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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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84

Box
29

Folder
1833

Zionist Organization of America, report on Conference of
Chaplains, 1946.

Report on Conference of Chaplains - Philadelphia, Pa. January 19th - 20th 1946

The conference was the culmination of several weeks of preparation, the idea being that a group of Chaplains would appear at the National Conference of the American Council for Judaism, and ask the privilege of attending the Conference or a session in order to make a brief statement. This report would be too lengthy were we to go into the details of the various stages of the work. Suffice it to say that this culmination in Philadelphia was successful beyond our hopes.

We began with the idea of enlisting ten chaplains to go. We immediately consulted with Chaplain Aryeh Lev because of his very important position in the U.S. Chaplains Corp. He agreed that it would be well for a group of Chaplains to appear in Philadelphia at the National Conference. We then consulted with Rabbi Philip Bernstein. We wanted to be sure that we were doing nothing that would be undignified or reflect on either the Chaplains or the Zionist Movement. Having the endorsement of these two men, we then proceeded.

Chaplain Edward Sandrow, (now Major) was elected as Chairman of this particular group of Chaplains and Chaplain David Cederbaum as Secretary. It was arranged that the chaplains arrive in Philadelphia on Saturday evening, January 19th and Sunday, January 20th. 31 Chaplains were present (list attached).

On Friday, January 18th, accompanied by Mr. Isreeli and Mr. Kaufman of the Emergency Council Public Relations Department, I went to Philadelphia, made arrangements to meet Judge Levinthal with whom I had discussed the matters before. Judge Levinthal was kind enough to call the owners of the three Philadelphia papers and made the connection with the press for Mr. Kaufman. We then proceeded to see the city editors and arrange for a press conference for Sunday morning. We also arranged for representatives of the News services and for the photographers.

On Saturday night, January 19th, a Conference of chaplains, attended by 31, was held. A letter was drawn for the purpose of asking officially for permission to attend the session by the Chaplains and to make a brief statement. (letter attached) This letter was sent in customary military style and was delivered in person by two chaplains, Jacob Polish, representing the Navy and Leon Adler representing the Army. While the men were gone, the Chaplains decided to change the statement to be given to the press, rather than have one which had been prepared before and taken along to Philadelphia in mimeographed form. After many ideas were expressed from the floor, a Committee was appointed to incorporate these ideas within a revised statement (attached).

Meanwhile, the two men who had been sent with the letter to the Council meeting, returned saying that the reply would be given in two hours. In due time these men went back to the Council meeting and Chaplain Polish reported as follows: Mr. Wallach who had taken the letter from him when he saw them, went to Mr. Rosenwald and for the first time handed him the letter. Mr. Rosenwald opened it, read it and shook his head negatively. Mr. Wallach then returned it to our representatives and said, "sorry, Mr. Rosenwald cannot accept the terms of the letter".

On Sunday morning, January 20th at 10:00 o'clock, the Chaplains met again in conference and decided every step to be taken at the press conference at 11:00 A.M. No one was to speak to the press unless introduced by the Chairman of the meeting for such purpose. At 11:00 A.M. the two representatives of the Philadelphia morning papers were there together with photographers. Chaplain Sandrow made a preliminary statement and then called on Chaplain Rosenberg to read the statement

which would have been read at the Council meeting that the Chaplains been admitted, also the letter written to Mr. Rosenwald asking for admission was read (copies attached) and copies were given to the press. The Chairman then invited the press to ask questions.

One of the newspapermen asked the names of those referred to as having failed to respond to the call for the chaplaincy. The answer given was that the names and all the details could be obtained from the Jewish Welfare Board. Another question was asked whether those who took the letter to Mr. Rosenwald know whether Mr. Rosenwald took it upon himself to turn down the request of the chaplains or placed it before the meeting. Chaplain Polish then was called upon to give a first-hand report indicating that Mr. Rosenwald, without consulting anyone, refused the request.

Mr. Kaufman remained in Philadelphia in order to make contact with the four radio stations in order to get this news over the radio. Mr. Leonard then undertook to return immediately to New York and saw the New York Times City editor and the other city editors upon his return. A release was prepared by Mr. Kaufman in Philadelphia which release was supplemented by personal interview with these editors.

This morning's New York Times has a story with a two-column headline. We secured this morning's Philadelphia papers and find that the Record has a full column and the Inquirer has about half a column.

OL:rl

RECEIVED			
NOTED BY		REFER TO	
DATE			DATE
	JAN 25 1946		
ANSWERED			

Oscar Leonard
Secretary

Committee on Unity for Palestine

Chaplains who attended Philadelphia Conference

Aaron H. Blumenthal

— Joshua L. Goldberg

Jacob Polish

Herschel Schacter

Samuel Goldstein

Emanuel M. Honig

Jesse J. Finkle

Abraham Winokur

— Gershon Chertoff

Isadore Barnett

Leon M. Adler

Mordecai Waxman

Louis Paris

S. Joshua Kohn

Abraham P. Kazis

Aryeh Lev

David Eichhorn

Edward T. Sandrow

David M. Cederbaum

— Leon Rosenberg

Arnold Lasker

Morris Gordon

Jacob Honig

Jacob Honig

Karl Applebaum

Shephard Z. Baum

Robert Marcus

Samuel Rosen

Harold Gordon

Alfred Kolatch

Isidore Signer



THE BELLEVUE - STRATFORD

Philadelphia, Pa.

January 19, 1946

Mr. Lessing J. Rosenwald, President
The American Council for Judaism, Inc.
Hotel Warwick
Philadelphia, Pa.

Dear Mr. Rosenwald:

On behalf of a group of twenty-five Army and Navy Chaplains of the Jewish faith, we respectfully request permission for this group to appear at the morning session, Sunday, 20 January, 1946 of the National Conference of the American Council for Judaism for the purpose of presenting a brief statement.

Sincerely yours,

JOSHUA L. GOLDBERG
Comdr. Ch. C., USNR

EDWARD T. SANDROW
MAJOR, Ch. C., USA

S. JOSHUA KOHN
Lt. Comdr., Ch. C., USMS

ARYEH LEV
Lt. Col., Ch. C., USA (Res)

By Hand

Jacob Polish
Lt., Ch., C., USNR

Leon M. Adler
1st. Lt., Ch. C., USA

In view of the defamatory statements and innuendoes made repeatedly by responsible representatives of the American Council for Judaism, impugning the patriotism of American Zionists, we the undersigned, Rabbis in Israel, serving as Chaplains in the Armed Forces of our nation, register our deep resentment and disapproval of such reckless and un-American allegations.

Of the 305 surviving Chaplains of the Jewish faith who responded unhesitatingly to the call of our country in its hour of need, 228 have already identified themselves with the Zionist ideal, with replies expected from many still overseas. For anyone to insinuate that Zionism tends to diminish the full measure of devotion of these 228 Rabbis to America is the height of impudence.

Such an accusation comes with particularly bad grace from an organization which numbers amongst its leadership men who did not respond to the call of the responsible Jewish Commission to serve in the Chaplaincy.

As Chaplains, we deplore such irreligious conduct on the part of the Council.

As servants of God, we call upon the Council to desist from defaming the memory of the thousands of Jews who believed in Zionism, and who fought and died for their beloved America.