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Reel  
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Box  
66

Folder  
514

The world crisis and Jewish survival, 1939.

## THE WORLD CRISIS AND JEWISH SURVIVAL

### I

What makes the present crisis so grave for the Jewish people is the fact that it is a world crisis, not a localized disturbance and one in which the Jew alone is involved. Were the disasters of our day limited to the Jewish people, Jews could face them with much less apprehension. "Every affliction in which Israel and the other nations of the earth share is indeed an affliction; that of Israel alone is not." (Mid. R. Deut. <sup>2</sup>II, 14). It is only those crises in human history which shake all things to their very foundations -- the Crusades, for example, or the Black Death, or the World War -- which also profoundly and disastrously affect Jewish life.

The world crisis is neither localized nor of short duration. It is the agony of a whole epoch, like the Thirty Years War, the Napoleonic Wars, or the era which preceded the American Civil War. The present crisis did not begin with Hitler, or Mussolini, or Lenin. It is not the result of the Great War. The Great War was a phase of it, just as have been all the wars and revolutions and depressions which have followed it.

Nor is the crisis limited to one department of social life. It penetrates all. It is a severe and prolonged crisis in the economic, political and international life of the world. Above all, it is a spiritual and moral crisis of frightful dimensions. "The whole head is ailing, and the whole heart is sick."

Capitalism is breaking up into new forms, like Feudalism at the close of the Middle Ages, and the transition is proving even more violent. Democracy which flourished for more than a century in the congenial climate

of laissez-faire economics and the confidence of a triumphant middle class is proving inadequate to the emergencies of a relentless class struggle which industrial and financial capitalism have brought about. Democracy and liberalism are abdicating in many parts of the world in favor of dictatorship and regimentation. This throw-back to anti-democratic forms of government which seems to be inevitable when economic classes are determined to fight it out, is being rationalized into ideologies, some of them outrageously immoral and vicious. Censorship to throttle opposing opinion and propaganda to persuade and confound men into ready acquiescence are destroying both the processes and objectives of humanistic education. Nationalism, as the principle of self-determination, which triumphed in the Allied victory in the Great War, and which logically should have led to eager international cooperation, to an effective League of Nations and to the protection of minorities has contracted into political isolationism and economic autarchy. The Western World has never been as fragmentized and disintegrated as it is today. Minorities are again being exploited and shamefully used as pawns in a game of power politics. Racism is ravaging our world. The idea of race, which except as it is used ideally to arouse men to nobler ways of life and service by an appeal to a noble ancestral past, has always been the warrant or occasion for hatred, exploitation and war among men, has turned into something fraudulent and shamelessly immoral. In its name governments have disfranchised blocs of their own citizens, degraded, despoiled, tortured and exiled them.

The brave experiment which was made at the end of the World War, and which was to be mankind's atonement for the war, to organize the nations of the earth for peace, has been wrecked and defiled. The vision of a world united and made secure in law, in which the weak as well as the strong nations would be free to live their independent and unmolesed lives, has vanished. In place of collective security and international cooperation has come again an almost complete political bouleversement. One hears again the old feral snarl of conquest and invasion. The old and dangerous devices of power balancing and regional military pacts have been revived. Over all is the shadow of war, darkening the lives of men and nations, paralyzing their normal activities, distorting their outlooks and confounding their reason. The wealth of nations is being drained off into armaments and national energies are all harnessed to war preparedness or war prosecution. Aggressor and non-aggressor nations, alike, are caught up in a mad stampede to increase their armaments. This is done at the cost of lowered standards of living, increased taxation, poverty, the retardation of social improvements and the postponement of a final solution of the problems of mass unemployment, want and insecurity.

International morality seems to be non-existent. A brazen political opportunism contemptuously violates the rights of peoples and the sanctities of covenants and treaties, and employs all forms of intrigue, deception and terrorization. Gangsterism is the new norm in international affairs. Crimes against nations and minorities are condoned or ignored or dismissed as domestic affairs. In the name of peace, and under the pretext of appeasement, shameful

victories, at the expense of smaller nations, have gone to powerful aggressors by default, free and independent peoples have been strangled, and helpless minorities have been turned over to plunder and destruction.

A whole continent of ideals has dropped out of our world, like some lost Atlantis -- the unalienable rights of man, the sanctity of the individual, the freedom of human mind, the right of dissent, tolerance, brotherhood, liberty, equality, peace. In many parts of the world, these ideals are now regarded as black heresy or treason. In other parts, they are still regarded as quite respectable, but none-the-less shabby and cumbersome heirlooms of the past, something of an annoyance, and considerably in the way.

In their place, a romantic, and intellectually debauched Fascism has proclaimed a violently oppositional set of ideals, derived from a peculiar synthesis of pseudo-nationalism, pseudo-socialism and pseudo-racism -- Force, Blood and Soil, Volkstum, Obedience, Leadership, Co-ordination.

Many men, even among the intellectuals, have been eager to listen to these new ideals and have been captivated by them. They seem to have grown weary of the excessive relativism, subjectivism, scepticism and lassism of the so-called modern spirit, a spirit which sees all sides of every issue, and quenches all urges to action in a sea of latitudinarianism. They have come to long for compelling, dogmatic convictions, and a positive, unqualified and unquestioning faith. Many men have wearied of excessive individualism. They want an element of mandate and authority in their

lives, and they seek psychic sanctuary in mass solidarity. In times of excessive social decomposition, men are ready to purchase discipline and order even at the price of tyranny. It is difficult for men who labor under hard and prolonged strain to remember that an element of disillusionment and glamorless realism is an essential attribute of any mature civilization. Periods of political and economic upheaval give rise to ardent expectancies and to numerous forms of extravagant romanticism. Vague, emotionally charged and highly confident dogmas over-ride all forms of classic culture. In place of the disciplined, humanistic, intellectual and libertarian motives of the classic tradition, there come the ecstatic, imagistic, primitive and authoritarian motives. The concept of human progress through the conscious and disciplined evolution of the individual in a freely organized society succumbs to a sharp introversion to a rapturous sinking and surrender to infantile race memories, to herd mores, to turgid, "folkis?" yearnings, and an eagerness to liquidate the ego in some exalted group Nirvana. The fumist romantics of Germany, from Schlegel and Schelling were always authoritarian and anti-liberal, and always hankered after some regressive pre-Christian, Germanic heathendom. The Nazis are their legitimate descendants.

Such is the world crisis today, a vast and prolonged convulsion whose end is nowhere in sight.

## II

Such a crisis was bound to affect Jewish life most adversely. The wide-spread suffering and discontent resulting from the appalling economic dislocations were destined to demand some visible and personal agent upon whom to place the onus of responsibility and guilt. No readier scape-goat is ever available than a defenseless minority. The beneficiaries of the old system, frightened by the rising tide of revolutionary resentment, attempted craftily to deflect from themselves this punitive resentment and to channel it towards an already disfavored group -- the Jewish group. They popularized the fiction that sinister and conspiratorial forces have misused in otherwise beneficent capitalism. There is a good, wholesome schaffendes, Christian capitalism, and per contra, there is a baneful, destructive, raffendes, Jewish capitalism. Also, there are good patriotic, nationalistically-minded Christian bankers, and on the other hand, there are the unpatriotic, war-mongering, international Jewish bankers. They also hit upon the strategy of discrediting every progressive movement, agency and law which threatened their vested interests by calling it Communistic, and by branding Communism as something alien and Jewish. In this manner an existing prejudice was capitalized and affixed as an odious tabu label to the whole complex of advanced social ideals and attitudes in the modern world. By means of this new propaganda technique, the Jewish group has been made a universal object of fear and hate. A sinister aura has been cast around the Jewish worker, merchant, and professional man, quite like

the aura which religious bigotry succeeded in casting around the Jew in the Middle Ages.

At a time of a world-wide contracting economy, when the number of men who seek jobs far exceeds the number of jobs available, and when diminishing opportunities drive work-and-career-hungry men into murderous competition, it is not only work standards which collapse, but moral standards as well. Men do not hesitate to exploit any and every advantage, however unfair, in their struggle for a living. The advantage of belonging to a dominant majority which can compel members of a minority group to relinquish economic positions is quickly and ruthlessly exploited. This is nothing new in Jewish experience. Frequently in the Middle Ages, this same strategy under a religious guise, was employed. It was a favorite expedient of Christian merchants, especially of German burghers in Poland in their competition with Jewish merchants. Members of the middle classes and the professional classes, many of whom have come to constitute a new proletariat, are particularly unscrupulous competitors, and it is within these economic ranges that so many of our people live.

In some countries, particularly in the old democracies, only social prejudices are invoked to insure economic preferences. But in other countries, the machinery of government is resorted to. The hands of the minority must be tied by law. In such instances, certain rationalizations are invented to justify what is palpably contrary to the spirit of all law and morality. A pseudo-scientific theory of race is furbished up and pontifically proclaimed not only as sovereign and indisputable truth, but

as the sole salvation of the state. Race is exalted into a higher law and a superior morality before which the lesser law of political equality must abdicate. Where race theories are not popular, the theory of integral nationalism is invoked. Whatever the subterfuge -- race purity or national integration -- the results are the same. The Jewish minority is despoiled of whatever economic position, wealth or power it may possess and the way is barred to any future economic recuperation.

The Third Reich -- and as a result of the pressure of the Axis, also Italy and other countries -- has carried this process to its logical conclusion -- complete political disfranchisement and economic outlawry. It has determined not merely to curb the Jew, but to exterminate him, through economic strangulation or exile. Juda Verreckel In Hungary, an economic numerous clausus has been imposed upon the Jew. In Nazi-occupied Poland, the Jewish economy is shattered and the Jews are branded outlaws within improvised ghettos. In other countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the programs of politico-economic action against the Jew have varied according to the political orientation within each country and the international sphere of influence in which each country moves.

Anti-Semitism has become in our day a matter of political action not only for economic reasons -- to appease the job-and-career hunger of the majority population, but also for diplomatic reasons -- to realize certain imperial ambitions, and to extend political hegemony. The race theory served the Nazis well as a political weapon by means of which millions of people, Germans by race but not by nationality, were brought within the

confines of the Third Reich. The seizure of Austria, Sudetenland, Memel, and Western Poland was justified on the ground of the race affinity of their inhabitants with those of Germany. Race was thus exploited for political purposes. The same Nazis are exploiting race prejudices and antagonisms to weaken the countries which lie athwart their course of empire, by fomenting discord among their inhabitants, thereby destroying their national unity and paralyzing their resistance to Nazi aggression. Anti-Semitism today is the Reich's Fifth Column -- a cunning and effective weapon of imperial conquest and domination. This explains the amazing missionary character of Nazi anti-Semitism and the sustained drive behind it.

Generally speaking, the trend toward political concentration which has characterized the post-war era, has affected the status of the Jew unfavorably. More and more of economic activities and areas of national life are coming under the partial or total control of government. Government will, in the last analysis, reflect the economic interest not of a racial or national minority group within the state, but of the majority group. Unless there are strong constitutional guarantees to protect the rights of such minorities, they are likely to be brushed aside. Unfortunately, constitutional guarantees do not hold out very long against sustained social pressure. The revolutionary impatience of the forces both of the Left and the Right with the slow processes of the democratic procedure has undermined the moral authority of constitutional guarantees. In a dictatorship, the individual is stripped of all those rights which democracy declared to be inalienably his. The individual becomes subject to the will or whim

of an autonomous political party in control of a rigidly coordinated state, and so do all minorities.

The Jew thrived best under a political system of constitutional guarantees and limited state power. This was the prevalent trend in the Western World from the time of the American Revolution to the World War. The Jew could claim his rights as an individual in a world which acknowledged that every individual, regardless of his race or class or creed, did possess definite rights which were his inalienably -- rights which were not granted to him by the state, and which were therefore not revokable by it. With the spread in our day of the opposing doctrine of state absolutism, the position of the Jew who is everywhere a member of a defenseless and exposed minority, was bound to decline sharply. And it has so declined.

Such is the world crisis, and such has been its impact upon Jewish life. Can the Jew survive this crisis?

### III

If there is one thing which can be predicated with any degree of certainty about Jewish life, it is its complete unpredictability. Two eminent Jewish sociologists, representing sharply divergent points of view, one an assimilationist, the other a Zionist, did nevertheless agree upon one thing. Dr. Maurice Fishberg in his study of The Jew, wrote: "If, in addition, it is considered that history shows conclusively that as soon as the Jew is emancipated and given human rights, he always discards his separative practices and does his best to assimilate, and that reactions,

such as were witnessed in Spain and in other countries during medieval ages, are at present unlikely, it is not difficult to foresee which tendency will prevail among the Jews in the near future." (M. Fishberg, "The Jews", (New York, 1911) P. 503).

Dr. Arthur Ruppin, writing in The Jews of Today, declared: "It is unthinkable that either in Europe or American anti-Semitism could ever bring about legal disabilities for Jews. Any such legislation would be a direct break with the political tradition of the nineteenth century, and no state could well take such a step. We must also remember that all anti-Jewish laws are directed against the Jews as a religious community; anti-Semitism is not directed against the Jewish religion -- it is perfectly indifferent to it. It is hostile to the Jews as a race, and as promoters of certain kinds of industry and politics. Here legislation is powerless... In Europe and the United States it is easy to deal with negroes, Indians or Chinese -- any child can tell the difference between these races and whites. But special treatment for Jews founded on such a basis would present insurmountable difficulties in practice. Jews, as a race, are beyond the reach of legislation, and still less can they be assailed as followers of certain branches of trade, etc., since there is today no one such branch exclusively in Jewish hands." ("The Jews of To-Day" (New York, 1913) p. 203).

