with great care, and I noticed that you voted in favor of every compromise to which I was forced to agree, and thus gave aid and comfort to the employing class. You will therefore understand why I am completely mystified that you should have so signally reversed to position, in favor of which you so eloquently argued at St. Louis, and which you have consistently upheld throughout your entire career.

However, the most disappointing feature of your opposition was your vote in favor of the elimination of the paragraph which assured the workingman of a welcome to membership in and administration of the synagogue. You perhaps did not realize that you yourself gave the inspiration to this plank in the platform, for at the annual meeting of the Federation of Jewish Charities in Philadelphia, you criticized our synagogues with being bourgeois, and you asked this very significant question: "Why is the workingman not on our Synagogue Boards?"

SYNAGOGUE
Broad and Mount Vernon Streets

Benjamin F. Teller Memorial School
S. W. Cor. Broad and Jefferson Streets

CONGREGATION RODEPH SHALOM

RABBI'S OFFICE
1400 JEFFERSON STREET
PHILADELPHIA

LOUIS WOLSEY
Rabbi

Bell Telephone, Stevenson 7194

January 25, 1927

#2 - Rabbi A. H. Silver

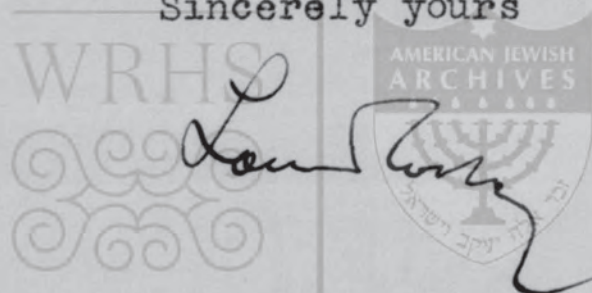
The plank in the platform was a formulation of your own suggestion. That you should have voted against it passes my understanding. I was very mightily discouraged by your vote. You advised me to ignore completely Mr. Lowenstein's suggestion that I soft-pedal the whole subject of Social Justice. I took your advice, and your failure to support your own suggestions was distinctly disheartening.

Forgive my saying these things, but I feel that you have done violence to a sacred cause, which I have always felt you took very much to heart.

With very kind regards, I am

Sincerely yours

LW:RW



January 28th, 1927.

Jewish Daily Bulletin,
611 Broadway,
New York City.

Gentlemen:

In your issue of Wednesday, January 26th there appeared a letter from Rabbi Solomon Foster commenting on the discussion concerning the Social Justice program which took place at the Cleveland convention of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. In the letter Rabbi Foster states that I spoke in opposition to the resolutions of the Social Justice Commission. This is clearly an error. I did not speak on the resolutions of the Social Justice Commission at all. During the afternoon session I suggested another phrasing to the fourth article in the Social Service Creed which was adopted by the convention. This new wording intensified the meaning of the original: "That a man's labor is his very life and constitutes his primary service to society. It is not a commodity to be bought or sold in the market". Dr. Goldenson of Pittsburg suggested the first phrase in this paragraph; "that a man's labor is his very life."

With kindest regards, I am

Very sincerely yours,

January 28th, 1927.

Mr. Henry M. Toch,
443 Fourth Avenue,
New York City.

My dear Mr. Toch,

Permit me to thank you for your kind letter of January 26th. I regret very much that I did not have an opportunity to see you following the splendid address which you delivered at the convention. I was suddenly called away by some member of the arrangement committee who insisted upon drafting me into a meeting. I enjoyed listening to the fine thoughtful message which you delivered, full of faith and loyalty to the great traditions of our people.

It afforded me great pleasure to take you and your friend through our new Temple.

With kindest regards, I am

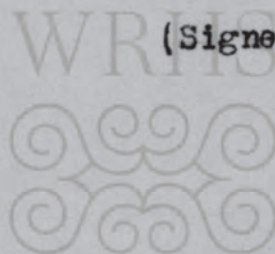
Very sincerely yours,

[February 13, 1927]

Rabbi George Zepin
Synagogue and School Extension
Merchants Building
Cincinnati, Ohio.

