



Abba Hillel Silver Collection Digitization Project

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

Series IV: Sermons, 1914-1963, undated.

Reel
161

Box
57

Folder
706

What is wrong with our young people, 1944.

"It is the nature of the devil of Tyranny to tear and rend the body which he leaves." (Macaulay.)

- Not only the devil of Tyranny, but also devil of War.
- The Price which we pay for War - Casualties - Wealth - which leave their heavy burden of human care and financial debt.
- A Very high price is also paid in the dislocation of ^{of Civil life at home} ~~all things~~ - pol-soc-econ-educational - ~~structural~~.
- So many things are turned topsy-turvy.
- Customary routines & procedures are interrupted.
- Accepted conventions and standards are discarded.
- Normal ways of living and thinking are thrust aside by ~~the~~ emergency considerations.
- The temper, the passions, the propensities, the life of people are stirred and aroused. Their emotional life becomes recharged with a higher voltage.
- Homes are disrupted. Millions of men are taken from their homes and community workings to distant camps, to foreign lands, to ^{practically} new environments, ^{a radically} new mode of life, ~~new~~ ^{often} violent experiences as battle fields.
- Millions of men & women ~~are~~ ^{to} shifted to migrate to ~~other~~ ^{other} cities, then homes beckoned by the need, the war defense work, those areas and by the prospect of higher pay.
- Small towns suddenly rush into big sprawling ~~amorphous~~ ^{swelling} cities, ~~unorganized~~ ^{unprepared} & ~~unfitted~~ ^{unfitted} for the normal life of men, women & children. Not enough schools. Not enough ~~recreational~~ ^{recreational} facilities. Not enough ~~social~~ ^{social} ~~agencies~~ ^{agencies} to ~~meet~~ ^{meet} the needs.
- Millions of women are ~~forced~~ ^{driven} by the necessity of war ~~into~~ ^{into} ~~defense~~ ^{industry} work. They cannot be in the factories.

and in the home at the same time. The home and the
children miss the customary supervision & care.

- Many people - many young people - are making money more
for men than they ever made before. Many of them spend it
wisely & invest it intelligently. Others ~~rush~~ ^{rush} to touch all
things which they could not touch before & satisfy all their
appetites.

- There are lovely men and lovely women everywhere -
married and unmarried - moving about in this
frenzied, supercharged, dislocated war-shaken world. Their
planned world is, for the duration at best, destroyed.
Their world, to ~~assure~~ ^{assure} they cannot at all see clearly.
All that they have is this hour - a fleeting and
unreassured hour - and the temptation is great
to seize it, and drain whatever mortal happiness
it can yield them, regardless -

- Young people in these early years are of course
affected by all this surging restlessness about
them. ~~They are~~ ^{Being young} they are ~~of course~~ the most impressionable
and the least stable among us. They are best able to
resist the evils of ~~uprooting & dislocation~~ ^{unemployment} and the sudden
removal of the customary disciplines of home and
~~environment~~ ^{normal} peer-life.

- They are caught up by the prevailing excitement of
war - the glamour of ~~war~~ ^{war} - and their own
unselfish ~~emotional~~ ^{emotional} life becomes somehow confused
with ~~the desire for~~ ^{the desire for} ~~adventure~~ ^{adventure} and love of country. A restlessness
+ a certain abandon enters their lives - which often throws itself
in anti-Jewish bias & conduct & behaviour

2/ Is it any wonder that in this flap + flop churned-up world where (3)
the war has left about, ~~that~~ moral standards generally should suffer
a decline, and ~~that~~ juvenile delinquency, in particular, should sharply
increase? There has been ^{such} an outrageous increase. Federal Children's
Bureau published figures indicating that the increase in delinquency
from 1940 to 1942 was 117% for boys and 387% for girls. For 1943
the figures show an even sharper rise. From 1941 to 1943 the
number of delinquency cases received in the Children's Court of
N.Y.C. increased 50% and in Chicago the increase was 50%
for boys and 100% for girls in the same periods.

Included
3/ All forms of delinquency - and all degrees - ^{of course} from the minor
to the major, from larceny, robbery, vagrancy,
petty larceny & stealing to sex delinquency and prostitution.
There has been an appalling increase in verbal ~~disrespect~~
among young people of teen age in this country.

4/ ~~And~~ It would be wrong to conclude from these figures that
young people to-day are worse, that is by nature and disposition
~~characters~~, inferior to young people a decade or a generation
ago. Not at all! Young people are pretty much the same
everywhere and in all ages. ^{generally speaking -} They are neither good nor bad
except as environment and ~~education~~ training make them
so. There are exceptions ^{cases} the unfortunately abnormal children,
those born with ^{some} psycho-physical twists and handicaps, those
who are born with a bad problem from birth. But the average
youth is made ^{either} a good citizen by this training which he
receives in ~~the~~ his home, his school, his church and by
his social environment, his friends, his play-mates and the

opportunities which his neighborhood & circumstances provide him (4)
for a ~~healthy~~ wholesome exercise in his leisure. ~~But~~ the
average youth is unmade for a career, good citizenship by
the absence, these developing & upbuilding factors - by the lack.

