

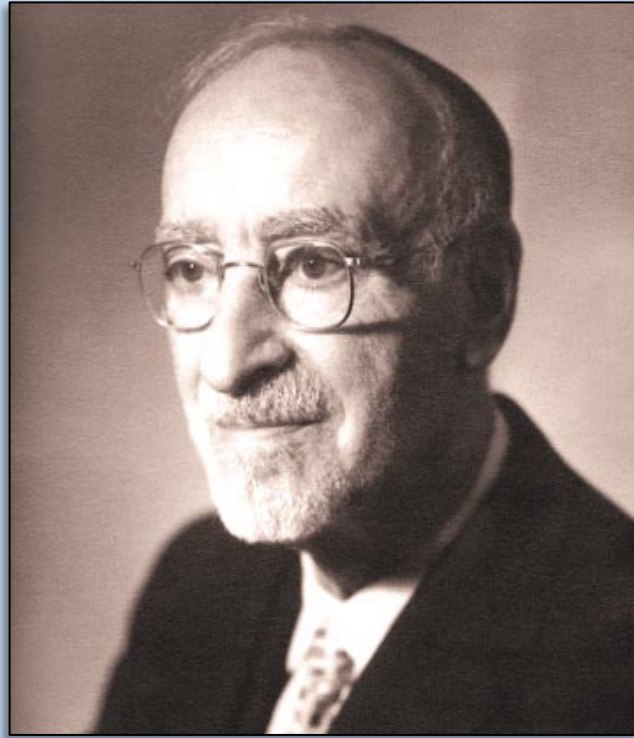


A Select Digital Catalogue of the 'Petit' Exhibition

**Selected Letters of Reverend
Dr. David de Sola Pool (1885-1970)
Twentieth Century American Jewish Leader**

Presented by the American Sephardi Federation
and exhibited at the *Center for Jewish History*
New York City - Summer 2012

Developed and Curated by Shelomo Alfassa



DR. DAVID DE SOLA POOL (1885–1970) was one of the great Jewish leaders of 20th century America. He was born in London, England, and later received his rabbinic ordination from the Hildesheimer Rabbinical Seminary in Berlin, Germany.

In 1907 he was invited to become the minister of Congregation Shearith Israel (the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue) located in New York City, the oldest Jewish congregation in the United States. There, he served as its minister for 63 years.

Dr. De Sola Pool translated and edited the Sephardic prayer book for the Union of Sephardic Congregations and the Ashkenazic prayer book for the Rabbinical Council of America.

Yet, he was more than an American rabbi, he could be called a ‘world rabbi,’ as both lay persons and rabbinical figures often reached out to him from around the globe, seeking his advice and counsel.

“I am not a self-made man. The self-made man often worships his maker. I realize only too well how little I owe to myself. Yet, in the retrospect of nearly two thirds of a century, I see, and those who know me must see even more clearly, how far I am from attaining the standards and ideals of which I speak and which fifty years ago seemed so close to me. The little that I may have achieved is heavily indebted to forces around me--home, family, friends, and a serene background now almost unknown.”

Dr. David Dr. Sola Pool

1953

CLASS OF SERVICE	WESTERN UNION	1200	SYMBOLS
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NOJ NEW YORK NY APR 12 1945

UNION OF SEPHARDIC CONGREGATIONS NI

99 CENTRAL PARK WEST NYK

MAY WE URGE YOUR ORGANIZATION TO SEND A REPRESENTATIVE TO A MEETING SUNDAY APRIL 15TH 1100 AM AT THE COMMODORE HOTEL EAST BALLROOM TO PERFECT PLANS FOR A GREAT OUTDOOR RALLY AT LEWISOHN STADIUM FOR SUNDAY APRIL 29TH. THE MEETING WILL BE SPONSORED BY THE AMERICAN JEWISH CONFERENCE AND THE AMERICAN ZIONIST EMERGENCY COUNCIL AS PART OF ^{THE} NATIONWIDE PROGRAM TO PROJECT DEMAND FOR HEARING FOR ^{THE} JEWISH PEOPLE AT SAN FRANCISCO AND ^{THE} PROGRAM WE SUBMIT TO UNITED NATIONS AND TO DEMAND THAT DOORS OF PALESTINE BE OPENED TO MASS JEWISH IMMIGRATION

