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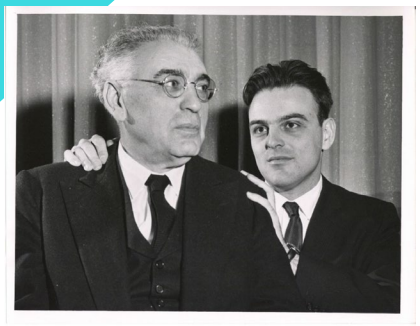




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Welcome: **Dr. Dana Herman,** *Associate Director, AJA*

Introduction: **Dr. Gary P. Zola,** *Exec. Director Emeritus, American Jewish Archives & Edward M. Ackerman Family Distinguished Professor Emeritus of the American Jewish Experience & Reform Jewish History at Hebrew Union College*

Panelists:

Mr. David Eisenhower, J.D., *Director of the Institute for Public Service, Annenberg School for Communication University of Pennsylvania*

Dr. Jonathan D. Sarna, *University Professor and the Joseph H. & Belle R. Braun Professor of American Jewish History, Emeritus at Brandeis University*

Dr. Susannah Heschel, *Eli M. Black Distinguished Professor of Jewish Studies and chair of the Jewish Studies Program at Dartmouth College*

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Dr. Dana Herman

Dana Herman, Ph.D., is Associate Director of the Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives (AJA), editor of *The American Jewish Archives Journal*, and director of the AJA Fellowship Program. She has worked at the AJA since 2007 and has held a series of leadership roles in collections, research, publishing, and public programming.

Dr. Herman received her Ph.D. in History from McGill University, specializing in modern Jewish history and the history of Jewish cultural reconstruction after the Second World War. Her publications include articles, book chapters, encyclopedia entries, and the co-edited volume *Sisterhood: A Centennial History of Women of Reform Judaism*.

Dr. Herman serves as an Affiliate Faculty member in the Department of History at the University of Cincinnati and is active in numerous professional organizations. She serves on the board of Jewish Community Legacies Project (JCLP), Jewish Women's Archive (JWA) and an honorary advisory board member of JewishGen's USA Research Division. She was the recipient of the 2022 Women of Reform Judaism HUC Faculty Award.

Dr. Gary P. Zola

Gary Phillip Zola is Executive Director Emeritus of the Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives (AJA) and the Edward M. Ackerman Family Distinguished Professor of the American Jewish Experience & Reform Jewish History at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR) in Cincinnati. Ordained as a rabbi in 1982 and awarded a Ph.D. in American Jewish History in 1991 by HUC-JIR, he has served the institution for more than four decades. As director of the AJA from 1998 to 2023, succeeding his mentor Jacob Rader Marcus, he expanded its collections, programs, facilities, and public accessibility, helping establish it as a leading center for the study of American Jewish life. A nationally recognized historian specializing in nineteenth-century American Judaism and Reform Judaism, Zola has authored and edited numerous influential books and scholarly publications. His public service includes appointments by Presidents Barack Obama and Joe Biden to federal commissions focused on historic preservation and Holocaust remembrance. He has also been widely honored for his civic leadership and community service in Cincinnati, where he lives with his wife, Stefi, and their family.

David Eisenhower, JD

David Eisenhower is the Director of the Institute for Public Service at the Annenberg School of Communication at the University of Pennsylvania. He is the author of *Eisenhower at War: 1943-1945*, which was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in history in 1987. Educated at Philips Exeter Academy, Amherst College, and George Washington University Law School, he is the son of John and Barbara Eisenhower, and the grandson of President Dwight D. Eisenhower. He is married to the former Julie Nixon, younger daughter of President Richard Nixon. David and Julie Eisenhower are the parents of three adult children and live in suburban Philadelphia.

Rabbi Silver Urges Candidate Eisenhower to Issue a Statement Clarifying His Position on Israel

PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES ON ISRAEL

Dr. Abba Hillel Silver met with General Dwight D. Eisenhower on October 18 at the latter's residence at Columbia University. Dr. Silver had written to the General on October 14, suggesting that the Republican Presidential candidate define his views on the subject of Israel. After the meeting, the following letter from General Eisenhower to Dr. Silver was made public:

October 17, 1952

Dr. Abba Hillel Silver
The Temple
Ansel Road and East 105 Street
Cleveland 6, Ohio

Dear Dr. Silver:

I was very pleased to receive your letter. I know, of course, of your profound interest in everything which concerns the State of Israel and of the unforgettable contribution which you made toward its establishment.

I should wish you and all Americans to know that I am in complete and hearty accord with the statement on Israel in the Republican platform. This, as you well know, was not a new departure, politically motivated, but one which represented a consistently friendly and cooperative attitude on the part of the Republican party over a period of many years. You will recall how vigorously and effectively Republican Senators and Congressmen, Governors and State Legislators supported the cause which was never viewed by them as a partisan issue, but as one which commended itself to all right-thinking people because of its inherent justice and as the right solution for one of mankind's grave and pressing problems.

