



THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE
AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

**A Finding Aid to the
Joseph L. Fink Papers**

Manuscript Collection No. 105



Collection Summary

Title	Joseph L. Fink Papers
Dates	1915-1967
Collection Number	MS-105
Repository	The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives
Creator	Fink, Joseph Lionel, 1897-1964
Extent	2 linear feet (5 Hollinger boxes)
Language of the Material	English

Administrative Information

Biographical Sketch

Joseph Lionel Fink, the only son and fifth child of Rabbi Mendel and Tillie Kagen Finkelstein, was born in Springfield, Ohio, on 12 May 1895. He was raised in Dayton, Ohio. Fink received a B. A. from the University of Cincinnati in 1915, an M.A. from the University of Chicago in 1918 and a Ph.D. in Philosophy from Niagara University in 1919. That same year, he was awarded the rabbinical degree from Hebrew Union College.

Fink's first pulpit was at the United Hebrew Congregation in Terre Haute, Indiana where he served from 1919 to 1924. While chairman of the Community Chest, he agitated the local Ku Klux Klan chapter who kidnapped him and brought him to their rally. Fink then addressed the rally, calling the masked Klan members cowards. He was released and the Klan wrote a check the following week to the Community Chest for \$1800.

In 1924, Fink stopped in Buffalo, New York while on his way to Germany to begin graduate studies. He became the rabbi at Temple Beth Zion and remained there until his retirement in 1958. Fink was the leading Reform Jewish spokesperson for the Buffalo community. From 1930-1956 he had a weekly radio program entitled "The Humanitarian Hour."

Fink was also a president of the B'nai B'rith lodge and a founder of the local Board of Jewish Education. Fink was also involved in other community affairs. He served as a chaplain to the police and fire departments and as a mediator of civic disputes. Fink was on the board of the University of Buffalo and served on several New York state commissions.

Fink was elected president of the Central Conference of American Rabbis in 1952. Joseph Fink was also one of the founders of the CCAR Journal and edited CCAR position papers while working on the Committee on Church and State.

Joseph Fink died in Buffalo, New York in 1964. He married Janice Gutfreund in June 1932. They had two children: Arnold and R. Toby Fink.

Scope and Content

The Joseph L. Fink Papers consist of the papers of Joseph L. Fink, a rabbi and activist, who served in Terre Haute, Indiana and Buffalo, New York. Fink was a leading spokesman of Reform Jewry.

The papers include correspondence relating to Fink's tenure as the president of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, together with sermons and scrapbooks about his Buffalo civic activities. Fink was elected president of the Central Conference of American Rabbis in 1952, following the completion of the convention held in Buffalo. Much of the correspondence relates to this convention and his years as president. A series of scrapbooks contain newsclippings about various events and individuals concentrating on but not limited to Fink's CCAR involvement. The Buffalo scrapbook contains newsclippings about various activities, including those of fellow rabbi Israel Aaron and Temple B'nai Zion. Other scrapbooks focus on the activities of Fink himself.

The sermons included in this collection are primarily transcripts from his Buffalo radio program, "The Humanitarian Hour." Some sermons from the 1930s discuss the evils of Nazism.

Terms of Access

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Preferred Citation	Footnotes and bibliographic references should refer to the Joseph L. Fink Papers and the American Jewish Archives. A suggestion for at least the first citation is as follows: [Description], [Date], Box #, Folder #. MS-105. Joseph L. Fink Papers. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.
Provenance	Received from Arnold G. Fink, Alexandria, Va., 1982.
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Index Terms

Subjects	Jews -- New York (State) -- Buffalo / Rabbis
Personal Names	Fink, Joseph Lionel, 1897-1964
Corporate Names	Central Conference of American Rabbis / Temple Beth Zion (Buffalo, N.Y.)
Media	Minutes / Photographs / Scrapbooks

Series A. General, 1915-1967

Box and Folder Listing

- Box 1. Folder 1. General correspondence. A-M.
- Box 1. Folder 2. American Jewish Tercentenary, 1953-1954
- Box 1. Folder 3. Brav, Stanley R., 1952-1953
- Box 1. Folder 4. Brickner, Barnett R., 1952-1954
- Box 1. Folder 5. Central Conference of American Rabbis. Applications for membership, 1952-1954
- Box 1. Folder 6. Central Conference of American Rabbis. Arbitration and Ethics Committee, 1952-1954
- Box 1. Folder 7. Central Conference of American Rabbis. [Leo] Baeck School (Haifa, Israel), 1952-1953
- Box 1. Folder 8. Central Conference of American Rabbis. Chaplaincy Equalization Fund, 1950-1953
- Box 1. Folder 9. Central Conference of American Rabbis. Committee on Church and State, 1950-1954, 1965-1967
- Box 1. Folder 10. Central Conference of American Rabbis. Committee lists.
- Box 1. Folder 11. Central Conference of American Rabbis. Constitutions, 1944, 1952-1953
- Box 1. Folder 12. Central Conference of American Rabbis. Convention, 1954
- Box 1. Folder 13. Central Conference of American Rabbis. Election as president, 1952
- Box 1. Folder 14. Central Conference of American Rabbis. Executive Board, 1950-1951
- Box 1. Folder 15. Central Conference of American Rabbis. Executive Board, 1952
- Box 1. Folder 16. Central Conference of American Rabbis. Executive Board, 1953-1954
- Box 1. Folder 17. Central Conference of American Rabbis. Finances, 1950-1951
- Box 1. Folder 18. Central Conference of American Rabbis. Finances, 1952
- Box 2. Folder 1. Central Conference of American Rabbis. Finances, 1953
- Box 2. Folder 2. Central Conference of American Rabbis. Finances, 1954
- Box 2. Folder 3. Central Conference of American Rabbis Institute for International Order, 1954
- Box 2. Folder 4. Central Conference of American Rabbis Institute in Israel, 1950, 1953-1953

