



## 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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Silver, Abba Hillel, notes re: events of 1943-1944, 1943-1944.



Tuesday, November 16 - We meet in Mr. Nathan Straus' office with Postmaster General Frank Walker, who undertakes to talk to the President.

President had left for Cairo and Teheran November 11.  
Returned December 17.

December 20 - I write to Mr. Nathan Straus inquiring as to whether he had heard anything from Mr. Walker.

December 23 - Mr. Walker telephoned me from New York saying that we would hear from the President some time before long and that we would be pleased with what he would tell us.

In this connection it may be interesting to quote from a conversation which Mr. James Waterman Wise had with Mr. Breckenridge Long, and in which Mr. Long stated "that conversations (with reference to Palestine) had taken place, the result of which when they were made known in the next month or so would be extremely gratifying."

January 11 - (Not having heard from the President) I phoned Mr. Straus and asked him whether he had heard anything further from Mr. Walker. He said that he would get in touch with him. The following morning,

January 12, the following message was relayed to me through Mr. Montor from Mr. Straus: "The President is planning to say something terribly important, most acceptable to your people within ten days (that is, January 21). He will send you an invitation to meet with him and give exact details of what is to be said and done."

On January 12, I saw Cordell Hull. He had seen the President, who had talked with Mr. Churchill. Churchill was waiting for proper timing. He declared that some statement should be forthcoming, logically before the end of March. He felt that the White Paper was definitely not the last word. It was at this interview that I showed him the proposed Congressional Resolution, to which he raised no objections. The inference is clear: As of January 12, Roosevelt and Churchill had agreed to make a statement on Palestine.

At about this time (January 3), too, urgent cables from Weizmann urging delegations to come to England arrived. The report of Mrs. Lindheim, January 13, also confirms that London, too, expected such a statement, possibly on the basis of partition. On the basis of this great expectation, the Zionist Emergency Council, anxious that no announcement on partition should be made by the President, decided to ask for an immediate interview with the President.

January 17 - Dr. Wise wrote to the President asking for an interview. On reply received from General Watson setting the appointment with the President for February . On his own responsibility and without consulting me, Dr. Wise, who had to go to the Pacific Coast, asked General Watson for a postponement of the interview to February 14. The postponement

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January 17 - (Continued)

was granted, and as a result of it, through the intervention of Judge Rosenman, the contemplated visit of Dr. Wise and myself to the President was transformed into a joint delegation of seven--Proskauer, Blaustein, Monsky, Held, Goldstein being added. Judge Rosenman had been working for such a joint delegation for some time. Our request for an interview January 17 precipitated action on his part.

On February 3 an invitation to this meeting was extended by General Watson to meet with the President on February 14. The Emergency Council voted not to participate in this delegation, and after consultation with Judge Rosenman, the meeting with the President was indefinitely postponed.

N.B. Between January 17 and February 14, the resolutions were introduced in the House on January 27 and in the Senate on February 1. The first hearings before the Foreign Affairs Committee were held on February 8 and 9. All the political activity connected with the introduction of the resolutions were launched.

February 7 - The Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate receives a letter from Cordell Hull enclosing a statement of Secretary of War Stimson stating that the War Department looks upon the passage of the resolutions and even hearings on them undesirable from a military point of view.

Thus, between January 11, when we were advised "that the President is planning to say something terribly important and most acceptable to our people within ten days" and February 7, when the War Department intervened to stop action on the resolutions, there was a complete change of front on the part of the Administration.

What were the reasons? (1) Was it due to the deterioration of the military situation in Italy? This is the explanation given by the War Department, by Frank Knox and others in government circles. (Battle of Cassino bogged down and Anzio beachhead). This seems to be also the judgment of those in London. In other words, Churchill, who was prepared to make a statement, found that the military situation in the Mediterranean was such that he would not wish to risk a statement which might provoke serious repercussions in the Arab world. By February 3 Dr. Goldmann was cabling from London advising us that the American delegation need not come. (2) Was it due to oil, the negotiations about the pipeline with Ibn Saud? This is the view of many writers--Time, Drew Pearson, The Nation, P M, Post, New Statesman. This is also part of the explanation of Secretary of the Navy Knox.

The change in attitude was clear down the line, from the President down, including the State Department and the War Department. From a conversation which Congressman had with the President on February 9, it was learned that Cordell Hull had seen the President and had urged him not to see us.

The Committee of Orthodox Jews called on Mr. Hull on February 7,



February 7 - (Continued)

at which time he told them that the military would undoubtedly wish to be heard at the hearings of the Foreign Affairs and Foreign Relations Committees. Furthermore, that General Marshall had seen the President and had discussed Palestine with him. The President may not have initiated the intervention of the military, as he told us on March 9, but he was fully aware both of the attitude of the State Department and of the War Department, and raised no objection to their intervention, <sup>and then</sup> not advised us in time. This is borne out by what Judge Rosenman told me on February 10--that the President knew about Secretary of War Stimson's intervention.

March 1

- The President still unwilling to issue any statement on Palestine. Frank Walker reports to me, by telephone to Chicago, after a conversation which I had with him in Washington on February 28. His sole comment was after seeing the President that the State and War Department views prevail.

But on March 3, Senator Wagner sees the President, receives reassuring words about Palestine, and suggests that the President see our leaders, to which the President replies that he would be most happy to do so. A date is set for an interview with the President for Thursday, March 9--interview with the President.

Having realized that the intervention of the War Department would cause a deferment on our resolutions, we decided to concentrate public pressure on the President. This was done. We asked quite a number of people to see the President and to suggest to him that a statement from him is clearly indicated--Ickes, Walker, Knox, Wagner, McCormack, etc. The President undertakes to consult Churchill before issuing his second statement.

Between January 11-21 and March 9 the attitude of official Washington had returned to where it had been up to the time when the President returned from Teheran, that is to say, negative and withdrawing. After his return from Teheran the political scene brightened up considerably. It remained so, as we had noted, until January 11 and 21, when it changed again for the worse. It now remains to be seen whether the improved situation, beginning as of March 9, will continue, culminating in some action which will indicate a new line, or whether we are entering a period of marking time until the military situation has improved or the situation about the oil negotiations is clarified.