



## 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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Facing the crises of our day, 1937.



ABSTRACT OF ADDRESS "FACING THE CRISES OF OUR DAY" DELIVERED BY DR. ABBA HILLEL SILVER OF CLEVELAND, OHIO AT THE SILVER JUBILEE BANQUET OF THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF TEMPLE SISTERHOODS, IN CHICAGO, ILL. ON JANUARY 13, 1937.

What needs to be stressed is that both Judaism and Christianity - that is to say - the whole Judaeo-Christian tradition - is being attacked today along the entire front. The upthrust of virulent anti-Semitism is only the symbol of the desperate and universal conflict.

The narrow and belligerent nationalism which is rampant in the Western World and which is tragically fragmentizing it, is basically a furious assault upon the universalism both of Judaism and Christianity whose ideals aimed at uniting and not disrupting mankind. Extreme nationalism has been right along a malady of the modern age, but ever since the World War it has become a deadly disease.

The racialism of the Nazi creed, apart from the unspeakable and inhuman ways in which, by a sort of lunatic pedantry, it evidences itself in action and legislation, is in violent contradiction to the very essence of the Judaeo-Christian tradition. Brave spokesmen of Catholicism and Protestantism in Germany have been quick to realize that a triumph of such racialism spells the defeat of Christianity in its most significant assignment to mankind.

The mystic exaltation of war as national policy and human destiny is the sheer and complete denial of the whole prophetic preachment of universal peace and disarmament which is at the heart of religion.

The pagan idolatry of the state is being restored in the Western World. The individual, whose moral improvement and happiness were the prime concern of religion, is being submerged, reduced in dignity and significance, stripped of his inalienable rights and absorbed into a monolithic state absolutism. The Middle Ages were theo-centric. The Modern Age has been anthro-po-centric. Our Post-bellum Age is dangerously politico-centric. The first was an age of faith. The second, an age of reason. Ours is fast becoming an age of



abject servility both in faith and reason.

One of the essential contributions of religion to human progress was the concept of method, the "Good Way". Ethical religion outlawed the notion that moral ends justify immoral means. Each step on the way towards the realization of a noble objective must be a noble objective in itself. To achieve justice, men must employ the ways of justice and to establish peace, the ways of peace. Nothing must be done even in our eager quest for the perfect society which will destroy the spiritual independence and the moral responsibilities of the individual.

This method is being flaunted everywhere in the modern world. Men are committing the most infamous acts of immorality in the name of the highest morality. Idealism itself seems to be spoiling men's morals. Individuals who are scrupulously moral in their private lives will resort to the most unscrupulous methods when in pursuit of some national, class or collective ideal. Men talk of justice, a classless society, patriotism, nation, race, culture and peace - all noble ideals - but act as if these ideals were demons out of hell lashing them on to acts of injustice, hatred, chauvenism, arrogance and blood.

This is how the battle-line is drawn today in the Valley of Decision. The war is upon Judaism and Christianity. In this struggle the Jewish people as a people is of-course vitally involved. For the triumph of Fascist and totalitarian ideas bodes evil for every minority group in the world - and especially for the Jewish group. But it bodes evil also for the faith which is Judaism and the faith which is Christianity - for all the spiritual and ethical values of Western civilization.

True Christians who are aware of what is going on in the world will wage war upon anti-Semitism as they would upon anti-Christ. Anti-Semitism is not the foe of Israel only. It is the foe of mankind. Anti-Semitism is being exploited today by certain governments and political parties in order to draw



the attention of people away from the real economic issues and to incite and stampede them into a surrender of their most precious rights and liberties. Anti-Semitic propaganda is a technique carefully worked out by which the masses are confounded and enraged by slogans, catch-words, half-truths and hysterical appeals to primitive emotions. Under such emotional stress and intoxication they are made to surrender their hard won liberties and their free institutions, and when they sober up it is too late to recapture what they had surrendered. Machine guns see to it.

In this hour of spiritual crisis, it is the duty of Judaism and of all religions to remain unswervingly true to their classic traditions and to their heroic missions. This is an age of apostasy, a dark and bitter age, lacking great leadership, beset with fears, and tense with dangerous apocalyptic expectations. Mad and roiled cross-currents are sweeping over the face of the world. Religion must now again carry in its deep historic channels those precious truths which our tragic and desperate age is in danger of losing: freedom, truth, brotherhood, justice and peace, and above all, the gospel of the "Good Way". These sanctities we must continue to safeguard within the sanctuaries of our synagogues and churches, and when these sanctuaries are destroyed, within the sanctuaries of our hearts.



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THE OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE BOARD  
OF THE  
NATIONAL FEDERATION OF TEMPLE SISTERHOODS

CORDIALLY INVITE YOU TO ATTEND THE

SILVER JUBILEE

COMMEMORATING

THE TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY  
OF THE FOUNDING OF THE FEDERATION

THURSDAY, JANUARY 13, 1938

THE GRAND BALLROOM, THE PALMER HOUSE

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

*R. S. V. P.*

*Merchants Building, Cincinnati*

*(See Program Inside)*



# Preliminary Program

GRAND BALLROOM, PALMER HOUSE, CHICAGO

JANUARY 13, 1938

## MASS MEETING

2 P. M. (*Admission by card only*)

### A CHALLENGE

Mrs. Abram Simon, *Founder and Honorary President,*  
*The National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods*

