



## Abba Hillel Silver Collection Digitization Project

Featuring collections from the Western Reserve Historical Society and  
The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives

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

Series IV: Sermons, 1914-1963, undated.

---

Reel  
153

Box  
54

Folder  
373

The Jewish world scene today, 1930.



331

THE JEWISH WORLD SCENE  
TODAY

LECTURE, SUNDAY, OCT. 19th  
1930  
AT THE TEMPLE, ANSEL RD.  
BY  
RABBI ABBA HILLEL SILVER

The Jewish world scene today is a rather depressing one. The pendulum of our political fortunes seems to have swung backward. Again we are in the midst of a period of reaction. Our political fortunes are at low ebb. In many parts of the world our economic fortunes in common with the rest of the world are likewise at a very low ebb. It is a law of Jewish history that when the world becomes restless and unhappy the status of the Jews becomes worse. The world today is decidedly restless, agitated and unhappy. A vast economic depression has engulfed seemingly the entire world, great unemployment, serious business disorganization, increasing poverty are in evidence in most of the countries of the earth. Wars, revolutions, uprisings and the tumult of desperate and resentful peoples are sweeping over many countries and even continents. Almost the whole of South America is today engulfed in revolution and civil war.

China is torn by a civil war. India is in the midst of a bitter and determined uprising. Spain is seething with revolt. Germany is in political chaos. Austria today is a political cock-pit. Egypt is experiencing at this moment the calm before the gathering storm. Palestine is just recovering from a bloody inter-racial conflict. The world is disturbed and when the world is disturbed the condition of all Jewry the world over is worsened.

At this particular moment Germany occupies the center of Jewish interest and anxiety. One of the most important Jewish communities of the world, for a time the most important Jewish community, because of its cultural and intellectual progress, is now being faced with a real menace to its security and well-being, a menace in the form of a rising tide of anti-Jewish feeling.



Germany has known anti-semitism before. In fact Germany was the cradle of modern anti-semitism. Not merely anti-semitism of prejudice, Germany has had a considerable anti-Jewish literary propaganda for some time now and even anti-semitic political parties were not unknown in Germany before but never was anti-Jewish sentiment so wide-spread, so organized, so unashamed, so aggressive as at this moment. A political party, the Nationalist Socialist party, Hitler's party, avowedly announced anti-semitic, which nobody very took/seriously, which never was able to command more than ten or twelve members of the Reichstag, suddenly at the last election, polled over six million votes, sent 107 deputies to the Reichstag, became the second largest political party in Germany and seemingly is on the way to become the most influential political unit in the German Empire.

Now in normal times that would be serious enough. In fact in normal times that would never have happened. But in abnormal times such as these, in times of humiliation, resentment, fear, hate, unhappiness such as prevail in Germany at this time, when men's minds swing from one thing to another, when anything is likely to happen, the situation is wrought with extreme danger. The possibility of a dictatorship is always present because the lure and the example is there. To the East there is the example of Russia a dictatorship, to the South - Italy a dictatorship and both the Nationalist Socialist party and the party which is the third largest in Germany are outspoken and avowedly reaching out after a dictatorship. And should the parliamentary system break down in Germany and the Hitlerites seize the reins, the situation would be desperate indeed.

Before the war one could prognosticate, one could say this is not likely to happen, that is not likely to happen, but today one can not prognosticate. One can only hope. When a man is normal you can prognosticate with a fair degree of certainty what his action will be, what he is likely to do. When a man is sick, in the grip of a terrific fever you can not prognosticate. You can only



watch with hope. And Germany today is sick, politically and economically. The war left Germany stripped of its power, deprived of its colonies, its entire territory dissected and shouldered with a crushing punity of reparations. The war left Germany humiliated, branded with guilt and that proud country which not so long ago was the most powerful country in Europe is today compelled to drink of the bitter dregs of defeat, humiliation and intolerance.