I L KENNEN EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

A telegram sent to Dr. David De Sola Pool, President of the Union of Sephardic Congregations in NYC from the American Jewish Conference, requesting that USC send a representative to a “Great Outdoor Rally” for Israel. Among the causes for the rally was to get the United Nations to “Demand that the doors of Palestine be opened to mass Jewish immigration.”



This is a never before published photo of a gutted Sephardic synagogue in Belgium. It was sent to Dr. Pool after World War II, as the community sought assistance to rebuild. Germany invaded Belgium and destroyed the Jewish community of 55,000 Jews, deporting most of them to Auschwitz, as they proceeded 95 miles north into Holland.

2 December 1946

Mrs. Julia Friedenwald Strauss
 2701 Whitney Ave.
 Baltimore 15, Md.

My dear Julia:

The letter from Jacques Abolafia is one of very many similar ones which have come to my desk. There are ruined Sephardic congregations all over the Balkans, also Italy, in some parts of the coast of North Africa, to say nothing of the more familiar ones in Amsterdam, The Hague, Paris, Bordeaux, etc. One after another appeal has reached me to help rebuild bombed synagogues, to provide sifre Torah, prayerbooks, Tefillin, etc. to the survivors of such communities.

My congregation raised a substantial sum for helping the Amsterdam community get on its feet in the first days after the war. For the rest, however, I have had to stimulate what help I could get from Landsleute. In the case of Antwerp there are no Sephardim from Antwerp in this country. There are a number of Ashkenazim, and notwithstanding the implications to say the least, distrust of the Ashkenazim which one feels in Mr. Abolafia's letter, I am putting the problem up to some of the Ashkenazim here to see whether they can supply some needed help.

The one basic question, however, is how many Sephardim survived. I have spoken to one or two of the Antwerp Ashkenazim here and their impression is that there must be very, very few. We shall therefore first have to find out whether there are enough to justify any considerable expense in rehabilitating the synagogue. I shall get in touch with Mr. Fisher. I assume that he is a member of the family of Jean Fisher. There is another member of that well-known

In this letter, Dr. De Sola Pool is discussing the many destroyed Sephardic congregations throughout Europe and North Africa. He writes of how his community helped send funds to congregations in need, particularly the Jews in Amsterdam, of which he has heard that few Sephardic Jews survived.

ISAAC S. AMADO
Murabüt Cargisi No 4
Izmir *smycrna*

Izmir 20.4.46

THE REV. DR. D. DE SOLA POOL
Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue
NEW - YORK

Dear Sir,

I took the opportunity to write to you once again, because the last time i ^{how} saw you tried to search for my son Charles Amado, and made him write us a few words after a long time.

I am sure you know what this meant to us. We never forget this act of yours and we are always thankful to you.

As I have written to you a few weeks ago, since five months we have no news from him again. In the last letter which we had, (dated October 26, 1945), coming from Los Angeles, he wrote that he expected to leave in a few days for New-York City. So he asked us to answer his letters to the following address:

GENERAL DELIVERY -NEW-YORK

We have sent a few letters to him, which importunately were left without answer what makes us feel very sad not knowing what the reason is.

Will you please help us in finding out something about him which I am sure you will do willingly.

I cannot find words to thank you from anticipation, be sure I will always be obliged as regards you.

Hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely

P.S.

His old address, is as follows:
P.B. 6163 Los Angeles
55 California

Here, a Mr. Isaac S. Amado of Izmir, Turkey is thanking Dr. De Sola Pool for assistance in locating his missing son, Charles. Mr. Amado sent Dr. Pool several letters over successive months, in a frantic search for the young man. To everyone's happy surprise, it was learned that Charles had been serving in the U.S. military in the war in Europe.

