**­Cooperation and Internationa­­­lism: The American Jewish Zionist Leadership and International Organizations in the First Half of the Twentieth Century: Abba Hillel Silver as a Case Test**

**Introduction**

In 1939, Abba Hillel Silver, the Reform rabbi and one of the most important American Zionist leaders, delivered a speech at the annual convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. The speech titled: *The World Crisis and Jewish Survival* and was devoted mainly to a description and analysis of the turbulent political and social condition of the world in 1939. Silver regretted that “the brave experiment which was made at the end of the World War, and which was to be mankind’s atonement for the war, to organize the nations of the earth for peace, has been wrecked and defiled. The vision of a world united and made secure in law, in which the weak as well the strong nations would be free to live their independent and unmolested lives, has vanished. In place of collective security and international cooperation has come again an almost complete political bouleversement. One hears again the old feral snarl of conquest and invasion. The old and dangerous devices of power balancing and regional military pacts have been revived.…International morality seems to be nonexistent. A brazen political opportunism contemptuously violates the rights of peoples and the sanctities of covenants and treaties and employs all forms of intrigue deception and terrorization. Gangsterism is the new norm in international affairs.”[[1]](#footnote-1)

In his speech Silver lamented the collapse of the system of international treaties and alliances that were consolidated in the aftermath of the First World War. He believed cooperation agreements between nations and the operation of robust and authoritative international bodies to be the preconditions essential for counteracting the growing threat of destructive political forces that espouse nationalist ideologies. In Silver’s opinion, the collapse of this system played a decisive role in the unfolding of the dramatic global crisis and the outbreak of World War II in 1939.

Silver’s words represent the tip of the iceberg in the ongoing support of American Zionist leaders during the second half of the twentieth century for a strong international network whose representative organizations in fact wield significant political power. This policy is best understood in the context of the unwavering support of Jewish intellectuals and activists worldwide and American Jews in particular for tighter international cooperation and for consolidating the international organizational structure following World War I and during the initial decades of the twentieth century.[[2]](#footnote-2)

In this article we discuss, through a comprehensive examination of the place assigned to the Jewish state in Silver’s worldview, the various ways in which Silver combined his worldview with the Zionist ideology and practice that led to the establishment of a Jewish state within the framework of the postwar political arrangements. Our main argument is that Silver’s saw no contradiction between this internationalist worldview and the establishment of a Jewish state.

American Zionist leaders’ support for a strong international network, whose representative organizations in fact wield significant political power, is especially significant given the singular position occupied by American Zionism and its leadership in the USA in the mid-twentieth century. During the 1930s US Jews began to play an active role in the affairs of world Jewry and in the Zionist movement. in the wake of the USA’s growing stature on the international stage and its increased involvement in the Middle East. Upon examining the political developments that occurred in the Zionist, Palestinian, and international spheres, one finds that US Zionists were deeply involved in the historical transformations that took place from the late 1930s up until the founding of the state of Israel. During this period US Jews and members of the US Zionist movement in particular operated under the shadow of the Holocaust of European Jewry and in light of the opportunity to realize the goal of the Zionist movement, namely the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine. These circumstances facilitated an extraordinary mobilization of the US Jewish community to the Zionist cause and offered the leaders of American Zionism an unprecedented opportunity to impact overall Zionist activity and to shape the complexion of the future Jewish state.[[3]](#footnote-3)

The significance of Silver’s and his allies’ support for the United Nations Organization and more broadly for the movements promoting cooperation between nations that transcends national boundaries, does not derive solely from the political clout wielded by Silver and his allies among American Jews during the 1940s and 1950s. It is intriguing that Silver, the most outspoken supporter in the US of the establishment of a Jewish state as part of the territorial arrangements put in place in the aftermath of World War II, saw no contradiction between this internationalist worldview and the establishment of a Jewish state. Silver envisaged that the future state would become part of an international system that would moderate nationalist elements and bolster international organizations.

**The United Nations, inter-bloc détente and international cooperation**

The United Nation’s main function in the postwar world order was the focus of a sermon delivered by Silver to his Cleveland congregation in 1945. In Silver's opinion, the establishment of a strong international organization was an essential condition for the achievement of post-war security, stability, and global peace. The United Nations would succeed in its mission only if it could call upon an international military force and an international judicial system under its supervision. Silver did not shy away from the potential pitfalls in the operation of the United Nations, and strongly opposed the granting of the right of veto to the great powers in the Security Council. He believed that this would place them above international law, grant them excessive power, and jeopardize the goals in whose name the United Nations was founded.[[4]](#footnote-4)

Silver’s stance on the UN’s central role in stabilizing international relations derived from his overall opposition to the struggle between the two power blocs and his desire to see more friendly relations between the Soviet Union and the United States. This point of view was clearly embodied in his opposition to the Marshall Plan. Silver argued that the plan would merely exacerbate political struggles in Europe and perpetuate the conflict between Eastern and Western Europe. He believed that Germany and not the Soviet Union presented the major threat to world peace and security. Hence, he opposed the flow of American aid for the rehabilitation of Germany, claiming that the Marshall Plan had created unnecessary tension between the USA and the Soviet Union. The solution, he maintained, did not lie in escalating the conflict with the Soviet Union through the Marshall Plan, but rather in initiating a dialogue between the leaders of the US and the Soviet Union and the immediate scheduling of a summit meeting between Stalin and Truman.[[5]](#footnote-5) Silver emphasized that all of Europe should be regarded as a single economic entity and that in order to build a stable and healthy economy all its constituent nations should be allowed to trade freely with one another. Separating Eastern European states from the West and removing them from the circle of economically developing nations could negatively impact the standard of living in these countries and generate political unrest that in the future could lead to a war initiated by countries that had nothing to lose. Silver advocated a policy of stepping up diplomatic efforts to initiate dialogue between the US and the Soviet Union and suggested that the leaders of the two countries meet prior to the implementation of the Marshall Plan. Silver reiterated his belief that the two major powers could come to an understanding and that the US administration had invested insufficient diplomatic effort to reach this objective. Silver took note of the Soviet Union’s refusal to participate in the plan but argued that this stemmed from the Soviets’ opposition to the Truman Doctrine and that a change in US policy would facilitate cooperation with Eastern European countries. Silver maintained that mediation between the US and the Soviet Union was feasible through the agency of the UN and asserted that many economists and politicians shared his view that it was possible to forge a cooperative relationship between two countries with radically different economic and social systems. [[6]](#footnote-6)