Please send me special delivery copy of original draft of Social Justice
Creed introduced at recent Union Convention. I want the original draft.

(Signed) A. H. Silver



THE UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS

HEBREW UNION COLLEGE
NATIONAL FEDERATION OF TEMPLE SISTERHOODS

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Albert Wolf—Philadelphia
Rabbi Louis Wolsey—Philadelphia
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Adolphe Wolfe—Portland

Dr. A. S. Silver,
Congregation Tifereth Israel,
Cleveland, Ohio.

Dear Dr. Silver:

I am in receipt of your telegram
and in accordance with your request am
sending you enclosed a copy of the original
draft of the Social Justice Platform, as
presented by Rabbi Wolsey on behalf of his
Committee.

With kindest personal greetings, I am

Very sincerely yours,

Secretary.

GZ:VH

*File under
Social Justice*

Union of A.H.C. Copy DH

1. The recognition of the principle of mutual service through the performance of economic function as fundamental to our social philosophy rather than the acquisition of wealth.
2. The recognition of the dignity of the laborer and the debt of society's dependence upon the effort of the toiler.
3. That human rights take precedence over the rights of property.
4. That labor is not a commodity to be bought or sold or coerced but is an attribute of human life.
5. The recognition of this duty on the part of employers and employee alike to exercise in the adjustment of their own rights a due regard for the paramount rights of society.
6. The duty of the synagogue to assure the working man of a welcome to its membership and its administration.
7. The duty of the synagogue and its pulpit to speak courageously on the rights of labor for the victims of social and economic injustice as part of its prophetic function to speak the truth.

We furthermore recommend to the U. A. H. C. that (1) the committee on Social Justice become a permanent committee of the Union. (2) That due consideration be given to the establishment of a department of social action whose business it shall be to secure a consensus of economic opinion on industrial and economic questions and to study them from a Jewish point of view and to keep the synagogues of the Union informed as to the development of thought and activity in the field of Social Justice.

February 4th, 1927.

Rabbi Louis Wolsey,
1400 Jefferson Street,
Philadelphia, Pa.

My dear Rabbi Wolsey,

First let me take up some of the mis-statements in your letter of January 25th. You say that you watched me vote on the several articles in the platform which you submitted to the convention with great care and that you noticed that I voted in favor of every compromise to which you were forced to agree and "thus gave aid and comfort to the employing class".

I recall that I voted to amend two of your recommendations. One had to do with the first article in which the words "rather than the acquisition of wealth" were stricken out.

I voted in favor of the omission of these words because of their redundancy and because of a possible reflection upon the Jews.

You will recall that when it was suggested that item four be struck out of your program I insisted that it should be included and that I suggested an even more intensive reading of your article, which you gladly accepted and which was adopted by the convention.

I opposed article six concerning the duty of the synagogue to assure the workman a welcome to its membership and its administration because the statement "welcome to its membership" vitiated the whole item. You know that the synagogue has always welcomed the workman. What I called for in Philadelphia was the inviting of the workman on to the Temple boards where his particular point of view would be of real value in forming congregational thought and policy.

February 4th, 1927.

I did not speak about welcoming the workingman to the synagogue. Had this article been retained as you wrote it, it would have been a serious and unjust reflection upon the synagogue.

You will also recall that I voted against Rabbi Foster's draft of article seven.

It is quite stupid of you to suggest that I reversed the position which I took in St. Louis. You know better. It is not I who need justification in the matter of ~~my~~ consistent attitude toward social justice, but you. In the nine years that I was in Cleveland I do not recall one instance in which you raised your voice in behalf of the cause of the employees in any industrial dispute. During these nine years we had in Cleveland any number of strikes, some of them of great seriousness. In no instance did you raise your voice and in no instance did you support me when I raised my voice. When I had my serious controversy with the Chamber of Commerce relative to its anti-labor program, in which the whole question of the open and closed shop and the right of labor to be represented through its own spokesman were involved, you were silent. You were silent also in the building strikes, in the steel strike, in the Belle Vernon milk strike and in numerous other instances when a bit of your present enthusiasm for the cause of labor would have been very much in place. And men who followed your career prior to my coming to Cleveland have indicated to me that this had been your attitude quite consistently.