BLOOMINGDALE'S
NEW YORK

EXECUTIVE OFFICES

April 23, 1943

Dr. D. de Sola Pool
99 Central Park West
New York City

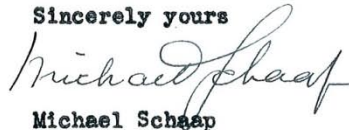
Dear Dr. Pool:

I want to thank you and Mrs. Pool for the very interesting and enjoyable Seder which I had the privilege of attending the other night.

I would like to get a copy of the new Hagadah which was used. I notice your new Hagadah was prepared specially for the men in the Armed Services, but if it is on sale I should like to have a copy. Perhaps you can send me one and let me know the cost, or else let me know where it is on sale.

With cordial regards to you and Mrs. Pool,

Sincerely yours



Michael Schapp

efw

A pleasant note to Dr. Pool thanking him for an enjoyable Passover Seder dinner, sent by Mr. Michael Schapp, a former New York State Assemblyman and political colleague of Teddy Roosevelt. Schapp was also a former judge who became the highly successful President of Bloomingdale's Department Store during the Depression.

December 12, 1944.

Mr. I. Shalom
411 Fifth Avenue
New York, 16, N.Y.

My dear Mr. Shalom,

It is only now that I am able to acknowledge your letter. Your plan of Judaizing the Alliance schools is an excellent one. I assume that you have the positive assurance that such direction as the Alliance still maintains over its schools will not oppose this, but will encourage it.

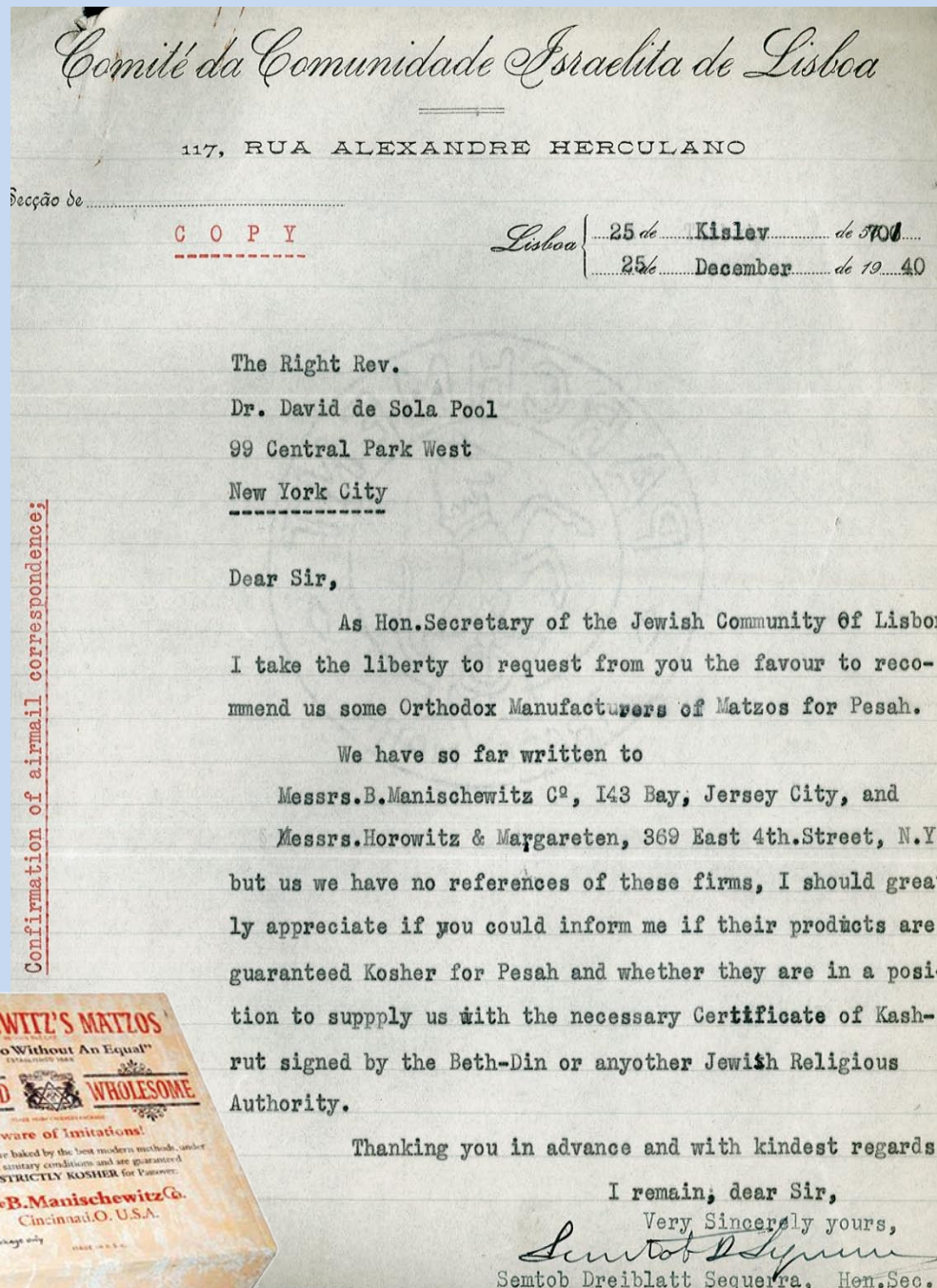
It would be a most valuable step in the right direction, if we could reestablish truly Jewish education in the historic communities of the Near East. I am especially glad to know that you include girls in the program, for unless the home is able to be intelligently Jewish, the work of the boys and men will lack real encouragement.