Silver’s opposition to the Marshall Plan are only one of a multitude of topics that he tackled in the sermons and speeches that he delivered during his tenure as rabbi in Cleveland, in which he delved into the fundamental problems of US foreign policy and the US political system. The same underlying ideas can be found in all his sermons, beginning with his 1945 address about the San Francisco Conference and right up until the impressions of his visit to the Soviet Union in 1961. Silver consistently expressed support for American involvement in post-Second World War international agreements, which was based on his recognition of the need for compromise between the Soviet Union and the US and on the battle against McCarthyism in the US.[[7]](#footnote-7)

The nature of Silver’s public advocacy on international issues is clearly illustrated by his opposition to the Korean War. Silver considered this issue to be of the greatest importance. Not content merely to voice his opinion in his Sunday sermons, he distributed his lecture entitled “A Letter to President Truman” in the form of an open letter that was published in the general and the Jewish press and sent to rabbis and Jewish community leaders throughout the US. In this letter Silver explains that his opposition to the Korean War was based on both legal and substantive considerations. His objection on legal grounds rested on the fact that the US had gone to war without prior approval of Congress and the United Nations, whose retroactive approval was damaging to the organization and had weakened its standing. From a substantive point of view, Silver argued that there was no strategic justification for the war and that by fighting in Korea Truman sought to prove that the Democratic administration was actively opposing communism in response to Republican propaganda. For Silver, the Korean War symbolized the failure of the Truman Doctrine. The decision to oppose communism everywhere, he argued, was a policy that the US could not implement, and furthermore, to prosecute this war the US had forged ties with fascist and dictatorial regimes. This policy constituted a greater threat to peace in the US and around the world than communism. Silver freely aired his view that the US should recognize the communist regime in China and abstain from showing support for the regime of Jiang Jieshi. He dubbed those who advocated a hardline policy toward communism and the Soviet Union in particular dogmatic, boastful, and warmongering, claiming that their eagerness to push the US into war was motivated not by patriotism but rather by self-interest and the desire to sabotage any possibility of a compromise. Contrary to them, Silver asserted his belief in the possibility of coexistence between the Soviet Union and the United States and insisted that although such a policy had become almost taboo in the US, reaching an agreement with the Soviets through negotiations based on compromise was the only way to ensure world peace.[[8]](#footnote-8)

Silver’s widely distributed public letter to President Truman spurred an unprecedented wave of letters both supportive and critical from Zionist and Jewish activists. Critics attacked Silver for expressing his opinion on military and political matters in which he had no expertise and complained about the discomfort his words had engendered among their communities.[[9]](#footnote-9) Supporters rallied to his side, endorsing his views and arguing that expressing critical opinions lay at the heart of American democracy.[[10]](#footnote-10) Notwithstanding the newspaper articles and the flow of letters, one could have been expected that Silver’s utterances condemning the Korean War and in favor of recognizing Communist China and reaching a compromise with the Soviet Union would reverberate more loudly, gain wider media coverage, and draw more stringent criticism. The question marks surrounding the fairly muted response to Silver’s political speeches hover over the episode of his public letter to Truman as well but are even more glaring with regard to other issues. Silver’s political statements provoked little response and appeared mainly in the local Cleveland press, generally placed at random on the inside pages of the newspaper, without editorial comment. His advocacy focused on increased Soviet involvement in the Middle East and specifically on matters concerning Palestine, and his opposition to the Truman Doctrine. Silver is quoted as calling for a change in America’s anti-communist policy, which aligned the USA alongside the regimes of Franco in Spain and Peron in the Argentine. Similar accounts appeared of Silver’s support for an agreement between the Soviet Union and the US and his rejection of the anti-Soviet components of the Marshall Plan.[[11]](#footnote-11)

In the late 1940s Silver campaigned tirelessly for the establishment of the Jewish state and rarely referred to international issues in his sermons. When he returned to these issues in 1950 the Jewish press in Cleveland and elsewhere in America continued to accord the sermons the same limited coverage. The reports reflect the wide range of international and internal political topics that Silver addressed in his speeches. Among these were the West’s culpability in the political crisis and the escalation of the Cold War, and the threat to world peace resulting from the escalation of the conflict between the two blocs; opposition to the Korean War; criticism of the nuclear arms race at the expense of American aid to the developing countries; and the declaration that Washington’s international policy would lead the US and the rest of the world to catastrophe. The reports also evince Silver’s opposition to what he referred to as the history of anti-communism in America and mention his appeal to world leaders to act jointly to promote world peace based on the recognition of coexistence between the US and communism. Other articles reported his vehement opposition to McCarthyism and his support for a summit between Eisenhower and Stalin. These articles provide evidence showing that while Silver did not turn a blind eye to the Soviet regime’s anti-Zionist and anti-Israel policies, he nevertheless advocated maintaining the channels of communication between Jewish organizations and the Soviet Union, explaining that its anti-Semitic policies were politically motivated and stemmed from Israel’s choice to ally itself with the West and with the US in particular. Other reports mention Silver’s call for the termination of nuclear tests and his view that Communist China did not pose a threat to the US.[[12]](#footnote-12)

Accounts of Silver’s political views appeared in the left-wing press in America as well. Some of his attention-grabbing statements made the headlines, and the reports highlighted different aspects of his calls for thawing relations between the blocs and a rapprochement between the USA and the Soviet Union. A particularly prominent headline appeared in the communist mouthpiece *The Daily Worker* in winter 1950, where Silver’s accusation that Truman was dragging the US into war was splashed across the front page.[[13]](#footnote-13) An article in the Yiddish language communist affiliated *Morning Freiheit* claimed that the relatively meager media coverage devoted to Silver’s opinions was deliberate, and derived from the desire to downplay them and minimize his influence on the Jewish public.[[14]](#footnote-14) The muted reaction to Silver’s comments is indeed puzzling, but is best explained not by conspiracy theories but rather by viewing it in the context of the totality of Silver’s political and public work. Silver’s political activity reached its peak during the years 1943-1948 with his campaign for the establishment of the State of Israel. All his efforts were directed toward this goal and little interest was shown in the other issues that had concerned him. Thus, his views regarding international political questions gained virtually no attention as the Jewish press and public were preoccupied with the struggle for the establishment of a Jewish state. Thus, when Silver expressed pro-Soviet opinions, these were perceived as arising from his wish to harness the Soviet Union to the campaign for the establishment of the State of Israel. Furthermore, a large section of the Jewish public could identify with these sentiments in light of the Soviet Union’s immense contribution to the fight against Nazism.[[15]](#footnote-15)

Silver stood at the center of Zionist activity for only a few years in the second half of the 1940s. Following his retirement from all official Zionist positions in 1948 he remained publicly active, but mainly behind the scenes and as part of his role as reform rabbi in Cleveland. After his exit from the limelight, his controversial statements no longer provoked the same broad public reaction as they had before 1948. Despite his public standing, Silver did not occupy any official Zionist or Jewish position and naturally attracted relatively little attention from the Jewish public and media.

