



THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE
AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

MS-763: Rabbi Herbert A. Friedman Collection, 1930-2004.

Series E: Sermons, Speeches, and Writings, 1933-1959.

Box
15

Folder
5

"Future of Jewish Life in America." Rosh Hashanah sermon.
September-October 1954.

For more information on this collection, please see the finding aid on the
American Jewish Archives website.

EINSTEIN URGES AID TO HEBREW UNIVERSITY; \$10,000,000 SOUGHT IN U. S.

PRINCETON, N. J., Sept. 19. (JTA) -- "Israel is the only place on earth where Jews have the possibility to shape public life according to their traditional ideals," Prof. Albert Einstein declared here today, addressing 200 delegates at the concluding session of a two-day conference of the American Friends of the Hebrew University.

"We are all greatly concerned that its final shape will be worthy and gratifying. To what extent this goal will be reached will depend significantly on the growth and development of the Hebrew University," Prof. Einstein said.

Prof. Einstein's speech highlighted a long day of discussion at the Nassau Tavern here which culminated in a decision by the delegates to adopt a goal of \$10,000,000 as American Jewry's share of the \$30,000,000 building program to replace the University campus on Mt. Scopus from which it has been barred by the Arab blockade since Israel's War of Independence in 1948.

ALLIED COUNCIL VETOES LAW TO RETURN PROPERTY TO AUSTRIAN NAZIS

VIENNA, Aug. 15. (JTA) -- The Allied Control Council, composed of representatives of the United States, Britain, France and Russia, today rejected the law passed by the Austrian Parliament recently providing for the return of assets forfeited by former Nazis to the Austrian state under de-Nazification proceedings.

The law, now vetoed by the Allied Council, also provided for the restoration of pensions and other civil service benefits to former officials who were members of the Nazi party. Jewish leaders especially objected to the law because it involved the return of "Aryanized" Jewish property back to former Nazis.

(In Washington, the White House has announced officially that Austria's Chancellor Raab is expected for an official visit to this country on November 22.)

AMERICAN JEWS ARE NOT DOOMED TO ASSIMILATE, PROF. BARON SAYS

STARLIGHT, Pa., Aug. 15. (JTA) -- The prediction that the Jewish community in America will survive "even if it doesn't want to," because the Jewish people will never succumb to assimilation, was made here by Dr. Salo Baron, Jewish historian, addressing the fourth B'nai B'rith Institute of Judaism.

Dr. Baron, professor of Jewish history at the University of Columbia, and author of "Social and Religious History of the Jews" and other works, presented his conclusions without qualification. "Even if the Jews did not really desire to survive, they would do so despite themselves," he stated flatly. He belittled any idea that American Jews were doomed to assimilate, pointing out that the present vibrant condition of Jewish life in America has completely disproved the gloomy prophecies of 30 years ago.

Conclusions drawn by some scholars and teachers, that earlier Jewish communities in various parts of the world perished because of ignorance and assimilation, are based on lack of knowledge or faulty interpretation of the facts, Dr. Baron said.

Dr. Robert Gordis, professor of Bible at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, felt that the American Jewish community would increasingly assume a spiritual rather than a secular or community-service character. Its major identification would be with religion. Dr. Israel Chipkin, vice-president of the Jewish Education Committee of New York, differed. He thought that the distinguishing characteristic of the future Jewish community would be its concern with education.

RELIGIOUS JEWS CALLED UPON TO OPPOSE U.S. POLICY OF ARMING ARABS

NEW YORK, Oct. 18. (JTA) -- The American rabbinate was called upon today to urge their worshippers to be prepared "to oppose and reject by all proper means" the U.S. policy of providing arms to the Arab states since this policy "threatens the lives of our co-religionists in Israel and the vital interests of the United States and of the free world in the Near East."

A resolution to this effect was adopted here today at an extraordinary session of the Mizrachi national executive attended by more than 100 leaders of the religious Zionist movement in this country. Rabbi Mordecai Kirshblum, president of the Mizrachi Organization of America, told the gathering that the U.S. program of proposed arms aid to the Arab states was "an immoral policy which penalizes peaceful intentions demonstrated by Israel and rewards aggressive acts by the Arab states."