Dr. Fishberg and Dr. Ruppin both assumed that the complete assimilation of the Jew was a foregone conclusion. One welcomed it; the other sought to forfend it by Zionism. Both men were persuaded, on the basis of their

extensive studies and research, that reactions such as occurred in Spain were not likely to happen in the Western World, and that no modern state would or could pass discriminatory legislation against the Jew, based on race. But learning, logic, and statistics notwithstanding, the Nuremberg laws were enacted, in the year of grace 1935, in one of the most civilized countries of the world, and the reactions which took place in Spain in 1492, and the manifold tragedies of the Spanish expulsion, pale into insignificance alongside of the horrible streamlined reaction in modern Germany, and the brutal expulsion of Jews from Germany which is even now going on. Here, in the twentieth century, one can witness reaction, cold pogroms, terror and tragedy at full tide.

It is no reflection upon these scholars that they wrote as they did. They were influenced by the same optimism which characterized the entire thought-life of the Western World in the decades which preceded the first World War -- an optimism which nurtured itself upon the truly remarkable achievements in every field of human endeavor, upon scientific discoveries, the popularization of education, the extension of franchise, the improvement in the standard of living, and the increased facilities for inter-communication among men and nations. Few could look beyond the facade, or underneath the surface of things into the dark, bitter primordial waters below. Few could anticipate that great human documents, constitutions, and charters of liberty, long cherished and sacrificially achieved, could shrivel up over night like some parched scroll, and few could foresee the sudden twist which a world war would give both to human destiny and to

Jewish destiny.

Just as difficult as it is to predict how nations will act towards the Jew in the future, so is it difficult to predict how the Jew himself will act. There is history which we ourselves make, and there is history which others make for us. Most of our political and economic history of the past twenty centuries, other hands fashioned for us. Most of our cultural and social history, we fashioned ourselves. The inner and outer forces playing upon Jewish life, however, have constantly interacted. What seems passive acceptance of influence and impact is not entirely so. Israel was never just marionettes; nor what appears to be original, volitional, and autochthonous, is always so. Furthermore, just as there never was a consistent and unvarying direction in the outer propulsive forces which played upon Jewish history, so there was never any consistence of action or reaction in our own inner world. It is unprofitable to over-simplify Jewish history. There are certain clichés about Jewish history which are universally accredited which, nevertheless, upon closer investigation, turn out to be grossly inaccurate. Thus, it is not true that persecution always helped Jewish communities to survive, and that prosperity always tended to disintegrate them. This is a form of easy-going determinism applied to Jewish history which is not borne out by the facts. Our history records many an important Jewish community which was destroyed by sharp and prolonged persecution -- in Persia, Babylonia, Arabia, the Byzantine Empire, Egypt, Northern Africa, Spain, Portugal, and elsewhere. Conversely, many a Jewish community survived and retained its identity through long

periods of tranquility and prosperity -- in the great Diaspora of the era of the Second Temple, in Hellenistic Alexandria, in pre-Christian Rome, in the Babylonia of the early Talmudic era, in Western Europe before the Crusades, in Eastern Europe before Christianity was firmly established, in Islamic Spain, in Holland, in America, and in the British Empire. Our history also records a phenomenon of cycles: many wadis contain the beds of water courses which are altogether dry and desolate but which become torrential streams in the rainy season. Close students have not failed to notice how often the cycle of recuperation is repeated in our history. The "Generation of the Wilderness", whom the Psalmist characterized as a despised generation and as "a people that do err in their heart" is followed by a generation which conquered Canaan. The generation whom Jeremiah charged with apostasy - "My people have forgotten Me/<sup>days</sup>without number", and with treason, - "for the house of Israel and the house of Judah have dealt very treacherously against Me...They have belied the Lord," - is soon followed by the generation of Zerubbabel, which rebuilt Judea in struggle and sacrifice. The age of Hellenizers is followed by the age of the Maccabees. The Jews of Spain whom Rabbi Solomon Alami found so deserving of censure for their materialism, their pride and their corruption, are followed by descendants, many of whom were crowned with martyrdom for their faith by myriads who preferred exile to apostasy. The generation for whom Judah Leib Gordon sang his Hebrew songs while his heart was fearful lest he would be the last of all the Hebrew poets and his readers the last few to understand, is followed by one of the most remarkable renaissance of the Hebrew language and culture

in Jewish history.

The confluence of many factors, outer and inner, personal and impersonal, some purely fortuitous, a matter of time and place, determine whether a given Jewish community will survive a persecution or will succumb to the enticements of a welcoming alien civilization.

Only one fact can we postulate with confidence about the history of our people. As a people, we have survived! There may be a difference of opinion as to how or why, but none as to the actual fact. We have survived — the one people that has come down intact from antiquity, that can trace an unbroken line of physical and spiritual continuity through thirty-five centuries, the one race that exemplifies in the modern world historical continuity and survival par excellence.

It should be borne in mind, too, that our survival transpired not in some secluded Shangri-La, sheltered from danger and attack by ramparts of impassable mountains. We did not vegetate in passivity in some quiet, sequestered land far away from the world's stern stresses and struggles. We achieved our survival in the very midst of the world's mad and murderous arenas. We were invaded. We were attacked. We were exiled. We were driven over the face of the earth. We were scattered and broken, hounded and harassed, through long and weary centuries. We clashed with great empires. We resisted mighty civilizations. We were surrounded by militant faiths which sought to absorb us or to destroy us. We are today again upon the rack in the torture-chambers of the earth. Nevertheless, we survived! And, for our size, we are today the most alive and creative

people in the world.

Some will call it a mere accident of history. But that is an evasion not an explanation. Such a strange accident can be accounted for only as the accidental result of ten thousand equally strange and accidental survivals in our long history. Such an explanation must tax the incredulity even of the most resolutely incredulous person.

Some say that the Jew survived because of his religion. We have no quarrel with them, for there is much truth in what they say. But we would remind them that it would be equally true to say that the Jewish religion survived because of the Jew. Had the Jews been made of weaker stuff, had they been incapable of converting the vision of a few inspired seers into the life-motif of a whole people, had they not been endowed by nature with the peculiar genius to translate their faith into expressive and evolving laws and institutions, to keep it forever fresh and vigorous by pouring new concepts into old forms, and to adapt it ever anew to profounder insights and higher intuitions, had they been unwilling or unable to suffer long for an ideal, and had they failed to match the heroic quality of their faith by a corresponding quality in their own nature, both they and their religion would have perished. It was Judah Halevi who declared: "If there had been no Jews, there would have been no Torah." (Cuzari II, 56).

It is of less moment now to determine who sustained whom, and how the intertwined strands of cause and effect can be separated, than to grasp fully the amazing fact that a long, unbroken covenanted relationship did

exist between the people of Israel and the faith of Israel, that Israel from of old, athirst for life and immortality, evolved a faith which exalted life and emancipated it, and that this faith, in turn, through the long centuries, nurtured the life of Israel and fed its powers of survival. In a word, it is important to understand the miracle of "The Ark carrying those who carry it."

But this is certain -- we have survived! Not in protective isolation, nor yet on a plane of primitive life or a low cultural niveau, where long and changeless survival is not uncommon, but in the very thick of life, near the nerve-centers of civilization, in all the fields of conflict, and, frequently, persecuted and oppressed.

This fact of our history, we cannot write off as a mere accident. To us and to our ancestors, all history is revelation and testimony. We hold history in great reverence. We were the first people to write history, and to interpret it. "The Book of Chronicles was given for the sole purpose of interpretation." Our people were encouraged to rehearse and to cogitate upon the great moments of their national history. "The more one expatiates upon the story of the Exodus the more praise is due him"; for in it is guidance and prophecy for the future. The last Redeemer will be like unto the first." (Mid. R. Num. <sup>11</sup> XI, 3). Our spiritual leaders based their faith in God not upon any cosmological proofs, but upon history -- upon those significant events in their own and in the world's history and those processes of the unfolding spiritual life of man which revealed the presence of God. History to them was evidence for faith far more valid

than philosophical proofs!

The Jewish people today is therefore warranted in drawing deep draughts of confidence from its past history. What we were able to do over and over again in the past, under all conceivable circumstances and in all parts of the world, we may yet do again, and again in the future. Nothing has fundamentally changed for us, neither the world's mania for persecution, nor our own unbroken will to live. Our forces are not less today, but more. Our powers of adaptability, which the strong life-sense of our people developed, have not been dulled. We were able in the past to adapt ourselves to all forms of economic life and activity -- the pastoral, agricultural, commercial and industrial, and to all forms of political systems and arrangements. We adjusted ourselves to conditions of utter rightlessness, to restricted rights, and to equality of rights. If in the future, Jews will be faced with the necessity of adjusting themselves to new economic and political arrangements, to new forms of capitalism or socialism, or to new conditions of restrictions and disabilities, or if they will be again confronted, as many of them already are, with the necessity of emigrating to new countries and of establishing a new Diaspora, they will be able to make their adjustments in the same way as their people have done throughout the ages.

The annihilationist policy of the Nazis is not likely to become the norm which will fix the actual relationship between Jews and non-Jews in the days to come. Such policies never assume world-wide dimensions. The Jewish dispersion is too far-flung for one policy to embrace it all.

Undoubtedly many a Jewish community will receive hard hammering in the future. Many of them will be liquidated and their members will be scattered to the four winds. A new era of Jewish wandering and migration has already set in. Everywhere Jewish life will for a long time to come find itself under the discomfort of hostile propaganda and the threat of an overhanging menace. But unless the entire world plunges back into barbarism, and the pathological obsessions of the Teutonic dervishes seize hold of the whole of mankind -- a condition conceivable but hardly probably -- the exterminationist policies of the Nazis are destined to be localized. Perhaps even in the Reich itself time will neutralize them. In other lands where governments are resolved to circumscribe the participation of Jews in the political, economic and cultural life of the nation, some legal modus vivendi will have to be evolved by them. The legal status of the Jew will have to be defined. In such countries, the Jews will have to learn again how to live worthy and undefeated lives, even under the duress of formidable disabilities. They will have to seek refuge again and they will find it in their own culture and faith, in the unassailable wisdom of their heritage, in their own communal organizations, and in the pride of "fulfilling the Torah in suffering". And they will wait and work for a better day, when they shall be permitted to walk again with unchained feet the ~~full~~ highways of the world.

Should the Nazi-Fascist movement spend itself and should nations return to the primal sanities of civilized life, constitutional guarantees for individuals and minorities will be re-established in the world and

anti-Semitism will cease to be a matter of political policy and program. The pressures upon the Jewish group will then be greatly relaxed.

A substantial section of Israel now lives under a Communist regime. Whether Jewish life can retain its identity under Communism and whether Judaism or, for that matter, any of the historic religions, can long survive under such a regime, remains to be seen. The Soviet Union has not only not been hostile to the perpetuation of race and nationality groups within its borders, but it has actually fostered their autonomy and self-determination. As an ethnic group, the Jews of the Soviet Union have been given equal opportunities to develop their own soviets in localities where they are the majority of the populations, to build their own schools, and to employ their own language in judicial and administrative transactions. The Yiddish press and literature have been steadily expanding. "The departments of Jewish studies in the universities and academies of Moscow, Kiev, Minsk, Odessa, etc., have employed a larger personnel and offered greater facilities for Jewish research than perhaps all European and American universities combined." (Baron, "A Social and Religious History of the Jews" (New York, 1937) II, p. 314).

Whether the Jewish people of the Soviet Union will, in spite of these favorable opportunities for self-determination, choose the road of assimilation, only time can tell. Whether their Yiddish proletarian culture, which is denuded of all the religio-Hebraic elements of the classic Jewish culture will become so completely different as to set it off as a totally

different culture, and whether the Jews of the Soviet Union will be able to re-establish vital bonds of spiritual and cultural unity with the rest of world Jewry, remains to be seen. Certainly there are at present no indications of any imminent dissolution of the Jewish group in Russia.

Russian communism has been anti-religious. Judaism, along with all other religions, has been severely repressed. But irreligion is not an essential of communism. Historically, it was the religious motif which nurtured, and religious bodies which fostered communism. Modern Socialism received its comprehensive and scientific exposition at the hands of Marx and his disciples at a time when materialistic determinism, now largely discredited, was the philosophic vogue. The theoreticians of the movement, in an effort to make their socialistic hypotheses up to date, drafted it upon those extreme materialistic hypotheses with which, of course, they have no essential connection. The fact that organized religion evinced little sympathy for the struggling masses was also a contributing factor to the anti-religious attitude of the founders of modern Socialism. But it is becoming clear to many that in turning anti-religious, Socialism has needlessly sacrificed a most powerful ally and has drawn to itself antagonisms which would otherwise not be directed against its real purposes.

It is quite possible that in time the Soviet Union may come to modify its attitude towards religion in the same way as it has already modified its attitude towards nationalism and patriotism and towards certain economic dogmas. In that case, Judaism in Russia, along with other historical religions, which a generation of repressions has not

succeeded in stamping out, may yet enjoy a new lease on life. Certainly there is no warrant for assuming that all future experiments in collectivism and socialization in other parts of the world will, of necessity, be anti-religious in character.

Surveying the world scene, one is accordingly led to the conclusion that while there are manifold threats today to Jewish security, to Jewish rights and to Jewish peace, there is no imminent threat to Jewish survival -- at least none different from those which Jews were able to circumvent in the past.

The Jewish people will remain intact. Even to those who would escape their Jewish destiny, opportunity has now been denied. Nolens volens the Jew must now remain and be counted as a Jew. Unto the third and fourth generation an inescapable, even if unwelcome, racial identification is forced upon him. The modern anti-Semite does not want the Jew to assimilate, to intermarry, to be converted, or give up his distinctive way of life. On the contrary, he wants him to remain the Jew integral, isolated, quarantined, exiled or annihilated, but always the Jew. This is quite different from our experiences in the past. There was always an easy and profitable way out from the harsh disabilities of Jewish existence. In the twelfth century, Judah Halevi could remind the gentile world that Jewish survival is voluntary: "For, whoever wishes to do so can become the friend and equal of his oppressor by uttering one word, and without any difficulty". (Guzari", I, 115).