Moreover, despite the liberal opinions he professed, his close relationship with the Republican Senator Robert A. Taft, well-known for his isolationist and anti-communist worldview, was most influential in shaping Silver’s public image. Silver’s political and personal connection to Taft was projected onto his political image by identifying him not only with Taft himself but with his conservative opinions as well.[[16]](#footnote-16) Silver’s political statements did not suffice to dispel this image, which clung to him throughout his life and after his death. In an obituary that appeared in the local Cleveland newspaper, the review of his public activities highlighted his propensity to voice opinions and take stands unpopular with his community, such as his support for the workers’ organizations in Cleveland in the 1920s and his connections with Senator Taft. The international issues discussed in this article were not mentioned at all.[[17]](#footnote-17) A similar picture emerges from the obituary written by his political aide and friend Emanuel Neumann, who referred exclusively to Silver’s Zionist activities while completely ignoring his position on the Cold War and the public campaign he waged against the Korean War and in favor of detente between the two power blocs.[[18]](#footnote-18)

By contrast to the subdued public response to Silver’s opinions, his activities attracted the attention of the Passport Division at the State Department. In a letter he received from the Passport Division in 1955 Silver was informed of the decision not to renew his passport with immediate effect and to scrutinize his request for a renewal of his passport in light of information about his membership in and support of organizations regarded as pro-communist or communist. One can gather from this letter that Silver’s passport had been invalidated and the head of the Passport Division invited Silver to respond to the letter and to appeal the decision in the event that he considered it to be mistaken.[[19]](#footnote-19) The decision to invalidate Silver’s passport was clearly the outcome of anti-communist hysteria and McCarthyism, yet the letter from the Passport Division is nevertheless significant in that it testifies to the incongruity between Silver’s image as an ally of Senator Taft and supporter of the Republican Party and the totality of his views regarding the global status of the US in the postwar era. The latter barely infiltrated the consciousness of the general public and gained negligible coverage in the Jewish and the general press. Silver’s reply to the letter reveals that he met personally with functionaries at the State Department, and his passport was returned to him, possibly with the help of the Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, with whom he had a close personal relationship.[[20]](#footnote-20)

Despite this outcome, Silver wrote a letter expressing his indignation at the attempt to withdraw his passport and outlined the fundamentals of his political outlook and its place on the American political and ideological map of the 1950s. He described the letter from the Passport Division as unexpected and troubling and firmly denied having ever belonged to any organization identified with communism in any way whatsoever. He observed that like many other Americans in key positions in the fields of education, politics, and religion, he had joined organizations that sincerely fought in the name of American democracy against all forms of dictatorship: Nazism, fascism, and communism. Silver clarified that in some cases his membership in an organization went no further than his agreeing to have his name appear under the organization’s umbrella, and that if some of these organizations had on occasion been exploited by subversive forces, he had had no way of knowing this. He stressed that his public activities over the course of the past forty years were transparent and insisted that he had never embraced views that could jeopardize American interests.[[21]](#footnote-21) These sentiments are indeed consistent with the views expressed in Silver’s sermons, which included harsh criticism of Stalin and the conduct of the communist government in the Soviet Union, but which nonetheless acknowledged the imperative of coexistence between the US and the Soviet Union and other countries’ prerogative to choose a communist way of life without American intervention; and which emphasized the vital need for international cooperation in the sciences for the benefit of humankind.[[22]](#footnote-22) Silver’s reply provides an insight into his standing within the public discourse in postwar USA and the start of the Cold War. Silver did not regard himself as a communist or pro-communist. He believed that his opposition to the Truman Doctrine and his support of detente between the powers and bolstering the United Nations represented support for a world order that best served American interests. Furthermore, his opposition to anti-communist hysteria and McCarthyism were rooted in his stand as a faithful warrior on behalf of the US both at home and abroad.[[23]](#footnote-23)

**Henry** **Wallace**

The attempt to place Silver’s worldview in the American political and ideological scene is complicated, not only because of his connection to Taft. As we mentioned in the introduction, Silver maintained a close relationship with Henry Wallace, which was expressed in several ways: like Silver, Wallace advocated the Jews right to a state of their own, and even visited Palestine in October 1947.[[24]](#footnote-24) At the same time, he also envisioned a postwar era governed by an international peacekeeping force and an international court, rather than through balance-of-power politics.[[25]](#footnote-25) Wallace opposed the Marshall Plan, arguing that the direct financial support of the US to West Europe in general and West Germany in particular meant to block the Soviet Union. Instead, he suggested to run this financial support through the UN.[[26]](#footnote-26) He preached for cooperation between the two powers, and even suggested a financial support of the US to the Soviet Union.[[27]](#footnote-27) He also attacked what he called “the American anti Bolshevik syndrome”.[[28]](#footnote-28) Regarding the Korean War Wallace, like Silver, opposed the War (although in 1952, in retrospect, he changed his mind) and asked the UN to intervene in the conflict in a way that would help the Korean people, respect both the US and the Soviet Union, and would strengthen the UN.[[29]](#footnote-29)

Like Silver, Henry Wallace also was scrutinized by the FBI and the House Un-American Activities Committee, both of which sought to uncover evidence of Communist influence.[[30]](#footnote-30) He also became a fierce critic of Truman regime. Expressing his disapproval of Truman's foreign policy, Wallace wrote a twelve-page letter urging the United States to exercise caution in abandoning its powerful wartime ally. He firmly believed that the only way to end the spread of communism was to raise the world's standards of living. In a speech at Madison Square Garden in September 1946, Wallace warned that American foreign policy towards Russia could lead to a third world war. Although Wallace had previously cleared his remarks with Truman, his speech occurred at the very time Secretary of State James Byrnes was negotiating with Soviet authorities in Paris. Byrnes charged that Wallace's speech had undermined U.S. policy and suggested damaging disunity within the administration. Shortly thereafter, Truman fired Wallace as secretary of commerce.[[31]](#footnote-31)