Sincerely yours,

President

In a conversation with Isaac Shalom on December 12, 1944, (one of the foremost leaders of American Sephardic Jewry during and after WWII), Dr. De Sola Pool supports the proposed idea to bring religious instruction (“Judaizing”) back to the Alliance Israélite Universelle (AIU).

Since 1860, the AIU had been the primary schools for Jewish children throughout North Africa and the Ottoman Empire. Their mission included advancing the Jews of the Middle East through French education and culture. And, while they in fact did educate hundreds of thousands of Jews, they were often criticized by rabbinical leaders for marginalizing the importance of Judaic religious instruction. Schaap and Dr. Pool exchanged several pieces of correspondence. Schapp was a “very likable man,” who had become active in the Jewish communal world during the WWII years. The Holocaust virtually destroyed the once great Sephardic community in The Netherlands, as most of the community members had perished in the German concentration camps.



Dr. De Sola Pool was known internationally as a trusted rabbinical authority, and insomuch that persons from across the world wrote him. Here, we have a letter from the Jewish community of Lisbon, Portugal that is attempting to ascertain if matsah made by Manischewitz and other (well known) companies are kosher for Pessah.

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WESTERN UNION

JOSEPH L. EGAN
PRESIDENT

1201

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1531
MAR 16 PM 4:07

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THE COMPANY WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING ITS SERVICE

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NA213 LONG PD=NEWYORK NY 16 341P=
 DAVID DESOLA POOL PRESIDENT, UNION OF SEPHARDIC
 CONGREGATION=99 CENTRAL PARK WEST=

*usc
 Moslem
 Countries*

THE SEVEN JEWS IN IRAQ DOOMED TO DEATH FOR THE CRIME OF
 BEING ZIONISTS CRY OUT TO US FOR SPEEDY HELP. IF THEY ARE
 TO BE SAVED FROM THE HANGMAN'S NOOSE STOP THE JEWISH DAY
 HAVING STARTED ACTION TO MOBILIZE AMERICAN JEWISH PUBLIC
 OPINION AGAINST THE OUTRAGE IN BAGDAD WILL BE GLAD TO GIVE
 SPACE TO THE ACTIVITIES OF EVERY JEWISH NATIONAL
 ORGANIZATIONS IN AMERICA, AIMED AT RESCUING THE SEVEN IRAQI
 JEWS FROM THE GALLOWS STOP WILL YOU PLEASE NOTIFY US