As Commander of the Allied Armies during the last war, I had the fullest opportunity to observe closely the tragic conditions of the war ravaged and Nazi decimated Jewish communities of Europe. It will be one of the enduring satisfactions of my life that I was privileged to lead the forces of the free world, which finally crushed the brutal regime of Hitler, with its responsbility for all those unspeakable atrocities. Our forces saved the remnant of the Jewish people of Europe for a new life and a new hope in the reborn land of Israel.

Along with all men of good will, I salute the young state and wish it well. I know what great things it has accomplished. I admire the hardihood of its pioneers and the vision and quality of the work of resettlement and reclamation which they are so energetically prosecuting. I also know something of their besetting difficulties and of the problems, both political and economic, which confront them. Foremost among these is that of establishing peace with the Arab world. Such a peace would be a boon both to Israel and to the Arab states. Such peace in the Middle East is essential to the free world. Every encouragement should be given to facilitate

direct negotiations between the State of Israel and its Arab neighbors whose independence, freedom and prosperity are equally the hope and wish of the American people.

One of the serious stumbling blocks in the way is the problem of the Arab refugees. In my judgment, both statesmanship and humanity dictate that these unfortunate refugees should, as rapidly as possible, be assisted with adequate means honorably to reintegrate themselves in the neighboring Arab countries wherever their reabsorption in Israel is either not feasible or practical.

The State of Israel has given every indication of being a progressive democracy which is desirous of cooperating with the free world in defense of human freedom and against totalitarian aggression. It is in the interest of the United States and of all peace loving nations that political and economic aid to establish their own security should be extended to Israel and to all countries in the Middle East which are similarly intentioned, to an extent consistent with a sound overall mutual aid program.

With warm regards and all good wishes,

(Signed) Dwight D. Eisenhower

* * * *

Louis Lipsky, Chairman of the American Zionist Council, received the following statement on Thursday, October 23, from Governor Adlai E. Stevenson, Democratic candidate for President, expressing his views on Israel:

"Four and one-half years ago there was born in the Middle East a new democracy, the nation of Israel, the fulfillment of a people's dream of many centuries.

"The friendship of the people of the United States for the new nation of Israel is unquestioned. We may be proud of the fact that President Truman made us the first country to recognize Israel, and that he promised his own unstinting help to the new state.

"But words are often cheap, actions come dearer. We may be even prouder that our pledge of aid to Israel has been honored. One hundred and thirty-eight million dollars in grants for the economic strengthening of Israel was voted by the last Congress. In addition, one hundred and thirty-five million dollars in loans have been granted by the United States Export-Import Bank.

"Not only has Israel received the help of our government, she has also benefited from the generosity of our people who have contributed generously to the noble cause of the United Jewish Appeal and who have invested in Israeli bonds.

President Eisenhower Invites Abba Hillel Silver to Attend One of His Men-Only Social Evenings at the White House

DDE

THE WHITE HOUSE

November 3, 1953

Dear Dr. Silver:

I wonder if it would be convenient for you to come to an informal stag dinner on the evening of Thursday, December third. I hope to gather together a small group, and I should like very much for you to attend if it is possible for you to do so.

Because of the informality of the occasion, I suggest that we meet at the White House about half past seven, have a reasonably early dinner, and devote the evening to a general chat. While I am hopeful that you can attend, I realize that you already may have engagements which would interfere. If so, I assure you of my complete understanding.

With warm personal regard,

Sincerely,

Dwight D. Eisenhower

Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver
The Temple
East 105th Street and Ansel Road
Cleveland, Ohio

November 10, 1953

Honorable Dwight D. Eisenhower
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D. C.

My dear President:

Thank you for your kind note of November 3rd and for your gracious invitation to attend an informal stag dinner on Thursday evening, December 3rd. I am most happy and honored to accept your invitation and shall look forward to being with you on the 3rd.

With all good wishes, permit me to remain

Most cordially yours,

AHS:dk

ABBA HILLEL SILVER

December 11, 1953

Honorable Dwight D. Eisenhower
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D. C.

My dear Mr. President:

I listened to your great utterance last Tuesday before the Assembly of the United Nations. It filled my heart, as I am sure it must have those of all your fellow citizens, with deep pride and gratitude. You have again superbly demonstrated to the world the moral leadership of America to which free men everywhere are so eagerly and hopefully turning. Your inspired address and your statesman-like proposals for the easing of tensions and the pacification of our world are milestones, regardless what the momentary reaction to them may be.

May I thank you also, Mr. President, for the perfectly delightful evening which I was privileged to spend with you on December third.