#### IV

What should, therefore, concern us today is not whether the Jewish people will survive, but how? Shall it be affirmatively and challengingly, as in the great periods of our past, holding our banners high in a day of battle and storm; or negatively, creeping into the nooks and crannies of the earth, waiting for the wrath to pass over and grateful for the mere gift of existence and survival? We can do either. Apart from all else, apart from the mighty energies which the past has stored up in us, mere inertia and social lag can keep us going for an indefinite period. Many Jews, especially the more prosperous ones, out of fear and personal interest, are choosing the latter course. But the Jewish people, as a whole, I believe, will not, because it cannot, consent to such a role of passivity, abdication and escapism.

There is too much leaven in its spirit, too powerful a dynamic in its faith and too much of the unquenchably prophetic in its traditions. When dangers threaten, when the enemy appears on the horizon, then the Ark of the Covenant begins to move -- the Ark which "carries those who carry it" -- the Ark which rests with the people, and marches with the people -- and the cry then goes up: "Arise, O Lord, and let Thine enemies be scattered!" and a militancy, a bitter stubbornness, a sharp defiance comes into the hearts of our people, and they are ready for battle...

The Jewish people, through its thoughtful guides and leaders, has been quick to appraise the issues which are involved in the present day world crisis and to grasp the true significance of the murderous attack

which is being made upon it. It has come to understand that the present conflict which is tearing the world apart is but another phase of the eternal conflict between the "Wild Man" and the "Quiet Man," between Jacob and Esau, Israel and Edom, Rome and Jerusalem, Judaism and Paganism. The neo-pagans of the 20th century wish to destroy the Jew because they hate and fear the spirit of the Jew, which has been the implacable and indefeasible foe of paganism throughout the ages and which will not rest until it has destroyed the new paganism also. They are not afraid of the Jews' physical power. The Jews were never numbered among the conquering peoples of the earth. They never built empires. Their legions never swept over continents with fire and sword. No Cyrus sprang from their loins, no Alexander, no Hannibal, no Genghis Khan and no Napoleon to shake the world. Against such conquerors one can protect oneself; one can build Siegfried lines of defense and fashion weapons in Krupp and Skoda works. But the Jews are foes of another stamp, and the fear which they inspire is a greater fear, and at bottom a justifiable fear. The neo-pagans sense a real menace, a threat to them and to their world.

John Macmurray, writing in his book, The Clue to History, sums it up admirably: "It (Fascism) discovers that the source of all this pressure towards progress, equality, freedom and common humanity is the Jew. The persecution of the Jews in Germany has, of course, the same source as their persecution throughout the history of Christian Europe; but it has a significant difference. It is secular, political, conscious and organized in a way that it has never been, and it is felt to be the central problem

of society in which all other problems have their roots. This new anti-Semitism of Germany looks completely irrational to us. From a purely intellectual point of view the problem seems, to say the least of it, absurdly exaggerated, and the practical reasons advanced to prove that the Jews are a real menace to Germany, the source of all her misfortunes and defeats, and the organizers and creators of all internationalism, and of Bolshevism in particular, are clearly nothing but rationalizations of an emotional impulse. Yet we have to face the fact that the Leader of the German people has no doubt in his own mind that the Jewish problem is the centre of all problems, not merely in Germany, but in the world. It is useless to dismiss this as an illusion, because if it is, it demands explanation.

"But it is no illusion. It is the truth. Hitler's declaration that the Jewish consciousness is poison to the Aryan races is the deepest insight that the Western world has yet achieved into its own nature; and his capacity to realize this is the proof of his genius as well as the secret of his power and of the curious fascination which his personality exerts. One has only to attend to the form of the statement to see that it is not the practical power or wealth of the Jews that he fears, but the character of the Jewish mind. It is the Jewish consciousness which is the enemy, not an organized Jewish army, not even an insurrection of the Jews in Germany. It is the hidden penetration of the Jewish spirit into the Gentile mind that is the danger; and it is a danger because the "Aryan" mind cannot resist it, but must succumb. The task is to extirpate the influence of the Jewish consciousness upon the world. At all costs the leaven must be

got out of the lump, or very soon the whole will be leavened, and the result will be the final end of the "Aryan" (so. pagan) tradition. Europe will be so false to itself that it will create a universal communism, [(Note: Communism, not necessarily, but Justice!)] which will destroy blood and race as the basis of civilization, destroy the beauties and the heroisms of the struggle for power, deny the natural superiority of the white races, and of Germans in particular, and produce universal equality and brotherhood. The Jewish spirit is not merely under the illusion of these ideas; it is the force, in the world, which creates them in ideas and compels the rest of humanity to achieve them in practice. I need ask for no greater testimony to the truth of the whole thesis of this book than Hitler's. His inspiration corroborates my own pedestrian reflection. The only <sup>is</sup> difference between us/that his will and mine respond to the truth in different ways. The thought of the triumph of the Jewish consciousness fills me with joyous exhilaration, while it casts Hitler into the depths of despair. For Hitler the Jewish consciousness is a poison. I have learned from the greatest genius of the Jewish race to recognize it as the Water of Life." (John Macmurray, "The Clue to History" ( ) pp.225-227. See also David Frishman "Al Ha-Yahadut", in his Collected Works (Warsaw, 1939) VIII, pp. 16-17).

The Catholic savant, Jacques Maritain, approaching the Jewish question from a different angle, nevertheless arrives at the same conclusion. He quotes Léon Bloy: "The history of the Jews thwarts the history of the

human race as a dike thwarts the flood, to raise its level," and he declares: "Israel, which is not of the world, is to be found at the very heart of the world's structure, stimulating it, exasperating it, moving it. Like an alien body, like an activating ferment injected into the mass, it gives the world no peace, it bars slumber, it teaches the world to be discontented and restless as long as the world has not God, it stimulates the movement<sup>of</sup>/history...The diverse specific causes which the observer may assign to anti-Semitism, all the way from the feeling of hate for the foreigner, natural to any social group, down to religious hatreds - alas! that these two words may be coupled - and to the manifold conveniences produced by some waves of immigration, mask an underlying spring of hatred deeper down. If the world hates the Jews, it is because the world clearly senses that they will always be outsiders in a supernatural sense, it is because the world detests their passion for the absolute and the unbearable stimulus which it inflicts. It is the vocation of Israel which the world execrates. To be hated by the world is their glory, as it is also the glory of Christians who live by faith." (Jacques Maritain, "A Christian Looks at the Jewish Question", (New York, 1939) pp. 29-30).

Is not this what the classic philosopher of Jewish history, Judah Halevi, had in mind when he declared: "Israel amidst the nations is like the heart amidst the organs of the body; it is at one and the same time the most sick and the most healthy of them". ("Cuzari" II, 36).

There is a form of magic called homeopathic. By it, if you are superstitious, you try to destroy your enemy by destroying an image of him.

In the eyes of the Nazi and Fascist revolutionists of moral nihilism, the Jew is the image or symbol of all these spiritual concepts of life which they must destroy if they are to succeed. And so they are practicing the black art of homeopathic magic upon him. They are hoping to destroy them by destroying him.

The Jewish problem is thus the world problem epitomized. The present world conflict again finds the Jew and his spiritual traditions the battleground of contending armies of mankind. The Rabbis of old apprehended this recurrent role which Israel plays in the drama of civilization and they welcomed it. "Blessed are the children of Israel in all their dwelling places, even though they wander painfully to the four corners of the earth, from North to South and from South to North, from East to West, and from West to East, they are always in the center!" (Tana d'be Eliyahu, Chap. 5). Always in the center! Halevi called Israel the heart of the world. That is our horoscope! In that house of destiny was our life cast!

The Jews of this generation should welcome this role, hard though it be, even as their fathers before them. God has again sent us a great, testing hour! They must again find the strength not only for survival, but for a stiff-necked resistance to the "Wild Man" who is again trampling under foot all that is noble and kindly and decent in life. They must arouse and join forces for a major offensive with all men of all faiths and of all races who have remained faithful to the spiritual vision of life. It is not enough to defend the status quo against reaction. Reaction must be defeated by destroying those evils in our present system which made it

possible. A courageous attack all along the line, summoning all our courage and employing all of our recourses, upon poverty, upon the economic insecurity of the masses, upon corruption and special privilege, upon the excessive concentration of wealth in the hands of a few, upon monopoly and exploitation, upon the war machine and the merchants of death, upon chauvinism, national exhibitionism and patrioteering, upon race arrogance and race domination -- in a word, upon all that our religion and all the great religions of mankind have branded and outlawed. Reaction is attacking the Jew today. Let the Jew defend himself by an audacious counter attack. Let the Ark of the Covenant begin to move again! There are no weapons which reaction can forge strong enough to destroy us. "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper." And there are no fortresses strong enough to protect reaction against the mighty thunderbolts of the human spirit once they are unleashed. The Jews have been singled out for destruction. This then is their holy and destined hour when "the exaltations of their God should be in their throats and the double-edged sword in their hands."

Just as democracy and liberalism will perish unless they resume their offensive, so the Jewish people will be defeated and beaten into servitude unless they fling themselves resolutely into the fight with Amalek and unless the hands of their leaders remain firm and uplifted all through the long day of battle until the sun sets upon their victory.

In a sense the present state of spiritual conflict and struggle in the world is a more normal and congenial one for the spirit of our people.

The life of our spirit was always a life of swords. Judaism was fused in struggle from Canaanitish days onward. Prophecy was born in protest and militancy. The prophet was a man of strife and contention to all the earth. The spirit of the Jew was never relaxed, even in Palestine. It was always braced against alien influences and the "customs of the heathen." Our position as a people was always abnormal, even in the ancient world. For the ancient world was all idolatrous and Israel was not. Our position was abnormal in the medieval world. It is abnormal in the modern world. It is meant to be. Judaism always conceived of life as progress and progress as the struggle of the spirit, -- to wrestle with gods and <sup>and</sup> men to prevail. Even in the world to come, Judaism allowed no repose to the righteous: "The pious sages will have no peace even in the world to come." (Moed. Kat. 29a) Our people are thus not likely to be shaken spiritually by the tensions and stresses under which they are living and will continue to live. Rather are they likely to be healed and made whole by becoming more truly and more intimately themselves and more at home with their own racial genius.

Otherwise, no new technique for Jewish survival is necessary. Adequate communal organization, the proper education of our youth in our religion, language, history and literature, the encouragement of Jewish scholarship and the devotion to and active participation in the up-building of the Jewish homeland in Palestine -- these are the ways which have proved adequate in the past and which are likely to prove adequate in the future also.

To the everlasting credit of this sorely-tried generation of Jews be it said, that in spite of the tragedies which were piled up upon it, Ossa on Pelion, in spite of the frightful disruption of numerous old centers of Jewish life, in spite of the impoverishment, exhaustion and persecutions which made of the whole household of Israel one vast hostelry of pain, it nevertheless was able to find within itself the energy, the courage and the resources to build in Palestine in twenty short years a new and resplendent center of Jewish life, already the fifth largest in the world, and first and foremost in the richness and vitality of its intrinsic Jewish spirit and culture.

The ten thousand evidences given daily in Palestine of renewal, of broken bodies made whole again, of building upon ruins, of courage, vision and self-sacrifice are an imperishable epic of splendor, the like of which our own people or any other people has not written at any time in its history. If one wishes to see the miracle and the mystery which is Israel, let him go to Palestine in these very disastrous and war-ridden days -- days of wrath and Golgotha for our people in the Diaspora -- and watch with anointed eyes the undefeated strength, the over-arching confidence, the superb zeal and energy, the social vision and the personal idealism which are being poured into the work of rebuilding Jewish national life in its national home. What is being done there and how it is being done, what common folk, transfigured by an ideal, can achieve is a tribute not only to our people and to their sires who begot them but to humanity itself.

Here a people - resolved to live and not to die - is shouting defiance

to a world bent upon its destruction. Here it is seeking to build upon strong foundations a lasting home to replace the tabernacles which have proved so frail and impermanent in so many parts of the earth. Here hope is restored to men robbed of hope, and pride to the humbled, and the gift of mission and destiny to those cut off, spiritually dispossessed, and cast out of all inheritance.

Here in Palestine a new and powerful bulwark for the survival of the Jew and of Judaism has been established, as great and as rich in promise, and to be sure, under as great difficulties, as in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah. Regardless of any future developments, something great and heartening and re-assuring has already been achieved there.

Palestine is today in the active war zone. One cannot foresee the fate which awaits it. It may be invaded and much of what has been so painfully built up in recent years again laid in ruins and ashes. Should the Axis powers win and should they carry out their threats, Jewish Palestine will be dismantled. Then the work of rebuilding it after this, the Third Destruction, will have to be resumed by another generation of Jews. But resumed it will be! It is questionable, however, whether even an Axis victory will lead to the total disruption of the Yishuv. Both economic and imperial considerations may dictate a far less disruptive policy. Should the Allied powers win, it is probably that greater opportunities will be forthcoming for increasing and strengthening the Jewish Homeland. Under such circumstances, while Palestine will, of course, not contain at any time in the calculable future the majority of the Jewish people,

it will loom ever larger as the fatherland of our people and as a mighty cultural and spiritual reservoir for world Jewry.

And so the Jewish people faces the critical days ahead not without fears and misgivings, not without dark moments of agony and despair -- for great is the wrath and terror and the menace -- but fundamentally unshaken. Jews are carrying on, many of them magnificently. Witness the remarkable outpouring of loyalty, compassion and help on the part of Jews throughout the world for those of their fellow-Jews who find themselves in the iron crucible of affliction. All this is evidence of an inner soundness, of an unbroken solidarity. Thoughtful Jews know their history. They know their resources. They have taken the measure of their enemies. They understand the world significance of their great tribulation. Other nations of antiquity, when they were defeated acknowledged that their gods had been defeated. The Jews always saw in their defeat the triumph of their God... In all this there is balm and healing. They know too that hope is a cardinal dogma of their ancient faith which they must not abandon. The first question which a man is asked on Judgment Day is, according to our Sages, "Did you hope for salvation?"

