



## 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 V: Writings, 1909-1963, undated.

---

Reel  
178

Box  
65

Folder  
429

Religious conditions in Europe, 1937.



For Cleve. News  
Sept. 4, 1937

RELIGIOUS CONDITIONS IN EUROPE  
Dr. Abba Hillel Silver  
of The Temple

It is, of course, quite difficult to generalize about religious conditions in Europe. Even a very close scientific study over a long period of time would leave much undisclosed and inconclusive. For one deals here with imponderables and with subtle spiritual values which cannot be accurately gaged and determined.

I did<sup>get</sup> however, a quite definite impression that the European mind is turning more earnestly and more reverently to religious traditions and institutions in the hope of finding in them some refuge from despair and some stability in the midst of the intellectual and moral chaos in the world today. Even among the curcles of the intellectuals one finds a new appreciation of the social utility of religion and among some of them a definite trend towards religious mysticism. European literature reflects the same mood.

I was in France at the time of a religious demonstration in connection with the dedication of a great church at Lisieux in honor of St. Theresa. The outpouring of hundreds of thousands of French people on that occasion and the remarkable reception which that event had in the entire French press of all shades of political and economic opinion was to me very impressive and significant. The heroic and unique resistance of the Catholic Church and important sections of the Protestant Church in Germany to Nazi totalitarianism and its anti-religious postulates has also won for organized religion admiration and a willingness on the part of many to re-examine the basic teachings of religion in order to discover why in times of crises, confusion, and unleashed brutality, it alone somehow does not buckle under.

The tragedy of the situation is that while the message of religion is becoming more relevant and vital in the loves of great numbers of individuals in the world today, it appears to be utterly without effectiveness in the councils of nations and in the policies of governments. Never were international relations



less moral, more cynical and more grossly materialistic than they are today. Governments simply have no moral codes whatsoever. They do not even observe the rules of the game of their own skulduddery. Foreign policy today is nothing but piracy, and heads of governments are frequently nothing better than racketeers and gangsters. Covenants, pledges and treaties are simply so many devices by which to hoodwink your neighbor. Bloody purges, political assassinations and concentration camps are the recognized instruments of governments both in the heroic lands of the Right and of the Left.

Perhaps after the present reign of Satan in the chancelleries of the world will have brought the nations to their inevitable disasters they will then resolve to give the old time principles of ~~religion~~ religion - justice, brotherhood, peace and truth-telling - a chance to regulate the affairs of nations.

Religion has never had a greater opportunity to proclaim its eternal truths to mankind and never a more desperate hour in which to proclaim them.