A new generation has grown up in Germany since the war. Those who were children in 1914 are men and women now and they furiously resent being burdened with the guilt and responsibility for the crimes of another generation. They refuse to be ground down for the rest of their days in poverty, in order to pay indemnities for the sins which they did not commit. These young spirits are timber for hot-bed propaganda. So throughout Germany today there is in the hearts of men, bitterness, resentment, hate. emotions These ~~people~~ are bound to seek an outlet. They have found an outlet in the program of the Nationalist Socialist party, the party of the Hitlerite. It is a party which shakes a fist at the world. It is a party of indignation. Hitler has capitalized all these people's pent up emotions, all of the dissatisfied elements in Germany today, and his program promises everything to everyone. For the defeated militarists the program of the Nazis as they are called, it promises the revision of the Treaty of Versailles, a revision of the Young Reparations Plan, a restoration of German territory.

In fact it promised everything. To the monarchists, the platform of this party promises anti-republicanism and the restoration of the monarchy in all its free balaam or anti-balaam splendor, to the land-owner, the reactionary land proprietor the program promises war upon communism. To the working class the very same program promises a vague and adulterated socialism, Hence the name of the party Nationalist Socialist. the abolition of unearned incomes, socialization of industry and everything else you read about. And for all the misfortunes of Germany, past and present, Hitler offers as a



burnt-offering, of course, the Jew.

Hitler's anti-Jewish program is medieval in the extreme. It calls for the exclusion of the Jews from public life. The Jews are to occupy no posts of any consequence in government. They are to be excluded from the schools and universities of Germany both as students and as teachers. They are to be excluded from the army and the navy, which is really no particular calamity except as it reduces them to citizens of the second class, for being excluded from the army and the navy they will be compelled to pay a special defence tax. They are not to be allowed to own land in Germany. Every newspaper published in Rome by Jews shall carry on the front page in headlines this fact, - a sort of a journalistic yellow badge. All the Jews who entered Germany since 1914 shall be expelled and all property of the rich Jews shall be confiscated. This is not Thirteenth Century medieval Germany but Twentieth Century and highly cultured Germany. And there are six millions of people who subscribed to this program. And the first appearance of these 107 brown-shirted Hitlerites on the opening day of the Reichstag was signalized by a good old-fashioned Jewish pogrom in Berlin, the capital of the highly civilized German Empire. This program was preached <sup>at</sup> ~~in~~ more than 100,000 meetings throughout Germany and was carried on banners and posters in tens of thousands, circulated through numberless demonstrations through the press and shot from the very lips of the handsome Hitler himself. I say his program has now borne fruit. When the Reichstag opened an old-fashioned carnival Windows of the principal stores and shops owned by Jews in Berlin were smashed, cafes, banks, stores broken into, furniture smashed, goods scattered, Leipzigerstrasse, we are told, after these riots, looked like a battlefield, littered with glass, goods thrown out into the streets. The cry "down with the Jews" rang through all the thorough-fares of Berlin on that day. The Manchester Guardian calls it "the ugliest thing in contemporary German life." It is reported that many Jews frightened with what has happened are withdrawing their funds and



moving to Holland, Switzerland and to other countries. It is reported that self-defense corps are being organized everywhere, led by the Union of Jewish War Veterans, telling the irony of Jewish history and conditions. Some Jews are now being told that they are not Germans but aliens, foreigners. Jews, ~~XXX~~, be it remembered, poured out their blood on every battlefield in the world war for their German Fatherland.

When a country is at war, in danger, it demands Jewish sacrifice, Jewish loyalty, Jewish patriotism. When a country is at peace and prosperous, it resents Jewish prosperity. When a country is in trouble it puts all the blame and responsibility upon the shoulders of the Jews. If a Jew is rich and a capitalist, he is an exploiter. He impoverishes the masses. When he is a liberal or a socialist, he is a disturber of the peace. When he is a statesman he is a traitor to his country and secretly betrays it. When he is a writer he pollutes the clear waters of the pure spirit, he poisons the life of the country by his semitic virus. When he remains in his own group he is clannish. When he tries to move in non-Jewish circles, he is a climber, an intruder. When he is alive he is in the way and when he is dead his cemeteries are eye-sores to the Teutonic race. In the last few years over <sup>a</sup> hundred cemeteries have been desecrated by thieves and hoodlums.

