



## Abba Hillel Silver Collection Digitization Project

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The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives

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

Series IV: Sermons, 1914-1963, undated.

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"The Eternal Road", 1937.

By RICHARD WATTS Jr.

(from page one)

offering. The new play, which is based on the cry by the already mentioned Mercutio of "a plague on both your houses," comes with considerable force to the defense of the belabored middle class in the warfare between capital and labor. Denouncing with almost equal vehemence the iniquities and arrogance of both the big industrialists and the organized workers, it proclaims that the matter of industrial crisis can be solved only when the small storekeepers and their like take things in hand and dictate terms. To illustrate the point, the author tells of a long-suffering druggist, the unhappy middleman in the class war, who is made the head of a vigilante group and proceeds to put both the arrogant mill owner and the radical strike leader in their place.

The thesis isn't argued with much persuasiveness in "Tide Rising," but the viewpoint itself has, on first thought, a certain pleasing quality in it. After all, isn't there something in what the author has to say? Hasn't the middle class been long-suffering enough and isn't the only way out from an increasingly intolerable situation just such action from the small shopkeepers? Unfortunately, we find on second thought, the thing isn't as simple as that. It takes but the briefest glance at the careers of such benevolent representatives of the middle class as Hitler and Mussolini to see that such cries are merely the sales talks of Fascism. It was by just such pleas that the German and Italian dictators gathered together the mass support that made their jaunts to power possible. In such adventures the middle class really isn't the hero. It is just the stooge. And "Tide Rising," with the best intentions in the world, is unwittingly a Fascist play.

IT IS undeniable that the Max Reinhardt spectacle, "The Eternal Road," is the most stupendous that the stage has ever managed. It is vast in conception and achievement; some of it achieves great pictorial beauty, and all of it is impressive in its sheer bulk. As a mere feat in theatrical resourcefulness and mass staging, it is overwhelming to the spectator, and there is no denying that it is one of the sights of Manhattan. Yet I cannot help feeling that as an earnest and eloquent protest against racial oppression it has one fatal defect. It lacks defiance. Instead of shouting forth boldly its scorn for the persecutors of the Jews, it has an unfortunate way of beating its breast and even cringing a little. It is satisfied to take the mere fact of survival as victory enough and to accept persecution with a satisfaction that approaches smugness. I wanted it to get up and fight back.

In fact, so insistent is the message of meekness that it is not long before the cynic, brilliantly played by Sam Jaffe, who is the cosmic villain of the spectacle, comes to be the one heroic figure in the tale. At least he cries out against the constant acceptance of cruelty and oppression and denounces the racial mysticism that makes such acceptance a virtue. There is much to be said for the values of meekness and resignation, but it seems to me that there must be a limit to both of them. It is my guess, too, that the Jews who are fighting the cruelties of Nazi oppression are performing a greater service for their race than those who proclaim that such oppression is merely another sign of Heaven's love. "The Eternal Road" would have been a thousand times more stirring if it did not seem to belong to the latter school.



- 1- Triumvirate - Events - impact - retrieved  
Franz Werfel - other works.
2. Not a drama - pageant - swiftly moving series - great -  
illustrates - inescapable -  
In that sense - more pageant of J. hist. alone  
Story - manifold's wandering - Universal law -  
Per angusta ad angusta  
per astra per ardua - 723 711 1111  
Israel's experience - epitome - Particular-symbol  
" story - Synopsis
- 3 - Heart of message - unbroken faith - not to put up h.  
deal is destroyed - beaten  
Over & over again - millennial dream.  
Forces of darkness - triumph - Faltered -  
But again & again - caught up, charged - forced them  
Eternal Road which rises in ascending birds  
At the end of days - Perfection - & the Messiah who
4. Great moments are illumined - remember  
" figures - " recalled  
" echoes - " echoed
5. Play in 4 Acts - Prologue - The 4 Parts - Epilogue  
Prologue - in form where - mother - Estranged Am.  
Some may -



The Rabbi - Scrolls - ~~the~~ Inverse - ~~the~~  
b. And as he reads - the papyrus unfolds on the four steps  
which run on above the other - like the steps, & stairway.

First is story of First Pilgrim - Abraham - (2/2)  
"I will make thee ... the seeking, soul! the hand  
I'm th!

(a) us only trials - this prototype, Israel - but practices  
of character - (1) Hospitality to thieves - angels (2) Intolerance  
for Sodom - Enemies with an eye to Nazis..

(b) Severest, Trials - Sacrifice

II And then Joseph - and the exile <sup>and the dreamer - ladder</sup> who learned truth in Exile  
III " Joseph - and the dreamer and the exile - who  
thru his exile, but blessing to Egypt - fanions -

9. Moses - Exile in Egypt - Task master

Moses goes into Exile - Midian - called Egyptian -

- Bush - trial in Egypt <sup>Redemption</sup> of people - Unbelief -

Note 63-4

Golden Calf -

Flourish - Return to Egypt  
Spears - snails - power  
Moses pleads for people

Death of Moses - Reis - Whis in Exile!



10. Kings - Isaiah -

{ Young Man - Ahin Gid. will not leave him!  
Ruth - Nazis. Ruth became ~~mother~~ ancestor, King  
David - from whom seed the Messiah will spring!

David - symbol of Israel - Goliath of the world - The World

summoned to confront Mary

Sun which darken hfi Bath-Sheba

Solomon - Temple - universal - flood world with  
light!

11. Prophets