Hope -- and Will!

Solomon ibn Verga tells this story in his Shebet Yehudah. A ship-load of Jewish refugees from Spain was swept by the plague, and the captain of the ship cast them all ashore upon a barren and uninhabited coast. Most of the unfortunate refugees perished from hunger. Some of them pressed on desperately to find some human habitation. Among them was a man, his wife and his two children. They struggled on through the barren waste,

until the mother fainted and died. The man then carried his children in his arms and upon his shoulders until he, too, fell down and fainted from hunger and exhaustion. When he came to, he discovered that his two children had died. He then arose and said: "Master of the Universe, much art Thou doing to make me forsake my faith. Know, for sure, that in spite of Thee, I am a Jew and I shall remain a Jew, and that nothing that Thou hast brought upon me or art likely to bring upon me will make any difference." He then covered the bodies of his dead children with earth and scrub and walked on into the wilderness to find a human abode.  
(Ibn Verga, "Shebet Yehudah" (Hanover 1855) p. 80)

Here is spiritual resoluteness which matches divine omnipotence! Here is will-power which says to the mountains: Be ye removed! Here, in the bitter cry of challenge wrung from the heart of this tortured Spanish refugee, is another key to the mystery of Jewish survival...

THE WORLD CRISIS AND JEWISH SURVIVAL  
Dr. Abba Hillel Silver

What makes the present crisis so grave for the Jewish people is the fact that it is a world crisis, not a localized disturbance and one in which the Jew, alone, is involved. Were the disasters of our day limited to the Jewish people, we Jews could face them with much less apprehension.

*Abba Hillel Silver*  
*with the Jewish people in the world*  
It is only those crises in human history which shake all things to their very foundations - the Crusades, for example, or the Black Death, or the World War - which also profoundly and disastrously affect Jewish life.

The world crisis is neither localized nor <sup>of short duration</sup> temporary. It is the agony of a whole epoch, like the Thirty Years War, the Napoleonic Wars, or the era which preceded the American Civil War. The present crisis did not begin with Hitler, or Mussolini, or Lenin. It is not the result of the Great War. The Great War was a phase of it, just as have been all the wars and revolutions and depressions which have followed it.

Nor is the crisis limited to one department of social life. It penetrates all. It is a severe and prolonged crisis in the economic, political and international life of the world. Above all, it is a spiritual and moral crisis of frightful dimensions. "The whole head is ailing, and the whole heart is sick."

Capitalism is breaking up into new forms, like feudalism at the close of the Middle Ages, and the transition is proving even more violent. Democracy which flourished for more than a century in the congenial climate of laissez-faire economics and the confidence of a triumphant middle class is proving inadequate to the emergencies of a relentless class struggle which industrial and financial capitalism have brought about. Democracy and liberalism are abdicating in many parts of the world in favor of dictatorship and regimentation. This throw-back to anti-democratic forms of government which seems to be inevitable when economic classes are determined

to fight it out, is being rationalized into ideologies, some of them outrageously immoral and vicious. Censorship to throttle opposing opinions and propaganda to persuade and confound men into ready acquiescence are destroying both the processes and objectives of humanistic education. Nationalism, as the principle of self-determination, which triumphed in the Allied victory in the Great War, and which logically should have led to eager international cooperation, to an effective League of Nations and to the protection of minorities has contracted into political isolationism and economic autarchy. The Western World has never been as fragmentized and disintegrated as it is today. Minorities are again being exploited and shamefully used as pawns in a game of power politics. Racism is ravaging our world. The idea of race which, except as it is used ideally to arouse men to nobler ways of life and service by an appeal to a noble ancestral past, has always been the warrant or occasion for hatred, exploitation and war among men, has turned into something fraudulent and shamelessly immoral. In its name governments have disfranchised blocs of their own citizens, degraded, despoiled, tortured and exiled them.

The brave experiment which was made at the end of the World War, and which was to be mankind's atonement for the war, to organize the nations of the earth for peace, has been wrecked and defiled. The vision of <sup>a</sup>the world united and made <sup>secure</sup>strong in law, in which the weak as well as the strong nations would be free to live their independent and unmolested lives, has vanished. In place of collective security and international cooperation, one hears again the old feral snarl of conquest and invasion. The old and dangerous devices of power balancing and regional <sup>military</sup>pacts <sup>have</sup>been <sup>are</sup> revived. Over all is the shadow of war, darkening the lives of men and nations, paralyzing their normal activities, distorting their outlooks and confounding their reason. The wealth of nations is being drained off into armaments and national energies are all harnessed to war preparedness. Aggressor and non-aggressor nations, alike, are caught up in a <sup>mad</sup>stampede to increase their armaments. This is done at the cost

of lowered standards of living, increased taxation, poverty, the retardation of social improvements and the postponement of a final solution of the problems of mass unemployment, want and insecurity.

International morality seems to be non-existent. A brazen political opportunism contemptuously violates the rights of peoples, and the sanctities of covenants and treaties, and shamelessly employs all forms of intrigue, deception and terrorization. Gangsterism is the new norm in international affairs. Crimes against nations and minorities are condoned or ignored or dismissed as domestic affairs. In the name of peace, and under the pretext of appeasement, shameful victories, at the expense of smaller nations, have gone to powerful aggressors by default, free and independent peoples have been strangled, and helpless minorities have been turned over to plunder and destruction.

A whole continent of ideals has dropped out of our world, like some lost Atlantis - the unalienable rights of man, the sanctity of the individual, the freedom of the human mind, the right of dissent, tolerance, brotherhood, liberty, equality, peace. In many parts of the world, these ideals are now regarded as black heresy or treason. In other parts, they are still regarded as quite respectable, but none-the-less shabby and cumbersome heirlooms of the past, <sup>something</sup> ~~very much~~ of an annoyance, and considerably in the way....

In their place, a romantic, dynamic and intellectually debauched Fascism has proclaimed a violently oppositional set of ideals, derived from a peculiar synthesis of pseudo-nationalism, pseudo-socialism and pseudo-racism -- Force, Blood and Soil, 'Volkstum', Obedience, Leadership, Co-ordination....

Many men, even among the intellectuals, have been eager to listen to these new ideals and have been captivated by them. They <sup>seem to</sup> have grown weary of the excessive relativism, subjectivism and scepticism of the so-called modern spirit, a spirit which sees all sides of every issue, and quenches all urges to action in a sea of latitudinarianism. They <sup>have come to</sup> ~~have~~ longed for compelling, dogmatic convictions, and a positive,

unqualified and unquestioning faith. Many men have wearied of excessive individualism. They want an element of mandate and authority in their lives, and they seek psychic sanctuary in mass solidarity. In times of excessive social decomposition, men are ready to purchase discipline and order even at the price of tyranny. It is difficult for men who labor under hard and prolonged strain to remember that an element of disillusionment and glamorless realism is an essential attribute of any mature civilization. Periods of political and economic upheaval give rise to ardent expectancies and to numerous forms of extravagant romanticism. Vague, emotionally charged and highly confident dogmas over-ride all forms of classic culture. In place of the disciplined, humanistic, intellectual and libertarian motives of the classic tradition, there come the ecstatic, imagistic, primitive and authoritarian motives. The concept of human progress through the conscious evolution of the individual in a freely organized society succumbs to a sharp retroversion to herd mores, turgid "folkist" yearnings, a primordial race libido, and an eagerness to liquidate the ego in some exalted group Nirvana. The fustian romantics of Germany, from Schlegel and Schelling on, were always authoritarian and anti-liberal, and always hankered after some pre-Christian, Germanic heathendom. The Nazis are their legitimate descendants.

Such is the world crisis to-day, a vast and prolonged convulsion whose end is nowhere in sight.

Such a crisis was bound to affect Jewish life most adversely. The wide-spread suffering and discontent resulting from the vast economic dislocations was destined to demand some visible and personal agent upon whom to place the onus of responsibility and guilt. No readier scape-goat is ever available than a defenseless minority. The beneficiaries of the old system, frightened by the rising tide of revolutionary resentment, attempted craftily to deflect from themselves this punitive resentment and to channel it to an already disfavored group -- the Jewish group. They popularized the fiction that sinister and conspiratorial forces have misused an otherwise beneficent capitalism. There is a good, wholesome, "schaffendes", Christian capitalism, and, per contra, there is a baneful, destructive "raffendes",

Jewish capitalism. Also, ~~that~~ there are ~~the~~ good, patriotic, nationalistically-minded Christian bankers, and, on the other hand, <sup>there are</sup> the unpatriotic, war-mongering, international Jewish bankers. They also hit upon the strategy of discrediting every progressive movement, agency and law which threatened their vested interests by calling it Communistic, and by branding Communism as something alien and Jewish. In this manner an existing prejudice was capitalized and affixed as an odious tabu ~~label~~ to the whole complex of advanced social ideals and attitudes in the modern world. By means of this new propaganda technique, the Jewish group has been made a universal object of fear and hate. A sinister aura has been cast around the Jewish worker, merchant, and professional man, quite like the aura which religious bigotry succeeded in casting around the Jew in the Middle Ages.

At a time of a world-wide contracting economy, when the number of men who seek jobs far exceeds the number of jobs available, and when diminishing opportunities drive work-and career-hungry men into murderous competition, it is not only work standards which collapse, but moral standards as well. Men do not hesitate to exploit any and every advantage, however unfair, in their struggle for a living. The ~~fortuitous~~ advantage of belonging to a dominant majority which can compel members of a minority group to relinquish economic positions is quickly and ruthlessly exploited. This is nothing new in Jewish experience. Frequently in the Middle Ages, this same strategy, under a religious guise, was employed. It was a favorite expedient of Christian merchants, especially of German burghers in Poland in their competition with Jewish merchants. Members of the middle classes and the professional classes, many of whom have come to constitute a new proletariat, are particularly unscrupulous ~~in competition~~ <sup>competitors</sup>, and it is within these economic ranges that so many of our people live.

In some countries, particularly in the old democracies, only social prejudices are invoked to insure economic preferences. But in other countries, the machinery of government is resorted to. The hands of the minority must be tied by law. In such instances, certain rationalizations are invented to justify what is palpably contrary to the spirit of all law and morality. A pseudo-scientific theory of race is

furbished up and pontifically proclaimed not only as sovereign and indisputable truth, but as the sole salvation of the state. Race is exalted into a higher law and a superior morality before which the lesser law of political equality must abdicate. Where race theories are not popular, the theory of integral nationalism is invoked. Whatever the subterfuge - race purity or national integration - the results are the same. The Jewish minority is despoiled of whatever economic position, wealth or power it may possess and the way is barred <sup>to</sup> ~~for~~ any future economic recuperation.

The Third Reich - and as a result of the pressure of the Axis, also Italy - has carried this process ~~through~~ to its logical conclusion - complete political disfranchisement and economic outlawry. <sup>It has</sup> ~~They have~~ determined not to curb the Jew, <sup>Juda Verrecke!</sup> but to exterminate him, ~~either~~ through economic strangulation or exile. <sup>^</sup> In Hungary, an economic "numerus clausus" has been imposed upon the Jew. In Poland, sporadic restrictive measures have been enacted, and only the uncertain international status of Poland, hovering between the two worlds of the Axis and the so-called democratic front, has restrained the government from enacting a <sup>drastic</sup> ~~complete~~ code of ~~drastic~~ anti-Jewish legislation in order to force a majority of Polish Jewry to emigrate. In other countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the programs of politico-economic action against the Jew have varied according to the political orientation within each country and the international sphere of influence in which <sup>each</sup> ~~that~~ country moves.

Anti-semitism has become in our day a matter of political action not only for economic reasons - to appease the job-and-career hunger of the majority population, but also for diplomatic reasons - to realize certain imperial ambitions, and to extend political hegemony. The race theory served the Nazis well as a political weapon by ~~means of~~ which millions of people, Germans by race but not by nationality, were brought within the confines of the Third Reich. The seizure of Austria, Sudetenland, and Memel, was justified on the ground of the race affinity of their inhabitants with those of Germany. Race was exploited for political purposes. The same Nazis are exploiting

race prejudices and antagonisms to weaken the countries which lie athwart their course of empire, by fomenting discord among their inhabitants, thereby destroying their national unity and paralyzing their resistance to Nazi aggression. Anti-semitism today is the Reich's Fifth Column, - a cunning and effective weapon of imperial conquest and domination. This explains the amazing "missionary" character of Nazi anti-semitism and the sustained drive behind it.

Generally speaking, the trend toward political concentration which has characterized the post-war era, has affected the status of the Jew unfavorably. More and more of economic activities and areas of national life are coming under the partial or total control of government. Government will, in the last analysis, reflect the economic interest not of a racial or national minority group within the state, but of the majority group. Unless there are strong constitutional guarantees to protect the rights of such minorities, they are likely to be brushed aside. Unfortunately, constitutional guarantees do not hold out very long against sustained social pressure. The revolutionary impatience of the forces both of the Left and the Right with the slow process of the democratic procedure has undermined the moral authority of constitutional guarantees. In a dictatorship, the individual is stripped of all those rights which democracy declared to be his inalienable. The individual becomes subject to the will or whim of an autonomous political party ~~which is~~ in control of a rigidly coordinated state, and so do all minorities.

The Jew thrived best under a political system of constitutional guarantees and limited state power. This was the prevalent <sup>trend</sup> ~~in government~~ in the Western World from the time of the American Revolution to the World War. The Jew could claim his rights as an individual in a world which acknowledged that every individual, regardless of his race or class or creed, <sup>did</sup> possess definite rights which were his inalienable - rights which were not granted to him by the State, and which were therefore not revokable by it. With the spread <sup>in our day</sup> of the opposing doctrine of state absolutism ~~in our day~~, the position of the Jew, who is everywhere a member of a defenseless and exposed

minority, was bound to decline sharply. And it has so declined.

Such is the world crisis, and such has been its impact upon Jewish life.

Can the Jew survive this crisis?