This man Hitler is a dangerous person and his star is in the ascendance at a very dangerous time. We have not yet heard the last of him. This half educated draftsman from Austria, who is not even a German citizen, a fanatic, in 1923, you will remember, he carried through a in Munich together with General Ludendorff to over-throw the Republic. It was a fiasco and Germany laughed. But Germany is not laughing today and back of this man today are six million or more men and women who look upon him as their ideal, their leader and spokesman. And Hitler has become the nightmare not only of the Jews of Germany but many other classes. Hitler is a sworn enemy of all of the progressive elements in Germany. At the recent trial of three or four



German officers for treason in Leipsic, Hitler made a statement before the court that "whenever his party will come into power heads will roll in the sand" and he meant, of course, the heads of all those who were responsible for the German Republic in November 1918. Whether he will carry out his threat or not remains to be seen. There are other parties quite as popular as Hitler's. They will have something to say about it, I am sure. There is also the German sense of order, discipline and common sense to be relied on in an emergency. But even if he does not succeed, the next ten years are going to be unhappy years for our fellow Jews in Germany for this humiliating propaganda is going to be carried on in every town and hamlet in Germany and the cry "down with the Jews" will ring for the next ten years through that empire and every conceivable accusation will be made against our brothers there. They will be harassed. Their spirits will be burdened.

What will be the outcome? Jewish experience, my friends, gives us the clue of what is likely to be the outcome of what is now taking place. The Jew who knows his history will take an historic perspective of what is now taking place and will see in it only another backward step in that old dance of life which is very much like the old English dance. The dance which consists of taking three steps forward and two backward, three steps forward and three backward. Our progress has never been without its halts and its retardations, its set-backs and ancient Israel will therefore not lose its sense of proportions and will not become demoralized, which after all, as far as our history is concerned, is not only a twice-told tale, but an oft-told tale.

German Jewry has a thousand years of history back of it. German Jewry has known every conceivable form of persecution in the past. Today it is Adolph Hitler, yesterday it was Each has its record of martyrology, its story of men and women who were martyrs during the Crusades. The Black Plague left its imprint upon Jewish communities in Germany. German Jews were subjected to every conceivable accusation in the past, to blood libels, to



desecrations, well poisoning. They knew the ghetto. They knew the yellow badge. They knew the burning of the Talmud and their sacred books. They knew humiliation and degradation. But they survived and through that sea of horror they waited for the new day. The new day is not altogether bright. Here and there a cloud returns, and sudden storms and darkness. But unmistakably the new day is there for them as it is in other parts of the world. From the days of the French Revolution and the days of Moses Mendelssohn, Napoleon, the Jews have made colossal strides in their economic, their political, their social history. They have enriched the life of the country in which they lived. They produced a galaxy of men of letters, writers, statesmen, students, of which Germany, the real Germany, soon

Numbering less than 1% of the population, they gave to Germany men of the type of Einstein, Heinrich Heine, Felix Mendelssohn, Meierberg, Karl Marx, Paul Ehrlich, Walter Rathenau, Lazarus, Jacob Wasserman - - - - - an endless list of men who carved highways for human thought and helped to bring Germany to the forefront of modern civilization. Not to speak of men who made many contributions to the ~~XXXXXX~~ of their own people: Moses Mendelssohn, Zung, Graetz, Frankel, Geiger, Einhorn

spirits in Israel. Such a community that knew darkness and knew light, that has lived and learned to face this latest recrudescence of bigotry, with courage, with imperturbability. The finest thing of all, as proof of what I am saying is that the German Jews of today are not complaining. They are not wimpering. They are not begging. They are fighting for their rights, their hard-won rights in Germany. But there are going to be some here and there who will run to cover in Germany in the next ten years. The weasel-hearted sons of the Covenant, who will seek the protective coloration of assimilation. Their logic is a simple one. We are hated because we are Jews. We are going to cease to be Jews. And they are going to change their names and join churches. They will practice all the devices of amateur gentiles. They are going to be half gentile and their children will probably be total gentiles and Israel will know



them no more. That has happened in the past and will happen again. But Israel always replenished, will carry on as it has in the past.

To the majority of the Jews of Germany, these present occurrences and what is likely to come will make them perhaps a little less care-free, but they will also act as a strengthening and cementing force, increasing the loyalty and solidarity among them. That has always been the case. Persecution always does that for the Jews. "

The more he is persecuted, the more he increases and multiplies. That has happened in the past.

