

8/9/91

Dear Rabbi Kosman,

I presume you read Meachum's today column so I do not enclose it. Based on your years of public silence - including when I phoned to enlist your support in confronting his and the papers overt anti-Semitism and left a message on your machine - I fear that you will still again be silent.

I am sorry about this and for you. This is not a Yavneh-Bethar business.

It is closer to Hitler and the Ayatollah. Frederick's Jewish community should not preserve a cowardly silence, tolerating this kind of Hitlerian abuse. But not only have you been silent, the president of the Congregation phoned and asked me to ignore Meachum because, she assured me, something would be done.

What was done is that Meachum remained Meachum and his tirades continued. I was sure it would but I respected the request of those who have not learned from the pain in our Jewish history. Until Meachum praised Saddam as a man of God! The papers did not publish my response but until today - with Mike Powell out of town this week - this Jew-hater and Israel-basher had not one such word in any column.

Each of these innumerable anti-Semitic diatribes forms the opinion of our less-informed neighbors. It makes anti-Semites of them because they do not know the truth and have no chance of learning it.

~~It~~ <sup>They</sup> cannot learn the truth, <sup>they</sup> it cannot avoid being made into anti-Semites because the Jewish community is timid and says nothing. Meachum and his Goebbels-like writing is all they have and unless I make the effort, which is often ignored, none is made. And I'm 78 and in seriously impaired health.

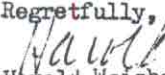
If I had no legs instead of weak and damaged ones I'd still stand erect faced with such racist infamy. Even if, as I have been, I am alone.

Santayana's wisdom has been validated only too often: those who do not learn from the past are doomed to relive it.

I regret that Frederick's Jews and their leader have not learned from their past and entice reliving the worst of it.

I regret also that to our non-Jewish friends and neighbors we look like cowards to those who have some inkling of the truth and like people of evil to those who do not.

Confronting Meachum and the papers is not a choice between fighting the Romans and a school, if I recall correctly. It requires no real combat. It does require, however, that we remember who we are and have been going do far back when there was nothing too intimidating, too overwhelming for Jews to defend themselves and not be cowardly or fearsome.

Regretfully,  
  
Harold Weisberg