Silver disagreed with a number of points raised in Wallace’s letter, particularly his opinion that the US had no right to intervene in Eastern Europe, but noted his concurrence with most of Wallace’s positions, particularly with his call for an agreement with the Soviet Union while pursuing an independent US policy without British collaboration.[[32]](#footnote-32) Despite his support of thawing relations with the Soviet Union and his opposition to Wallace’s removal, Silver took issue with the pro-Soviet aspects of the position adopted by Wallace and his associates. Unlike them, Silver did not endorse the policy of disarmament even though he was opposed to increasing America’s defense budget.[[33]](#footnote-33) His reservations regarding Wallace’s standpoint suggest that the key to understanding his position and political standing in the American public discourse during the postwar period and the 1950s does not lie in defining him as pro-communist. Silver’s views on international issues indicate his affinity with the liberal faction of the Democratic Party. This is apparent as well in his endorsement of Roosevelt’s conciliatory policy toward the Soviet Union, which he considered to be entirely different to Truman’s policy.[[34]](#footnote-34)

**Bretton Woods Agreements and UNNRA**

Silver’s activities fell under the umbrella of the American Zionist leadership’s far-reaching public activity aimed at bolstering the power of international organizations after World War II. Particularly interesting is the support given by the leadership of the World Jewish Congress to the Bretton Woods Agreement in 1944. Although the World Jewish Congress was regarded as an international Jewish organization, it in fact functioned as a pro-Zionist American Jewish organization. The movement’s founder and its first president was Stephen Wise, president of the World Zionist Organization in America and one of the most prominent Zionist leaders in the USA.[[35]](#footnote-35) Documents belonging to the World Jewish Congress disclose that the organization’s leaders appealed to their members and to the entire Jewish-American public to actively support the United Nations, contending that it was beholden on Jews as an intellectual entity with a progressive outlook to back the UN. They maintained that given the disaster that befell the Jews during World War II, the striving for cooperation and international peace embodied by the United Nations was especially crucial to all Jews. Jewish support for the UN, however, did not derive from narrow Jewish interests but from a sense of mission that recognized the organization’s global significance. It was vital that Jews support the establishment of the UN and invigorate it so as to ensure that the fundamental principles underlying its existence would not remain merely a utopian dream. At the same time, the heads of the World Jewish Congress in New York gave their blessing to the Bretton Woods Agreements, the trade agreements that determined the rates of exchange of the currencies of the developed countries that were signed at the international economic summit that took place in July 1944 in the town of Bretton Woods in New Hampshire. Forty-four states participated in the convention, following which the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank were established. Delegates of the World Jewish Congress joined the campaign to promote the agreements in the USA; the organization’s American members were urged to lobby their delegates in the House of Representatives to support the agreements, and its institutions disseminated information about the agreements to their members and expressed support for them and the financial arrangements they put in place.[[36]](#footnote-36)

The World Congress similarly supported the activity of UNRRA (the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration), whose mission was to care for refugees in occupied allied territories in Europe and the Far East during World War II. Aryeh Tartakower, Director of the Department of Relief and Rehabilitation at the World Jewish Congress, believed that only an international organization such as UNRRA was capable of tackling the complex task of rebuilding Europe in the war’s aftermath. Although Tartakower recognized that integrating the Jewish philanthropic network into UNRRA would facilitate a more effective endeavor on behalf of the Jews of Europe, the decision to join forces with UNNRA was also rooted in a belief in the organization’s orientation and worldview. Tartakower expressed this sentiment when writing about the organization following UNRRA’s fourth conference held in Atlantic City in 1946: “These then were the aims: To mobilize the force of mankind for a great work of mercy to help liberate peoples rapidly to recover strength and stability and to achieve this by international solidarity…It goes without saying that these feelings were fully shared by the Jewish people.”[[37]](#footnote-37)

Tartakower did not discount the difficulties faced by the organization in Europe but claimed that these did not derive from flaws in UNRRA’s underlying principles but rather from the constraints and obstacles inherent to the situation in post-war Europe. Europe was effectively under allied military rule, he explained, and the military authorities were not inclined to learn about or accommodate the organization’s European activities. Moreover, various European countries bemoaned the purported infringement of their sovereignty that philanthropic activity undertaken by an international organization on their territory would entail. These countries had failed in the task of reconstruction, thereby undermining UNRRA’s capacity to administer any significant recovery projects of its own. The especially fierce opposition to UNRRA’s activity in Eastern Europe derived from the fact that the bulk of the organization’s budget was funded by the US and Britain; the perception that UNRRA represented the interests of the US and Britain dealt a blow to its international standing. Tartakower insisted that these setbacks were not grounds for halting the organization’s activities but should rather spur UNRRA to bolster the international aspects of its activities in order to facilitate fruitful and across-the-board cooperation. In this vein he wrote: “The spirit in which UNRRA’s daily work is being done may point the way toward a new future, but it may also become a symbol of inability to cope with the fundamental problem of mankind.”[[38]](#footnote-38)

UNRRA’s problems in Europe should not drive it to cancel its operations but rather the opposite. UNRRA should be energized, and its European representatives given more freedom of action and authority. Bolstering UNRRA, Tartakower explained, was especially important for Jews. During the inter-war period, the treaties formulated by the League of Nations for the protection of minorities had assured the Jews rights in Europe. This process had failed utterly. Tartakower was well aware of the past failure of the international apparatus, but, in his estimation, this did not justify winding down international operations in Europe; It demonstrated, rather, the need to create mechanisms that would ensure their success. In this vein he wrote: “We Jews are no less interested than others in this kind of development. We may be even more interested. The problem of Jewish displaced persons will never be solved without the cooperation of official international machinery…. This is the reason of our blessings for its future work. God knows we mean it sincerely. Let us hope that we shall not be disappointed again.”[[39]](#footnote-39)

