



THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE
AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

**A Finding Aid to the
Moses B. Sachs Papers**

Manuscript Collection No. 773

Collection Summary

Title	Moses B. Sachs Papers
Dates	1945-1947
Collection Number	MS-773
Repository	The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives
Creator	Sachs, Moses B., 1920-2009 Sachs, Frances
Extent	0.4 linear feet (1 Hollinger box)
Language of the Material	English

Administrative Information

Biographical Sketch

Moses B. Sachs was born in Baltimore, Maryland on December 20, 1920 to Jacob and Molly Sachs. During his youth, Sachs became immersed in the Hebraist movement known as Tarbut Ivrit, an offshoot of American Zionism, which he encountered first as a member of the Gordonia labor Zionist youth movement, and pursued during his studies at the Baltimore Hebrew College, under the tutelage of Dr. Louis L. Kaplan. Sachs attended the University of Maryland, and following his graduation in 1940, he enrolled at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, receiving his ordination there in 1944. Wishing to serve in the chaplaincy during World War II, Sachs was required to serve one year as a pulpit rabbi in Houston, Texas prior to enlistment. It was there that he met his future wife, Frances Rose Schwied, whom he married in 1945.

Upon entering the chaplaincy, Sachs served first in Manila and then in Okinawa. In addition to servicing the needs of his Jewish soldiers, during this time he assisted Jewish refugees and worked with the U.S. Army to create a restoration program for the island of Okinawa. As part of this restoration effort, he organized a Tu Bishvat ("New Years of the Trees") tree planting ceremony involving native Okinawans and U.S. soldiers.

Upon leaving the chaplaincy, Sachs and his wife traveled to Israel (then Palestine) in 1947. Soon after their arrival, Sachs was forced to abandon his plans to study Jewish thought with Martin Buber at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem due to ongoing Arab-Jewish strife. Instead Moses and Frances joined the Haganah the underground Jewish defense force devoted to the creation of a Jewish state. In addition to their service in the Haganah, the Sachs' worked for the Youth and Hechalutz Department of the Jewish Agency for Palestine on diaspora Zionist education.

Returning to the United States in 1949, Sachs served at Congregation Anshe Emet in Chicago (as assistant to Rabbi Solomon Goldman) from 1950-1951, Congregation Am Echad in Waukegan, Illinois from 1951-1959, and at Congregation Bnai Abraham in St. Louis Park, Minnesota from 1959-1974. While at Bnai Abraham, Sachs implemented a creative, egalitarian Sabbath morning education program that taught hundreds of children to read Torah and lead services and to immediately put their new skills to use as teachers of slightly younger children. The program continues to serve as a model for Conservative synagogues in the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul. He was also an untiring advocate of the Ramah Hebrew summer camps and the conservative movement's Leaders Training Fellowship (LTF) youth movement, which he encouraged hundreds of Minneapolitans to attend.

In the 1960s, Rabbi Sachs became more politically active. In the early years of the decade he joined the civil rights movement, marching together with a small group of rabbis in support of Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. in Birmingham and Selma, Alabama. By 1968 he had become a tireless advocate for the free Soviet Jewry movement. In the 1970s he founded and led the Minnesota Soviet Jewry Action Committee. As part of this work Rabbi Sachs arranged a number of highly publicized telephone calls to Jewish Refuseniks (some of which involved Senators Hubert Humphrey and Walter Mondale).

In anticipation of his decision to make aliyah in 1974, Sachs earned a doctorate in counseling psychology from the University of Minnesota. Once in Israel, Sachs attempted to introduce family and cognitive therapy into Israeli psychiatric hospitals, with limited success. Subsequently, he worked with delinquent youth in the northern Israeli town of Bet Shean and as a private therapist in Jerusalem. He later published two books, *Under Siege* and *After*, containing a selection of his letters home from Palestine and Israel from 1947-1949, and, *Brave Jews*, documenting the efforts of Soviet Jewish activists during the 1960s and 1970s to make and maintain contact with Jewish Refuseniks waiting for the opportunity to emigrate.

Moses B. Sachs died in Jerusalem on August 1, 2009.

(This biographical sketch relied heavily upon, and often quoted verbatim from, a short biography of

Moses B. Sachs written by his son, Noam Zion).

Scope and Content

Moses B. Sachs (1920-2009) was a rabbi, chaplain, Zionist and psychologist. His papers contain correspondence and other materials concerning his chaplaincy service in Okinawa from 1945-1947, together with his time in Israel from 1947 to 1949 working with the Haganah, as well as his involvement in the civil rights movement in Birmingham, Alabama during the 1960s.

The majority of the papers consist of letters he wrote while serving in the U.S. Army chaplaincy in Manila and Okinawa from 1945 to 1947. These letters provide a vibrant, first-person account of life in this zone, both for the military personnel serving there and those who lived there. Included among these letters are copies of a newsletter, Oiy Knawan, that Rabbi Sachs wrote and published for U.S. military personnel stationed on the island.

Two separately cataloged files, SC-15598, and SC- 15605, contain additional letters and papers of Rabbis Sachs' chaplaincy service together with his involvement in the civil rights movement in Birmingham, Alabama during the 1960s. Included among these files is a copy of Sachs' book, *Under Siege and After: Life in Jerusalem, 1947-1949*. This volume is a compilation of letters of Frances and Moses Sachs during their time in Jerusalem working in the Haganah and their efforts to create a Jewish state in Palestine.

The papers contain first-hand accounts of two of the most important events of the 1940s: the battle for the Pacific and its aftermath during World War II, and the creation of the state of Israel. Included are personal accounts of one rabbi's involvement in the civil rights movement of the 1960s.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged in one (1) series: A. General.

Terms of Access

The collection is open for use; no restrictions apply.

Preferred Citation

Footnotes and bibliographic references should refer to the Moses B. Sachs Papers and the American Jewish Archives. A suggestion for at least the first citation is as follows:

[Description], [Date], Box #, Folder #. MS-773. Moses B. Sachs Papers. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Provenance

Received from Noam Zion, Jerusalem, Israel, 2009.

Processing Information

Processed by American Jewish Archives staff, 2009.

Index Terms

Subjects Civil rights / Israel / Military chaplains / World War, 1939-1945

Media Newsletters / Photographs

Series A. General, 1945-1947

Box and Folder Listing

- Box 1. Folder 1. Correspondence, 1946 January-April
- Box 1. Folder 2. Correspondence, 1946 May-July
- Box 1. Folder 3. Correspondence, 1946 August-October
- Box 1. Folder 4. Correspondence, 1946 November-December
- Box 1. Folder 5. Correspondence, 1947 January-February
- Box 1. Folder 6. Correspondence, 1947 March-June
- Box 1. Folder 7. Oiy-Knawan newsletter, 1946-1947
- Box 1. Folder 8. Miscellaneous correspondence, 1945-1947
- Box 1. Folder 9. Photographs. Okinawa, 1945-1947