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

Series VI: Speaking Engagements, 1917-1964.

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Princeton, New Jersey, 1921-1947.

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY
PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY

Jan. 24, 1921

Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver
Congregation Tifreth Israel
Cleveland, Ohio.

Dear Rabbi Silver;

A few of the Jewish men of Princeton last year conceived the idea of forming a congregation for religious services on Friday evenings. The meetings were attended by only a very small minority of the fifty Jews here, so few as six or eight comprising the entire body on a large number of the evenings. It was extremely difficult to interest that portion of our number who were indifferent to anything religious and it was quite impossible to conciliate that other portion who, weak-kneed and cowardly, feared to affiliate themselves with any movement strictly Jewish, at a place where, in the past, the percentage of Jews has been a negligible quantity, and where the impression that "Jews were not wanted" has been let go uncorrected.

A faithful few, however, carried the thing through quietly and unostentatiously, and began anew this year by interesting the entering men, a good percentage of whom responded in a most encouraging manner. We have been conducting services every Friday evening, with one or two exceptions, and have arrived at that point where our average attendance is about one-third. When we are unable to have a Rabbi visit us to conduct the services, one of our own number does so, and we recruit a local minister or professor to talk. So far Rabbis Goldenson, Lazaron, Foster, Stern, Ettelson, and Mann, have given us evenings and we have a number of others scheduled for coming meetings. It would indeed be presumptuous for me to ask you to come from Cleveland to address our congregation at present. However, should you be East, ~~in spring~~ we should be delighted to have you any Friday in May.

Very sincerely yours,

Morton Meyer

*13 Middle Dock
Princeton N.J.*

January 25th, 1921

Mr. Morten Meyer,
13 Middle Ded,
Princeton, N.J.

My dear Mr. Meyer,

Permit me to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 24th, conveying the interesting information concerning the founding of a Students' Synagogue at Princeton and describing your activities during the past year.

I would, of course, be glad to avail myself of the opportunity to address your congregation. I cannot say now just when I shall be in the vicinity of Princeton, but whenever that opportunity presents itself to me, I shall get in touch with you.

With kindest regards, I beg to remain

Very sincerely yours,

December sixteenth
1921

Mr. Charles Handler,
13 South West
Princeton, N.Y.

My dear Mr. Handler,

Permit me to thank you for your kind invitation to address the Jewish Student Congregation at Princeton. I wish I were in a position to avail myself of your kindness. Unfortunately, my work here incidental to the building of our new Temple is so heavy that I cannot, in justice to myself, accept any further engagements for this season.

Perhaps next year I may be able to be of service to you.

Very sincerely yours,

DR. OTTO NATHAN
6 Bank Street
Princeton
N. J.

March 28, 1934.

Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver,
Cleveland, Ohio.

Dear Rabbi Silver:

I felt so much impressed by your two speeches at Newark which I had the privilege of hearing that I want to again express my gratitude for the inspiration we derived from you. I have never before heard a speech on the German situation which was given with so much force and vigor and which pictured the events in Germany and all their social, political and economic implications with such a fine understanding. As one of those who is directly affected by the developments in Germany and whose family is still living in that country, I felt some comfort that there are men like you who have made our cause their cause, and who are fighting such a vigorous and gallant fight. I am sure that everybody in your audience was intensely moved by your warm and forceful appeal.

It would be a great pleasure indeed if I could soon have an opportunity of meeting you again and of discussing with you at greater length the situation both in Europe and in the United States. Please let me know in case you may be coming east in the near future. I should certainly try to make it possible to meet you in New York should you plan to be there.

With best wishes,

Very sincerely yours,

Otto Nathan,

April 10, 1934.

Dr. Otto Nathan,
6 Bank Street,
Princeton, N.J.

My dear Dr. Nathan:

Permit me to thank you for your thoughtfulness in writing to me and to express to you my great pleasure in having heard from you. It was a source of deep satisfaction that I had the opportunity of meeting you at Professor Einstein's banquet. I trust that good fortune will favor me in the near future and that I shall have the opportunity of meeting you again. I may be in the vicinity of Princeton in the next few months and I shall then give myself the pleasure of calling on you.

What are your plans for the summer? Are you remaining in the country?

With best wishes, permit me to remain

Very cordially yours,

AHS:BK

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JULY 2ND AND THIRD JOINING FIFTY AMERICAN CHRISTIAN
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WOULD LIKE YOU TO SPEAK 30 MINUTES AT CLOSING SESSION
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Dr. Le Sand
41 E. 42 nd St.

WRHS



I inform Dr. Bernstein of my inability to attend
Princeton Conference. I should very much like to
come but previous commitments make that impossible.
I wish conference every success. Kindest regards.
Abba Hillel Silver

34 South West
Princeton University
Princeton, N.J.
October 23, 1947

Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver
c/o The Zionist Organization of America
Cleveland, Ohio

Dear Sir,

Princeton University has always been known as the center of Arab learning and culture in the United States. For many years Professor Hitti has taught here, and spoken to the students and to the nation in behalf of the Arab nations, and lately in behalf of the Arab League and their anti-Zionist stand.

Last year, the Princeton Liberal Union received its charter from the University as an organization devoted to the promotion of liberal ideas on the campus. This year the Student Hebrew Association was actively organized with the help of the B'nai Brith Hillel Foundation, to minister to the needs of the Jewish students on campus. Both the Liberal Union and the Student Hebrew Association feel that the entire question of Zionism and of the Holy Land has been presented too one-sidedly here at Princeton. Very rarely has the Zionist view been defended on campus, and to my knowledge no great Zionist leader has ever spoken here. We feel that this state of affairs is definitely detrimental to the development of unbiased and liberal thinking.

Now, for the first time, the opportunity has arisen to remedy this unequal and undemocratic situation. There exist on the campus two organizations dedicated to the reduction of such inequalities. Therefore it is my duty and pleasure as a member of both organizations to extend to you an invitation to address an open meeting, and to present the Zionist answer to the problem of Eretz Israel to the student body, faculty, and townspeople of Princeton either sometime in December, or at your own convenience.

A well-versed, well-known speaker is needed to equalize the inequalities which have existed for so long. I sincerely hope that you will be able to address the forum.

Respectfully,

Joel C. Dobin

Joel C. Dobin, Chairman,
Joint Forum Committee
Princeton Liberal Union
Student Hebrew Association

November 2, 1947

Mr. Joel C. Dobin
34 South West
Princeton University
Princeton, N.J.

My dear Mr. Dobin:

I wish I were free to come to Princeton to address a meeting under your auspices. It would give me great pleasure. Unfortunately the pressure of my work compels me to decline your gracious invitation. I have been unable to accept other invitations which normally I should be most happy to accept because of the pressure of Zionist obligations which I have assumed.

I would, however, suggest that you get in touch with Mrs. Blanche J. Shepard, who is in charge of the Lecture Bureau of the American Zionist Emergency Council, 342 Madison Avenue, N.Y. I am sure that she will be able to provide you with a speaker that would fully meet your needs. This Lecture Bureau provides many campuses with prominent speakers. When you write to Mrs. Shepard, please mention that I have referred you to her.

With all good wishes, I remain

Very cordially yours,

AHS:BK