Emphasizing that their resolution expresses the sentiments of the 70,000 members of the Mizrachi organization in this country, the delegates called on the American rabbinate "during the remaining Jewish Holy Days," to lead their congregations "in prayer to the end that the hearts of those of our leaders who are determined to give arms to the Arab aggressors will be reached and this dangerous policy reconsidered."

The resolution also asked the Jewish spiritual leaders "to arouse every worshipper to the perils to Israel's security arising from the refusal of the Arab states to make peace" and to "clarify from their pulpits the dangers of the proposals of our Government to provide huge quantities of modern arms to Arab leaders who have never concealed their determination to destroy our beloved Holy Land."

SILVER PREDICTS "GREAT AGE" FOR U.S. JEWRY AT TERCENTENARY DINNER

DETROIT, Oct. 18. (JTA) -- The prediction that the next hundred years will be known as the "American Century" in the same sense as the 19th century was "The Century of Great Britain," and that "it will be a great age for American Jewry if the catastrophe of war does not shatter its security and life," was made here last night by Dr. Abba Hillel Silver, addressing a Jewish Tercentenary dinner at Hotel Statler. More than 1,200 guests attended the function.

"As a minority," Dr. Silver said, "we are helpless against the ravages of hate and demagoguery which war and economic depressions unleash. But given peace and economic stability, the American Jewish community will move forward and develop. It will expand its cultural and religious life and institutions, and will make worthy contributions to the total life of America."

"If the American Jews of the coming decades will carry on uninterruptedly and with wisdom and discrimination, putting first things first, and accentuating the positive and indispensable enterprises of Jewish life, they will make the numerically largest Jewish community in the world also one of the greatest in terms of faith, culture and scholarship."

"What may endanger our Jewish future here," Dr. Silver continued, "is not conscious escapism or deliberate assimilationist tendencies such as characterized Jewish communities elsewhere and at other times. Rather, an unconscious drift and a carefree relaxation of all disciplines - not out of conviction but out of sheer indifference - such as belonging to synagogues but not attending them, or sending children to Sunday Schools which are so limited as to time that they cannot really give them an adequate Jewish education, or in very many instances, not giving them any instruction at all, or homes which are emptied of all Jewish content."

FUTURE OF JEWISH LIFE IN AMERICA

By Rabbi Herbert A. Friedman

The American Jewish Tercentenary Committee has suggested as a theme for the celebration "Man's Opportunities and Responsibilities Under Freedom" and has offered an excellent paragraph in support of the choice:

"We believe that with this theme the Tercentenary should have purposeful meaning for all Americans and for the entire world. The whole 300-year record of American Jews can be made a symbol of hope to oppressed people throughout the whole world. Millions of people in many lands now live in poverty, in despair, in fear, in the straitjacket of totalitarianism. The American experience, and the Jewish experience in America, can give them fresh hope, as millions of human beings seek for themselves and their children, in the lands where they live, the very things that Jews and all other settlers in America sought when they came here - freedom, self-respect, opportunity, safety, security."

The record of America by and large has been good. True, there have been periods of retrogression, when witchhunts, whether of the Palmer period after World War I or the McCarthy period after World War II, have darkened the face of the land. True, there have been long periods of stagnation as between the Civil War and World War I, when it seemed that the advance of racial equality for the Negro was doomed to frustration. True, there have been periods of incipient fascism, as when federal troops herded the unemployed off the White House lawns during the Great Depression. True, there have been episodes of stony-heartedness, as when the first

23 Jews found it so hard to break the immigration barriers of New Amsterdam in 1654, and their latter-day successors find it so hard to crack the McCarran-Walter law restrictions of today.

But all of this, the retrogression, the stagnation, the stony-heartedness, has been part of the ceaseless struggle to expand the frontiers of freedom and repair the inadequacies of our present democracy. The beauty of America is that the struggle has always been at least partially successful and we pray will always continue to be so.

I would rather speak tonight not of the future development of America, important as that is, but of the future development of the Jews and Judaism. America will emerge safely from the trials of her future whether these constitute attacks upon her body from without by misguided enemies or sabotage upon her soul from within by misguided patriots. I am not so certain that our people and our faith will emerge equally safely from their trials of the next century.