You will recall during the second half of the last century assimilation was wide-spread throughout Western Europe and many Jews actually believed that the millenium was at hand and so they turned their backs upon their religion and their people and accepted the political, social and intellectual life of the countries in which they dwelt. For all intents and purposes they ceased to be Jews. But they were beguiled. They were misled by their own hopes. Ancient prejudices do not die that easily and the millenium does not come about that speedily. Suddenly, as if out of a clear sky, a veritable thunder storm of anti-Jewish agitation swept over the whole of Europe. Anti-Jewish literature appeared in every language. The last half of the Nineteenth century witnessed war, economic disorders and the resentment of the people. Their clamorings sought an outlet then as it does now, in blaming it all on the Jews. Medieval accusations such as the                      in Hungary, anti-Jewish parties appeared in Germany. Bismarck found it expedient to place the blame of his unsuccessful fight against Catholics on the Jews. One of the liberals of his day, Hermann Ahlwardt, a prototype of Hitler in those days, stormed through Germany fulminating against the Jews as Germany's real enemies. In 1879 a political party whose purpose was anti-semitism came into existence, in Austria Hungary measures restricting the Jews' rights to education, the Jews' right to activities. Karl Lueger became burgomaster of Vienna, than whom there was no more rascally Jew-hater.



in Bohemia

There were riots in Prague and Hilsner, /you will recall was accused of a blood charge and actually sentenced . In 1870 in France the clerical parties became virulently anti-Jewish. Political anti-Jewish parties appeared in France. Dumont wrote his "The French Jew" about that time, the book which hundreds of editions. This culminated in the Dreyfus affair in 1894. The whole world turned against the Jew. With what result? The result which our history has taught us to expect. Jews rallied round their peoples' standard and their peoples' faith. They re-discovered themselves. Some of them who wanted to forget that they were after Jews discovered that the gentiles would not let them forget. Soon, however, the Demascus affair the great organizations whose object it was to protect Jewish rights wherever Jews found themselves in need of defence, to help, prompted by a newly inspired sense of Jewish obligation and inter-nationalism In London the Anglo-Jewish Association and Israelitische Alliance, in Vienna. The Jewish Colonization Association was established by Baron de Hirsch with fifty million dollars to transport Jews to centers where they were likely to

Following the pogroms in Russia in earlier years of the our own American Jewish Committee was established. The response has always been remarkable



AN ABSTRACT OF THE ADDRESS

"THE JEWISH WORLD SCENE TODAY"

BY

RABBI ABBA HILLEL SILVER  
THE TEMPLE, OCT. 19th, 1930

Germany today occupies the center of Jewish interest and anxiety. One of the most important Jewish communities in the world is today confronted with a real menace to its security and well-being in the form of an anti-semitic nationalist socialist party which has as a result of the last elections become very powerful. Germany has known anti-semitism before but never in so powerful an organized form as at present.

Whenever a country becomes restless and unhappy the lot of the Jewish people there becomes worse and Germany today is restless aggitated and unhappy. Germany is sick economically and politically. The war left it stripped of power, bereft of its colonies, its territory dissected and burdened with a crushing load of punitive reparations. A proud people, once mightiest on the continent of Europe, it is now drinking deep of the drags of defeat and humiliation. A new generation has grown up since the war which had no share in the responsibilities for the war and which furiously resents being saddled with the sins and burdens of another generation. These young people can not face with equanimity the prospect of being ground down into poverty throughout their life-time in order to pay indemnities for other men's crimes.

On top of all comes a severe economic collapse which disrupts industry, throws three million men out of employment and brings a wide-spread curtailment in wages.



Hearts are filled with protest at such a time, with bitterness and resentment. These emotions have now found an outlet in Hitler's party. It is a party of protest, of indignation, of fist-shaking. Hitler has capitalized the dissatisfactions of all the elements of Germany. His platform promises everything to everyone. To the beaten military class it promises revision of the Treaty of Versailles as well as of the Young Reparations Plan, restoration of the Polish Corridor and all German colonies. To the defeated monarchists it promises restoration of the monarchy, to the reactionaries in general it offers an anti-communist propaganda and to the workingmen a vague and adulterated socialism. And as a burnt offering for all the past and present woes of Germany Hitler offers the Jews.