5/ It has been truly observed by expert criminologists that "children
do not born with a tendency to law-abidance. The effort
is more nearly true. Only by hard and continuous effort will
they succeed in conducting themselves in conformity with
standards set by the law, home, school and church."

6/ Given the best seed and soil, and ^{abundant} sun and rain, and ~~the~~
your garden may still be full of weeds. ~~and~~ It is
tilling & weeding and care which yield the hoped for
results. Conversely an unimproved soil may be helped to
produce a good crop by fertilizing it and irrigating it - by
tilling & caring for it. It is so with human growth
a well. - 23 to 24 p 313 10 -

5/ Our young people to-day are no worse than those of other times
except that they are less tended and cared for - more neglected
at a time when they should be cared for more than ever because
the land is a world in which they find themselves. They are
being subjected to more ^{in their homes} writhes, stimulations, temptations and
"feeding up" than ~~the~~ ^{the ever before} any people. ~~the last generation~~ - and their
are not enough of the upholding & strengthening agencies ^{about}
them, human and ~~earthly~~ earthly, to help them as their various
difficulties.

6) There is less of parental guidance & control. - An expert observer, who surveyed a number of ^{way-impaired} communities ~~which he felt~~ (Jude) ①

② There is less of parental guidance in some homes when the mother does not work all day in a defense plant. A goodly number of the ~~del~~ youthful delinquents come from well-to-do homes. They are high school boys & girls from some of our best families. The mother is not working in plants. Is it a case of "adult delinquency" of the father of the parent - ~~to~~ father trusts her - to see up fully to their responsibility of guidance & supervision - or to give the example, their own lives the proper inspiration to their children?

7) The same expert observer - surveyed 10 communities - comments on the inadequate housing - over-crowded ^{homes} conditions in schools, the cities - lacking adequate schooling facilities & recreational facilities (Jude 2)

8) What is to be done about it? All that needs to be done, unfortunately, cannot be done, because of the very circumstances which created these conditions the war! As long as the war lasts, these conditions of shifting population, migration, labor, congested housing, school & teaching staff shortages, inadequate recreational facilities, home temporary broken families separated & all abundant evils will in a large measure continue. And now, their after-effect will go to make up the large range social problems of post-

⑤ Teachers ^{+ Schools} ~~has~~ have become more sharply aware of their great opportunity - Social Training - conduct - cooperation - living

9/ Church has not opportunity & challenged -

- Majority of young people who cannot receive services of churches have had no religious training. Refused by law.
- the children of in the U.S. have had no religious affiliation - other ways - self-interest - Kindness + sympathy - Dignity
- Teaching religion in School - Home

10/ To counter-act the deleterious influences, then disturbed + abnormal times - must receive agencies of Social Stability + Normalcy. ① Home - more peace - high-mindedness + selflessness in part / parents - more love + patience. ② Schools - stressing social conduct + duties / citizenship to match the duties of fighting men - to use these facilities to maximum. No school should remain closed after sunset hours or dark in the evening. ③ Church - more rel. instructions to youth - + its high ideals. ④ Social Agencies - + its Reformation facilities.

(1)

Lack of Parental Supervision: More than a fourth of the persons interviewed agreed that there had been a general lessening of parental supervision. The cases of James and Marie are typical. James, aged ten, was taken to court for stealing. When found, he had been away from home for three days without either parent's knowing it. The mother worked on a day shift, the father on a night shift, and each thought the other knew the child's whereabouts. In another family, Marie, aged five, the oldest of three children, was found by neighbors trying to make toast for the others over an open-flame oil stove.

People in each area had noticed that the employment of large numbers of women in industry was accompanied by an increase in children's absences from school and in the cases of neglect received by various agencies. Anyone who has observed the tired, nodding women in packed buses traveling long distances from work at the end of day, can sense their fatigue and readily believe that some mothers are unable either before or after work to plan and care for their children and to give them attention and direction.

Baraka

(2)

(Continued from page 87)

Typical of conditions was one street called Riverside Drive—a winding, rutted road of red clay dust overlooking a muddy river. On either side of the road, but a few feet apart, were rows of gray one-story frame houses, each identical with the next, with three rooms apiece, one behind the other. Each house usually held two families. A bed could be seen from each open, unscreened front door. The houses had never known paint nor the yards planting. Children idled or played in yards scattered with garbage, mostly watermelon rinds, and a few clumps of grass. Ragged laundry was slung over fences and broken down porch rails. The only bright spots were a few sturdy zinnias growing in the clay banks, or a few petunias blooming in battered lard cans set out on the worn porch steps. For these “dwellings” the inhabitants were paying from 40 to 50 percent of their income.

Many houses had someone sleeping in them at all hours of the day. Thus children were prevented from normal indoor play and were driven into the streets. Teen-age army wives, with newborn babies, lived in single bedrooms, where they slept, prepared their food, did their laundry, and cared for the babies. In one house thirty-five girls were sharing the use of one bath. In another, five married couples and a single girl were occupying one room in which there were five double beds and a cot.