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

Series V: Writings, 1909-1963, undated.

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The German Jewish situation, 1938.

Abstract of Address delivered by Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver on Sunday
Evening, June 25th - Oakwood Club.

The need for the relief of our brothers in Germany is great and urgent. Hitler's ruthless anti-semitic policies have disrupted the whole economic life of German Jewry. Workers, artisans and clerks have been dismissed from their positions because they were Jews. Many small business men have seen their establishments wrecked by the economic boycott. The professional classes, doctors, lawyers, teachers and artists have, by the thousands, been forced from their positions and had their careers ruined. All Jewish civil servants have been summarily dismissed. Tens of thousands have fled from Germany and are now refugees in many parts of Europe and in Palestine. Many of them are penniless.

Thousands of Jewish children have been forced out of schools. It is now necessary for the Jewish communities of Germany to build schools for them if these children are not to be consigned to lifelong illiteracy. The shadow of medievalism, of hate and intolerance has again fallen athwart the lives and homes of a large community of Israel.

Our first task is to provide adequate relief for these men, women and children. They must not be driven to despair by physical want. They must be helped to re-establish themselves either in new callings and occupations or in new countries. The Jewish youth, particularly, must be saved from degradation. The old have lost their world. But the young must not be denied their right to life and their chance at self-respecting manhood and womanhood. Hitler would make of them outcasts, helots and paupers. Israel will not

permit its children to be degraded.

The Jews in Germany will outlive the present regime. In a few years Hitler's name will be just another one added to the long dark list of Jewish persecutors who are remembered only because Jewish history was compelled to take notice of them. There is nothing new about the Nazi persecutions except their thorough-going brutality and the mad race doctrines by which they are being justified.

In the meantime, however, we must strengthen their hands and their spirits so that they may come through their great tribulation with their spirits unbroken and their morale unimpaired. Nothing can defeat these fine men and women in their desperate struggle for their elementary human rights except lack of faith on their part and indifference on ours. They do not lack faith. Let us not be indifferent.