If there is one thing which can be predicated with any degree of certainty about Jewish life, it is its complete unpredictability. Two eminent Jewish sociologists, representing sharply divergent points of view, one an assimilationist, the other a Zionist, were able, nevertheless, to agree upon one or two ~~things~~<sup>things</sup>. Dr. Maurice Fishberg in his study of "The Jew", wrote: "If, in addition, it is considered that history shows conclusively that as soon as the Jew is emancipated and given human rights, he always discards his separative practices and does his best to assimilate, and that reactions, such as were witnessed in Spain and in other countries during medieval ages, are at present unlikely, it is not difficult to foresee which tendency will prevail among the Jews in the near future." (p. 508)

Dr. Arthur Ruppin, writing in "The Jews of Today", declared: "It is unthinkable that either in Europe or America anti-Semitism could ever bring about legal disabilities for Jews. Any such legislation would be a direct break with the political tradition of the nineteenth century, and no State could well take such a step. We must also remember that all anti-Jewish laws are directed against the Jews as <sup>a</sup>religious community; anti-Semitism is not directed against the Jewish religion -- it is perfectly indifferent to it. It is hostile to the Jews as a race, and as promoters of certain kinds of industry and politics. Here legislation is powerless....

"In Europe and the United States it is easy to deal with negroes, Indians or Chinese -- any child can tell the difference between these races and whites. But special treatment for Jews founded on such a basis would present insurmountable difficulties in practice. Jews, as a race, are beyond the reach of legislation, and still less can they be assailed as followers of certain branches of trade, etc.,

since there is today no one such branch exclusively in Jewish hands." (p. 203)

Dr. Fishberg and Dr. Ruppin both assumed that the complete assimilation of the Jew was a foregone conclusion. One welcomed it; the other sought to forefend it by Zionism. Both men were persuaded, on the basis of their extensive studies and research, that reactions such as occurred in Spain were not likely to happen in the Western World, and that no modern State would or could pass discriminatory legislation against the Jew, based on race. But learning, logic, and statistics notwithstanding, the Nuremberg laws were enacted, in the year of grace 1935, in one of the most civilized countries of the world, and the reactions which took place in Spain in 1492, and the manifold tragedies of the Spanish expulsion, pale into insignificance along side of the horrible, stream-lined reaction in modern Germany, and the brutal expulsion of Jews from Germany <sup>now going on</sup> ~~in 1935~~. Here, in the twentieth century, one can ~~really~~ witness reaction, ~~and~~ cold pogroms, ~~and~~ terror and tragedy at full tide.

It is no reflection upon these scholars that they wrote as they did. They were influenced by the same optimism which characterized the entire thought-life of the Western World in the decades which preceded the World War - an optimism which nurtured itself upon the truly remarkable achievements in every field of human endeavor, <sup>upon</sup> scientific discoveries, the popularization of education, the extension of franchise, the improvement in the standard of living, and the <sup>increased</sup> ~~new~~ facilities for inter-communication <sup>among</sup> ~~between~~ men and nations. Few could look beyond the facade, or underneath the surface of things into the dark, bitter primordial waters below. Few could anticipate that great human documents, constitutions, charters of liberty, long cherished and sacrificially achieved, could shrivel up over night like some parched scroll, and few could foresee the sudden "twist" which a world war would give <sup>to</sup> both human destiny and to Jewish destiny.

Just as difficult as it is to predict how nations will act towards the Jew in the future, so ~~it~~ is difficult to predict how the Jew himself will act. There is history which we ourselves make, and there is history which others make for us.

Most of our political and economic history of the past twenty centuries, other hands fashioned for us. Most of our cultural and social history, we fashioned ourselves. The inner and outer forces playing upon Jewish life, however, have constantly interacted. What seems passive acceptance of influence and impact is not entirely so. Israel was never just *עם חסר תבונה* or just marionettes; and what appears to be original, volitional, and autochthonous, is also not always so. Furthermore, just as there never was a consistent and unvarying direction in the outer propulsive forces which played upon Jewish history, so there was never any consistence of action or reaction in our own inner world. It is unprofitable to over-simplify Jewish history. There are certain clichés about Jewish history which are universally accredited which, nevertheless, upon closer investigation, turn out to be grossly inaccurate. Thus, it is not true that persecution always helped Jewish communities to survive, and that prosperity always tended to disintegrate them. This is a form of easy-going determinism applied to Jewish history which is not borne out by the facts. Our history records many an important Jewish community which was destroyed by sharp and prolonged persecution - in Persia, Babylonia, Arabia, the Byzantine Empire, ~~Egypt~~ Northern Africa, Spain, Portugal, and elsewhere. Conversely, many a Jewish community survived and retained its identity through long periods of tranquillity and prosperity - in the great Diaspora of the era of the Second Temple, in Hellenistic Alexandria, in pre-Christian Rome, in the Babylonia of the early Talmudic era, in Western Europe before the

Crusades, in Eastern Europe before Christianity was firmly established, in Islamic Spain, in 17th century Holland, in 19th century America, and the British Empire. Our history also records a phenomenon of cycle; many wadis contain the beds of water courses altogether dry and desolate which, however, become torrential streams in the rainy season..... Close students have not failed to notice how often the cycle of recuperation is repeated in our history. The <sup>דור הזה</sup> whom the Psalmist characterized as a despised generation and as <sup>דור הזה</sup> is followed by a generation which conquered Canaan. The generation whom Jeremiah charged with apostasy <sup>דור הזה</sup> and with treason <sup>דור הזה</sup> is followed by the generation of Zerubbabel, which rebuilt Judea in loyalty, struggle and sacrifice. The age of the Hellenizers is followed by the age of the Maccabees. The Jews of Spain whom Rabbi Solomon <sup>Alami</sup> ~~Salvi~~ found so deserving of censure for their materialism, their pride and their corruption, are followed by descendants, many of whom were crowned with martyrdom for their faith, myriads who preferred exile to apostasy. The generation for whom Judah Leib Gordon sang, fearful lest he was the last of all the Hebrew bards and they the last to understand, is followed by one of the most remarkable periods of flowering <sup>in</sup> of Hebraic culture and by a generation of the Builders of Zion.

The confluence of many factors, outer and inner, personal and impersonal, some purely fortuitous, a matter of time and place, determine whether a given Jewish community

will survive a persecution or will succumb to the enticements of a welcoming alien civilization.

Only one fact can we postulate with confidence about the history of our people. As a people, we have survived! There may be a difference of opinion as to how ~~and~~ ~~or~~ why, but none as to the actual fact. We have survived - the one people that has come down intact from antiquity, that can trace an unbroken line of physical and spiritual continuity through thirty-five centuries, the one race that exemplifies in the modern world historical continuity and survival par excellence.

It should be borne in mind, too, that our survival transpired not in some secluded Shangri-La, ~~which was~~ sheltered from danger and attack by ramparts of impassable mountains. We did not vegetate in passivity in some quiet, sequestered land away from the world's stern stresses and struggles. We achieved our survival in the very midst of the world's mad and murderous arenas. We were invaded. We were attacked. We were exiled. We were driven over the face of the earth. We were scattered and broken, hounded and harrassed, through long and weary centuries. We clashed with great empires. We resisted mighty civilizations. We were surrounded by militant faiths which sought to absorb us or to destroy us. We are today again upon the wrack in the torture-chambers of the earth. Nevertheless, we survived! And, for our size, we are today the most alive and creative people in the world.

Some ~~will~~ call it a mere accident of history. But that is an evasion not an explanation. Such a strange accident can be accounted for only as the accidental result of ten thousand equally strange accidental survivals in our long history. Such an explanation must tax <sup>the</sup> incredulity even of the most ~~extremely~~ <sup>intensely</sup> <sup>resolutely</sup> incredulous person....

Some say that the Jew survived because of his religion. I have no quarrel with them; for there is much truth in what they say. But I would remind them that *it would be equally true to say that*

Haber

the Jewish religion survived because of the Jew. Had the Jews been made of weaker stuff, had they been incapable of <sup>converting</sup> ~~making~~ the vision of a few inspired seers <sup>into</sup> ~~the~~ life-motif of a whole people, had they not been endowed by nature with the peculiar genius to translate their faith into expressive and evolving laws and institutions, to keep it forever fresh and vigorous by pouring new concepts into old forms, and adapting it ever anew to profounder insights and higher intuitions, had they been unwilling or unable to suffer long for an ideal, and had they failed to match the heroic quality of their faith by a corresponding quality in their own nature, both they and their religion would have perished. It was Judah Ha Levi who declared

וְאִם לֹא הָיָה יִשְׂרָאֵל, "If there had been no Jews, there would have been no Torah".

It is of less moment now to determine who sustained whom, and how the intertwined strands of cause and effect <sup>may</sup> ~~can~~ be separated, than to grasp fully the amazing fact that a long, unbroken covenanted relationship did exist between the people of Israel and the faith of Israel, that Israel from of old, athirst for life and immortality, evolved a faith which exalted life and emancipated it, and that this faith, in turn, through the long centuries, nurtured the life of Israel and fed its powers of survival. In a word, it is important to understand the miracle of

יְהוּדָה אֶל יִשְׂרָאֵל.

But this is certain - we have survived! Not in protective isolation, not yet on a plane of primitive life or a low cultural <sup>level</sup> ~~niveau~~, where long and changeless survival is not uncommon, but in the very thick of life, near the nerve-centers of civilization, in all the fields of conflict, and, frequently persecuted and oppressed.

This fact of our history, we cannot write off as a mere accident. To us and to our ancestors, all history is revelation and testimony. We hold history in great reverence. We were the first people to write history, and to interpret it.

לְיִשְׂרָאֵל הָיָה עֲדָתָם לְיִשְׂרָאֵל. Our people were encouraged to rehearse and

to ~~contemplate~~ <sup>exhilarate</sup> upon the great moments of their national history: אלה הם רגעי ההיסטוריה הלאומית.

0216, 15, 1000; for in them is guidance and prophecy for the future.

||הוהוה הוהוה הוהוה הוהוה|| (H. R. M. 1973). Our spiritual guides grounded their faith in God, not in any cosmological proofs, but in history - in those significant events in their own and in the world's history and in those processes of the unfolding spiritual life of man which revealed the presence of God. History <sup>to them</sup> was evidence for faith for more valid than philosophical proofs!

The Jewish people today is therefore warranted in drawing deep <sup>draughts</sup> ~~drafts~~ of confidence from their past history. What we were able to do over and over again in the past, under all conceivable circumstances and in all parts of the world, we may yet do again and again in the future. Nothing has fundamentally changed for us, mania for neither the world's/persecution, nor our own unbroken will to live. Our forces are not less today, but more. Our powers of adaptability, which the strong in life-sense of our people developed, have not been dulled. We were able/the past to adapt ourselves to all forms of economic life and activity - the pastoral, agricultural, commercial and industrial, and to all forms of political systems and arrangements. We adjusted ourselves to conditions of utter rightlessness, to restricted rights, and to equality of rights. If in the future, Jews will be faced with the necessity of adjusting themselves to new economic and political arrangements, to new ~~conditions~~ forms of capitalism or socialism, or to new/conditions of restrictions and disabilities, or if they will be again confronted, as many of them already are, with the necessity and of emigrating to new countries/of establishing a new Diaspora, they will be able to make their adjustments in the same way as their people have done throughout the ages.

The annihilationist policy of the Nazis is not likely to become the norm which will fix the actual relationship between Jews and non-Jews in the days to come. Such policies never assume world-wide dimensions. The Jewish dispersion is too far-flung for one policy to embrace it all. Undoubtedly many a Jewish community

will receive hard hammering in the future. Many of them will be liquidated and their members scattered to the four winds. A new era of Jewish wandering and migration has already set in. Everywhere Jewish life will for a long time to come find itself under the discomfort of hostile propaganda and the threat of an overhanging menace. But unless the entire world plunges back into barbarism, and the pathological obsessions of the Teutonic dervishes seize hold of the whole of mankind - a condition conceivable but hardly probable<sup>2</sup> - the exterminationist policies of the Nazis are destined to be localized. Perhaps even in the Reich itself time will neutralize them. In other lands where governments are resolved to circumscribe the participation of Jews in the political, economic and cultural life of the nation, some legal "modus vivendi" will have to be evolved by those governments. Their legal status <sup>of the Jew</sup> will have to be defined. In such countries, the Jews will have to learn again how to live worthy and undefeated lives, even under the duress of formidable disabilities. They will have to seek refuge again, and they will find it, in their own culture and faith, in their own communal organizations, and in the pride of *אברהם אבינו* ; and they will wait and work for a better day.

Should the Fascist movement spend itself and should nations return to the primal sanities of civilized life, ~~then~~ constitutional guarantees for individuals and minorities will be re-established in the world, and anti-Semitism will cease to be a matter of political policy and program. The pressures upon the Jewish group will <sup>then</sup> be greatly relaxed.

A substantial section of Israel now lives under a Communist regime. Whether Jewish life can retain its identity under Communism and whether Judaism or, for that matter, any of the historic religions, can long survive under such a regime, remains to be seen. The Soviet Union has not only not been hostile to the perpetuation of race and nationality groups within its borders, but it has actually fostered their autonomy and self-determination. As an ethnic group, the Jews of the

Soviet Union have been given equal opportunities to develop their own soviets in localities where they are the majority of the populations, to build their own schools, and to employ their own language in judicial and administrative transactions. The Yiddish press and literature have been steadily expanding. "The departments of Jewish studies in the universities and academies of Moscow, Kiev, Minsk, Odessa, etc. have employed a larger personnel and offered greater facilities for Jewish research than perhaps all European and American universities combined." (Baron, "A Social and Religious History of the Jews" - Vol. 2, page 314).

"Whether the Jewish people of the Soviet Union will, in spite of these favorable opportunities for self-determination, choose the road of assimilation, only time can tell. Whether their Yiddish proletarian culture, which is denuded of all the religio-Hebraic elements of the classic Jewish culture will become so completely different as to set it off as a totally different culture, and whether the Jews of the Soviet Union will be able to re-establish vital bonds of spiritual and cultural unity with the rest of world Jewry, remains to be seen. Certainly there are at present no indications of any imminent dissolution of the Jewish group in Russia.

