



Abba Hillel Silver Collection Digitization Project

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

Series V: Writings, 1909-1963, undated.

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Answer to Dr. E. A. Freking, 1937.

Also - Jew War Veteran
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June 20 Broadcast

In Cincinnati, a few days ago, the Rev. Dr. E. A. Preking, national secretary of the Catholic Students' Mission Crusade, criticised the action of the Central Conference of American Rabbis in expressing sympathy for the Loyalist Government in Spain and interpreted that to mean that they were sympathetic with Communism. This, of course, is not the case. He furthermore stated that it was his firm belief that the Rabbis would have rendered an effective service to the cause if they had denounced both Communism and Fascism. This is exactly what the Rabbis have done on numerous occasions at previous conferences. They expressed sympathy with the Loyalist Government in Spain because it was a democratically elected government, cruelly and unjustly attacked by a vicious reactionary clique. At the time when it was attacked by General Franco's military junta, assisted and financed, as evidence has conclusively shown, by the Fascist governments of Germany and Italy, there was not a single Communist in the Government of Spain. It was not unfriendliness to the Catholic Church nor sympathy for Communism which prompted this resolution of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. The most devout Catholics of Spain are the Basques - and they are certainly not Communists. Yet they have with magnificent heroism been fighting in behalf of ~~the~~ the Loyalist Government and against the Moorish-Italian-German onslaught upon the liberties of the Spanish people.

It is a great mistake on the part of spokesmen of a religious group which is itself a minority group in this country and which in other countries is persecuted and charged with attitudes and actions for which it is not responsible, to turn round and charge another group with equally unwarranted and unjustified accusations. There is nothing to be gained by calling or by implying that the Jews of America are Communists except to strengthen the hands of the reactionary forces in this country which may some day be encouraged to attempt some Fascist adventure and which, if successful, will result in incalculable harm not alone to the Jewish group but to the

Catholic group and the Prot stant group as well. Witness the case of Nazi Germany, and the utterly shameless attack upon the Catholic Church there, and the repression of the Protestant Church as well. The brave Cardinal Faulhaber of Munich, Germany has been too wise to fall into this trap of unconsciously aiding Fascism b fighting Communism with the weapons of anti-Semitism.

The Jews of the United States are patriotic, devoted to the democratic institutions of this country which they helped to build and to defend in times of peace and war. If there are some Jews in the United States who are Communists, there are also Communists among the German, Irish, Italian and other nationality groups in this country. If some Communists come from Jewish homes, others come from Catholic and Protestant homes. And, be it remembered, there are as vigorous opponents of Communism among Jewish leaders in this country as there are among Catholic or Protestant leaders. These leaders, in the name of democracy, oppose Fascism as vigorously as they do Communism which, unfortunately, is not always the case ~~xxxx~~ with Catholic leaders.

May I, in passing, remind my Catholic and Protestant friends that we Jews of America are not asking for tolerance. We shall not sacrifice any of our freedom of action, individually or collectively, out of fear lest such action, based on profound conviction, will antagonize this or that section of the American population. We are part and parcel of American life exactly as every other group, and the fact that there are larger numbers in other groups does not impress us with the need of being dependent upon their toleration. We offer our cooperation even as we invite the cooperation of all other groups and religious denominations in behalf of the great American ideals which are the breath of all of our lives and the longings of all of our hearts. We refuse to accept the preposterous division of America into Jew and Christian - a theologic division of olden days. Our government recognizes no religious qualifications for citizenship, and as a racial or nationality group we are just one among fifty ~~xxxx~~ races and peoples which make

up these United States.

We stand ready, at all times, to defend the rights of other groups equally with our own. At the session of the Central Conference of American Rabbis held in Milwaukee Wisconsin in 1933, the following resolution was unanimously adopted after listening to a report of the persecution of the Catholic Church in a number of lands:

"We Jews, pledged to the principle of religious liberty for all groups, are perturbed by the increasing growth of restrictions against the Catholic Church in a number of lands.

"We stand firmly on the principle that no political philosophy and certainly not that of liberalism dare lead itself to the suppression of a free and ~~any~~ unhampered religious worship. Believing that every individual has the right to worship God according to the dictates of his conscience, we desire to put ourselves on record as deploring the disabilities to which the religious agencies of the Catholic Church have been subjected in recent years in some quarters."