With warmest regards, I remain

Most cordially yours,

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

December 14, 1953.

Dear Dr. Silver:

Thank you very much for your note of December eleventh regarding the UN speech. I can only pray that it will contribute in some measure toward the strengthening of hope and the lessening of fear among the peoples of the earth.

I, too, enjoyed the dinner on December third, and I am glad you were able to be with us.

With warm personal regard,

Sincerely,

Dwight D. Eisenhower

Dr. Abba Hillel Silver,
The Temple,
Cleveland, Ohio.

Dr. Silver is Upset with the Sale of Soviet-bloc weapons to Egypt in September of 1955 and He Urges President Eisenhower to Issue a Statement on the Matter

Nov. 14-1955

Dwight D. Eisenhower
President of the United States
White House
Washington, D.C.

My dear Mr. President:

I have been profoundly disturbed by the recent events in the Near East which have aroused deep apprehension in Israel and among peace loving people everywhere. I am to address on November 15th a mass rally at Madison Square Garden, NY City in which many civic, religious and labor organizations will participate, to express their VITAL concern over the situation. I know that they would welcome a word from you, as coming not only from the Chief Executive of our beloved country but as the foremost spokesman of international justice, freedom and peace in the world today. Personally I would greatly appreciate such a message. With warmest regards and with all good wishes for your complete recovery and well-being.

Abba Hillel Silver

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WESTERN UNION

1220

W. P. MARSHALL, PRESIDENT

SYMBOLS
DL=Day Letter
NL=Night Letter
LT=Int'l Letter Telegram
VLT=Int'l Victory Ltr.

(50) 1955 NOV 15 PM 4 54

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NBC100 LONG GOVT PD=THE WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON DC 15 353PME=
RABBI ABBA HILLEL SILVER, REPORT DLY=
=ROOM 1026 COMMODORE HOTEL=

=I AM GLAD TO COMPLY WITH YOUR REQUEST TO SEND A MESSAGE TO THE MEETING WHICH YOU ARE ADDRESSING THIS EVENING. AS I KNOW OF YOUR GREAT CONCERN ABOUT THE RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE NEAR EAST WHICH DISTURB ALL OF US. A THREAT TO PEACE IN THE NEAR EAST IS A THREAT TO WORLD PEACE. AS I SAID THE OTHER DAY, WHILE WE CONTINUE WILLING TO CONSIDER REQUESTS FOR ARMS NEEDED FOR LEGITIMATE SELF DEFENSE, WE DO NOT INTEND TO CONTRUBUTE TO AN ARMS COMPETITION IN THE NEAR EAST. WE WILL CONTINUE TO BE GUIDED BY THE POLICIES OF THE TRIPARTITE DECLARATION OF MAY 25, 1950. WE BELIEVE THIS POLICY BEST PROMOTES THE INTEREST AND SECURITY OF THE PEOPLES OF THE AREA.=

WE BELIEVE THE TRUE AND LASTING SECURITY IN THE AREA MUST BE BASED UPON A JUST AND REASONABLE SETTLEMENT. IT SEEMS TO ME THAT CURRENT PROBLEMS ARE CABAPLE OF RESOLUTION BY PEACEFUL MEANS. THERE IS NO REASON WHY A SETTLEMENT OF THESE PROBLEM S CANNOT BE FOUND. AND WHEN REALIZED I WOULD BE PREPARED TO RECOMMEND THAT THE=

(END SHEET ONE)=

THE COMPANY WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING ITS SERVICE

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NBC100 SHEET TWO

UNITED STATES JOIN IN FORMAL TREATY ENGAGEMENTS TO PREVENT OR THWART ANY EFFORT BY EITHER SIDE TO ALTER BY FORCE THE BOUNDARIES UPON WHICH ISRAEL AND ITS IMMEDIATE NEIGHBORS AGREE.=

THE NEED FOR A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT BECOMES DAILY MORE IMPERATIVE. THE UNITED STATES WILL PLAY ITS FULL PART IN WORKING TOWARD SUCH A SETTLEMENT AND WILL SUPPORT FIRMLY THE UNITED NATIONS IN ITS EFFORTS TO PREVENT VIOLENCE IN THE AREA. BY FIRM FRIENDSHIP TOWARDS ISRAEL AND ALL OTHER NATIONS IN THE NEAR EAST. WE SHALL CONTINUE TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE PEACE OF THE WORLD=

=DWIGHT D EISENHOWER=

THE COMPANY WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING ITS SERVICE



Office of the Historian
U.S. DEPARTMENT of STATE | BUREAU OF ADMINISTRATION

FOREIGN RELATIONS OF THE UNITED STATES, 1955–1957, ARAB-ISRAELI DISPUTE, JANUARY 1–JULY 26, 1956, VOLUME XV

311. Memorandum of a Conversation, White House, Washington, April 26, 1956, 11:10–11:50 a.m.[1]

Washington, April 26, 1956, 11:10–11:50 a.m.