IMMEDIATELY AS TO WHAT STEPS YOUR ORGANIZATION HAS
 UNDERTAKEN OR PLANS TO UNDERTAKE IN THAT DIRECTION WE
 DARE NOT FAIL OR FALTER STOP WHEN YEARS AGO TWO OBSCURE
 ITALINS IMMIGRANTS, SACCO AND VANZETTI, WERE CONDEMNED
 TO DEATH ON WHAT APPEARED FLIMSY EVIDENCE, THE WHOLE WORLD
 ROSE IN PROTEST AGAINST THE MISCARRIAGE OF JUSTICE. WHAT
 ABOUT THE SEVEN JEWISH SACCO AND VANSETTIS IN BAGDAD? WE
 MUST NOT LET THEM DOWN STOP THE JEWISH DAY IS APPEALING TO
 ALL JEWS IN AMERICA TO FLOOD THE STATE DEPARTMENT IN THE IRAQI
 LEGATION IN WASHINGTON AND THE UN IN LAKE SUCCESS WITH
 LETTERS AND TELEGRAMS OF PROTEST STOP WHAT ARE YOU DOING
 ABOUT IT?=
 THE JEWISH DAY MORDECAI DANZIS EXECUTIVE EDITOR=

Continued from telegrams...

Telegrams dispatched by *The Jewish Day*, a Zionist Yiddish-language daily, to Dr. de Sola Pool, seeking assistance from him and the Central Sephardic Community of America, in an attempt to generate public interest that would hopefully save persecuted Jews in Iraq.

The Jews of Iraq, and especially Baghdad, lived for the first half of the 20th century under flourishing conditions. The Jews played a significant role among the leadership and within the infrastructure of the city, but this abruptly ended in 1947, with the partition of Palestine and the fight for Israel's independence. Outbreaks of anti-Jewish rioting occurred from 1947-1949, and after the establishment of Israel in 1948, Zionism became a capital crime and Jews were looked at as traitors.

From 1950-1951 Jews were permitted to leave the country but without their belongings; most became refugees that went to Israel, others stayed behind. Several public hangings took place from 1949-1952. In 1952, Jews were barred from leaving. In response to international pressure, most of the remaining Jews emigrated to Israel in the 1970's.

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DR DE SOLA POOLE= *N/*

99 CENTRAL PARK WEST NYK=

RECENT ARRIVAL FROM ISRAEL OF ONE OF OUR PROMINENT SEPHARDIC MEMBERS HAS RESULTED IN THE SPREADING OF INFORMATION TO THE EFFECT THAT DEFINITE DISCRIMINATION AGAINST SEPHARDIM IN DISTRIBUTION OF UJA FUNDS. THIS INFORMATION PROVING SERIOUSLY DETRIMENTAL TO FEDERATED FUND CAMPAIGN AMONG SEATTLE SEPHARDIC COMMUNITY. URGE YOU WIRE COLLECT IMMEDIATELY GIVING US YOUR PERSONAL VIEWS BASED ON YOUR OBSERVATION FOLLOWED BY FULL DETAILED REPORT BY AIR MAIL. IMPERATIVE THIS INFORMATION BE IN OUR HANDS SOON AS POSSIBLE AS CAMPAIGN IS NOW IN FULL SWING=

JACK CASTON AND GORDON DE LEON CHAIRMEN

2000 ALASKAN WAY=

A telegram sent from the Seattle Sephardic community (Jews from Turkey and Rhodes) to Dr. De Sola Pool in NYC, advising him that one of their members reports that there is “definite discrimination” against the Sephardic Jews in Israel in regard to the distribution of funds by the United Jewish Appeal (UJA).