Box 2. Folder 5. Central Conference of American Rabbis Journal, 1952-1954

Box 2. Folder 6. Central Conference of American Rabbis. Commission on Justice and Peace, 1951-1954

Box 2. Folder 7. Central Conference of American Rabbis. Kaufman, Jay, 1952-1953

Box 2. Folder 8. Central Conference of American Rabbis. Liturgy, 1951-1954

Box 2. Folder 9. Central Conference of American Rabbis. Marcuson, Isaac, 1951-1952

Box 2. Folder 10. Central Conference of American Rabbis. Marriage, Family and Home Committee, 1952-1953

Box 2. Folder 11. Central Conference of American Rabbis. Miscellaneous.

Box 2. Folder 12. Central Conference of American Rabbis. National Federation of Temple Brotherhoods, 1952-1954

Box 2. Folder 13. Central Conference of American Rabbis Offices in HUC-JIR New York. Lease, 1954

Box 2. Folder 14. Central Conference of American Rabbis. Placement Committee, 1952-1956

Box 2. Folder 15. Central Conference of American Rabbis. President's message, 1952-1954

Box 2. Folder 16. Central Conference of American Rabbis. Projects in Israel, 1952-1953

Box 2. Folder 17. Central Conference of American Rabbis. Psychiatry Committee, 1951-1954

Box 2. Folder 18. Central Conference of American Rabbis. Rabbinic Pension Board, 1952-1954

Box 2. Folder 19. Central Conference of American Rabbis. Relief Fund, 1952-1954

Box 2. Folder 20. Central Conference of American Rabbis. Resolutions Committee, 1953

Box 2. Folder 21. Central Conference of American Rabbis. Responsa, 1952-1953

Box 2. Folder 22. Central Conference of American Rabbis. Solicitation of Funds, 1952-1954

Box 2. Folder 23. Central Conference of American Rabbis. Subvention Fund. Freed, Abraham, 1953

Box 2. Folder 24. Central Conference of American Rabbis. Subvention Fund. Marcuson, Mrs. Isaac, 1953-1954

Box 2. Folder 25. Central Conference of American Rabbis. Synagogue Council of America, 1952-1954

Box 3. Folder 1. Central Conference of American Rabbis. Committee on Synagogue Music, 1950-1954

Box 3. Folder 2. Central Conference of American Rabbis. Committee on the Unaffiliated, 1952-1953

Box 3. Folder 3. Chaplaincy, 1950-1951

Box 3. Folder 4. Egelson, Louis I., 1953-1954

Box 3. Folder 5. Eisendrath, Maurice N., 1952-1953

Box 3. Folder 6. Eisenstein, Ira, 1953

Box 3. Folder 7. Glueck, Nelson, 1952-1954

Box 3. Folder 8. Heller, Bernard, 1952, 1954

Box 3. Folder 9. Hebrew Union College- Jewish Institute of Religion - Union of American Hebrew Congregations Combined Campaign, 1952-1953

Box 3. Folder 10. Hebrew Union College- Jewish Institute of Religion. Unification Plan, 1953

Box 3. Folder 11. Lefkowitz, Sidney M., 1953-1954

Box 3. Folder 12. Liner, Paul, 1950-1951

Box 3. Folder 13. Marriage certificates, undated

Box 3. Folder 14. Millstone, Dorothy, 1952-1954

Box 3. Folder 15. National Jewish Welfare Board. Division of Welfare Activities, 1952-1953

Box 3. Folder 16. General correspondence. O-Z.

Box 3. Folder 17. Pilchik, Ely, 1953-1954

Box 3. Folder 18. Plaut, W. Gunther, 1952, 1954

Box 3. Folder 19. Polish, David, 1953

Box 3. Folder 20. Polish, Jacob, 1953

Box 3. Folder 21. Postal, Bernard. Jewish Tourists Guide to America.

Box 3. Folder 22. Publications, 1951-1954

Box 3. Folder 23. Scouting, 1951-1952

Box 3. Folder 24. Seidler, Judah, 1953-1954

Box 3. Folder 25. Silver, Samuel, 1953

Box 3. Folder 26. Snyder, Herman E., 1953-1954

Box 3. Folder 27. Taxay, Joseph, 1952

Box 3. Folder 28. Union of American Hebrew Congregations. Executive Board, 1951-1952

Box 3. Folder 29. Union of American Hebrew Congregations. Commission on Jewish Education, 1952-1953

Box 3. Folder 30. Union of American Hebrew Congregations. Commission on Social Action, 1952-1954

Box 3. Folder 31. Union of American Hebrew Congregations. Commission on Synagogue Activities, 1952-1953

Box 3. Folder 32. World Union for Progressive Judaism.

Box 4. Folder 1. Photographs, undated

Box 4. Folder 2. Scrapbook. Aaron, Israel, undated

Box 4. Folder 3. Scrapbook. Buffalo, New York, undated

Box 5. Folder 1. Oversize scrapbook, 1915-1946

Box 5. Folder 2. Scrapbook, 1949-1967

Box 5. Folder 3. Sermons, addresses. A-L.

Box 5. Folder 4. Sermons, addresses. M-Z.