PARTICIPANTS

The President
Rabbi Hillel Silver
Secretary Dulles

Rabbi Silver made a very strong plea for arms to Israel along the conventional lines, picking up all of the arguments of Eban in answering the counterarguments which I had made to Eban. It seemed obvious that Silver had been pretty well briefed by the Israelis. He argued that since we felt that Israel should get arms from somewhere and since they could not get arms unless we did something, therefore we should do something. The President and I explained our desire to be able to exert an influence throughout the area for peace, and that while we were constantly reviewing the question of defensive arms of some kind for Israel, we had not yet concluded that this would really serve the interests of peace in the area. I said that we did not want our policy to seem to be made by the Zionists and that I did not think that the mass meetings and public appeals helped the situation. Silver seemed somewhat resentful of this intimation.

The President said that he was not going to be influenced at all by political considerations and that if doing what he thought right resulted in his not being elected, that would be quite agreeable to him. Silver said, "You can be reelected without a single Jewish vote."

JFD[2]

1. Source: Eisenhower Library, Dulles Papers, Meetings with the President. Confidential; Personal and Private. Drafted by Dulles. The time of the meeting is from the record of the President's Daily Appointments. (*Ibid.*)↩
2. William Macomber initialed for Secretary Dulles.↩

Dr. Silver Crafts the Text of a Passover Greeting to Israel's President Yitzchak Ben Zvi.



(UNedited copy of greeting letter dictated by AHS and phoned in to Washington)

March 15, 1956

President
State of Israel

My dear Mr. Ben ~~Sevi~~ Zvi:

Through my friend, Dr. Abba Hillel Silver, who is about to visit Israel, I take the opportunity to convey to you my warm greetings on the occasion of the celebration of Passover, your historic Festival of Freedom and on the eve of the Eighth Anniversary of the establishment of the State of Israel.

I have followed with admiration the progress and development of your country. The American people wish your young State peace and prosperity. Permit me to assure you that the American Government is earnestly and in the friendliest of spirit exploring every avenue to bring about a satisfactory and peaceful solution of the problems which confront Israel and its neighbors. Patience, confidence and good will will help us greatly along the way.

With best wishes, I remain,

Cordially yours,

See publication in Cleveland Press of March 24, 1956

Dr. Jonathan D. Sarna

Jonathan D. Sarna is University Professor and the Joseph H. & Belle R. Braun Professor of American Jewish History (emeritus) at Brandeis University. He also is the past president of the Association for Jewish Studies, Chief Historian of the Weitzman National Museum of American Jewish History in Philadelphia, and co-chair of the Academic Advisory and Editorial Board of the American Jewish Archives. Author or editor of more than thirty books on American Jewish history and life, his *American Judaism: A History,* now in its second edition, won six awards including the 2004 "Everett Jewish Book of the Year Award" from the Jewish Book Council. Sarna is a fellow both of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and of the American Academy of Jewish Research, and he holds five honorary degrees. His most recent books are *Coming to Terms with America,* a volume of essays now translated into Hebrew under the title *Zehuyot Bemifgash*; and *Yearning to Breathe Free: Jews in Gilded Age America,* coedited with Adam Mendelsohn. His *Mark Twain and the Jews: Defying Antisemitism in the Gilded Age,* with Benjamin Shapell, will be published next Fall by Princeton University Press.

ABBA HILLEL SILVER COMMENTS ON STATEMENTS BY DR. ISRAEL GOLDSTEIN & CONTROVERSIES IN THE AMERICAN ZIONIST EMERGENCY COUNCIL

Note: For the Purposes of This Webinar Only Pages 1 and 6 are shown.

STATEMENT BY DR. ABBA HILLEL SILVER

I have been requested to comment on the statements issued by Dr. Israel Goldstein which purport to give the facts connected with the controversy which developed in the American Zionist Emergency Council. Dr. Goldstein's facts suffer from deft distortions, twists and significant omissions, which give a false and misleading account of what actually transpired.

1) Dr. Goldstein states that at a meeting of the Emergency Council on October 30, it was unanimously decided not to press for the resolutions unless and until the preliminary approval of the Executive branch of the Government shall have been secured. No such decision was taken by the Emergency Council on October 30. In fact no decisions whatsoever were taken at that meeting. The minutes of the meeting quote me as saying: "We will not go ahead with the resolution without fully canvassing the situation. If the answer from the State Department is at all vague, I would not recommend proceeding with it." This precaution was suggested, not out of a desire not to offend the State Department or the President, but in order to protect ourselves against the kind of surprise which was jumped on us last Spring. The Council wanted to make doubly sure before it moved; but no one really expected any opposition in view of all that had transpired in the preceding months.

