



## 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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Pittsburgh Welfare Fund, 1939.



RADIO BROADCAST BY DR. ABBA HILLEL SILVER  
May 10, 1939

Good afternoon, good friends of Pittsburgh! It gives me particular pleasure by means of this broadcast to open the Women's Division campaign of the United Jewish Appeal in your community, a splendid Jewish community, long noted for its generosity and its high sense of responsibility and devotion to all that is worthy and noble in Jewish life.

I understand that three hundred Jewish women in your city are acting/as <sup>today</sup> hostesses in their homes to thousands of their friends who have assembled at the behest of the great cause and in order to learn how they may best serve that cause. To my knowledge, it is the first time that such a method has been employed in a campaign in the United States. It is both original and inspiring and I am sure will prove tremendously helpful.

I have also been informed that there are more than fifty other divisions representing every industrial, civic and professional group in your city organized and already at work in your campaign. All this is a happy augury of great success.

My dear friends, you are now engaged, as are all the Jews of the United States, in a great task to relieve the tragic plight of suffering brothers abroad, to care for the tens of thousands of homeless refugees in many parts of the world, and to support many other activities which, in the past, have recommended themselves to the care and generosity of our people.

Your funds have been allocated to over-seas relief and refugee needs: - for the manifold activities of the Joint Distribution Committee which cover the face of Europe, reaching into every danger zone where Jews have felt the blows of intolerance; for the United Palestine Appeal which is helping in the rebuilding of Palestine where in the past five years, over two hundred thousand Jews from Germany and other parts of Europe have found a new home and a new life; and for the work of the National Co-Ordinating Committee whose program comprises vital services to the



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refugees who are coming to this country, their resettlement and their integration into the life of our nation.

Your leaders in the United States are fully conscious of the solemn responsibility which they assumed when they called upon their people to contribute liberally, nay sacrificially, to an extraordinarily large United Jewish Appeal Fund this year. Yet they could not have acted otherwise. Ours is one of the gravest and most distressing periods in Jewish history. Seldom has tragedy piled upon tragedy for our people overseas in such rapid and appalling succession. Never had they been attacked on so many fronts at the same time. The highways of the world are choked with Jewish refugees, fleeing from terror and hatred, seeking new homes. Most of them are utterly impoverished, having been plundered and despoiled by thieving governments before they were driven out. These helpless and innocent victims of tyranny, reaction and mad intolerance, are our brothers and therefore our wards. To assist them in every way possible is a sacred obligation, which no member of the Household of Israel either can, or would wish, to shirk.

The Joint Distribution Committee is the agency through which American Jewry has been helping its distressed fellow-Jews overseas. It has faced a three-fold problem -- the problem of assisting the Jews in Nazi Germany to survive; the problem of aiding the refugees of Germany now dispersed throughout the world; and the problem of assisting the Jews of Poland, Roumania, and the other countries of Eastern Europe to withstand the pressure of poverty and persecution.

Until the riots of last November, the Jews in Germany had been able through their own heroic efforts and with the aid of the Joint Distribution Committee, to stave off the relentless forces crushing them. Now their stamina to resist grows feebler with the passage of every day. Only increased aid from America will save the Jews of Germany from starvation and destitution; only by increased assistance will the vital and vast program of rescuing Germany's Jews through immigration, training and economic assistance and relief continue through 1939.



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Equally grave is the situation of the huge army of German refugees- wanderers spread over the face of the earth. Large numbers of them have been unable to find permanent havens of refuge.

Lending a helping hand to these refugees are local refugee committees in many lands. Through these committees the refugees are helped to adjust themselves, to emigrate further from countries of temporary refuge to settle in permanent homes, to train for new occupations and to receive, when necessary, emergency relief.

<sup>the</sup>  
In/countries of Eastern Europe - Poland, Roumania, Latvia and Lithuania - where nearly 5,000,000 Jews reside, the Joint Distribution Committee must continue its extensive program of economic aid, vocational and industrial readjustment, child care and medical care.

Parallel to the work of the Joint Distribution Committee, is that of the United Palestine Appeal. We all realize that Palestine has played a unique role in recent years in offering a haven to the thousands compelled to flee from hate-filled lands. Today there is a community of 450,000 Jews in Palestine, living in 230 urban and rural settlements, giving a splendid account of themselves and exhibiting a creative power, a courage, and a dignity that are particularly thrilling at a time when Jews in some other lands ~~are~~ are being steadily degraded and despoiled.