His anti-Jewish program is medieval in character. It is like a voice from the dark ages. What will be the outcome? Jewish experience gives us the clue. The Jew who knows his history will take a long range historic view of the present events and set them down as only a temporary check to an unmovable and inevitable progress. This latest recrudescence of bigotry is for an ancient people only an oft-told tale. The Jews of Germany have a thousand years of history back of them. They have experienced every conceivable form of persecution in the past and they have survived. In the last hundred years they have made colossal strides in their political economic and cultural history. They won their political equality and have enriched German life by giving it a galaxy of outstanding men of letters, scientists, artists, economists, philosophers and statesmen far out of proportion to their actual numerical strength. Heine, Marx, Mendelssohn, Ehrlich, Rathenau, Wasserman and Einstein are only a few of the men of genuine greatness who have served the Fatherland.



German Jewry will know how to meet the present situation with patience, courage and dignity. They will continue to identify themselves with every movement which makes for liberalism and against every movement which makes for reaction. Their destiny is bound up with the destiny of liberal thought.

















driven out. Leipzig & Halle looked like a small fair  
 after riots, with broken glass & goods which had been thrown  
 out into street. Hoffmann, from young ~~men~~ <sup>men</sup> & women,  
 many <sup>young girls</sup> ~~only boys~~ stayed a real Anti-Carnival  
~~prophets~~ <sup>and the cry</sup> "Halle with the Jews" sang then the ~~best~~  
 Sieges Arie etc. The March Guard calls it "the ugliest  
 thing in contemporary Ger. life" -

8. It is reported that many Jew. has been forgotten  
they are receiving their funds from banks and money  
to Holland, Switzerland or the countries. Everywhere  
they are in an emergency self defense corps under  
leadership Jew. war veterans. For to it remember  
that these same Jew. who are now being told that  
they were not Germans but foreign because fought  
on every battle field, the rule was for their Jew. Father-  
land - And this is their reward - when a country  
is at war & sacrifices as demanded. Prosperity - Jew. people & ~~struggle~~ <sup>struggle</sup>  
this - When in trouble - I ~~think~~ <sup>think</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~people~~ <sup>people</sup> ~~are~~ <sup>are</sup> ~~not~~ <sup>not</sup> ~~to~~ <sup>to</sup> ~~be~~ <sup>be</sup> ~~left~~ <sup>left</sup> ~~alone~~ <sup>alone</sup>

9. There is a dangerous person, whose star is in the  
ascendant at a <sup>particularly</sup> dangerous time. This is we have  
not heard the last of him. This is Edw. Arthur  
draftsman is an ambitious fanatic. In 1923 he  
kept a party in Munich together with Gen.  
Friedenreich to overthrow the Rep - It was a fiasco.  
Gen. Langsd. It is a laughing matter. Both of  
them are 6 m. people whose spokesman will be -



If he is a capitalist, he converts all the wealth &  
superintends the means. If he is a president he  
disrupts the state, If he is a soldier is an enemy  
(Law Order). If he is a statesman he is a  
traitor to his country & secretly betrays it  
to foreign powers. If he is a writer - he  
corrupts the true Germ. spirit by his Semitic  
views. If he remains in his own group - he  
is clannish. If he mingles with others - he  
is a chamber & interloper. If he is alive, he  
is in the way, and if he is dead - his  
Cemeteries are ~~one eyes~~ to an eye - Sun  
to the world. Tenth. In the 19th Cen. have  
been desecrated ~~by the~~ <sup>by the</sup> few  
years.



The Jew. Jew are not the only the people for whom  
H. has become a right-war. He is the enemy  
of all classes in Jew. who program differ from  
his. An witness at trial in Leipzig & from Jew  
charged with treason he said: When my party comes  
into power, heads will roll in the street.  
Meaning the heads of all those who set up the  
Jew. Republ. in Nov. 1918.