Here, they are asking Dr. Pool for his opinion on the matter, as the Seattle Sephardic community was in the middle of participating in a fund-raising campaign for the UJA. These types of reports and allegations were not uncommon during the early years of the State of Israel.

Ce lundi 19 août 1946

JACQUES ABOLAFIA
 81 Marché St. Jacques
 Anvers, Belgique

Belgium
 Antwerp

A Monsieur le Grand Rabbin de la
 Communauté Sépharadite
 New York.

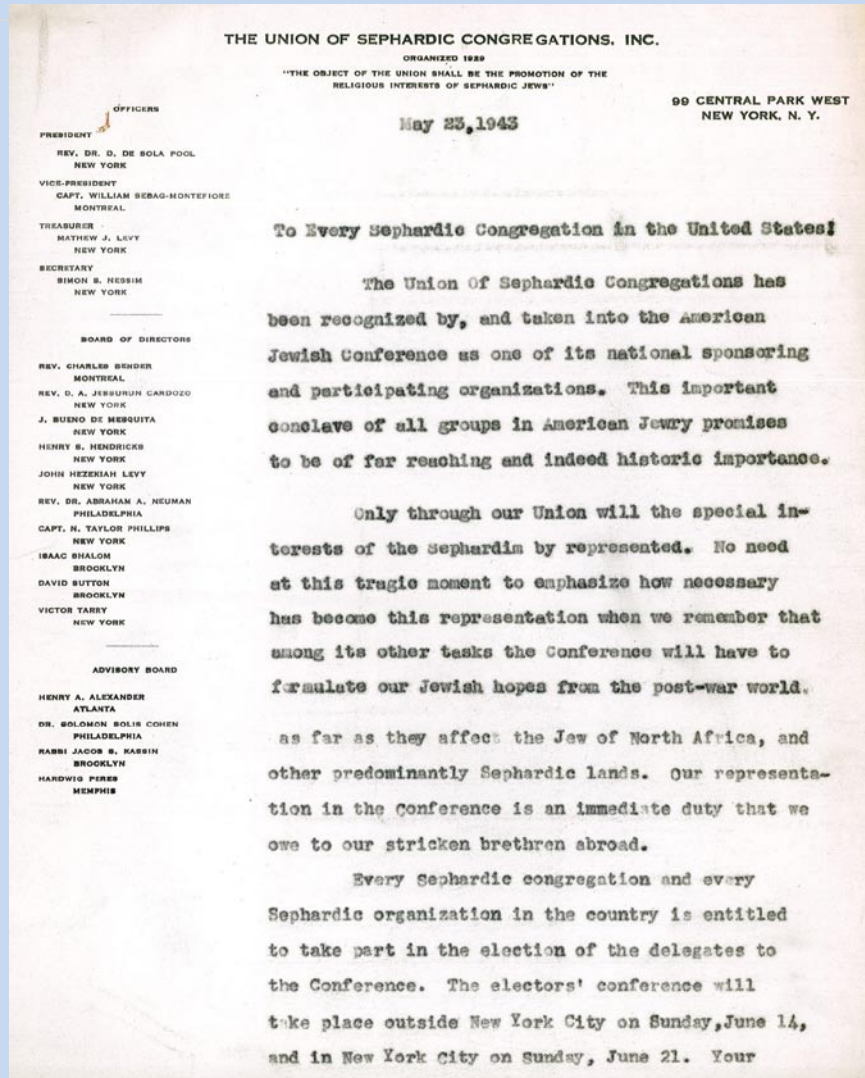
Monsieur le Grand Rabbin.

Nous nous permettons de vous adresser celle-ci et nous vous prions de la prendre en considération.