The funds of the United Palestine Appeal are used to help maintain the institutions which already exist in Palestine. It is notable that in the past two and a half years, despite political set-backs and the effort of terrorists, there arose in Palestine thirty-six new Jewish settlements as token of these two facts: first, that Palestine Jewry will under no circumstances yield in its struggle to assure the right of an oppressed people to enter its homeland freely, and secondly, that the great needs of European Jewry for immigration opportunities make essential the increasing development of Palestine.

A third agency which will be a beneficiary of our Fund is the National Co-Ordinating Committee. It is devoted to assisting the refugees who have come



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to the United States, within the quota set by our immigration laws. The National Coordinating Committee's program comprises social services to refugees, employment services, resettlement and transportation to other communities, granting of loans, placement of scholars and physicians, and services relating to affidavits and immigration.

Our hearts are heavy and our minds perplexed, but we should not despair.

We should try to understand our age against the background of the ages. We should endeavor to appraise our present hour in terms of what has gone before. In so doing, we shall gain perspective, confidence and courage.

What seems like Armageddon at first, is in reality but another bitter skirmish in the age-old and irrepressible conflict between the religious and moral traditions of mankind, as represented in Judaism and Christianity, symbolized in the concepts of law, freedom, peace, brotherhood and the inviolable rights of man - and the indurate traditions of paganism symbolized in the concepts of power, state idolatry, autocracy, militarism, conquest and war.

The outcome of this conflict cannot be in doubt. Man, though frequently yielding to fear, pressure and panic, will not permanently submit himself to intellectual and spiritual serdom, however great the deceptions and beguilements which a cynical government, bent upon power, will through a thousand and one forms of propaganda, practice upon him. In the long run, man will accept no substitutes for the autonomy of his spirit and the sovereign freedom of his questing and adventuring mind. Man does not wish to be a robot, or the blind instrument of some usurping state bureaucracy. Man wants freedom and dignity and a sense of personal and inherent worth. There is also something in man which at long last revolts against the mystic adoration of force, the everlansting brandishing of fists and against national and racial chauvinism and exhibitionism. There are deeper sources of human inspirations whence well up irrepressibly the redemptive power of compassion, love and good-will, the ideals of human solidarity, justice and peace.



Mankind will sooner or later return to these classic ideals of civilization. We are not at the end of a way, at the edge of a wilderness, but on a long broken detour. We shall return to the golden highway. But this return will not come about automatically and as a matter of course, but only as the result of the patient labor and the heroic faith of those people who, in spite of the world's vast turmoil, still think with a minimum of bias and feel with a maximum of self-restraint—who have lost neither their vision nor their perspective, who are conscious both of their strength and of their mission, and who are determined to carry on, even as a saving remnant, in these times of spiritual crisis and tribulation. Upon these people, working faithfully, each in his sphere, to preserve the precious values of a free society, rests today the ultimate salvation of our world.

We Jews, especially, should learn to see our problem against the background of the entire world's problem, and also against the background not of the last few years, but of generations, nay centuries. We are bearing today a double load of the burdens which all free men are bearing. Frequently that has been our fate in the past. It is our cross and our crown and our immortality. Perhaps it is the key to our strange destiny so underlaid with grandeur and with pain. We never succumbed, and as long as we remain faithful to the God whose name and nature our seers revealed to mankind, as long as we serve Him in simple truth, in justice, in love and in sacrifice, dealing our bread to the hungry, bringing the poor that are cast out to our homes, and satisfying the afflicted soul, so long will light ever rise in our darkness, and the gloom shall be as the noonday...

For us Jews, too, this age of surge and thunder, of suffering and menace, should be a compelling and undeniable challenge, not a disillusionment or a despair.

We are free. Let us help <sup>give</sup> freedom to those who are in slavery and serfdom. We are at peace. Let us help give peace and surcease from fear and hopelessness to those who know no peace. We have sheltered homes of security. Let us give shelter to those whose homes have been destroyed and who are now homeless wanderers.



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50 other agencies representing every intellectual, <sup>and</sup> civic  
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your great effort to raise funds etc. ~~this~~  
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You are now engaged, as are all Jews of America  
in a great task to (cont)