At that same meeting I reported (and I quote from the minutes of the meeting) "that in anticipation of the reconsideration of the resolution when Congress reconvenes, the Emergency Council has been engaged in stimulating afresh the interest of the members of the House Foreign Affairs and Senate Foreign Relations Committees. The local emergency committees in communities in which these members resided had been asked to approach them again and to bring them up to date on recent developments and to suggest that early action on the resolution, when Congress reconvenes, would be desirable. The results so far are gratifying."

Thus the Council, on October 30, was fully informed that continued activities in behalf of our resolution were going on and would continue in Washington and all over the country. It is false to suggest even by implication that the Emergency Council at its meeting on October 30 ordered all of our activities in behalf of the resolution to be discontinued. It merely directed that we explore the mind of the State Department on our resolution, and there was a consensus of opinion that if the State Department attitude was found to be negative, we would then not proceed with the resolutions. Until such time, however, activities in behalf of the resolution were not to be discontinued, nor was word to go out that we were even considering a possible postponement.

Inquiries were accordingly made at the State Department, and at the meeting on November 21, Dr. Wise reported "that Mr. Stettinius had telephoned him and informed him that he had seen the President who urged that nothing be done about the bill at this time and that the matter be left in his hands a little while longer."

This, however, did not satisfy the members of the Emergency Council. Many felt that they had made a mistake in deciding to make inquiries at the State Department in the first place. We might have assumed that the withdrawal of the military objections, the party platforms which included Palestine planks and the statement of the President himself on October 15 were sufficient "green light" to go ahead.

At this meeting, and here again I quote from the minutes, "there followed a lengthy discussion, and it was finally decided that efforts be made once more to obtain clearance from the President through Senator Wagner, and perhaps others. It was

Dr. Goldmann did not treat that "information" as confidential. He conveyed this "information" to newspapermen in New York. A panic mood was being fostered among Zionists with the design -- as later events showed -- to bring about my resignation.

In preparation for my official report to the Emergency Council, which was to be given on December 20, and in order not to do any injustice either to the Secretary of State or to the President, I made inquiries as to whether this memorandum of Dr. Goldmann correctly represented what Mr. Stettinius had said, and whether perhaps he had been misquoted, or misunderstood.

I received a reply to the effect that Dr. Goldmann's memorandum "was not quite in accordance with the Secretary's record. The Secretary told Dr. Wise that he had been in touch with the President as he had offered to do regarding the statement which Dr. Wise and Dr. Silver had requested him to make. The reaction that Mr. Stettinius obtained was that the President felt that this group should have confidence in his handling of the matter and that it would not be appropriate for Mr. Stettinius to issue the statement. Mr. Stettinius asked Dr. Wise if he would be good enough to give this information to Dr. Silver."

This, of course, is a radically different version from that of Dr. Goldmann's. There is nothing here about the President being in a very bad mood, or feeling that the Zionists had lost confidence in him. But Rabbi Goldstein, far from being shocked at Dr. Goldmann's amazing misquotation of a most critical report and far from regarding it as something "scandalous," denounces rather my fact-finding inquiry as something "scandalous"...

12) There are many other things which this Rabbi chooses to forget. Already at the Zionist Convention in Atlantic City he and his little cabal were preparing the way for my elimination. The Resolutions Committee of the Convention had prepared a resolution which wholeheartedly endorsed my administration and called for a continuation of the dynamic and successful program of the Emergency Council "under the present leadership." At a subsequent meeting, Dr. Goldstein demanded the elimination of the words "under the present leadership." He made that request, he said, in the name of Dr. Wise with whom he had spoken by telephone in New York. I stated, of course, that as far as I was concerned, I intended to hold my office not a single day longer than the Emergency Council wished me to, and that, of course, I would agree to the elimination of the words "under the present leadership."

The ZOA Administration had a difficult time at the plenary session of the Convention to put through the resolution without the words "under the present leadership." I personally had to step forward and beg the delegates to agree to the omission of those words. But my friends and I knew all along what was in the mind of Dr. Goldstein and his clique.

13) Many will recall the fight which raged at the ZOA Convention in Atlantic City about my annual report which the administration was determined to schedule at the very end of the Convention when most of the delegates would have gone home, in order to make small change of it. Dr. Goldstein had to yield to the pressure from the delegates but the whole miserable affair was another result of the embittered and envenomed policy of undermining, belittling and discrediting which Dr. Goldstein and his friends had been carrying on throughout the year.

14) The Rabbi has since carried out a successful purge of Silver adherents on the Executive of the ZOA and among the representatives of the ZOA on the Emergency Council. His efficiency in perfecting his political machine should be the envy of Tammany Hall.