So that at the convention I could not repress a bit of malicious humor when I beheld you in what seemed to me to be ^{the} role of a zealous convert battling for Jehovah. Let me assure you, however, that my knowledge of these facts had nothing whatever to do with my acts of omission or commission at the convention. I knew these facts in St. Louis too.....

February 4th, 1927.

I was detained Wednesday morning by Mr. Toch and another member of the building committee of Temple Emanuel who desired to make a thorough study of the building and being host, I could not well refuse. We arrived at the convention just prior to the close of the morning session. Even if I had been at the morning session I might have hesitated to speak. As host I refrained from participating in any of the discussions of the convention. It was not until practically the close of the convention late Wednesday night when the chairman, against my expressed wishes as he publicly acknowledged, formed me to the platform to say a few words to the delegates.

Had I been present on Wednesday morning and had I spoken, I am afraid that I would have suggested a re-submission of the entire report for further study and revision for both the "creed" and your preamble, parts of which I have since seen, give palpable evidence of haste, "gesturing" and careless writing - the same unfortunate qualities which characterize your letter to me. Thus your statement that because I favored certain amendments to your creed and because I was not present to participate in the discussions earlier in the day I "did violence to a sacred cause" and "gave aid and comfort to the employing class" is clearly shams.

In passing might I say that although a member of the Social Service Commission of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, I did not see a copy of the report which you were to submit until the afternoon prior to the day of its submission. Then you showed me a bunch of papers but you did not give them to me to read. Nevertheless you expected a blanket endorsement of all you wrote. If you were so anxious for my support and depended so much upon it, why did you not take the trouble to send me a copy of the report a few days ahead of time so that I could familiarize myself with it and if necessary make some suggestions.

-4-

February 4th, 1927.

You are right in stating that I consistently upheld the cause of social justice throughout my entire career and I shall, by the grace of God, continue to do ~~so~~ in the future - not merely in academic discussions and pronouncements at conventions but in specific economic struggles at home when speaking the courageous word tries a man's soul.

With kindest regards, I am

Very sincerely yours, —

WRHS




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Charles Shohl—Cincinnati
Adolphe Wolfe—Portland

Dr. Abba H. Silver,
1485 E. 106th St.,
Cleveland, O.

Dear Dr. Silver:

I have the honor to inform you that pursuant to the action taken at the last meeting of the Executive Board, the Chairman has appointed you a member of the Commission on Social Justice.

The full membership of your committee is given on the attached list.

Will you be so kind as to acknowledge this letter indicating your acceptance so that the committees may be printed in the year book.

With kindest regards, I am

Sincerely yours,

George Zepin
Secretary.

GZ:RH

Commission on Social Justice

Rabbi Louis Wolsey, Chairman,

Marcus Aaron,

Henry Cohen,

Lee K. Frankel,

Dr. Jacob S. Goldbaum,

Dr. Samuel H. Goldenson,

Henry Morgenthau,

A. Leo Weil,

Carl E. Pritz,

Horace Stern,

Milford Stern,

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Alfred Seligman,

Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver



H. A. H. C.
"Social Justice"
LOUIS WOLSEY
Rabbi
Bell Telephone, Stevenson 7194
see 8?

CONGREGATION RODEPH SHALOM

SYNAGOGUE

Broad and Mount Vernon Streets

RABBI'S OFFICE

1400 JEFFERSON STREET

PHILADELPHIA

Benjamin F. Teller Memorial School

S. W. Cor. Broad and Jefferson Streets

April 5, 1927

Rabbi Abba H. Silver
E. 105th St. at Ansel Road
Cleveland, Ohio

Dear Rabbi Silver:--

You are a member of the Commission on Social Justice, of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. In that capacity, may I ask you to give me your reaction to the following matter which has been referred to our Committee, by the Executive Board of the Union:

The Commission on Social Justice made the following recommendation to the Cleveland Council:

"We further recommend to the incoming Executive Board of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, that the Commission on Social Justice be continued, and that due consideration be given by the Executive Board to the establishment of a department of social action whose business it shall be to secure a consensus of economic opinion on industrial and economic questions and to study them from a Jewish point of view and to keep the synagogues of the Union informed as to the development of thought and activity in the field of Social Justice."

