



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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World Union for Progressive Judaism, 1939.

THE WORLD UNION FOR PROGRESSIVE JUDAISM

Hon. Secretary: THE HON. LILY H. MONTAGU, O.B.E., J.P.

THE RED LODGE, 51, PALACE COURT, LONDON, W.2.

3rd May 1939

Dear Rabbi Silver,

We had a meeting of the Executive on Monday, and as I was asked to write to you as a member of the Palestine Committee.

I think you are aware that the progress of all our groups in Palestine has been most satisfactory, indeed rather remarkable. We understand that public worship in the three centres is extremely well attended, and is only limited by the difficulty of finding suitable accommodation. Much important work of a progressive kind has been undertaken among children and young people, and all kinds of social service have been initiated.

These facts make us all the more distressed ~~that~~ ^{Since} unless we get new and strong financial support, we shall be obliged at the meeting of the Governing Body on July 27th, to recommend a curtailment of our work. The three Rabbis who have devoted themselves in a most self sacrificing manner are at the moment clamouring for increased support, which they say is imperatively needed. You can easily see how hard it will be for us to refuse this further support, and even say that the support we have been able to give in the last year must be curtailed.

I appeal to you most earnestly to prevent this catastrophe. You and the other leaders of the Zionist cause have told us again and again that your movement is a religious one. We must be right in believing, therefore, that support for doing religious work must be forthcoming from those who have already given generously for other parts of Palestinian enterprise.

The need is desperate. If you cannot help us now, the work so well begun, is threatened. Please let me hear as soon as you can that some support is coming through your personal influence.

Yours sincerely,

Lily H. Montagu

THE WORLD UNION FOR PROGRESSIVE JUDAISM

Hon. Secretary: THE HON. LILY H. MONTAGU, O.B.E., J.P.

THE RED LODGE, 51, PALACE COURT, LONDON, W.2.

9th October 1939

Dear Dr. Silver,

I am sure that all our American friends are thinking of us with sympathy in these very difficult times. Among the many reasons for being unhappy, we naturally feel anxiety about the work which has absorbed such an important part of our lives, but, believing, as we do, that The World Union was started in order to intensify and spread Progressive Judaism, we are confident that whatever happens to the individual workers, its development is sure as a power for good in the community.

To help us in the present emergency, we rely mainly on our American colleagues, who are just a little removed from the acute difficulties produced by the war situation. It would be an immense comfort to me personally to know that you will do all you can to further our work in your great country, and to make suggestions which we will do our very best to follow.

You will remember that we count upon you to maintain and further, through your financial assistance, the work so well begun in Palestine. The leaders, who have made such devoted and courageous efforts to start the work there, tell us that it is making very good progress in spite of all the terrible difficulties due to political conditions in Palestine. The latest letters state that plans previously made for the autumn and winter will be carried out as far as possible. It is inconceivable that this small but fine Progressive Jewish community should not be placed on a permanent basis.

We do not fear disappointment, because we have received from the American leaders definite promises of help, and we feel sure that these will be fulfilled this autumn; but I venture to appeal to you to give me the great personal encouragement of responding as quickly as possible.

With greetings and all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Lily Montagu