For further information write to: Harry L. Shapiro, 250 West 57 St., Room 1030, New York 19, N. Y.

Abba Hillel Silver Papers, MS-5492, Box 1, Folder 24. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

SILVER TO SOVIET AMBASSADOR ZARUBIN RE: ZIONISM AND ANTISEMITISM

January 30, 1953

His Excellency
Mr. George Zarubin
Ambassador of the
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
Washington, D. C.

Your Excellency:

The Jewish world has been profoundly disturbed by reports which have appeared in the public press with increasing frequency ever since the Prague trials, suggesting that anti-Semitic propaganda has now become an instrument of Communist policy. Knowing of the official outlawry of anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union and of its opposition through the years to all forms of discrimination on the basis of race and nationality, I am at a loss to understand what is going on. So are many other men of good will everywhere who, though they are not Communists, have consistently favored a rapprochement between the East and the West and a working out of a modus vivendi so that all peoples of the world might have peace and a chance to live their lives in accordance with their economic and political preferences.

There have been reports of the revival of the Nazi racial laws in the Soviet Zone of Germany, of anti-Semitic purges and deportations, of an attempt to woo neo-Fascists and neo-Nazis through anti-Semitism in order to win them over to a campaign against the Western democracies. There have been reports that the Jewish population in all Communist countries have been terrified by the anti-Semitic overtones of the Prague trials, and by the charges brought in Moscow against the physicians, most of whom are Jewish. It is feared that the attacks which have been made on Zionism, Zionist leaders, and the State of Israel, might arouse anti-Semitic sentiments and might endanger the security of the Jews who live in the Soviet Union and in the neighboring countries.

In writing to you, Your Excellency, at this time I do not wish to take up the present attitude of the Soviet government to the Zionist movement and the State of Israel. I am persuaded that your government is under a most unfortunate misapprehension. The Zionist movement is not a subversive movement or a movement given to espionage. Your representatives at the United Nations would not have championed the cause of a

Abba Hillel Silver Papers, MS-4787, Reel 53, Box 19, Folder 1287. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

sovereign Jewish State and would not have voted for its admission to the United Nations if the Zionist movement were of the character which it is now represented to be. Zionism has been a movement of national freedom and liberation. The State of Israel, I am persuaded, is the enemy of no country that is friendly to it. I trust that time and a fuller acquaintance with the true facts will dissipate these unfortunate misconceptions.

But anti-Semitism, racialism and hostility to the Jewish people as such may prove an imminent danger, not alone to the peace of mind and the security, but even to the very lives of millions of Jews living in the Soviet Zone, and will inflame all right-thinking people outside the Soviet Zone so that efforts at creating better understanding will become even more difficult.

In your judgment, Your Excellency, should not some authoritative statement be issued by your government which would clarify the situation, set the record straight and relieve the minds of men of fears and suspicions? From many quarters I have been asked to express an opinion upon the events which have been reported. I should like to base my judgment upon facts rather than on what might be propaganda.

With deep concern and assuring you of my high regard, permit me to remain

Respectfully yours,

ABBA HILLEL SILVER

AHS:er

Abba Hillel Silver Papers, MS-4787, Reel 53, Box 19, Folder 1287. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.



THE

TERCENTENARY DINNER

MARKING THE THREE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF JEWISH SETTLEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 20, 1954 • HOTEL ASTOR, NEW YORK CITY

MENU

THE TERCENTENARY DINNER

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 20, 1954 • HOTEL ASTOR



Traditional Stuffed Fresh Water Fish
Cucumbers Windsor
Sauce Sauterne

Olives
Hearts of Celery
Nutmeats

Roast New Amsterdam Turkey
Early American Dressing
Cape Cod Cranberries Glacés
Crown of Yams
Tiny Stringbeans and Mushrooms Sautés

Colonial Harvest Salad

Frozen Soufflé Alaska
Jubilee of Strawberries

Tercentenary Petits Fours

Demi-Tasse

PATRICIAN CATERERS

Dr. Susannah Heschel

Susannah Heschel is the Eli M. Black Distinguished Professor and Chair of Jewish Studies at Dartmouth College and currently serves as the Gerard Weinstock Visiting Professor of Jewish Studies at Harvard University. A leading scholar of modern Jewish thought, German Jewish history, and antisemitism, she is the author of *Abraham Geiger and the Jewish Jesus* and *The Aryan Jesus*, and editor or coeditor of numerous influential volumes. A Guggenheim Fellow, she has received major grants and fellowships from institutions including the Ford Foundation, Carnegie Corporation, and National Humanities Center, and has held visiting appointments at universities worldwide. She is the recipient of five honorary doctorates and continues to deliver prestigious lectures internationally, including recent engagements at the University of Munich and Yale University.

Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver Responds to the Kent State University Killings

Kent State - May 4, 1971

"Sun and stillness. Looking down the jade green waters, you see the monsters of the deep playing in the reef. Is this a reason to be afraid? Do you feel safer when the waves hide what lies beneath the waters?"
--Dag Hammarskojold

Why have we come?

Four died swiftly, suddenly -- too young. We have come in respect to their memories.

But have we? Do such conventional sentiments hide deeper, more frightening truths? Most of us did not know these four. Had they not died in the white glare of national publicity, we would not now know their names.

They lived -- yes! But do we know why they lived, what tugged at their souls?

They died -- yes. Were they martyrs who chose death deliberately to consecrate a cause? Were they frightened bystanders fatally drawn to campus excitement? Were they innocents who forgot that guards have guns and that power protects itself with bullets? Were they only passing by?

I have come because I was asked to come. Someone wanted this memorial to be consecrated by words of faith. But "Pious words do not a memorial make." No earthling can know what God is thinking about leaders who promise "peace, peace, but who do not make peace," who send soldiers to silence those who cry for an end to war and to hypocrisy -- about the flood of consoling words being spoken to those who suffered loss and wounds. "Take heart. The winter is past, springtime has come, the terror is over, all will be well. Be comforted their death has strengthened many." I wonder if God does not smile knowingly, resigned at yet another classic image of human folly: The righteous perish and no one takes it to heart.

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Legend tells that one day man spoke to God. "Let us change about. You be man and I will be God, just for one day." God smiled gently and asked man, "Aren't you afraid?" No, are you?" "Yes, I am", God said. It is easy to be God, divine, but even God trembles to be human -- a human who must contemplate that this hour's significance may lie only in its bathos, its maudlin posturing, its cathartic effect on our fears.

Ask yourself why. Why were they shot? Why this tragedy? And listen for an answer. Forget all certain answers, the words, the speeches, they are too sure. You know how you and those like you can take advantage of the flood of feelings that flows so full. But that is strategy not understanding. Listen to your silence. Do not impose your urgency on these feelings. For whom did that bell toll that day, but for you?

Ask why. Why did they die? As I listened to the silence, I heard another's silence -- the voice, minor-keyed, of a psalm. The voice of another lonely human puzzled by life's vagaries: "Then sought I to understand this, but it was too hard for me."

Why did they die? I do not know. Man's ways are set in folly. I only know that to some these deaths became symbolic. Many die every day, many die senselessly. These four died to history.

I wonder: did we need their deaths to shock us into wakefulness? Certainly, their deaths tore the last shreds of American pride.

We had accepted life as violent -- but violence happened in Viet Nam. We had accepted death as a statistic -- if the bodies counted were yellow. Soldiers fired at demonstrators, at the unwanted, the unwashed, the alien -- but not at ordinary, middle-class kids with middle-range ideas. Here were frightened American youth throwing stones -- at frightened American youth. Here were

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frightened American youth firing live bullets at frightened American youth. Why the fright? We -- they -- were caught in the whirlwind.

Was it the whirlwind of Viet Nam? Was it the whirlwind of law and order -- of racial hate, of property and privilege, of urban violence? Was it the whirlwind of parents who do not listen to their children and children who cannot speak to their parents? I do not know. I know only what others have found in this violence -- fear -- a dagger pointed at their souls -- a warning against the present.

Once we had a dream. America knew itself to be different -- blessed. There was enough for everyone, an open frontier, an abundant technology. We spoke feelingly of equal justice and the American promise -- for each man a share of a golden future. America the beautiful.

We spoke these words each Fourth of July.

The fourth of May taught the innocents that this dream was a childish fantasy. History is not a dark headline about the follies of others, but the dark scroll of our own stupidity.

But many have not seen or chosen to see the pretension gap between dream words and dreary reality. In America a respectable man goes to work in an office which has no blacks, eats at a club which has no Jews, lives in a suburb which prohibits public housing, sends his children to a school where they will meet those just like themselves, gives a few dollars to charity and his vote to those who promise lower taxes -- "Less help to those bums on welfare" -- and he is unhappy with the war in Viet Nam because we did not win it.

Oh beautiful for smoky skies, for endless littered streets. Each goes his own way confident that his is the only way. The human landscape

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is pockmarked with gaps -- between the races, between the generations, between groups of self righteous men.

The respectable are shabby. Their children see the hypocrisy of this respectability but do not see their own posturings -- a cult of freedom which is little more than an excuse for indulgence, a passion for change if it is exciting and there are others milling around, a contempt for history which dooms the contemptuous -- and their society -- to relive history's grimmer times, a childish desire for instant gratification and instant political achievement, and a thirst for crusade if it has style -- driving as one can to the revolution in his Alfa-Romeo.

History has caught up with us. We are not different. We are inconstant, instinct-ridden worldlings, pompous in our pretensions, who declare our privilege righteous and occasionally engage in selective outrage.