### MODERN WOMAN'S GREATEST DUTY

The Honorable Lily H. Montagu, J.P., O.B.E., *London*  
(*Via short-wave radio*)

### THE FAMILY AND THE SOCIAL CRISIS

Ruth O. McCarn, *Counselor to Women,*  
*Northwestern University*

### DARE WOMEN BUILD A NEW WORLD?

Rabbi George Zepin, *Secretary,*  
*Union of American Hebrew Congregations*

## BANQUET

6:30 P. M. (*Informal - \$2.50 per plate*)

### THIS DYNAMIC WORLD

Estelle M. Sternberger, *Director,*  
*World Peaceways, Inc., New York*

### FACING THE CRISES OF OUR DAY

Dr. Abba Hillel Silver,  
*Rabbi, The Temple, Cleveland, Ohio*



# SILVER JUBILEE

THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF TEMPLE SISTERHOODS



THE PALMER HOUSE, CHICAGO

JANUARY 13-14, 1938

1913

1938



# MASS MEETING

THURSDAY, JANUARY 13, 1938

GRAND BALLROOM, THE PALMER HOUSE

1:45 P. M.

PRESIDING: MRS. LEON L. WATTERS

*President, The National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods*

ON THE AIR 1:45 TO 2:15 P. M. CST

BLUE NETWORK, NBC

ANNOUNCING: MISS JANE EVANS, CINCINNATI

*Executive Director, N.F.T.S.*

Official Call to Order

MRS. LEON L. WATTERS, *New York*

The Spirit of Progressive Religion

MRS. ALBERT J. MAY, *New York*

VICE-PRESIDENT, N.F.T.S.

Modern Woman's Greatest Duty

HON. LILY MONTAGU, J.P., O.B.E.

SPEAKING FROM LONDON, ENGLAND

A Challenge

MRS. ABRAM SIMON, *Washington*

FOUNDER AND HONORARY PRESIDENT, N.F.T.S.

END OF BROADCAST

A Word of Welcome

MRS. G. GEORGE FOX, *Chicago*

CHAIRMAN, ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE

From Submission to Action—The Transformation of the

Twentieth Century Woman

MRS. ABRAM SIMON, *Washington*

The Family and the Social Crisis

RUTH O. MCCARN

COUNSELOR TO WOMEN, NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

Dare Women Build a New World?

RABBI GEORGE ZEPIN, *Cin'ti*

SECRETARY, UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS



# THE BANQUET

THURSDAY, JANUARY 13, 1938

GRAND BALLROOM, THE PALMER HOUSE

(Dress Optional)

6:30 P. M.

MRS. G. GEORGE FOX, CHAIRMAN

Invocation

DR. G. GEORGE FOX

PRESIDENT, CHICAGO RABBINICAL ASSOCIATION

TOASTMASTER: MRS. LEON L. WATTERS, NEW YORK

*President, The National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods*

Greetings

MR. HARRY N. GOTTLIEB, *Chicago*

VICE-PRESIDENT, UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS

Woman's Stake in Democracy and Peace

MRS. ESTELLE M. STERNBERGER, *New York*

DIRECTOR OF WORLD PEACEWAYS

Facing the Crises of Our Day

DR. ABBA H. SILVER, *Cleveland*

RABBI, THE TEMPLE

*Music through the courtesy of members of Chicago Temple Choirs*



The National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods is composed of more than 360 local units throughout the United States and in Canada, Panama, England, Johannesburg, South Africa and Melbourne, Australia.

Its program is devoted to the advancement of Jewish and humanitarian causes.



## MEETINGS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

THE PALMER HOUSE, PRIVATE DINING ROOM 10 (THIRD FLOOR)

THURSDAY, JANUARY 13, 1938

9:30 A.M.—Annual Meeting, National Executive Board

12:00 NOON—Luncheon, open to the public

FRIDAY, JANUARY 14, 1938

9:30 A.M.—Annual Meeting, National Executive Board

1:00 P.M.—Luncheon, open to the public

2:30 P.M.—Closing Session, National Executive Board

## HOSTESS GROUPS AND PRESIDENTS

Beth El Sisterhood  
Sisterhood of Temple Beth Israel  
Temple B'nai Jehoshua Sisterhood  
Temple Emanuel Sisterhood  
Sisterhood of Temple Isaiah-Israel  
Temple Judea Sisterhood  
K.A.M. Sisterhood  
Temple Sholom Sisterhood  
Chicago Sinai Temple Sisterhood  
South Shore Temple Sisterhood  
Washington Blvd. Temple Sisterhood  
Women of Mizpah Sisterhood  
North Shore Congregation Israel Sisterhood



MRS. MILTON VOGEL  
MRS. DAVID H. GROSS  
MRS. M. RESNICK  
MRS. HAROLD REDEL  
MRS. MAURICE H. BRONNER  
MRS. HARRY B. GORDON  
MRS. NATHAN L. KRUEGER  
MRS. LESTER L. STERN  
MRS. MAX BIESENTHAL  
MRS. FRANK KATLIN  
MRS. ELMER E. BENESCH  
MRS. OSCAR H. PLOTKIN  
MRS. BENJ. L. STEIF

### COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

Chairman of Decorations  
Chairman of Hospitality  
Chairman of Menu  
Chairman of Reservations

MRS. JOSEPH COHN  
MRS. LESTER L. STERN  
MRS. MILTON KLEE  
MRS. NETTIE STEINDLER

GENERAL CHAIRMAN: MRS. G. GEORGE FOX