

UNION OF
ORTHODOX JEWISH
CONGREGATIONS
OF AMERICA



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ה"ב

DATE: 22 Cheshvan 5730 / November 3, 1969

TO:

FROM:

SUBJECT: Report of the Study Panel

Handwritten notes:
Return - Haganah - SCA not with...
Disregard - Haganah
of Haganah - not - important

The Special Study Panel was created by resolution of the UOJCA National Biennial Convention in 1968/5728 and charged with the task of recommending to the Board of Directors of the Orthodox Union appropriate action in connection with those coordinating or "umbrella" agencies to which the Orthodox Union belongs or in which to accept participation the Orthodox Union has been invited. In the discharge of its functions, the Study Panel has held several sessions, solicited a large number of written comments, conducted a lengthy hearing at which seven leading lay and rabbinic leaders were invited to appear, and undertaken other appropriate studies.

While the original resolution and mandate was couched in the broadest possible terms and the Panel attempted to meet that mandate, most of those interviewed or whose opinion was sought confined their response to the matter of the Synagogue Council of America. This interim report, therefore, will deal primarily with that agency and will offer further suggestions for Board consideration concerning other agencies.

In order to give the Directors pertinent information concerning the relationship of the UOJCA to the Synagogue of America, the Study Panel decided to submit to the Directors a condensed summary of the arguments, pro and con, as expressed in the written communications and the oral presentations made by leading rabbis and community leaders at the invitation of the Study Panel.

The essential arguments for continuing the status quo are as follows:

1. The United States is a country which is basically religion oriented. It is most important, therefore, that there be a voice of religious Jewry which is united, vis-a-vis the total American community. This religious voice is recognized as emanating from the SCA, therefore it behooves the U.O.J.C.A. not to divorce itself from this united voice of religious Jewry.
2. Withdrawal from the SCA, no matter what the justification, would isolate us from the rest of American religious Jewry. *Handwritten note:* (this is a very serious situation)
3. By remaining in the SCA, the Orthodox Union can effect control over the activities and pronouncements of the SCA. Obviously, this control would be lost if we withdraw and as a result the other wings of religious Jewry would cause much greater harm and havoc in our midst, without the settling influence of the orthodox spokesmen.

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restate in
positive-
use SCA
for another
purpose

(cont.)

Alternatively, SCA as umbrella
non-Orth group will outgrow
orthodox UOJCA

4. Withdrawal might well spell the demise of the SCA. This in turn would give added potency and importance to the secular Jewish Agencies which many feel reflect even less than do the other religious wings, the true and authentic Jewish spirit and image which we cherish.
5. Since the average Jew is not overly sophisticated in Jewish affairs and has accepted for so long the legitimacy of three wings in Judaism and the concept of a united front as manifested in the SCA, withdrawal on our part would alienate many who were heretofore sympathetic to the orthodox community and certainly would enrage those who have been heretofore neutral. Far better, therefore, to live with the problems of SCA affiliation than creating new and greater ones by withdrawing.

The essential arguments for leaving the SCA are as follows:

1. There are many important leaders and groupings within the orthodox community who are adamantly opposed to membership in a roof organization which is exclusively religious and yet has within its membership non-orthodox representation. Continued affiliation in the SCA by the UOJCA therefore impedes the cooperation of these individuals and groups, which are strong and vibrant, and in turn denies the Union desperately needed fresh forces.
*chabot they
work in vs
UJFA (seems
extra fact
vs. SCA)*
Sas: Mtg Jerusalem (Sas - present Ashdod syn oriented; 2nd of 10 + students)...
2. Continued affiliation in the SCA lends legitimacy to the concept of denominations within the Jewish faith. This is contrary to our Halacha and all Torah teachings. *who's legitimizing whom? grantat: legitimacy/validity...*
3. By submerging ourselves in a mixed group we blur our own image and deny ourselves the opportunity of projecting our opinions in a forthright, clear and dynamic fashion. *but: image of intolerance, narrowness*
4. The SCA is basically an unimportant organization which would be entirely meaningless if the orthodox group were to withdraw. By remaining we give credence to a paper lion voice which gives the impression of speaking in behalf of all religious Jewry whereas in reality it is at best a "parve" voice and at times a dangerous one, since the SCA has in recent years entered areas which are beyond its own legitimate boundaries. *→ that's our fault, our passivity*
5. Although the ultimate decision of the Union is one of policy and not a Halachic one, nonetheless it is well nigh impossible to ignore the P'sak Halacha which forbids membership of Torah observant organizations in a roof organization such as the SCA. Although the Union may not be bound by this P'sak, nonetheless it is imperative that we recognize its impact and binding nature upon a very large segment of the orthodox community. Thus, it behooves the Union to consider very seriously the advantages of removing this impediment and to weigh them against the dubious disadvantage involved in leaving the SCA.

The strong feelings concerning the present participation of the Orthodox Union in the Synagogue Council prevented the Study Panel from eliciting appropriate and adequate information concerning other "umbrella" agencies. Thus, the Panel is reluctant to make any specific suggestions without adequate opportunity to solicit the opinion of orthodox rabbis and lay leaders who are involved with these agencies.

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Accordingly, we recommend that the Board continue the Study Panel - whether with its present personnel or with other members - to inquire into the following matters and report to the Board of Directors during the year 5730 for appropriate action;

1. What is the present UOJCA relationship to the Jewish Welfare Board and would any change in that relationship adversely affect participation by the Rabbinical Council of America in the Chaplaincy Board?
2. Should UOJCA solicit participation in any of the existing specialized "umbrella" agencies to which it now does not belong, such as the American Association for Jewish Education?
3. Does the Union have effective representation in the international coordinating agencies in which it is nominally a member?
4. What is the burden on the budget of the Union of our membership in the various coordinating and "umbrella" agencies and to what extent might better uses for the limited funds be found? Alternatively, could special sources be found for the required funds for this participation? Similarly, could certain specialized projects of the Union be funded through such agencies as CJWFF or the LCBC, either independently or through other coordinating agencies?
5. Assuming that efforts to obtain 100% participation in an orthodox coordinating group will not be immediately successful, what further efforts could be recommended to the administration for coordination with at least some of the orthodox agencies, so that there would at least be an orthodox "caucus" in the Presidents' Conference, or in similar organizations?

The search for unity and coordinated effort in Jewish life has historically been a difficult one. Nevertheless, the Study Panel recommends the earnest and sustained pursuance of this search by the Orthodox Union.