Russian communism has been anti-religious. Judaism, along with all other religions, has been severely repressed. But irreligion is not an essential of communism. Historically, it was the religious motif which nurtured, and religious bodies which fostered communism. Modern Socialism received its comprehensive and scientific exposition at the hands of Marx and his disciples at a time when materialistic determinism, now largely discredited, was the philosophic vogue. The theoreticians of the movement, in an effort to make their socialistic hypotheses "scientific" and up to date, drafted it upon those extreme materialistic hypotheses with which, of course, they have no essential connection. The fact that organized religion evinced little sympathy for the struggling masses was also a contributing factor to the anti-religious attitude of the founders of the modern Socialism. But it is becoming clear

to many that in turning anti-religious, Socialism has needlessly sacrificed a most powerful ally and has drawn to itself antagonisms which would otherwise not be <sup>directed</sup> ~~aimed~~ <sup>against</sup> its real purposes.

It is quite possible that in time the Soviet Union may come to modify its attitudes towards religion in the same way as it has already modified its attitude towards nationalism and patriotism and towards certain economic dogmas. In that case, Judaism in Russia, along with other historic religions, which a generation of repressions has not succeeded in stamping out, may yet enjoy a new lease on life. Certainly there is no warrant for assuming that all future experiments in collectivism and socialization in all other parts of the world will, of necessity, be anti-religious in character.

Surveying the world scene, one is accordingly led to the conclusion that while there are manifold threats today to Jewish security, to Jewish rights and to Jewish peace, there is no imminent threat to Jewish survival - at least none different from those which Jews were able to circumvent in the past.

The Jewish people will remain intact. In a sense the problem of Jewish survival, as I had occasion to indicate elsewhere, is much simpler in our day than at any time in the past. The doors of escape from Jewish destiny have been shut in many parts of the world. *1075 H* Jews must now remain and be counted as Jews. Unto the third and fourth generation an inescapable, even if unwelcome, racial identification is forced upon them. The modern anti-Semite does not want the Jew to assimilate, to inter-marry, to be converted, or to give up his distinctive way of life. On the contrary, he wants him to remain the Jew "integral", isolated, quarantined, exiled or annihilated, but always <sup>the</sup> a Jew.

What should, therefore, concern us today is not whether the Jewish people will survive, but how. Shall it be ~~a~~ greatly or meanly, affirmatively and challengingly, as in the great periods of our past, holding our banners high in a day of battle and storm; or negatively, creeping into the nooks and crannies of the earth, waiting for

the wrath to pass, ~~and~~ and grateful for the mere gift of existence and survival? We can do either. Apart from all else, apart from the mighty energies which the past has stored up in us, mere inertia and social lag can keep us going for an indefinite period. Many Jews, especially the more prosperous ones, out of fear and personal interest, are choosing the latter course. But the Jewish people, as a whole, I believe, will not, because it cannot, consent to such a role of passivity, abdication and escapism. There is too much leaven in its spirit, too powerful a dynamic in its faith and too much of the unquenchably prophetic in its traditions. When dangers threaten, when the enemy appears on the horizon, then the Ark of the Covenant begins to move - the Ark which "carries those who carry it" - the Ark which rests with the people, and marches with the people - and the cry then goes up: "Arise, O Lord, and let Thine enemies be scattered!" and a militancy, a bitter stubbornness, a sharp defiance comes into the hearts of our people, and they are ready for battle....

The Jewish people, through its thoughtful guides and leaders, has been quick to appraise the issues which are involved in the present day world crisis and to grasp the true significance of the murderous attack which is being made upon it. It has come to understand that the present conflict which is tearing the world apart is but another phase of the eternal conflict between the *עַם הָאֱלֹהִים* and the *עַם הָבֶשֶׁת*, between Jacob and Esau, Israel and Edom, Rome and Jerusalem, Judaism and Paganism. The Neo-pagans of the 20th century want to destroy the Jew because they hate and fear the spirit of the Jew, which has been the implacable and indefeasible foe of paganism throughout the ages and which will not rest until it has destroyed the new paganism too. They are not afraid of the Jews' physical power. <sup>The Jews</sup> ~~They~~ were never numbered among the conquering <sup>peoples</sup> ~~nations~~ of the earth. They never built empires. Their legions never swept over continents with fire and sword. No Cyrus sprang from their loins, no Alexander, no Hannibal, <sup>no</sup> ~~no~~ Ghengis Khan and no

Napoleon to shake the world. Against such conquerors one can ~~do oneself~~ <sup>protect oneself</sup>; one can build Siegfried lines of defense and fashion weapons in Krupp and Skoda works. But the Jews are foes of another stamp, and the fear which they inspire is a greater fear, and at bottom a justifiable fear. They sense a real menace, a threat to them and to their world.

John MacMurray writing in his book, "The Clue to History", sums it up admirably: "It (Fascism) discovers that the source of all this pressure towards progress, equality, freedom and common humanity is - the Jew. The persecution of the Jews in Germany has, of course, the same source as their persecution throughout the history of Christian Europe; but it has a significant difference. It is secular, political, conscious and organized in a way that it has never been, and it is felt to be the central problem of society in which all other problems have their roots.... This new anti-Semitism of Germany looks completely irrational to us. From a purely intellectual point of view the problem seems, to say the least of it, absurdly exaggerated, and the practical reasons advanced to prove that the Jews are a real menace to Germany, the source of all her misfortunes and defeats, and the organizers and creators of all internationalism, and of Bolshevism in particular, are clearly nothing but "rationalizations" of an emotional impulse. Yet we have to face the fact that the Leader of the German people has no doubt in his own mind that the Jewish problem is the centre of all problems, not merely in Germany, but in the world. It is useless to dismiss this as an illusion, because if it is, it demands explanation.

"But it is no illusion. It is the truth. Hitler's declaration that the Jewish consciousness is poison to the Aryan races is the deepest insight that the Western World has yet achieved into its own nature; and his capacity to realize this is the proof of his genius as well as the secret of his power and of the curious fascination

which his personality exerts. One has only to attend to the form of the statement to see that it is not the practical power or wealth of the Jews that he fears, but the character of the Jewish mind. It is the Jewish consciousness which is the enemy, not an organized Jewish army, not even an insurrection of the Jews in Germany. It is the hidden penetration of the Jewish spirit into the Gentile mind that is the danger; and it is a danger because the "Aryan" mind cannot resist it, but must succumb. The task is to extirpate the influence of the Jewish consciousness upon the world. At all costs the leaven must be got out of the lump, or very soon the whole will be leavened, and the result will be the final end of the "Aryan" (sc. pagan) tradition. Europe will be so false to itself that it will create a universal communism,

[Note: Communism, *(1713 1/2)* which will destroy blood and race as the basis of civilization, destroy the beauties and the heroisms of the struggle for power, deny the natural superiority of the white races, and of Germans in particular, and produce universal equality and brotherhood. The Jewish spirit is not merely under the illusion of these ideas; it is the force, in the world, which creates them in ideas and compels the rest of humanity to achieve them in practice. I need ask for no greater testimony to the truth of the whole thesis of this book than Hitler's. His inspiration corroborates my own pedestrian reflection. The only difference between us that his will and mind respond to the truth in different ways. The thought of the triumph of the Jewish consciousness fills me with joyous exhilaration, while it casts Hitler into the depths of despair. For Hitler the Jewish consciousness is a poison. I have learned from the greatest genius of the Jewish race to recognize it as the Water of Life." (pp. 225-227)]

The Jewish problem is thus the world problem epitomized. The present world conflict again finds the Jew the symbol, and his traditions the battle-ground of contending armies of mankind. The Rabbis of old apprehended this recurrent role which Israel plays in the drama of civilization and they welcomed it. २७१

le which Israel plays in the drama of civilization and they welcomed it.

אשר הוא זכר אבותיהם ואלה שבהם מתקדשין ואנשי חסידות  
במלכות מלכות אלהים ומלכות אלהים ומלכות אלהים

. 7 (Tama de' Elyah, Chap. 5)



themselves resolutely into the fight with Amalek and unless the hands of their leaders remain firm and uplifted all through the long day of battle until the sun sets upon their victory.

In a sense the present state of spiritual conflict and struggle in the world is a more normal and congenial one for the spirit of our people. The life of our spirit was always a life of swords. Judaism was fused in struggle from Canaanitish days onward. Prophecy was born in protest and militancy. The prophet was a man of strife and contention to all the earth. The spirit of the Jew was never relaxed, even in Palestine. It was always braced against alien influences and ~~the~~ *ה' אלהינו*. Our position as a people was always "abnormal", even in the ancient world. For the ancient world was all idolatrous and Israel was not. Our position was "abnormal" in the medieval world. It is "abnormal" in the modern world. It is meant to be. Judaism always conceived of life as progress and progress as the struggle of the spirit, to wrestle with gods and men and <sup>t</sup>prevail. Even in the world to come, Judaism allowed no repose to the righteous:

*וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁמַח בְּיְהוָה וְיִשְׁמַח יְהוָה בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁמַח בְּיְהוָה וְיִשְׁמַח יְהוָה בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל* (M.K. 29a)

So that our people are not likely to be shaken spiritually by the tensions and stresses under which they are living and will continue to live. Rather are they likely to be healed and made whole by becoming more truly and more intimately themselves and more at home with their own racial genius.

Otherwise, no new technique for Jewish survival is necessary. Adequate communal organization, the proper education of our youth in the religion, ~~the~~ language, history and literature of our people, the encouragement of Jewish scholarship and the devotion to and active participation in the upbuilding of the Jewish homeland in Palestine - these are the ways which have proved adequate in the past and which are likely to prove adequate in the future also.

To the everlasting credit of this sorely-tried generation of Jews be it said, that in spite of the tragedies which were piled up upon ~~them~~<sup>it</sup>, Ossa on Pelion, in spite of the frightful disruption of numerous old centers of Jewish life, in spite of the impoverishment, exhaustion and persecutions which made of the whole Household of Israel one vast hostelry of pain, ~~they~~<sup>it</sup> nevertheless ~~were~~<sup>was</sup> able to find within ~~themselves~~<sup>itself</sup> the energy, the courage and the resources to build in Palestine, in twenty short years, a new and resplendent center of Jewish life, already the fifth largest Jewish center in the world, and first and foremost in the richness and vitality of its intrinsic Jewish spirit and culture. Here in Palestine a new and powerful bulwark for the survival of the Jew and of Judaism has been established, as great and as rich in promise, and, to be sure, under as great difficulties, as in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah. Regardless of any future developments, something great and heartening and re-assuring has already been achieved ~~there~~.

And so the Jewish people faces the critical days ahead not without fears and misgivings, not without dark moments of agony and despair - for great is the wrath and terror and the menace - but fundamentally unshaken. Jews are carrying on, many of them magnificently. Witness the remarkable outpouring of loyalty, compassion and help on the part of Jews throughout the world for those of their fellow-Jews who find themselves in the <sup>iron</sup> crucible of affliction. All this is evidence of an inner soundness, of an unbroken solidarity. Thoughtful Jews know their history. They know their resources. They have taken the measure of their enemies. They understand the world significance of their great tribulation. In all this there is balm and healing. They know too that hope is a cardinal dogma of their ancient faith which they must not abandon. The first question which a man is asked on Judgment Day is: <sup>וְהָיָה לְךָ לְאִשָּׁה</sup> "Did you hope for salvation?"

Hope and Will!

Solomon ibn Verga tells this story in his *She'at Sichel*. A ship-load of Jewish refugees from Spain was swept by the plague, and the captain of the ship cast them all ashore upon a barren and uninhabited coast. Most of the unfortunate refugees perished from hunger. Some of them pressed on desperately to find some human habitation. Among them was a man, his wife and his two children. They struggled on through the barren waste, until the wife fainted and died. The man then carried his children in his arms and upon his shoulders until he, too, fell down and fainted from hunger and exhaustion. When he came to, he discovered that his two children had died. He then arose and said:

הָאֵל הָאֱלֹהִים: כִּי רַב וְאֵדָה וְיִשְׂרָאֵל  
לְהַשְׁמִיט בְּיָדֶיךָ. אֲנִי וְאִשְׁתִּי וְשְׁנֵי בָנָי  
אֵל הָאֱלֹהִים, וְאֵל הָאֱלֹהִים לֹא אֶהְיֶה לְבַכָּא (אֲנִי וְאִשְׁתִּי).

"Master of the Universe, Thou art doing much to force me to forsake my faith.

Know, for sure, that in spite of Thee, I am a Jew and I shall remain a Jew, and that nothing that Thou hast brought upon me or art likely to bring upon me will make any difference." He then covered the bodies of his dead children with earth and ~~scab~~ and walked on into the wilderness to find a human abode. <sup>Here</sup> is spiritual resoluteness which matches divine omnipotence! Here is will-power which says to the mountains: Be ye removed! Here, in the bitter cry <sup>of challenge</sup> ~~wrong~~ from the heart of ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> tortured Spanish refugee, is another key to the mystery of Jewish survival....

ABSTRACT OF ADDRESS DELIVERED BY DR. ABBA HILLEL SILVER OF CLEVELAND, OHIO  
AT THE CONVENTION OF THE CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS IN WASHINGTON, D.C.  
ON WEDNESDAY, JUNE 14, 1939.

### THE WORLD CRISIS AND JEWISH SURVIVAL

Only one fact can we postulate with confidence about the history of our people. As a people, we have survived! There may be a difference of opinion as to how and why, but none as to the actual fact. We have survived -- the one people that has come down intact from antiquity, that can trace an unbroken line of physical and spiritual continuity through thirty-five centuries, the one race that exemplifies in the modern world ~~the~~ historical continuity and survival par excellence.