**A new Middle East in the first half of the twentieth century**

Silver strove for the establishment of a Jewish state in the Middle East that would participate in a system of global agreements founded on the United Nations, designed to cool hostilities between East and West and to promote the economic development of former colonial countries. Silver and his political allies wrote numerous articles laying out the guiding principles for the consolidation of political and social agreements in the post-war Middle East.[[40]](#footnote-40)

The starting point for effecting change in the Middle East was to halt the economic and political exploitation of the region’s countries by elements both within and beyond it. Silver and his associates urged that a policy of development and conservation of natural resources be instigated for the benefit of all the region’s inhabitants. The implementation of such programs demanded international cooperation; a single country, however democratic and well-intentioned, could not accomplish this alone. Only an international force that could wield authority and that had the power to execute programs was qualified to meet this challenge. To ensure that this force would not become a tool for the exploitation of the Middle East in the hands of the powers with an interest in the region, they recommended that an international committee under the auspices of the United Nations be appointed to oversee this body. The committee members would come from developed countries with neither an imperialist history nor a direct stake in the Middle East, such as Norway or Switzerland. Asian countries such as China and the Dominion of India should be given full membership in the international force to prevent the US and European countries from taking control of the committee’s activities.[[41]](#footnote-41) The proposed program was designed to create a new and positive political and social atmosphere in the Middle East, to solve the complex political problems it faced, and to meet foreseeable needs arising from natural population growth and massive Jewish immigration to Palestine. From these lectures and articles an idyllic picture of a diverse Middle Eastern society emerges, in which Muslims, Christians, and Jews would all work together for the benefit of the region. Silver and his colleagues were convinced that political and economic stability would provide the antidote to hostility and hatred, which thrive on poverty and deprivation.[[42]](#footnote-42) The correspondence between Silver and Emanuel Neumann, his political partner and future president of the Zionist Organization of America, reveals that this was a calculated political and public strategy that sought to ensure that UN forces would replace colonialist states such as Britain, France, and Italy, which had formerly ruled over large parts of the Middle East, seeking to maintain order and stability in the region. Silver and Neumann anticipated that the UN would protect the interests of the Jewish people’s national home alongside their support for the populations in the region and while dealing with the issue of oil, in accordance with the UN’s decision and in a way that would contribute to the welfare of the region.[[43]](#footnote-43)

During his visit to Israel in 1948 Silver held a press conference where he addressed the question of Israel’s international political standing. In his opinion, Israel should align itself with the United Nations rather than with the East or the West. He recalled that “even more than two years ago when the Anglo-American Committee was set up, I criticized it for not including Russia.”[[44]](#footnote-44) He stressed that Israel should maintain complete neutrality with regard to the inter-bloc struggle. This policy had facilitated the establishment of the state and had resulted in significant political achievements for the Zionist movement. Silver maintained that the issue of Zionism had engendered cooperation between the blocs and contributed to the fall of the Iron Curtain, an event whose international ramifications extended beyond its importance for Zionism.[[45]](#footnote-45)

Silver’s position in favor of transferring responsibility for resolving the question of Palestine to the United Nations rather than to a single power, is reiterated in the drafts of his memoirs.[[46]](#footnote-46) On another occasion he asserted that the establishment of the United Nations had enabled the righting of historic injustices and the resolution of the problem of Palestine as part of a global process of promoting justice and peace over which the League of Nations was supposed to have presided.[[47]](#footnote-47) In the same vein Silver advocated the internationalization of the Jerusalem's quarters between the walls and transferring control over the holy sites belonging to the three religions to the United Nations. Silver did not consider the division of Jerusalem and the ceding of control over the holy sites to the United Nations a political move motivated by political constraints, but rather saw it as a positive process that could contribute to building what was, from his point of view, a better Jewish state.[[48]](#footnote-48)

Silver’s view of Palestine blended into his perception of the desired reciprocal relations between Israel and the US. This was reflected in the correspondence with his assistant Harold Manson immediately after the founding of the state. Manson wrote to Silver after a statement released by several US General Zionists calling on the State of Israel to adopt a pro-Western policy and urging the US to implement a program similar to the Marshall Plan in the Middle East that would provide massive American support for Israel. Manson described this declaration as irresponsible and stupid and determined that it had been released without prior coordination with Silver, who, had he known of it, would have blocked it. Manson asserted that the US was seeking to draw Israel into the Cold War and was using the bait of economic aid to achieve this end. He went on to declare that both he and Silver were well aware of Israel’s security and economic needs but maintained that the country could not barter with its freedom. It must be specified that Silver’s position regarding the incorporation of the Jewish state into the international mechanism ran contrary to that of Ben-Gurion, who supported American involvement in Palestine and the stationing of American troops in the region. Ben-Gurion stressed that “there will be an army in every country, the American army will be in every country, I saw the beginnings in Africa. I hope they will come to Israel; I pray that they come here, they will be powerful. America can send 100,000 soldiers and that will suffice for peace.”[[49]](#footnote-49)

Silver and Manson’s positions were decidedly nonconformist within the American political and social climate that prevailed at the end of the 1940s and early 1950s. Even Wallace campaign in 1948 proved it, since he received only 2.5 percent of the popular vote. Taking a stand against the Cold War and in favor of cooperation with the Soviet Union were so extraordinary that Manson felt the need to add a comment in bold letters in the margins of one of the letters intended for the secret agents who would read the letter, making clear that the sender and the addressee were neither communists nor communist supporters.[[50]](#footnote-50)

Silver’s political and Zionist philosophy were closely linked to his views regarding the place of the Jewish religion in modern western society. Silver claimed that Judaism believes in humanity’s constant progress, a view not shared by any other religion. Humanity’s advancement, he asserted, is reflected not only in the fields of science and technology but mainly in the social sphere, particularly in the expansion of political freedoms and the abolishment of imperialism and colonialism. In his opinion, the crux of the matter, from a religious perspective as well, was not the coming of the Messiah, but rather the path human society aspires to follow. Social goals include the eradication of ignorance and racism; achieving international peace and cooperation; eradicating and reducing poverty; and terminating wars and interracial conflicts. Silver believed these to be the major goals facing the twentieth century and, in this respect, there was no difference between East and West or between communists and non-communists. Silver cautioned that all human progress was exposed to the risk of reaction and regression and believed that Judaism and the Jews play a special role in counteracting these reactionary tendencies.[[51]](#footnote-51)

