

Abba Hillel Silver Collection Digitization Project

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

Series V: Writings, 1909-1963, undated.

Reel Box Folder 174 63 217

Louis Marshall memorial, 1929.

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If any man in American Jewish life deserved the title of American

Jew in its fullest implications it was Louis Marshall. He succeeded in

making the most perfect synthesis, the most satisfying adjustment between

his unadulterated Americanism and his unassimilated Judaism. He discovered

the strength in each and he fused both into a greater strength. Being without

guile or servility he saw in Americanism and Judaism not a conflict but a

concordance.

The catholicity of his Jewish interests, the bigness, scope and encompassing intelligence of Louis Marshall enabled him to be a pioneer in the work of bringing all the scattered elements in American Jewish life into closer contact and cooperation. His methods were not always approved. He was the last of the great school of Jewish tribunes to which Manasseh ben Israel, Moses Montefiore, Adolph Cremieux belonged. But in the latter years of his life Louis Marshall became aware of the rising type of democratic sentiment and because he had the true elements of great leadership in him he adjusted himself to the realities of the situation and became the chosen leader of the very democratic forces which up to that time had apposed him.

He was not a doctrinaire. Thou reared in the philosophy of antinational Reformed Judaism, his closer study of Jewish life soon enabled him
to pass from a purely theologic conception of Judaism to a religio-sociologic
one. He came to think in terms of the Jewish people.

Ultimately he was led and almost inevitably to the gates of Palestine.

There was no break between Louis Marshall the anti-Zionist of years ago and Louis Marshall the co-creator of the Jewish Agency - only the logical development of a great and growing mind.

He was one of our few great lay leaders. We have many great laymen of culture and capacity but they do not wish to take on the cross and the crown of Jewish leadership. The life of Louis Marshall challenges these men. In the midst of his crowded professional career he found time and energy to

wrestle with Jewish problems not only local but national and international.

What was said of Socrates may be said of Louis Marshall:

"There is in such a life a principle which does not admit of death."

Abba Hillel Silver