10. Whether he will make good his best reward to  
be seen. There are other parties in Jew. equally as  
powerful who will have something to say about  
it. But even if he fails - the next decade  
will be an unhappy one for our fellow Jew in  
J. For the disgusting hum, propog. against the  
Jew will be cast. by his followers in other  
Jews & <sup>hundreds</sup> in Jew - The Swastika will be carried  
high in banners & posters - Every conceivable accusation  
will be made against them. They will be harassed  
& harassed -



[illegible]



not to mention the great ones who crowded  
barren Mr. Mansfield, Zeph Frankel, Jacob,  
Ab. This fine Judge, Feys, Leitch, Ambrose, Lazarus, Stewart, Charles -



(2) Sure, the war turned well run. They will seek the persecuted cobblers  
& assimilation, they have no use. I am a Jew. I will clear the  
a Jew. We have always had these wretched wretched men, the carriers  
we always will. That every generation. Less than and  
Jewish carriers on. They will change their names. They will  
enter the church. They will become dissimulate even from their  
fellow Jews. They will practice all the devices, and make  
gentiles. Their children will be total gentiles and Jews will  
know them no more. That has happened before. It will happen  
again. But Jews, always replenished, carries on.

(3) In the great majority of Jew. Jew. this period of reaction will  
pass a ~~strong~~ <sup>strong</sup> & receding force. They will not be as care-free  
but they will of course, will seem stronger, and their group  
loyalty & solidarity will increase. Persecution always does that  
for the Jew. I go to bed -

(4) In the 2nd 1/2 of 19c. - J. assimilation was widespread in W. Europe.  
Moralism was in the air and the Jew persuaded himself that the  
millennium was at hand. Many knew their hell upon these  
people, their religion and completely uncovered eyes in the last. Faith  
& intell. left, their countries in which they dwell. But they were  
beguiled. The world does not need that greatly, against prejudices  
nations, their centuries are not up-kept in a decade or in  
10 - as if not of a clear sky came a total ~~was~~ about burst  
of anti-Jew. agitation in every way W. Eur. country. Wars,  
the war, Nat., even disasters all combined to excite the peoples  
& to turn their resentment onto the ever-available scapegoat  
the Jew. A vast Anti-Jew. literature made its appearance. Med.  
Worst accusations - such as the Tessa Englar affair in Hun-  
gary were reported. Anti-Jews was org. & gained power in the  
Parliaments of nations. In Germany - this was all found  
it expedient to turn the blame, his unsuccessful fight against  
the Catholics - on the Jews - as well as his hatred, liberalism.



Heine -

F. Mendelssohn -

Meyerbeer -

Karl Marx

Paul Ehrlich

Walthe Rathenau

Lazarus

Albert Einstein -

Edmund Husserl

Joel Karsenman

Herman Kohr

---

M. Mendelssohn

Zung -

Grants -

Frankel

Leizer

Heuschneider

---





and in 1879 an avowed Anti-Sem. Soc. Party was org. — Hermann  
Abelwart, left his present-day successor Hillel — Strauss then  
the enemy, fulminating against the Jews — as Germany's real  
enemy. In Austria — Hungary introduced measures against  
Jews in school & universities — & restricted their civic activities.  
Karl Lueger became Mayor of Vienna and a more  
virulent Jew-baiter ~~was elected Mayor~~. There was riots  
in Prague, and Hilander was executed, a trial was held  
in Bohemia — In France the clerical & royalist parties  
following the establishment, the Republic in 1870 became embittered  
anti-semitic — There was Anti-Sem. rep. in Chamber, & Deputies  
in 1885 — Drumont wrote his Anti-Sem. Campaign in  
France with — hundreds of editions — 1894 culminated  
in Dreyfus affair —

Remet. acted like a cold douche upon them. Reminding  
that they were still Jews — and if they forgot were ready to forget  
it — the gentile was not — Antisemitic J. Spirit. J. Nat.  
revived in modern Germany — (1) Following Christian Affairs  
in 7 July & Warsaw on 1860 — Alliance Israélite Universelle  
org. — for needy & oppressed Jews, & most. (2) Anglo Jew.  
Ass. in London & Machabiah Albany in 1860.  
(3) 1906. Pogrom in Russia — Anti-Jew. Com. (4) Jewish  
Col. Am. 1891. Marion de Hirsch — 50 m. dollars — to transport  
Jews from Russia to Argentina & the Americas —

This is our answer. We need not we do not break. We grow  
strong in our defeat. When we are persecuted & persecuted we  
project. Look into the past — we take the best, least-resistant. When  
the storm passes, we find ourselves. Our J. character asserts itself.  
We return to the well-springs of our own inspiration —  
after having pursued the deceptive mirages of the unreal