History has caught up with us and given us little reason to be confident about man's capacity to sort out his priorities, to set sensitivity over ambition, to set a moment of human grace against a lifetime of calculation.

History records many May 4ths.-- Right does not inevitably triumph over might -- and might often proclaims itself to be right.

History does make cynics of us all. History is dark, and the only light we carry is in our soul -- a small dim flame which says -- yes,

You can,

You must,

"Toss me about, but you will not best me.

Bruise me, but you will not turn me into a beast.

Confuse me, but I will hold fast to my conviction that every human life is sacred, that in each there is a decency which can respond.

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A voice calls by: "You must!"
Must what? O voice, explain!
Instead of an answer, I hear that voice again.

I've known them all my life,
The caller and the call.

It cries: "You Must, You Must"
And only God can tell
Whether Must is my redemption
or Must will be my hell.

(H. Levick)

I know that to love is to lose, that to live is to be bruised. To be able to find the deep source of joy, of laughter in ourselves, that's the test. To be able to respond to the warmth that tempers the chill, the duty that claims the soul. I call it God, some call it steadiness, others grace. Call it as you will. If you have it, you can push on without pushing others out of your way.

I am only one, but faith says to me, to each of us, you are the one: "Care, though many be calloused. In our heedless world feel hurt for another's pain, work for another's justice and your own, maintain reason when the mob howls war peacefully for peace."

Live for your soul -- not for your self. There is no goal, there are no guidelines, but there is gentleness and goodness. There is no certainty, but there is challenge. I think often of what God said to Abraham: "Leave your house, your roots, your customary ways, set out." "Where shall I go?" Abraham asked. "Go. On the way, you will be shown the way. Remember only: be always a blessing."

"May their memory be for a blessing."

Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver
The Temple



AJA: CURRENT DIGITIZATION PROJECTS

- Rabbis Abba Hillel Silver & Daniel Jeremy Silver Collections *(Completed May 2025)*
- Sy Syms Digital Collection (Completed 2024)
- Alexander M. Schindler Digital Collection (Completed June 2025)
- Processing and digitizing Central Synagogue Records (in progress)
- Jacob Schiff Collection (in progress)

WRHS: CURRENT DIGITIZATION PROJECTS & PROGRAMS

- Securing the Future of Jewish Cleveland's Past, a multiyear initiative to process and digitize the holdings of the Cleveland Jewish Archives
- Archive Alive, Sunday, May 16, 2027, featuring educational workshops highlighting Cleveland's Jewish history, in person at the Jewish Federation of Cleveland

To visit and search the Silver Collections go to:
https://www.americanjewisharchives.org/research/digital-collections/

RABBIS ABBA HILLEL & DANIEL JEREMY SILVER WEBINAR

LINKS TO DOCUMENTS FROM THE SILVER DIGITAL COLLECTIONS USED IN THE PRESENTATION

Presentation Slide Number	Title	Link	Pages in Linked Folder
6	Rabbi Silver Urges Candidate Eisenhower to Issue a Statement Clarifying His Position on Israel	https://collections.americanjewisharchives.org/ms/ms4787/ms4787.027.009.0625.pdf	8-9
7-8	President Eisenhower Invites Abba Hillel Silver to Attend One of His Men-Only Social Evenings at the White House	https://collections.americanjewisharchives.org/ms/ms4787/ms4787.027.009.0625.pdf	39-42
9-10	Dr. Silver is Upset with the Sale of Soviet-bloc weapons to Egypt in September of 1955 and He Urges President Eisenhower to Issue a Statement on the Matter	https://collections.americanjewisharchives.org/ms/ms4787/ms4787.027.010.0627.pdf	3-5
11	Eisenhower Library, Dulles Papers, Meetings with the President	https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v15/d311	311
12	Dr. Silver Crafts the Text of a Passover Greeting to Israel's President Yitzchak Ben Zvi.	https://collections.americanjewisharchives.org/ms/ms4787/ms4787.027.010.0627.pdf	6
14	Abba Hillel Silver Comments on Statements by Dr. Israel Goldstein & Controversies in the American Zionist Emergency Council	https://collections.americanjewisharchives.org/ms/ms5492/ms5492.001.024.pdf	2, 7
15	Silver to Soviet Ambassador Zarubin re Zionism and Antisemitism	https://collections.americanjewisharchives.org/ms/ms4787/ms4787.053.019.1287.pdf	3-4
16	Menu: The Tercentenary Dinner	https://collections.americanjewisharchives.org/ms/ms4787/ms4787.002.001.0062.pdf	15, 25
18-20	Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver Responds to the Kent State University Killings	https://collections.americanjewisharchives.org/ms/ms4850/ms4850.025.009.0327.pdf	5-9

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