



## Abba Hillel Silver Collection Digitization Project

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

Series II: Harold P. Manson File (Zionism Files), 1940-1949, undated.

Sub-series A: Main Manson File, 1940-1949.

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Summers, Representative Hatton W., 1943.



*W. J. Silver*

*C. J. Felt*

MINUTES OF CONVERSATION WITH REPRESENTATIVE HATTON W. SUMMERS  
of the 5th District of Texas in the office of the House  
Judiciary Committee of which Mr. Summers is Chairman,  
Washington, D. C., Friday afternoon, December 17, 1943.

Present: Representative Hatton W. Summers, Mr. Leo Sack, and Rabbi Feuer

This was a brief but very pointed interview. Although Mr. Summers is quite advanced in years, he is very intelligent and asked brief and incisive questions to which he expected brief and incisive answers. We told him that we were interested in discussing with him the future of Jewish Palestine and its relation to the problem of rescuing the surviving Jewish victims of Nazism. In discussing the question of England's attitude, he suggested that it might be wise not to bring pressure upon England because it had been his experience that the more pressure you brought upon people, the more stubborn their opposition became. He said he thought, although he was not making it as a positive statement, that the pressure brought upon the Germans during the prewar years tended to unite them behind Hitler. He thought that was good psychology.

We got the impression that Mr. Summers did not actually mean what he was saying but was trying to discover what kind of answers he was going to elicit and he got what he wanted. We told him that, using his own analogy, the pressure being brought to bear upon the Jewish people had made us all the more determined to do what we had started out to do after the last war, to build a real national home for ourselves where we could be in control of our own destiny and where no one could tell us what to do and what not to do. This answer pleased Mr. Summers very much and he said it was what he wanted to know. He asked us about the absorptive capacity of the country. He sketched for him very briefly the history of the development of Palestine and indicated that the progress made during the past 25 years was a pretty good guarantee of how many and how rapidly Palestine can absorb new immigrants. He discussed the possibility of trouble between the Jews and Arabs and the attitude of England



which he felt might be connected with that trouble. We told him that the Jews of Palestine were determined to develop their rights under international law and not to be robbed of the status which had been promised to them by the Balfour Declaration and Mandate. We mentioned the fact that the Arabs had vast undeveloped territories and national states of their own, that they were perfectly well able to look after their own interests, and we Jews were determined to look after our interests. We talked tough and Mr. Summers seemed to like it.

Although we began the interview in a hurry--Mr. Summers indicating that he did not have much time--he was disposed to keep it going toward the end but we did not take advantage of the situation. We felt that we were talking to a very shrewd man, who was quite sympathetic with the idea of Jewish Nationalism. He did not want us to plead for the cause but to speak up for it. At the end of the interview, Mr. Summers asked us what we wanted definitely and concretely. In the light of the nature of the interview, we felt that, at this time, we ought not to ask for anything specific of him, but leave that for a later interview. In fact, we do not believe that it is necessary to ask for it. He is clever enough to guess just exactly what we are after and if he is in the mood, will be inclined to go along with us. So we told him that we were simply engaged in providing leaders of public opinion in the United States with information which we think should be at their disposal. He was completely satisfied with that answer.

We left some literature with him, including the Lurie Absorptive Capacity Memorandum and we got the very definite impression that he would study the literature carefully. He is very evidently a student who likes to get at the facts.