Nous avons l'honneur de vous faire savoir que nous avons formé un comité qui est chargé de reconstituer la communauté qui a été en grande partie anéantie par l'ennemi d'Israël. Malgré que nous soyons réduits à un petit nombre, hélas! ces quelques uns avons l'étincelle pour édifier la maison de Dieu où nous désirons nous réunir pour remplir nos devoirs envers Dieu et nous réfugier dans son sein.

Nos pères qui ont tant souffert, nous qui avons perdu tant des nôtres qui ont été martyrisés avec la dernière des cruautés, nos pères qui ont été la proie des loups qui sont venus les devorer, nos pères qui ont été massacrés en tant que remplis! maisons de Dieu où le soleil dans nos âmes brillait toujours quand nous venions, nous, vos propres enfants, demander grâce et miséricorde. Vous qui étiez

Dr. De Sola Pool's international popularity grew from his active involvement and dedication toward helping all Jews. Because of such, it was not uncommon for letters - such as this one from Belgium - to be addressed to Dr. De Sola Pool as the "Grand Rabbi" or "Chief Rabbi" of New York.



The Union of Sephardic Congregations (USC), one of the early 20th century organizational bodies of Sephardic Jews in the United States, was proud to have been accepted as a national sponsoring organization of the American Jewish Conference, an ad hoc pro-Zionist organization that first met in 1943.

In this letter, Dr. De Sola Pool (the USC President), is attempting to rally and motivate the Sephardic congregations with the news of USC's acceptance. The American Jewish Conference initially consisted of 32 organizations, then 64, that desired to help decide what role the American Jewish community would play in representing Jewish demands after WWII and helping to build Jewish Palestine. This collection of Jewish organizations constituted the most representative gathering of American Jews ever. The American Jewish Conference was organized by the American Zionist Emergency Council, a direct ancestor of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), which was established by the World Zionist Organization. The Conference folded in 1949.

CLASS OF SERVICE This is a fast message unless its delivery class is indicated by the symbol below.	<h1>WESTERN UNION</h1> <h2>TELEGRAM</h2> <p>W. P. MARSHALL, President</p>	SYMBOLS DL = Day Letter NL = Night Letter LT = International Letter Telegram
<small>The time shown on the date box is local time at point of origin. Time of receipt is LOCAL TIME at point of destination.</small>		
<p>NK078 (42)(06)SYC103 RA022 R WB014 GOVT NL PD THE WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON DO 14 REVEREND DR DAVID DE SOLA POOL CONGREGATION SHEARITH ISRAEL CENTRAL PARK WEST AND SEVENTIETH ST NYK</p> <p>I AM DELIGHTED TO JOIN THE MEMBERS OF YOUR CONGREGATION AS WELL AS YOUR MANY OTHER FRIENDS IN TRIBUTE TO YOUR HIGHLY REWARDING SIX DECADES OF SERVICE IN THE MINISTRY AND IN WARM CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR 80TH BIRTHDAY.</p> <p>IT IS A PLEASURE TO APPLAUD YOUR SELFLESS DEDICATION TO SOCIAL JUSTICE AND THE PUBLIC WELFARE, AND TO COMMEND YOU ON ALL THE MANY CONTRIBUTIONS WHICH YOU HAVE MADE BOTH TO YOUR COMMUNITY AND TO OUR NATION</p> <p>YOU HAVE MY SINCERE GOOD WISHES FOR AN ABUNDANT MEASURE OF HAPPINESS AND SATISFACTION IN THE YEARS AHEAD</p> <p>LYNDON B JOHNSON.</p>		

An 80th birthday telegram to Dr. de Sola Pool from President Lyndon B. Johnson.

Special thanks to Naomi de Sola Pool, MD (now in her 90's), the daughter of the late Dr. David de Sola Pool, and her son, David de Sola Rodstein, as well as all the family and friends who visited the exhibition during September of 2012. Their visit and family stories were a true inspiration, one that added another layer of validation to the stellar reputation of this great rabbi and Jewish leader, Dr. David de Sola Pool.

--Shelomo Alfassa

www.AmericanSephardiFederation.org