It should be borne in mind, too, that our survival transpired not in some secluded Shangri-La which was sheltered from danger and attack by ramparts of impassable mountains. We did not vegetate in passivity in some quiet, sequestered land away from the world's stern stresses and struggles. We achieved our survival in the very midst of the world's mad and murderous arenas. We were invaded. We were attacked. We were exiled. We were driven over the face of the earth. We were scattered and broken, hounded and harrassed, through long and weary centuries. We clashed with great empires. We resisted mighty civilizations. We were surrounded by militant faiths which sought to absorb us or to destroy us. We are today again upon the wrack in the torture-chambers of the earth. Nevertheless, we survived! And, for our size, we are today the most alive and creative people in the world.

The Jewish people today is therefore warranted in drawing deep draughts of confidence from their past history. What we were able to do over and over again in the past, under all conceivable circumstances and in all parts of the world, we may yet do again and again in the future. Nothing has fundamentally changed for us, neither the world's mania for persecution, nor our own unbroken will to live. Our forces are not less today, but more. Our powers of adaptability, which the strong life-sense of our people developed, have not been dulled. We were able in the past to adapt ourselves to all forms of economic life and activity -- the pastoral, agricultural, commercial and industrial, and to all forms of political systems and arrangements.

We adjusted ourselves to conditions of utter rightlessness, to restricted rights, and to equality of rights. If in the future Jews will be faced with the necessity of adjusting themselves to new economic and political arrangements, to new forms of capitalism or socialism, or to new political conditions of restrictions and disabilities, or if they will be again confronted, as many of them already are, with the necessity of emigrating to new countries and of establishing a new Diaspora, they will be able to make their adjustments in the same way as their people have done throughout the ages.

The annihilationist policy of the Nazis is not likely to become the norm which will fix the actual relationship between Jews and non-Jews in the days to come. Such policies never assume world-wide dimensions. The Jewish dispersion is too far-flung for ~~one~~ *one* policy to embrace it all. Undoubtedly many a Jewish community will receive hard hammering in the future. Many of them will be liquidated and their members scattered to the four winds. A new era of Jewish wandering and migration has already set in. Everywhere Jewish life will for a long time to come find itself under the discomfort of hostile propaganda and the threat of an over-hanging menace. But unless the entire world plunges back into barbarism, and the pathological obsessions of the Teutonic dervishes seize hold of the whole of mankind - a condition conceivable but hardly probable - the exterminationist policies of the Nazis are destined to be localized. Perhaps even in the Reich itself time will neutralize them. In other lands where governments are resolved to circumscribe the participations of Jews in the political, economic and cultural life of the nation, some legal "modus vivendi" will have to be evolved by those governments. Their legal status will have to be defined. In such countries, the Jews will have to learn again how to live worthy and undefeated lives, even under the duress of formidable disabilities. They will have to seek refuge again, and they will find it, in their own culture and faith, in their own communal organizations, and they will wait and work for a better day.

Should the Fascist movement spend itself and should nations return to the primal sanities of civilized life, then constitutional guarantees for individuals and minorities will be re-established in the world and anti-Semitism will cease to be a matter of political policy and program. The pressures upon the Jewish group will <sup>then</sup> be greatly relaxed.

Surveying the world scene, one is accordingly led to the conclusion that while there are manifold threats today to Jewish security, to Jewish rights and to Jewish peace, there is no imminent threat to Jewish survival - at least none different from those which Jews were able to circumvent in the past. The Jewish people will remain intact.

What should, therefore, concern us today is not whether the Jewish people will survive, but how? Shall it be greatly or meanly, affirmatively and challengingly, as in great periods of our past, holding our banners high in a day of battle and storm; or negatively, creeping into the nooks and crannies of the earth, waiting for the wrath to pass over and grateful for the sheer gift of existence and survival. We can do either. Apart from all else, apart from the mighty energies which ~~in~~ the past has stored up in us, mere inertia and social lag can keep us going for an indefinite period. Many Jews, especially the more prosperous ones, out of fear and personal interest, are choosing the latter course. But the Jewish people, as a whole, I believe, will not, because it cannot, consent to such a role of passivity, abdication and escapism. There is too much leaven in its spirit, too powerful a dynamic in its faith and too much of the unquenchably prophetic in its traditions.

The Jewish people, through its thoughtful guides and leaders, has been quick to appraise the issues which are involved in the present day world crisis and to grasp the true significance of the murderous attack which is being made upon it.

The Jewish problem is the world problem epitomized. The present world conflict again finds the Jew the symbol, and his traditions the battle-ground of contending armies of mankind. The Rabbis of old apprehended this recurrent role which Israel plays in the drama of civilization, and they welcomed it.

The Jews of this generation should welcome that role, hard though it be, even as their fathers before them. God has again sent us a great, testing hour. We must again find the strength not only for survival, but for a stiff-necked resistance to the Hairy Man who is again trampling under foot all that is noble and kindly and decent in life. We must arouse and join forces with all men of all faiths and of all races who have still remained faithful to the spiritual vision of life for a major offensive. It is not enough to defend the status quo against reaction. Reaction must be defeated by destroying those evils in our present system which made it possible. A courageous attack all along the line, summoning all our courage and employing all of our resources, upon poverty, upon ~~the~~ the economic insecurity of the masses, upon corruption and special privilege, upon the excessive concentration of wealth in the hands of a few, upon monopoly and exploitation, upon the war machine and the merchants of death, upon chauvinism, national exhibitionism and patrioteering, upon race arrogance and race domination - in a word, upon all that our religion and all the great religions of mankind have branded and defend outlawed. Reaction is attacking the Jew today. Let the Jew, himself, by an audacious counter-attack. Let the Ark of the Covenant begin to move again! There are no weapons which reaction can forge strong enough to destroy us. And there are no fortresses strong enough to protect reaction against the mighty thunderbolts of the free human spirit once they are unleashed. The Jews have been singled out for destruction. This is their holy and destined hour when "the exaltations of God should be in their throats and double-edged swords in their hands."....

Just as democracy and liberalism will perish unless they resume their offensive, so the Jewish people will be defeated and beaten into servitude unless they fling themselves resolutely into the fight with Amalek, and unless the hands of their leaders remain firm and uplifted all through the long day of battle until the sun sets upon their victory.

The Jewish people faces the critical days ahead not without fears and misgivings, not without dark moments of agony and despair - for great is the wrath and the terror

and the menace - but fundamentally unshaken. Jews are carrying on, many of them magnificently. Witness the remarkable out-pouring of loyalty, compassion and help on the part of Jews throughout the world for those of their fellow-Jews who find themselves in the crucible of affliction. All this is evidence of an inner soundness, of an unbroken solidarity. Thoughtful Jews know their history. They know their resources. They have taken the measure of their enemies. They understand the world significance of their great tribulation. They know, too, that hope is a cardinal dogma of their ancient faith which they must not abandon.



1) <sup>War</sup> World Crisis - Localized - Jews alone - Crusades  
Agony of an epoch - 30 years War - Napole - Civil War  
not limited to one dept - Prolonged Cr. - Soc. Econ. Data  
"Whole Head is aching - whole heart sick"

Capitalism is breaking up - like feudalism - transition  
even more violent

Dem + Liber. - inadequate to meet little class struggle  
rationalized - immoral ideologies

Nationalism - troubled - should have led - later  
isolationism - certainly + New - denial

Collective Security + Law - gone - new Empire  
War again - cities - wealth - lower standards

"Gangsterism" - stomach disorders - Rape  
/ little countries - latest Greece  
Lost Atlantic

Force - Blood - Volkstum - Conduct - honor

Such is world - crisis - bound to affect

2) Any radical unsettling - War - defeat -  
Crusades - 1348-1648 - Last War

① Scape-goat - 1st defeated lands  
Militarists - Stab in Back - "Vichy"  
Capitalists - deflect - "Schaffenberg"

Class struggle: ① Jews are capitalists  
② Jews are radicals - "incoherent"  
Bismarck - "Jew Deal"

(2) How to get rid of Jews? <sup>Do</sup> Not as Rebels as Rebels (E)

Race - Culture - "integral" nationalities

Roe - basin Pol arter - Quarta etc

3). Antos. as Imperial Weapons - descript  
Fifth Column - Amazing M. S. drawing

F. Vth Cohen - Amazon M. S. S.

4) Trend towards Total. unfavorably affected

19C - Constructed Guarantees - Rights

Man, Li, Fed State Paper -

Competition depends - One depart  
other and the - No consumer to the

after and the - No Comm. by left  
Jew Smevor?

5/ Can I see Smevort? unpredictable - No Commun. b/c left  
basic (Rage laws) pers. n Persp

un pied de chat - Caulis { Rage lous  
Pers. n. Persan

① Marvellous Recreation power  
22nd 17 - Jarvis - Hillman  
Spain - Gordon

221717 - Jeremiah - Hildner

Spencer - Goodman

(2) We have reviewed! Diff. of previous  
intro - 350 - 'Survival' par Exalt

intro - 350 - 'Survival' par exemple

→ Shangri-la - unbroken areas  
closed-reserve - for an age

Closed - resister - for our right

(3) Weak Initial p150

④ Why - Religion - Jew?

④ Why - Religion - Jew?

④ Why - Religion - Jew?

6) From our past, draw confidence for future  
what we were able - nothing has changed  
Our forces - power of adaptability

In the past - we were able to fight all forms  
of econ. & pol. life - Pastoral, Agrarian  
Communist - industrial

To conditions, other requirements - restored  
equality of rights - for future -

Am. in international policy - world-wide discussion  
dispersion to - for peace

Should (Nazis win) - ~~no~~ 1938  
and where liberated - ~~no~~ 1945

Should they lose -

→ Soviet - retain its identity? May  
in course, how alternate to author.  
Socialism  
No present indication of imminent dissolution

7) U.S. center - great - ~~8) Palestine =~~

8) No escapism - (1) to 1942 - Assured

9) What should concern us - not whether  
but How?

10) Take up challenge - Jew as symbol (4)

Homophobia - men -

police - per L.H.

33-116 - 11/13-118

Rome - Jerusalem

Our Trade as again both present &  
world-cultures participants

11) Let Jew defend - Ambitious counter-  
attack

Tom Jones -

11/13, 11/14, 11/15, 11/16

12) Hope 11/16/11/18

13) kill - 11/16/11/18 -

11/16/11/18 - 11/16/11/18 - 11/16/11/18  
11/16/11/18 - 11/16/11/18 - 11/16/11/18  
11/16/11/18 - 11/16/11/18 - 11/16/11/18

- 1) World Crisis grave - localized - Jews alone involved - Were they - 1935  
 It is only those crises - Crusades - Agony of an Epals - 30 years war -  
Napol. Wars - preceding Civil War - (I was on Campus - )  
Not limited to one deft - Seven, prolonged in econ. etc. - Abroad - a sls  
+ moral crisis of frightful dimensions - Blitz B - airing - nick
- 2) Cap. is breaking up - like feudal at close of Middle Age - transition  
Dem. which flourished - congenial climate - Barley - farm econ. - confidence  
independent awareness / little class struggle - Abolition  
The throw-back to anti-dem. - rationalized - autogeny in world  
Nationalism - which triumphed - contracted - pol. isolation - econ.  
autarky - now into distortion & destruct - New Order -  
Minorities - shamefully used -  
Racism - rampanant  
Brawn experiment - atrocities - org. war - in place -  
Vision of world united & made secure in law vanished -  
~~A new Peace Balance~~  
Old feral rule of conquest & invasion - War has  
engulfed our earth -  
Inter. morality - non-existent - brutal - pol. operations -  
contumaciously violates right - sanctions / truths  
explores all forms / intensity / depth / terror  
Japan - Russia - Nazis -  
a form of gangsterism  
Fort Atank - unimaginable right  
Such a World Crisis - bound

3/ Wide-spread suffering - make-goat - "Personal" agent -

No readers - defenders minority

Benefit of old system - revol. resentment - deflect  
channel it to a disfavored group.

Jury - rights, corporat. free - misused an otherwise  
beneficial Cap. - Shaffers - Raffers -  
Good Christian bankers -

→ Discredit every progressive movement - junk -  
in advice - An existing prejudice capitalized - to

→ J. Pump made an object / Fear & surprise  
a sinister aura.

→ Contracting economy - not enough jobs - work and -  
careers. hungry men - murderous competitions.

exploit every advantage - belonging to a dominant group  
- Social prejudices - machinery of govt - rationalization  
used - Race - Integral Nationalism - Whitewash


4/ Imperial weapon - weaken - Amazing "Missionary" character

5/ Gen. speaking - Trend towards Pol. Concentration. State Control  
Govt will reflect econ. interest & way. Ampl. -

Values of  
Survived under system, Govt. parameters -  
Rights, Univ. declined )

6) Can Jew Survive? Unpredictable - Race laws -  
How Jew, himself - Persecution - Prosperity - Facile  
- Easy-going determination - Judge from Frank  
Our history records - sharp-prolonged persecution  
Persecution, Babel - Arabia, Byzantium, No. Africa, Spain  
Portugal -

Conversely - long periods of tranquillity & prosperity -  
Diastasis of 2<sup>nd</sup> Temple - Hell. Egypt, Babyl & Talmud  
era - Islamic Spain - pre-Crusade W. Europe - Italian  
England - North Europe - U.S.

9 classes ① 22315 VERLIS  221 165 108 -  
- converted Canadian

- ② Jews - apostasy - treason - Zionist
- ③ Hellenism - Macabees
- ④ Spain - Sef. Alami - converts - convert  
with workshops
- ⑤ Jewish Sub. Modern - perfect

Confluence of many factors - outer, inner, personal, cultural  
some purely fortuitous - determines - survival

7/ Only one fact - portentous. We have survived!

Diff? gum - on flow? - how old just  
the on light - in fact from light?

- Trace - in water - 35 cent  
- the on face example - hint. Con - the Order

8) Shanty - to! Wunder over

Not Rel nausea 7 water into.