Let me make it clear immediately that I am not speaking of physical dangers which may harm us. While Jewish history is replete with examples of the unexpected and the inexplicable, and while a fatuous optimism embracing the attitude that nothing could happen to us here would indicate an unpermissible blindness, still the likelihood of pogrom, incarceration, genocide here in America, under present circumstances, is remote. Events could transpire to take this country down the path of brutalitarianism, but it is devoutly to be hoped that we would be able to recognize the danger signs in time to join with like-minded fellow-Americans in a total

resistance to such events. If we succeeded, well and good. If we failed, not only our survival would be at stake, but the survival of the entire western world.

No - I speak not of the physical, but rather of the spiritual safety of Judaism in the century ahead. For I feel that there is a greater likelihood of our being killed by kindness than by sword. The very perfection of democracy in America may bring us to the situation wherein our institutions will crumble, our identity be destroyed, the loyalties of our constituency wither through assimilation, indifference, intermarriage and acculturation. The crueler would be this fate if it were to occur under conditions of improved freedom, fewer restrictions, increased emancipation.

This is not a new danger. Earlier generations recognized it and have left us a legacy of warnings.

Sir Moses Montefiore said in 1837 "I am most firmly resolved not to give up the smallest part of our religious forms and principles to obtain civil rights."

Lionel Rothschild said in 1869: "We are emancipated, but if our emancipation should damage our faith, it would be a curse instead of a blessing."

Achad Ha'am wrote an essay in 1891 entitled "Slavery in Freedom", making the point that many western Jews, desiring to participate fully in the new political freedoms offered by the emancipation, were distorting their Judaism. His words flashed with anger: "When I look beyond the borders of Russia I see Jewish professors, Jewish members of academies, Jewish officers in the army, Jewish civil servants; and when I see there, behind the glory and the grandeur of it all, a two-fold spiritual slavery - moral slavery and intellectual

slavery - and ask myself: Do I envy these fellow Jews of mine their emancipation? - I answer in all truth and sincerity: No! a thousand times No! The privileges are not worth the price! I may not be emancipated; but at least I have not sold my soul for emancipation."

These are three warning voices from the recent past. There is also one from the present. David Ben Gurion said in 1952: "Inevitably the Jew vacillates between ghetto and assimilation, between scorn and self-effacement, between flight from the world and flight from himself."

And so we come to the key question for the future. Will Jewish life in America tend to disappear under optimum conditions of freedom or will it be preserved by our own will, even in the face of temptation? And if it is to be saved, what shall the forms be? What attitudes are to be adopted? What posture shall we assume in order to live as a healthy organism?

There are three major paradoxes in Jewish life and religion which represent to me the statement of our major problems and at the same time their solutions. If we understand the problems involved in survival and agree to the resolution of those problems, we shall automatically develop such forms and attitudes as will guarantee the future.

First there is the problem of our life as Americans and as Jews. America has been a country in which, almost from the very beginning, we were considered free and equal. Our response to this, in terms of love and loyalty, has been unstinting. We have bled, poured out treasure, assumed enormous loads of civic duty in full consciousness that we were equal partners in the venture of making America

stronger and freer and better. And we have done this not under duress but because we wanted to.

Further, our ethical imperative, which has goaded us since the ancient prophets first prodded a social conscience into full awakening, forced us to work even harder than others for the complete realization of equality and freedom for all men. When there is a chance, in at least one land upon earth, to bring messianic dreams to fulfillment we are conditioned to even greater exertions. These goals of justice, peace, fair treatment for all, have been part of our baggage since the beginning, and when we find a land which smiles on these and is in harmony with them, we are impelled to the utmost love for and identification with that land.

Even further, we are really more American than anyone else in this country, for its earliest commonwealths were built upon the bricks of our most sublime ideals. The major themes and premises of America were derived from the Bible - specifically from the Hebrew Bible. The Atlantic Ocean was called the Red Sea and the English monarch was referred to as Pharaoh. The Pilgrims and Puritans were escaping from the bondage in Egypt and making their Exodus to the Promised Land. The early stories of Massachusetts and Rhode Island read like parts of the Pesach Haggadah. The Liberty Bell has words from Leviticus on it and the Protestant ministers of the thirteen colonies used texts from Samuel to inspire the Revolutionary War.

Oh, yes - we are part of America, we are "in" America, we are "of" America, we are, in fact, without supererogation, of its most basic structure and fabrication. We will work for every liberalizing, humane cause, for this is our ethical imperative, and we will cherish every democratic advance, for this is our destiny on earth.

