



## Abba Hillel Silver Collection Digitization Project

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### **MS-4787: Abba Hillel Silver Papers, 1902-1989.**

Series I: General Correspondence, 1914-1969, undated.

Sub-series A: Alphabetical, 1914-1965, undated.

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Lewisohn, Ludwig, 1942-1943.



Ludwig Lewisohn

Chicago, Ill.,  
December 7, 1942.

Dear Dr. Silver:-

Last summer I wrote a brief war novel which addresses to the Christian world the great necessary but here artistically implied accusation of the Jewish people. It must be published; it is--from the angle of the opportunists and cowards who publish--dynamite. I knew that when I wrote it. Hence, lecturing in this neighborhood, I have been able through the serviceableness of my devoted friend, Saul Spiro, to have a number of copies mimeographed. These copies I am submitting to three American critics who are my "fans" and to a very few of our leading men. May I send you one?

It is understood that if the story doesn't strike you sufficiently for you to give it the support of your good opinion there will be no "feeling" of any kind on my part. For these matters of approach to an artistic problem are intensely personal. But I do both hope and believe that you will like it and want to give it your support.

After Friday, December 12, I shall have left here to rejoin my dear wife in Tucson, Arizona, where our address is P.O. Box 5078.

Always cordially,

Ludwig Lewisohn

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December 9, 1942

Dr. Ludwig Lewisohn  
C/o Zionist Organization of America  
220 South State Street  
Chicago, Ill.

My dear Friend:

Thank you for your letter. I am of course very happy to read anything you write, and if you will send me a copy of your latest novel, I shall be most happy to read it and give you my opinion of it.

With all good wishes and trusting that you are well, I remain

Most cordially yours,

AHS:BK



January 7, 1943.

Mr. Ludwig Lewisohn,  
P. O. Box 5078,  
Tucson, Arizona.

My dear Friend:

Under separate cover, I am returning to you the manuscript entitled "Breathe Upon These" which you graciously sent me. I read it through in one sitting. I was as deeply moved by it, as was Ada. It is so true and so dramatically revealing of the great tragedy and guilt in which all peoples are involved today.

Had you asked me last Spring whether this novel should be published, I would have unhesitatingly said "yes". Today - at this moment - frankly, I do not know. It will revive the whole Struma affair which had evoked so much indignation on the part of the Jewish people and others against the British Government. What good that might do at the moment, I do not know. It might do some harm.

The United Nations, including Great Britain, have recently expressed official condemnation of the mass murder of our unfortunate brothers in Europe. The English people and the House of Commons were particularly gracious in their expressions of profound sympathy. Plans have officially been announced for the punishment of the Nazi criminals. To remind the world again of the Struma crime at this moment, would be misinterpreted and I am afraid bitterly resented by those whom we must have as our friends. Patrioteers, even Jewish ones, will accuse you and us of interfering with the war effort by seeking to blacken the reputation of our strongest ally in the war against the Axis.

These and many other considerations, are passing through my mind as I write you this note and that is why I say that I am not at all sure that it would be wise to publish "Breathe Upon These" at the present time.

With all good wishes, I remain

Most cordially yours,

AHS:bw

P.S.

I am not at all sure that an Orthodox Jew would eat chicken not ritualistically slaughtered and cooked in "goyish" pots in a "goyish" home. I am inclined to believe that he would limit himself to fruits and vegetables, and, only by way of a major concession, to fish.



Ludwig Lewisohn

P.O.Box 5078,  
Tucson, Arizona.

January 12, 1943.

Dear Abba Hillel Silver:-

Let me thank you with all possible warmth at once (you and your wife, too) for your kind words about my story. Ah yes, it would have been well could it have been published last spring! But it wasn't written then. It takes some time for any subject matter to ripen into a work of art. Even so the period of gestation was terribly brief.

That brings me to your doubts and hesitations which do, indeed, impress me. You may recall, however, that Dorfsohn speaks of that true England which he once knew and emphatically says: he is afraid for England etc. And so I beg you not to believe that I haven't considered the matter. But in view of the ineffable Jewish tragedy I cannot find that England has done one thing to purge her. The performance of Eden and the house the other day struck me as supremely horrible. He said: so little could be done. Has he done that little? But perhaps you will read a forthcoming article of mine in the New Palestine. Perhaps it is because I myself am so well acquainted with injustice in rather brutal forms that I cannot afford to be afraid or feel that our people can afford that luxury. The crime committed against us and so against humanity is so unique and monstrous as to place it utterly beyond healing words and kind assurances or prudent considerations. Edna and I laughed the other day when by accident we heard a radio-preacher try to be moving about the sufferings of Jesus on the cross. We thought of our slaughtered children in Europe; we thought, too, pardonably, of the fact that the Catholic hierarchy of New York still keeps my--our--child from us and leaves him at the mercy of a madwoman. No, my dear friend. When Antony Eden weeps crocodile tears and does nothing about refugees freely entering Eretz Yisrael and even when our great and good President sends agreeable messages to conventions but never speaks out about a Jewish People or that people's place (with Luxembourg!) at the peace table--I confess I am unmoved and unassuaged.

You're right. My man will get fish.

Always faithfully yours,

Lewisohn.