



## Abba Hillel Silver Collection Digitization Project

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

Series VII: Personal Miscellaneous, 1908-1989, undated.

Sub-series G: Oddments, 1917-1989, undated.

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Correspondence, Paul W. Walter and Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver,  
concerning Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver and Senator Robert Taft,  
1989.

Paul W. Walter  
1215 Terminal Tower  
Cleveland, Ohio 44113

January 27, 1989

Rabbi Daniel Silver  
The Temple  
26000 Shaker Boulevard  
Cleveland, Ohio 44122

Dear Daniel:

Some days ago there was an article in the Plain Dealer celebrating the heritage of Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver. As I read the article, it brought back many memories of my association with your late father.

In early 1944, your father was in New York, meeting with a prominent lay Zionist. Your father was the world's most outstanding Zionist leader. He had just learned about the deal that President Roosevelt had made with the King of Saudi Arabia.

Some months earlier, Life Magazine had a cover story showing President Roosevelt dressed in his black cape, sitting with the King of Saudi Arabia dressed in his white flowing garb - seated in the fantail of a cruiser in the Mediterrean Sea.

As the North African campaign was succeeding and General Rommell was retreating, Churchill was determined to invade Europe from its soft underbelly and through the Eastern Europe countries, thus separating Russia from Europe. In order to accomplish this, there had to be an assurance that oil would be available from the Mid-Eastern source, namely Saudi Arabia. As part of this deal, the Saudis demanded the withdrawal from the commitment that an Israeli homeland would be established in Palestine.

When your father consulted with the man in New York, he was very distraught about the shocking development and in his disillusionment as to his trust in President Roosevelt he queried the New York person as to whom he should turn. This man suggested to him that he talk with the late Senator



Robert Taft. Since the Taft family was a tolerant family, William Howard Taft at the close of the Spanish-American War negotiated the Papal land grants settlement.

The man called Senator Taft and arranged to have your father on the train to Washington, and your father and Senator Taft met at 10:00 P.M. the same evening to discuss the situation. The Senator promised your father that he would check into the matter and contact him - hopefully in about forty-eight hours. Your father told me later that he left with great hope but with the feeling that nothing would happen. However, he did receive a call from the Senator advising that he checked into the situation and found that your father's information was sound and that he would immediately cause a resolution to be introduced in the Senate to reaffirm the early commitment to establish the State of Israel and not the agreement to abandon the Belfour declaration. This was accomplished.

Later on I had a meeting with your father at the Temple which was always an inspiring experience and he advised me he had great respect for Senator Taft. Senator Taft had arranged for him to deliver the invocation at the Republican Convention in Chicago in 1944. As we talked, he stressed the importance of having Senator Taft remain in the Senate.

At that time we still had the straight ticket in Ohio by which a person could vote the entire Democratic ticket by placing an X in a circle under a Rooster, or Republican by placing an X in the circle under the Eagle. Mayor Lausche of Cleveland was the Democratic candidate for Governor and James Garfield Stewart of Cincinnati was the candidate for Governor on the Republican ticket. Pickrel of Dayton, was the Democratic candidate for Senate against Senator Taft. However, their names were seven places down the ballot and there was a danger that Taft would be defeated in the northern Ohio counties by the straight Democratic ticket votes.

Your father said to me that if he could



be helpful, I should call him.

Louis Seltzer took a poll in which he had the candidates for governor and senate each against the opposing candidates. The poll showed Lausche defeating Stewart in Cuyahoga County by well over 275,000 votes and Taft defeated Pickerel by a substantial margin. I called Louis Seltzer about the results and he then took a second poll using the straight ticket which showed Taft being defeated in Cuyahoga County. There was a budget of \$10,000 for the campaign. No one expected serious problems. With Lausche at the head of the Democratic ticket from Cleveland and James Garfield Stewart at the head of the Republican ticket from Cincinnati, Taft faced defeat.

I called the Senator and we met at the Terminal on a Friday evening and tried to establish what we could do to overcome the disadvantage of the straight ticket voting. I told him he had to move a large group of voters that were against him by voting the straight Democratic ticket and if he were to gain this vote the voter would have to scratch out Pickerel and put an X in front of Taft. I said, "The Jewish voters are most likely to vote the straight Democratic ticket because of the Roosevelt influence". I received Senator Taft's permission to call your father and on Saturday morning, I called him. His secretary told me it was impossible for your father to talk to me. I left my name and phone number with the secretary, and in a few minutes I received a phone call from your father. I explained the problem and your father asked that Senator Taft be at the Temple on Sunday evening, ten days before the election.

Senator Taft and I arrived at the Temple at 8:00 P.M. and were taken to your father's office, and in due time we appeared on the platform. Senator Taft and I sat in one corner and your father in his inimitable style was speaking about President Roosevelt to an audience fully aware of its loyalty to Roosevelt. Suddenly your father stopped, raised his hands high in the air and shouted, "He betrayed us.". He repeated this two more times and only your



father with his inspiring oratory could accomplish the result. The result was electrifying. He stated what happened and that he had on the platform a dear friend who saved the situation. After he introduced Senator Taft and Taft made a short comment, your father called out, "Am I a politician?" And they all said "No.". "Do you want a friend in Washington in January?" "Yes". "Do I have to tell you what to do?" "No".

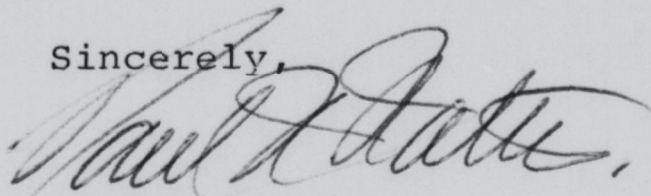
Taft carried the state by 17,500 votes. Lausche beat Stewart by a tremendous margin. The CIO-PAC paid for and demanded a recount of every precinct in the state, some 9,900 at \$10 per precinct for a total of \$99,000. The recount started in Cleveland and amazingly, as the ballot bags were opened reflecting areas where there was a heavy Jewish population, every ballot showed an X under the Rooster and a line through Pickerel and an X in front of Taft.

It was this sharp swing in voting that elected Taft in 1944. The friendship continued between your father and Senator Taft and I had the rare privilege of having been associated with your father and to witness his tremendous power.

I thought you might be interested in reading this very important occurrence and your father's key roll in having Senator Taft remain in the U.S. Senate after 1944.

Wishing you the best.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Paul W. Walter".

Paul W. Walter

PWW:11b



# The Temple

DANIEL JEREMY SILVER - RABBI

UNIVERSITY CIRCLE AT SILVER PARK • CLEVELAND, OHIO 44106 • 791-7755  
BRANCH: 26000 SHAKER BLVD. • BEACHWOOD, OHIO 44122 • 831-3233

FEBRUARY 7, 1989

MR. PAUL W. WALTER  
1215 TERMINAL TOWER  
CLEVELAND, OH 44118

DEAR PAUL:

I WANT TO THANK YOU FOR THE FASCINATING LETTER THAT YOU WROTE ME ABOUT DAD AND SENATOR TAFT AND THOSE EARLY YEARS. I DID NOT KNOW THE WHOLE STORY, AND I WILL PUT YOUR LETTER IN THE ARCHIVES OF THE TEMPLE.

I TRUST YOU ARE WELL. HOPE TO SEE YOU SOON.

SINCERELY,

DANIEL JEREMY SILVER

DJS:MP