But there is an inner paradox, for while we are integrally involved in a full and complete Americanism in the deepest (not merely flag-waving, shallow) sense, we still feel ourselves to be different from other Americans. And to the extent that our Judaism is strong within us, we want to remember that we are different.

This is a difficult doctrine, often misunderstood. There are some who misunderstand through ignorance and some through willful malice. Our desire to be different does not involve any less loyalty to America. It is purely and simply the desire of any living organism not to surrender the unique characteristics of his individual existence. America, with all of her wonderful attributes, is nevertheless possessed, for example, of some incredible vulgarities. We do not wish to succumb to these. We are the proud people of the book, of learning. Much of America is the land of the comic book. We do not wish to be reduced to that. We have not come this far, in a long and glorious history, to be transformed by America, or any other land, into the lowest common denominator. Our values of family solidarity, for example, must not be cheapened by the quick and easy Reno divorce. Our passion for social justice must not be blunted by the American desire for quick and easy popularity. We must be willing to risk unpopularity for the sake of our special ethical ideals.

So here is the first inner paradox - our organic and radical identity with the best of America; and at the same time our refusal to surrender unique Jewish sensitivities in order to be like everyone else. We are at once more American and less American than the average non-Jew.

Perhaps the resolution of the paradox is to be found in the very propounding of it. Perhaps it is good that we are faced with this - for the outcome is that we are forced to make two acts of faith - not one. We must make acts of faith as Americans and as Jews. This requires not diluted loyalties to one or the other, but double loyalties to both, a two-fold cord, a double measure of strength. These are equal but separate strains of our being, our essence, our existence. We are Americans and we are Jews, intertwined, yet distinct.

The second problem is one which involves American Jewry and world Jewry. Here too there is a paradox. We are of the people of Israel and yet not in the land of Israel. We are part of the world brotherhood of a scattered but united people. If our sense of unity with the sons of Jacob everywhere is shattered, we will quickly drift, even in powerful America, down a side-stream of Jewish history, to wind up on the forgotten shores as a historically interesting but fossilized fragment of Jewish experience. Separation from the main stream of Jewish life, from the world body of the Jewish people, will make of us, in another 300 years, either Protestants or museum relics like the South China Jews.

There are those who deny this concept of the world unity of the Jewish people. They claim that no such entity as the Jewish people exists, but only Frenchmen, Englishmen, Americans of the Jewish faith. They are wrong. The Jewish people is a real entity with solid dimensions in both time and space, in both history and geography. The world-wide bonds of sympathy, feelings of brotherhood, intuitions of identification combine to constitute a real and living entity. One is either blind and cannot see this or closes his eyes and will not see it.

Our belief in the world unity of Jews and our desire to help those of our brethren who are in need, have served as the twin motivations behind the great pro-Zionist sentiment of the American Jewish community. The record of service in this cause is long and valiant, aided not inconsiderably by organizations, which, while not founded expressly for Zionist purposes, still have understood destiny and lent great support.

We, the great bulk of our five million, have joined our voices in a litany of clamor for a Jewish land, independently governed and politically secure. We have massed a great caravan of ships and planes to free the captives and bring the redeemed to Zion. If our financial support has at times faltered, the dedicated ones among us have whipped themselves into renewed effort - and the initials UJA and BIG will long remain part of our vocabulary. Woe betide the Jew - be he leader or follower - who fall prey to ennui or who is guilty of complaining - how long? History will deal cruelly with him who deserts Israel in her hour of birth. And again, speaking of our bulk, we do not seriously contemplate this. There may be griping - there may be chafing under the harness - there may be competition for our interest and our dollars. But through it all the land of Israel will remain paramount as an obligation for the people of Israel.

Having expressed this sentiment with utter conviction, let us recognize the paradox that while we are of the people, we are not in the land. Nor will we be, apparently, in any large numbers - at least not in the immediate future. There is no large-scale movement of Chalmutzit, no large-scale transplantation. Some American (and other western) Jews are going, to make their homes in the pioneering

*Insert
current
situation*

state, but such are few. We remain afar. We support and admire and work for - but from afar. We may be completely pro-Zionist but we are strangers to the land of Zion.

So here is the second paradox - that we believe utterly and ineradicably in the world unity of the Jewish people, which causes us to work unceasingly for the state of Israel - yet we appear to be rooted firmly in this friendly soil of America, with every intention of strengthening and solidifying our position here, so that the voluntary movement of Jews from here outward does not come to pass.