**Conclusion**

This article traces the complex interplay between the American Zionist leadership’s advocacy of a Jewish state and its universalist worldview by delving into the case of Abba Hillel Silver, the most influential American Zionist leader during the second half of the 1940s. As we show, Silver and other Zionist leaders applied the ideas they brought to the debate on the desirable world order following World War II also to the solutions they proposed to the question of Palestine and the place of the future state among the nations. Their support of the United Nations was integral to their conceptions regarding the political solutions to the Palestine question. The UN and the other international bodies they envisioned were to play a major role in establishing a Jewish state in the Middle East by creating a climate of cooperation and peace in the region as part of the international endeavor to build a powerful United Nations.[[52]](#footnote-52)

In demanding that most of the authority to address the Palestine question be placed in the hands of the UN, Silver and his associates were driven primarily by their strong opposition to the struggle between the power blocs and by what they regarded as imperialistic political machinations. Their views certainly extended beyond tactical considerations of profit and loss with regard to the UN’s potential contribution toward the founding of the state of Israel. By the same token Silver was intent on keeping the young state out of the cold war. He believed that Israel’s immediate survival and subsequent growth and security depended on its non-involvement in the power struggle between the blocs. Furthermore, keeping the superpower rivalry out of the Middle East could, he believed, significantly contribute to creating a climate of cooperation throughout the world.

The ongoing involvement of US Zionist leaders in working out the place and status of the Jewish state in the Middle East enables us to consider the singular linkage between their Zionist and general worldviews. They sought to ensure that the future Jewish state would develop in accordance with their plan and would become part of a series of arrangements regarding, inter alia, the major role to be played by the United Nations, cooling the rivalry between the East and the West, and promoting the economic development of the former colonies.

Silver’s solution to the Palestine problem entailed a process that sought to achieve two complementary objectives: the building of a Jewish state in Palestine in accordance with his political and ideological position, and reinforcement of the global trends he advocated as part of the international arrangements following World War II. The founding of a Jewish state, establishing its status in the Middle East, and securing it a place within the new international order were objectives in themselves as well as a means toward concluding political, economic, and social arrangements that accorded with Silver’s worldview.

Silver’s particularly strong support of the United Nations was shared by others. Apart from the evidence presented in the article, it is noteworthy that the American Zionist leader Stephen Wise, ,who engaged in a fierce political and personal rivalry with Silver, likewise unequivocally supported the ideas underlying the establishment of the United Nations. This support is clearly expressed in the memorandum he dispatched to the observers and representatives of the Jewish and Zionist organizations who attended the UN conference at San Francisco in 1945. This was the conference at which the UN charter, the organization’s foundational document, was signed.[[53]](#footnote-53) The fact that both these American Zionist leaders, who fundamentally disagreed on a series of political and ideological issues, saw eye to eye on this matter serves to emphasize once again that the American Zionist leadership supported the United Nations and the ideas it represented.

This underplaying of the universal aspects of his thought and political activity obstructs a clear view of the complex reciprocal relationship between Silver and the Zionist leadership in Palestine in general and with Ben-Gurion in particular. Silver’s extraordinarily influential position within the US Zionist leadership during the first half of the twentieth century along with other evidence presented in the article demonstrate that the importance of the debate on support of the UN and the ideas it represented extends beyond the discussion of Silver the individual and is vital to our understanding of the history of American Zionism. Appreciation of the universal element and its practical manifestation in support of the United Nations Organization enables a better understanding of the inbuilt tension between US Zionists and US Judaism as a whole on the one hand, and the Zionist movement and the state of Israel on the other. Ostensibly, Silver’s wholehearted support of a Jewish state is irreconcilable with his advocacy of universal trends. Yet he and his political associates thought otherwise. Silver was highly critical of the patterns of Jewish nationalism that evolved within the Zionist movement. He countered them by proposing a Zionist alternative rooted in Herzl’s enterprise that stressed the universal moral components found in the words of the biblical prophets, as befitted the worldview of Silver the American reform rabbi and Zionist.[[54]](#footnote-54)

The failure on the part of US Zionists to bring their ideas on the issue of the place of the Jewish state in the Middle East to bear indicates the fundamental problem they faced, namely their desire to influence the way the Jewish state developed from their place of residence in the USA.[[55]](#footnote-55) This was a mission doomed to failure, since it was the heads of the Zionist establishment in Palestine who determined how the Jewish state would fit into the Middle East and find its place in the world, in accordance with their worldview and the political and social circumstances that evolved in the region. These were very different to the ideas expressed in the plans devised by US Zionists. Once the state of Israel came into being, the leaders of American Zionism all but gave up their endeavor to influence its complexion. If their efforts in this direction prior to the founding of the state had met with fierce resistance on the part of the local Zionist establishment, after 1948 they faced insurmountable obstacles and any attempt to proffer advice was regarded by the state’s leadership as a gross intervention in its internal affairs.[[56]](#footnote-56)

1. Abba Hillel Silver, *The World Crisis and Jewish Survival: A Group of Essays* (New York, Richard R. Smith, 1941), 15-16. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. For a comprehensive discussion of this issue see James Loeffler, *Rooted Cosmopolitans: Jews and Human Rights in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2018) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Concerning developments in the Jewish community in general and American Zionism in particular during the 1940s, see: Henry L. Feingold, *A Time for Searching, Entering the Mainstream 1920-1945* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992); David H. Shpiro, *From Philanthropy to Activism, The Political Transformation of American Zionism in the Holocaust Years 1933-1945* (Oxford, Pergamon Press, 1994). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Silver’s sermon in Cleveland about the turning point in San Francisco, April 22, 1945, Microfilm edition, in Abba Hillel Silver Archives in Cleveland, Ohio. Microfilm reel no. 6, file 730. Henceforth Silver Archives 6/730. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Report in the *Daily Worker* newspaper, November 18, 1947, on Silver’s lecture in Cleveland on the Marshall Plan. A comprehensive discussion of the position of American Jews toward Germany began in 1945. See Shlomo Shafir, *Ambiguous Relations, The American Jewish Community and Germany Since 1945* (Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 1999). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Silver’s sermon on the Marshall Plan, November 16, 1947, Silver Archives, 6/695. Silver’s sermon in Cleveland, “Russia and the United States: Is there no bridge between them?” October 19, 1947,

Silver Archives 4/767. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. See the list of Silver’s sermons dealing with political issues relating to the discussion in the article:

