



## Abba Hillel Silver Collection Digitization Project

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

Series V: Writings, 1909-1963, undated.

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431

Letter from German students in exile, 1937.

GERMAN STUDENTS IN EXILE  
TO  
THE GERMAN STUDENTS NOW ON A VISIT TO CLEVELAND!

We who have been exiled from our homes in Germany salute you, former classmates, on your arrival to the City of Cleveland in free America.

We do not know what purpose your coming here is to serve. The present German Government which sent you here and which drove us from our schools and homes certainly does not wish you to learn to love and to appreciate the ideals of freedom, tolerance and peace which are the cornerstones of American life and of the American schools which you wish to attend. In Germany they have trampled these ideals under foot, so that we and thousands of other young people and tens of thousands of adults - among them the foremost scientists, artists, and statesmen of the Fatherland - have had to flee from Germany.

At this very moment you will find in Cleveland, Erika Mann, the daughter of the famous Thomas Mann, who is the crown and glory of German Literature, both of whom are now exiles, both of whom have been deprived of their citizenship in Germany.

After spending a pleasant few weeks in Cleveland, you will be free to return to your homes and to your parents and families in Germany. Some of us exiles may never see our homes and parents again. A few short months ago we were in German schools just like you were, studying and preparing ourselves for our careers. Our parents, honorable men, were respected citizens in their communities. Some of our families have lived in Germany for hundreds of years. Some of our parents fought at the Front during the World War. Suddenly the terror of the Nazi dictatorship swept over us. We were torn from our homes, our schools and our careers.

We thank God daily that it has been our good fortune to find a home in this free land. We miss our former homes, friends and schoolmates greatly, but we are proud of the privilege which is now ours to grow up in this gracious



land and to have the opportunity to serve, in the years to come, this great nation which was founded and built up by exiles, immigrants and champions of human liberties from all parts of the earth.

We do not know what you have been instructed to do during your stay in Cleveland. If it is to carry on a subtle propaganda in behalf of the Nazi regime, your time and your energies will be wasted. Your propaganda will fall on deaf ears. The American people is too well-informed about the actual economic and political conditions in Germany to be influenced by any routine propaganda which you may have been instructed to spread. And you will be doing a great injustice to yourselves, for you will be missing a marvelous opportunity to see how a free people really lives, what education in a democracy really is, how children of all races and all creeds study in the same classrooms and learn to work together and live together without hate, bitterness and suspicion for the common good. You will have opportunities to observe how people in a free democracy try to adjust their differences without resorting to tyranny and the suppression of free speech and free thought, without persecuting the churches, without building concentration camps and terrorizing people by espionage and a Gestapo, without driving their best citizens into exile, and without making its youth drunk with national egoism and the spirit of war.

The next six weeks which you will spend in Cleveland will undoubtedly be the freest weeks which you will have had. Make the most of them!