Again I think that the very statement of the paradox yields the clue to its resolution. Perhaps it is good that the paradox exists - for it forces us to make two acts of faith - as American Jews and as world Jews. We are not one or the other. We will not reject our brethren abroad nor will we reject our sons at home. It is insufficient and selfish and blind to say that we will build a future only in America, just as it is unwise and unrealistic to say that we will concentrate on world Jewish affairs to the exclusion of matters at home. We build a bridge between our beings as American Jews and as world Jews, - and across this bridge we walk ever back and forth. Two acts of faith create one magnificent archway embracing all our interests.

The third and last paradox has nothing to do with the physical disposition of Jews, but rather involves religious and spiritual problems. Our greatest genius was that we were the creators of monotheism and gave to the world a religious message of the most crucial significance. Yet the world today seems to be much more moved by science than by religion.

To effect a synthesis between our religious idealism and modern science is legitimate. The new disciplines of sociology, economics, political science may possibly provide clues to a better social organization of the human race. The natural sciences will constantly unlock new secrets of the universe - matter, energy, space are being explored. To investigate these and understand them is not to practice idolatry. Our religion is broad enough not to be obscurantist. If new scientific theories explode ancient religious theories we must be flexible enough to accept and to inquire. We need not live with medieval closed-mindedness.

And so the final paradox unfolds itself - that our religion is based on the premise of faith in a God, while modern science which we want to understand takes nothing on faith. It might even be that astronomy and space travel will ultimately unveil the farthest stretches of the universe and return with the theory that there is no evidence of a God. We want to believe, because life is easier with a belief - yet we want to partake in the new science, with a gamble that belief may be destroyed.

Again, the statement of the problem leads us to the answer - that two separate acts of faith are required. Perhaps this paradox also is good - for it forces us to accept both Sinai and science. We must have faith in Sinai and faith in science. Sinai and science could be the twin poles around which our religious minds and our modern minds would circle in equal orbits. Sinai provides us with a focus for ethical religiosity. Science provides us with a focus for the atomic age ahead. We need not leave morality behind as we enter the new centuries. On the contrary, we may be able to apply

our ethics even more successfully in a world where science can grow enough food, provide enough power, invent new systems of distribution so that no man shall be hungry or homeless or hounded.

And, so to the summation. Eliminating the possibility of physical persecution, the American Jew facing the future must contemplate two realistic possibilities. Either the free air of America will smother his sense of Jewish identity and permit him to drift easily into an anesthetized state of painless assimilation - or he will make vigorous efforts to develop a resistance against this temptation and forge strong links in an anchor chain which will hold him to his own destiny. If he chooses the latter path, and we hope he will, he has three problems - three paradoxes - three major areas - requiring definition and resolution.

First, he must be a liberal fearless American in the best tradition, speaking against evil wherever he sees it, without rationalizing himself into inactivity. This will be his greatest contribution to a developing democracy. Yet he must be a survivalist, separatist Jew, relinquishing nothing of his precious uniqueness in order to be more welcome or better received among non-Jews. This will be his greatest contribution to personal self-respect. He has a right, or even a duty, to reconcile these two aspects of his being - and he does so best not by pitting one against the other (which am I first, an American or a Jew?) but by accepting them both in the highest integration of their respective values. He makes two acts of faith - as an American and as a Jew.

Second, he must be a world Jew who is actively identified with the people of Israel all over the globe and the land of Israel in its new-found sovereignty. He must work to join people and land, for otherwise large sections of Jewry and Judaism will surely perish. Yet he has apparently decided, for the historic present at least, to make his own life in America, and therefore must devote much energy to the strengthening of our Diaspora community. Again, the highest integration is achieved when these two aspects of world Jew and America Jew are not pitted against each other but are allowed to harmonize. He makes two acts of faith and lives on both levels - America and the world.

Third, he must be a religionist, for this is our true mark of distinction, with a metaphysical belief in God and a message of messianic hope for man. Yet in addition to being an ethical religionist, he also wants to be, and should be a disciple of the modern science which is remaking our world. Thus the highest integration of these two aspects of life comes also through harmonizing not through antagonism. Religion must be liberalized but not lost and restored as a central force in the life of man. The two supreme acts of faith - in Sinai and in science - can be achieved.