I should say that the Executive Board decided to continue the Commission. However, the second part of the recommendation was referred back to our Commission, to report on May 29th to the Executive Board "on the advisability of creating a Department of Social Action."

I think it is not superfluous to state that both the Protestant and Catholic bodies have such a Bureau. Would it not be an unprogressive step for the Union of American Hebrew Congregations to refuse to establish such a department as might enable the Liberal wing of Judaism at least to keep pace with these other denominations, who are committing themselves with such commendable zeal to the entire study of Social Justice? It is almost too much to expect busy rabbis and laymen to give to this subject the earnest study which it requires. If the Union had a Bureau which could dedicate itself exclusively to a study of the entire subject, we might be in a position to speak with more authority than we can now.

I therefore urge upon you to consider with great care the subject of the establishment of such a Department, under Union auspices, and to let me have your opinion as soon as possible in order that I may present a Commission report to the meeting of the Executive Board, which is to be held in Cincinnati, on May 29th.

With very kind regards, I am

Very sincerely yours

Louis Wolsey
Chairman

LW:RW

Union-A. H. C.,
"Commission on Social Justice"

April 7, 1927.

Rabbi Louis Wolsey,
Congregation Rodeph Shalom,
1400 Jefferson St.
Philadelphia, Pa.

My dear Rabbi Wolsey:

In reply to your letter of
April 5, permit me to state that I have
not accepted the appointment this year to
membership on the Commission on Social Justice
of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.

With kindest regards, I am

Very sincerely,

AHS:NEB

U.A.H.C.

THE UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS

HEBREW UNION COLLEGE

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RABBI JACOB B. POLLAK
Manager

New York Office

April 11, 1927.

Dr. Abba Hillel Silver
E. 105th St.
Cleveland, Ohio

Dear Dr. Silver:

Referring again to your letter declining to serve on the committee on Social Justice beg to state that Mr. Vogelstein would like to send your letter to Rabbi Woolsey - if you don't object.

While similar statements have been made by others, nevertheless they consented to serve.

If you prefer to have me communicate "the feeling" in the matter without using names I will do so.

Am writing this at the request of Mr. Vogelstein. Would you mind dropping me a line to Cincinnati where I will be in a few days.

With kind regards and cordial Passover Greetings,
I am

Sincerely yours,

GZ.G

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RABBI GEORGE ZEPIN, Cincinnati,
Secretary

U. A. H. C.

April 18, 1927.

Rabbi George Zepin,
Union of American Hebrew Congregations,
Merchants Building,
Cincinnati, Ohio.

My dear Rabbi Zepin:

I have no objection to
Mr. Vogelstein sending the letter that
I wrote him, declining to serve on the
Social Justice Commission to Rabbi Wolsey
if he thinks that it would serve any particular
purpose.

I do not wish to serve
on that Commission for reasons clearly
indicated in the letter.

With kindest regards,

I am

Very sincerely,

AHS:NEB

February 4th, 1927.

I was detained Wednesday morning by Mr. Tooh and another member of the building committee of Temple Emanuel who desired to make a thorough study of the building and being host, I could not well refuse. We arrived at the convention just prior to the close of the morning session. Even if I had been at the morning session I might have hesitated to speak. As host I refrained from participating in any of the discussions of the convention. It was not until practically the close of the convention late Wednesday night when the chairman, against my expressed wishes as he publicly acknowledged, forced me to the platform to say a few words to the delegates.

Had I been present on Wednesday morning and had I spoken, I am afraid that I would have suggested a re-submission of the entire report for further study and revision for both the "creed" and your preamble, parts of which I have since seen, give palpable evidence of haste, "gesturing" and careless writing - the same unfortunate qualities which characterize your letter to me. Thus your statement that because I favored certain amendments to your creed and because I was not present to participate in the discussions earlier in the day I "did violence to a sacred cause" and "gave aid and comfort to the employing class" is clearly absurd.

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