	1. 22.4.45 “Crossroads at San Francisco,” Silver Archive 4/730.
	2. 14.10.45 “Enter the Atomic Age,” Silver Archive 4/732.
	3. 5.5.46 “The Fear of Russia,” Silver Archive 4/747.
	4. 20.10.46 “The Role of America in the World Today,” Silver Archive 4/749.
	5. 13.4.47 “The New American Foreign Policy – Is there Danger in it or Promise?” Silver Archive 4/762.
	6. 19.10.47 “Russia and the United States – Is there a Bridge Between Them?” Silver Archive 4/767.
	7. 16.11.47 “The Marshall Plan,” Silver Archive 4/769.
	8. 30.1.49 “The Vision of the One World,” Silver Archive 4/789.
	9. 30.4.50 “The Cold War,” Silver Archive 4/821.
	10. 8.10.50 “The Lessons of Korea,” Silver Archive 4/824.
	11. 22.10.50 “The Cold War,” Silver Archive 4/826 .
	12. 29.10.50 “Freedom in the United States,” Silver Archive 4/827.
	13. 4.3.51 “Shall We Re-Arm Germany,” Silver Archive 4/843.
	14. 22.4.51 “The recall of MacArthur – and What Next?” Silver Archive 4/849.
	15. 26.10.52 “Some Reflections on the Present Political Campaign,” Silver Archive 4/879.
	16. 2.11.52 “Some More observations on the Coming Elections,” Silver Archive 4/880.
	17. 15.3.53 “Stalin and After,” Silver Archive 4/895.
	18. 28.2.54 “The Berlin Conference – its Success and Failure,” Silver Archive 4/922.
	19. 4.4.54 “Just What is Loyalty to America?” Silver Archive 4/926.
	20. 7.11.54 “Where is our Foreign Policy Taking us?” Silver Archive 4/7932.
	21. 20.2.55 “Changes on the International Scene,” Silver Archive 4/944. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Printout of Silver’s lecture “A Letter to Mr. Truman,” December 17, 1951, Silver Archives 3/833. For another of Silver’s statements against the Korean War and in favor of recognizing Communist China, see “The Lessons of Korea,” October 8, 1950, Silver Archives 4/284. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. See similar letters dated: January 29, 1951, January 31, 1951, Silver Archives 1/1405. Also see an article in the same vein in the *Intermountain Jewish News*, March 1, 1951. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. For letters of support see dates: January 25, 1951 (three letters), January 18, 1951 (three letters), January 17, 1951 (two letters), January 16, 1951, January 15, 1951, January 14, 1951, January 4, 1951, January 2, 1951 (two letters), Silver Archives 1/1405. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. See news reports on the following dates: *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, December 9, 1945, April14, 1947, November 11, 1947, December 29, 1947. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. See the following articles: *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, May 28, 1951; October 29, 1952; November 13, 1952; February 18, 1959; *The San Francisco News*, February 24, 1953; *The Cleveland Press*, December 30, 1956; *The Jewish Record*, December 4, 1960. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. *Daily Worker*, December 27, 1950. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. The *Morning Freiheit*, January 1951. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. For Silver’s remarks acknowledging the Soviet Union’s crucial contribution to the fight against Nazism, see: “The Fear of Russia,” May 5, 1946, Silver Archives 4/747. At the same time as he voiced his support for reaching an agreement with the Soviet Union Silver called for Germany’s disarmament. This issue possibly received greater attention from the Jewish public and contributed toward diverting attention away from his remarks concerning the Soviet Union. See “Shall We Re-Arm Germany?” March 4, 1951, Silver Archives 4/843. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. The discussion surrounding Silver’s complex symbiotic relationship with Taft goes beyond the scope of the present study. Silver evidently found in Taft a loyal partner in his campaign for the establishment of a Jewish state. For a wider discussion of this issue, see: Zohar Segev, “Ethnic Identity and Local Politics: Abba Hillel Silver as Community Leader and International Politician, Cleveland 1940 – 1945,” In Sean Martin and John J. Grabowski (eds.), C*leveland Jews and the Making of a Midwestern Community”* (New Brunswick, New Jersey, Rutgers University Press, 2020), 102-121. Concerning Taft, see: James T. Patterson, *Mr. Republican, a Biography of Robert A. Taft* (Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1972). [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. *The Cleveland Press*, November 30, 1963. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Neumann’s obituary for Silver in: Opening Session of the Zionist Actions Committee in Jerusalem, March 16, 1964, Silver Archives 8/81. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Letter from the head of the Passport Office at the State Department to Silver, May 23, 1955, Silver Archives 3/270. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Silver’s letter to the head of the Passport Division at the State Department, June 3, 1955, Silver Archives 3/270. Regarding the close personal relationship between Silver and John Foster Dulles, see the draft of Silver’s unpublished autobiography, 1963, Silver Archives 7/3. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Silver’s letter, June 3, 1955, ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. See Silver’s sermons on these issues: “Stalin and After,” March 15, 1953, Silver Archives 4/895; “The Russian Space Satellite,” October 20, 1957, Silver Archives 4/1000. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. On Silver’s views opposing McCarthyism and anti-communist hysteria see, for example, “Freedom in the United States,” October 29, 1950, Silver Archives 4/483; “What is Loyalty to America?” April 4, 1954, Silver Archives 4/932. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. “Wallace La’aretz”, *Davar*, October 5, 1947 (Hebrew). [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. J. Samuel Walker, *Henry A. Wallace and American Foreign Policy* (Westport, CT, 1976), 83-97. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. “The Century of the Common Man”, *Hatzofe*, January 16, 1948 (Hebrew). [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. “Henry Wallace, American minister of commerce, in a sensational speech”, *Hatzofe*, September 13, 1946 (Hebrew); “Henry Wallace: Anti-Soviet policy led to war”, *Kol Ha’am*, April 10, 1947 (Hebrew). [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. “Wallace on the Anti-Bolshevik complex", *Davar*, April 24, 1947 (Hebrew); Jules Witcover, *Crapshoot: Rolling the Dice on the Vice Presidency* (New York: Crown, 1992), 405-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. “Wallace Support UN action in Korea”, *Davar*, July 16, 1950 (Hebrew). [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. John C. Culver, John Hyde, *American Dreamer: A Life of Henry A. Wallace* (New York: Norton, 2001), 92–93, 110. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Herbert Hoover, *The Ordeal of Woodrow Wilson* (Baltimore, 1992; reprint of 1958 edition), 270-78; Robert H. Farrell, Ill-Advised: *Presidential Health and Public Trust* (Columbia, MO, 1992), 16. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. See Silver’s sermon in Cleveland, October 20, 1946, “The Role of America in the World Today. Are We Leading Towards Peace? Are We Heading for War? The Implications of the Byrnes-Wallace-Baruch Controversy,” Silver Archives 4/749. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. No evidence can be found of Silver’s support of Wallace’s independent candidacy for president 1948, and perhaps this indicates his partial support for Wallace and his views. The two exchanged letters in 1948 but the subject of the elections did not arise. See Silver’s letter to Wallace, July 30, 1948, and Wallace’s reply July 8, 1948, Silver Archives 1/964. For evidence showing that Silver did not define himself as pro-communist, see his address in Cleveland, April 30, 1950, “The Cold War,” Silver Archives 4/821. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Silver’s sermon, “The Role of America in the World Today.” On the attempts of liberal elements in the Democratic Party to agitate against Truman’s policy toward the Soviet Union, see: Walter LaFeber, America, Russia, and the Cold War 1945-1980 (New York, Knopf, 1985), 46-47. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. About the Congress, see: Leon A. Kubowizki, *Unity in Dispersion: A History of the World Jewish Congress* (New York, WJC, 1948). [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. See Nehemiah Robinson, *The United Nations and the World Jewish Congress* (Institute of Jewish Affairs, New York, WJC, 1955). Regarding support of the UN, see Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati OH November 17, 1994, collection 361, box A68, file 3 (henceforth AJA, 361, A68/3). Regarding the participation of World Jewish Congress representatives in activities in Washington and the body’s support of the Bretton Woods Accords, the World Bank, and the World Monetary Fund, see Nehemiah Robinson’s articles in the World Jewish Congress’s weekly newspaper, April 20, 1945, AJA, B95/3, 361. See too Robinson’s memo, undated, AJA, 361, B95/1, and a telegram from the Secretary of the United States Treasury Henry Morgenthau, Jr. inviting the World Jewish Congress to dispatch a representative for consultations in Washington regarding the Bretton Woods Accords: Telegram, February 17, 1945, AJA, 361, B95/3. Regarding the request to lobby deputies in the House of Representatives to support the Bretton Woods Accords, see Guide to the Women’s Division of the World Jewish Congress, February 5, 1945, AJA, 361, C68/5. Regarding the accords and their significance, see John Maynard Keynes, *Activities 1941-1946: Shaping the Post-War World: Bretton Woods and Reparations* (London, Macmillan, for the Royal Economic Society, 1980). [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Tartakower on UNRRA, 1946 (no precise date specified), AJA, 361, C6/641. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Ibid. Regarding the organization and deliberations about its course of action, see Anna Holian, *Between Nationalism and Internationalism: Displaced Persons at the UNRRA* (Frankfurt, University of Munich, 2009), 109-129. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. See the article by Emanuel Neumann, Silver’s aide and political partner and future Chairman of the American Zionist Federation, in the monthly *Free World* published in New York between 1941 and 1946. The monthly promoted efforts to reach a global settlement after the war and defined itself as committed to democracy and world peace following the Allies’ victory in the war. To gain a wider audience, the monthly published special editions in Chinese and Spanish. See The Central Zionist Archives in Jerusalem (henceforth CZA), reprint of Neumann’s article in *Free World*, div. A123, file 256, C123/256. For the original article, see Emanuel Neumann, “Arab Alignments in the Near East,” *Free World* 1942 (3): 3-15. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Neumann, *Free World*, ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. A transcript of Neumann’s lecture on the Middle Eastern economy, January 30, 1943, CZA, A123/256. Neumann espoused similar views in a position paper that dealt with shaping a new policy on the Middle East. See position paper, “A New Policy for the Middle East,” (undated), CZA, A123/256. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Letter from Neumann to Silver, June 16, 1944, Silver Archives 2/165. Letter from Neumann to Silver in *New Palestine*, December 16, 1947, Silver Archives 1/886. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. See the report in *Ha-Tzofe*on Silver’s press conference, December 18, 1948, under the headline “Silver: Our orientation is toward the UN, not East and not West.” [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Draft of Silver’s autobiography, Silver Archives, 1963, 7/3. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Transcript of Silver’s speech in New York, April 29, 1945, CZA, S53/271 [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Silver’s address to the UN General Assembly’s ad hoc committee established on September 23, 1947, on which sat representatives of all the member states of the UN to discuss the UN special committee’s report on Palestine. See Hillel Silver, “We will sacrifice the victim,” in Abba Hillel Silver, *In the Campaign for a Jewish State: Collected Addresses and Articles* (Jerusalem, The Zionist Library, 1968), 201. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Ben Gurion at the Jewish Agency, October 6, 1942, CZA, S100. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Manson’s letter to Silver, July 25, 1949, Silver Archives 1/1147. Regarding the Cold War, see Manson’s letter to Silver, May 6, 1950, Silver Archives 1/1148. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. On these topics see Silver, “Rabbis and Their Critics,” in *Therefore Choose Life*, 391-392; Silver, “There is Yet Room for Vision,” in *Therefore Choose Life*, 428-430. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. See Neumann’s article in *New Palestine*, December 16, 1947, Silver Archives 1/886. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Stephen S. Wise, “Fifty Years Later: Official Memorandum to the United Nations Organizing Conference, San Francisco – 1945,” *Western States Jewish History* 1996 (28/2): 144-148. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. For a comprehensive discussion of these issues, see Ofer Schiff, *The Downfall of Abba Hillel Silver and the Foundation of Israel* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2014). [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. On the paucity of US Zionist settlers in Palestine and their negligible impact on the *yishuv’s* society, see Joseph B. Glass, *From New Zion to Old Zion: American Jewish Immigration and Settlement in Palestine*, 1917-1939 (Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 2002). [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. A clear example of opposition in Israel to the activity of US Zionists and of Silver and Neumann in particular during the 1950s is to be found in articles on this issue that appeared in *Ha-Dor*, Mapai’s mouthpiece. See, for example, articles on this topic that appeared on these dates: May 30, 1951; November 26, 1950; November 24, 1950. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)