It was a tragedy of the most immense proportions that European Jewry was destroyed in the 20th century. It would be an irony almost equally immense if American Jewry were to wither in the 21st or 22nd. Double acts of faith - as American and as Jews - as American Jews and as world Jews - as religionist and as scientist - will save us for many another century and will possibly even make of our future a glorious and proud adventure, in which our children will gladly want to share.



לשנה
טובה
תכתבו

Holiday Greetings
by WESTERN UNION

ARCHIVES

MC329

MWA738 GTG PD NONSUB=MILWAUKEE WIS 28 125PMC=

AQ-1 (44)

RABBI HERBERT FRIEDMAN=

1954 SEP 28 PM 1 50

3431 NORTH LAKE DR SHOREWOOD WIS=

A BRILLIANT AND COURAGEOUS SERMON BY A WORTHY SON OF OUR
PEOPLE STANDS OUT LIKE A BEACON ON A DARK NIGHT AND ADDED
A PROPHETIC MEANING TO THIS IMPORTANT DAY. YOUR ADDRESS
WILL LONG REMAIN A NOBLE DOCUMENT TO THOSE WHO WANT TO
UNDERSTAND, A GUIDE TO THE PERPLEXED, A TEXT FOR OUR



לשנה
טובה
תכתבו

Holiday Greetings
by WESTERN UNION

ARCHIVES

MC329/2

1954 SEP 28 PM 1 50

CHILDREN, MY SINCERE AND WARMEST CONGRATULATIONS=

HENRY T GROSSMAN=



JOSEPH GOLDBERG
ATTORNEY AND COUNSELLOR AT LAW
401 SLATER BUILDING
390 MAIN STREET
WORCESTER 8, MASSACHUSETTS

Sept. 23, 1954

Rabbi Herbert A. Friedman,
Temple Emanuel B'ne Jeshurun,
2419 E. Kenwood Blvd.,
Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

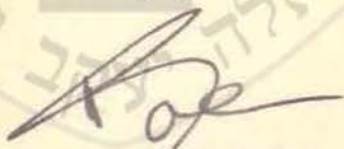
Dear Rabbi:

I was in Boston last week-end and had the opportunity of talking to a number of people who heard your address at the American Jewish Congress.

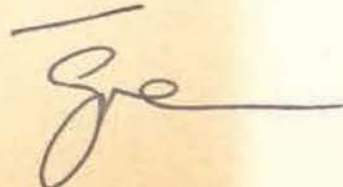
I have never had such an enthusiastic reaction to anyones talk. It was characterized by everyone that I spoke to, as brilliant and to put it mildly, you made a deep and ever-lasting impression upon all your listeners.

They were so impressed by the talk and its contents, that they are having it mimeographed, and sent all over New England.

Sincerely yours,


Judge Joseph Goldberg

JG/des

May you have the finest - of all
five New Years - you and
your family


American Jewish Congress

New England Region
ANNUAL CONVENTION
Sunday, September 12, 1954
HOTEL BRADFORD, BOSTON

Convention Co-chairmen
AARON J. BRONSTEIN EDWARD J. BARSHAK

294 WASHINGTON STREET

BOSTON 8, MASS.

Liberty 2-0266

September 16, 1954

Mr. Isaac Toupin
American Jewish Congress
15 East 84th St.
New York 28, New York

Dear Isaac,

Many thanks for coming to Boston for our convention. My main purpose in writing is to tell you what a swell job Herbie did. The entire audience in the closing session left with a feeling of satisfaction. I concur in one of the expressions that "he is one of the best speakers ever to come to Boston." I imagine Shad has given you an evaluation too.

The check is going forward to Herbie for the amount you indicated.

Although I haven't heard from you about the Administrative Committee, I am planning to be in New York this weekend, (on my own), and will see you some time Saturday night or Sunday. If you think it advisable, I will be glad to stay over for a conference on Monday.

Best wishes.

Sincerely yours,

M. JACOB JOSLOW
Executive Director

MJJ/fo

Dear Herb-

*I thought you would like to see the
as a note to me & therefore, an honest
evaluation. I got the same commendation
other. Many thanks - I love you for this.
Attend the 1954 Convention Read the speech -
Lousy - I can't use it for a phone.
Brose*