Vegetal in water from with after flow

We was involved - at the - light - down

Scattered, order, hundred - very many order

We described - described very care -

Summarized by constant fact -

We are to-day again - fact change, think

Never then - repeated! - last other creation

No repeated

9) Watch? in fact is! - They have as!

10) Summarized line 5 line history? in general

Expected then to say of us received line from

that year - water stuff - adoption - object - unusually

to water (your heart) - but the change of line

period.

→ 1/10 2/10 3/10 4/10 5/10 6/10 7/10 8/10 9/10 10/10

11) "The Ark carrying those who carry it"

12) ∴ unwanted - deep draught -  
what we were able - Nothing has changed  
In the past able to fit in - all power & pol. Econ. of  
pastoral - agri - commerce - industrial

Under negotiations - reworked negot - agreements  
If in future - new form of Cap. & Socialism  
new cond. of disabilities + restoration -  
Emigration (new lands + new Deasfina)  
If Nazis are defeated - If not Hampering ambitions.  
policy - world-wide dimensions -

How to live worthy & unexploited lives even under  
1948 1949 1950 1951 - want for better day  
walk again with unchained feet the free highways  
of the world -

13) Survival will remain - wonderful threats to our  
peace, security, and - survival!

No escape - no issues - Assimilation biggest taboo  
The Gentile - would the Jews integral - isolated

There was always an in and out - propaganda any out -  
Haber: "For, whoever wishes to do so can become the  
found & equal of his opponent by attacking an word"  
No Buyer!

- 4/ What should concern us - appeal challenge  
great periods - barriers high - negativity  
Could do either - J people will not accept role  
passivity - abstention - defeat  
Too much harm! - too powerful a dynamic - too  
much the unusually propaganda in an tradition  
We know why we are being attacked Symbol  
2310.1000 - 2310.1000  
2310.1000 - 2310.1000  
- Welfare this role  
- Salvation in counter-attack -  
- God has sent us again a test test him  
- Fight - with all free peoples - are unusual  
- Fight not only for with and -  
poverty - econ. very poverty - corruption  
manipulation - inflation - are organised resist  
- For all that Jordan  
- Let A UK & Gov - begin to work again  
- Other university town - Sydney - School - Scholarship  
15/ Other university town - Palatium - Research - War -

15/ And so we pre-critical days ahead - not without 2  
fears transgressions - fundamentally unstable

① We know our history - our resources  
We understand regime - as great fulfillation

② We are carry us - Writers - inner  
soundness - unbroken solidarity -

③ 21 Mar 1983

④ Salomon ibn Vega → 21.01.82 -

Here is Sp. resolution which matters divine  
unbroken - in the future -

Here - better city - writing - is Key to the  
way in J. Samuel

**TENTATIVE  
PROGRAM  
FIFTIETH  
ANNUAL CONVENTION  
*OF THE*  
CENTRAL CONFERENCE  
*OF*  
AMERICAN RABBIS**



**WASHINGTON, D. C.**

**TUESDAY, JUNE THIRTEENTH**

**SUNDAY, JUNE EIGHTEENTH**

**NINETEEN HUNDRED AND THIRTY-NINE**

# PROGRAM

Tuesday, June 13th, 9:30 A. M.

## MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Tuesday Evening, 8:00 o'clock

Opening Prayer

Address of Welcome ..... Colonel Julius I. Peyser

Reply to Greetings ..... Emil W. Leipziger

President's Message ..... Max C. Curriek

Memorial Resolutions:

MOSES BUTTENWIESER ..... Louis L. Mann

MILTON ELLIS ..... Frederick I. Rypns

ABRAHAM ZEVI IDELSOHN ..... Samuel S. Cohen

CHARLES S. LEVI ..... Joshua L. Liebman

GERSON B. LEVI ..... Charles E. Shulman

MORRIS LICHTENSTEIN ..... Abraham Holtzberg

ABRAM SIMON ..... William Roseman

Kaddish and Closing Prayer

Wednesday Morning, June 14th, 9:30 A. M.

Opening Prayer

Roll Call

REPORTS:

President ..... Max C. Curriek

Recording Secretary ..... Isaac E. Marcuson

Corresponding Secretary ..... Samuel M. Gup

Treasurer ..... Harry S. Margolis

Finance ..... Samuel M. Gup

Investments ..... Harry S. Margolis

Publications ..... Isaac E. Marcuson

Solicitations ..... Charles E. Shulman

Tracts ..... Leo M. Franklin

Cooperation with International and  
National Organizations ..... Max C. Curriek

Synagog Council

Contemporaneous History and Literature ..... Jacob R. Marcus

Religious Education ..... Samuel M. Blumenfeld

Religious Work in Universities ..... Bernard Heller

Liturgical Committee ..... Solomon B. Freshhof

## Wednesday Afternoon

### REPORTS:

Commission on Synagog Activities

Arbitration ..... Samuel E. Goldenson

Marriage, Family and the Home ..... Sidney E. Goldstein

3:30 P. M.

### PAPER:

The World Crisis and Jewish Survival ..... Abba Hillel Silver

## Wednesday Evening, 8:00 o'clock

### PAPER:

The Jew, Champion of the Ideals of Democracy—

A Survey and Program ..... Samuel E. Goldenson

Discussion of both papers.

## Thursday Morning, June 15th, 9:30 A. M.

Opening Prayer

### REPORTS:

Responsa ..... Jacob Mann

Curator of Archives ..... Henry Englander

Synagog and Community ..... Samuel Wohl

## Thursday Afternoon

ROUND TABLE: Ways of Fortifying Religious Life—

1. Through Adult Education ..... William J. Schwartz

2. Through Synagog Affiliation and  
Attendance ..... Jacob K. Shankman

3. Through Ceremonial Practices ..... Maurice Goldblatt

4. Through Youth Activities ..... Walter G. Peiser

5. Through the Religious School ..... Melbourne Harris

6. Through Congregational Groups ..... Jacob J. Ogle

7. Through Communal Work (Jewish and  
Non-Jewish) ..... J. Marshall Taxay

## Thursday Evening, 8:00 o'clock

### GOLDEN JUBILEE BANQUET

## Friday Morning, June 16th, 9:30 A. M.

Opening Prayer

### REPORTS:

Social Justice ..... Barnett R. Brickner

International Peace ..... Nathan Stern

## Friday Afternoon

### REPORTS:

Church and State ..... Joseph L. Fink  
Resolutions .....  
Ceremonies ..... James G. Heller

## Friday Evening, 8:00 o'clock

Opening Prayer

Evening Service from the Union Prayerbook

Conference Lecture—The Jew, the Perpetual Sacrifice  
on the Altar of Freedom ..... Wm. H. Finckshaber

Adoration and Kaddish

Benediction

## Saturday Morning, June 17th, 10:00 A. M.

Opening Prayer

Morning Service from the Union Prayerbook

Reading from the Torah

Conference Sermon ..... Julius Mark

Adoration and Kaddish

Benediction

## Saturday Afternoon

FREE

## Saturday Evening, 8:00 o'clock

Meeting of Alumni Associations

## Sunday Morning, June 18th, 9:30 A. M.

Opening Prayer

### REPORTS:

Synagog Music ..... James G. Heller  
Relief ..... Morris Newfield  
Pensions .....  
President's Message .....  
Nominations .....  
Thanks .....

Benediction ..... Julian Morgenstern

Adjournment

## Sunday Afternoon

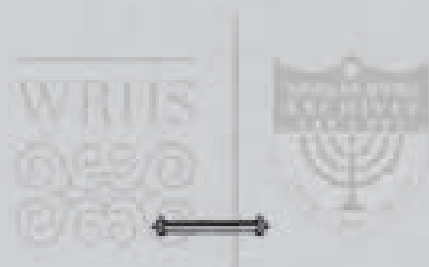
Meeting of the Executive Board

# THE WORLD CRISIS AND JEWISH SURVIVAL

BY

DR. ABBA HILLEL SILVER

THE TEMPLE,  
CLEVELAND, OHIO



REPRINTED FROM  
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1939

## THE WORLD CRISIS AND JEWISH SURVIVAL

ABBA HILLEL SILVER

What makes the present crisis so grave for the Jewish people is the fact that it is a *world* crisis, not a localized disturbance and one in which the Jew alone is involved. Were the disasters of our day limited to the Jewish people, we Jews could face them with much less apprehension. כל צרה שישראל ואומות העולם שותפין בה—צרה; (M. R. Deut. II, 14). It is only those crises in human history which shake all things to their very foundations — the Crusades, for example, or the Black Death, or the World War — which also profoundly and disastrously affect Jewish life.

The world crisis is neither localized nor of short duration. It is the agony of a whole epoch, like the Thirty Years War, the Napoleonic Wars, or the era which preceded the American Civil War. The present crisis did not begin with Hitler, or Mussolini, or Lenin. It is not the result of the Great War. The Great War was a phase of it, just as have been all the wars and revolutions and depressions which have followed it.

Nor is the crisis limited to one department of social life. It penetrates all. It is a severe and prolonged crisis in the economic, political and international life of the world. Above all, it is a spiritual and moral crisis of frightful dimensions. "The whole head is ailing, and the whole heart is sick."

Capitalism is breaking up into new forms, like feudalism at the close of the Middle Ages, and the transition is proving even more violent. Democracy which flourished for more than a century in the congenial climate of *laissez-faire* economics and the confidence of a triumphant middle class is proving inadequate to the emergencies of a relentless class struggle which industrial and financial capitalism have brought about. Democracy and liberalism are abdicating in many parts of the world in favor of dictatorship and

regimentation. This throw-back to anti-democratic forms of government which seems to be inevitable when economic classes are determined to fight it out, is being rationalized into ideologies, some of them outrageously immoral and vicious. Censorship to throttle opposing opinions and propaganda to persuade and confound men into ready acquiescence are destroying both the processes and objectives of humanistic education. Nationalism, as the principle of self-determination, which triumphed in the Allied victory in the Great War, and which logically should have led to eager international cooperation, to an effective League of Nations and to the protection of minorities has contracted into political isolationism and economic autarchy. The Western World has never been as fragmentized and disintegrated as it is today. Minorities are again being exploited and shamefully used as pawns in a game of power politics. Racism is ravaging our world. The idea of race which, except as it is used ideally to arouse men to nobler ways of life and service by an appeal to a noble ancestral past, has always been the warrant or occasion for hatred, exploitation and war among men, has turned into something fraudulent and shamelessly immoral. In its name governments have disfranchised blocs of their own citizens, degraded, despoiled, tortured and exiled them.

The brave experiment which was made at the end of the World War, and which was to be mankind's atonement for the war, to organize the nations of the earth for peace, has been wrecked and defiled. The vision of a world united and made secure in law, in which the weak as well as the strong nations would be free to live their independent and unmolested lives, has vanished. In place of collective security and international cooperation, one hears again the old feral snarl of conquest and invasion. The old and dangerous devices of power balancing and regional military pacts have been revived. Over all is the shadow of war, darkening the lives of men and nations, paralyzing their normal activities, distorting their outlooks and confounding their reason. The wealth of nations is being drained off into armaments and national energies are all harnessed to war preparedness. Aggressor and non-aggressor nations, alike, are caught up in a mad stampede to increase their

armaments. This is done at the cost of lowered standards of living, increased taxation, poverty, the retardation of social improvements and the postponement of a final solution of the problems of mass unemployment, want and insecurity.

International morality seems to be non-existent. A brazen political opportunism contemptuously violates the rights of peoples and the sanctities of covenants and treaties, and employs all forms of intrigue, deception and terrorization. Gangsterism is the new norm in international affairs. Crimes against nations and minorities are condoned or ignored or dismissed as domestic affairs. In the name of peace, and under the pretext of appeasement, shameful victories, at the expense of smaller nations, have gone to powerful aggressors by default; free and independent peoples have been strangled, and helpless minorities have been turned over to plunder and destruction.

A whole continent of ideals has dropped out of our world, like some lost Atlantis — the unalienable rights of man, the sanctity of the individual, the freedom of the human mind, the right of dissent, tolerance, brotherhood, liberty, equality, peace. In many parts of the world, these ideals are now regarded as black heresy or treason. In other parts, they are still regarded as quite respectable, but none-the-less shabby and cumbersome heirlooms of the past, something of an annoyance, and considerably in the way.

In their place, a romantic, dynamic and intellectually debauched Fascism has proclaimed a violently oppositional set of ideals, derived from a peculiar synthesis of pseudo-rationalism, pseudo-socialism and pseudo-racism — Force, Blood and Soil, *Volkstum*, Obedience, Leadership, Co-ordination.

Many men, even among the intellectuals, have been eager to listen to these new ideals and have been captivated by them. They seem to have grown weary of the excessive relativism, subjectivism and scepticism of the so-called modern spirit, a spirit which sees all sides of every issue, and quenches all urges to action in a sea of latitudinarianism. They have come to long for compelling, dogmatic convictions and a positive, unqualified and unquestioning faith. Many men have wearied of excessive individualism. They want an element of mandate and authority in their lives, and they

seek psychic sanctuary in mass solidarity. In times of excessive social decomposition, men are ready to purchase discipline and order even at the price of tyranny. It is difficult for men who labor under hard and prolonged strain to remember that an element of disillusionment and glamorless realism is an essential attribute of any mature civilization. Periods of political and economic upheaval give rise to ardent expectancies and to numerous forms of extravagant romanticism. Vague, emotionally charged and highly confident dogmas over-ride all forms of classic culture. In place of the disciplined, humanistic, intellectual and libertarian motives of the classic tradition, there come the ecstatic, imagistic, primitive and authoritarian motives. The concept of human progress through the conscious evolution of the individual in a freely organized society succumbs to a sharp retroversion to herd *mecca*, turgid "folkist" yearnings, a primordial race *libido*, and an eagerness to liquidate the ego in some exalted group Nirvana. The fumist romantics of Germany, from Schlegel and Schelling on, were always authoritarian and anti-liberal, and always hankered after some pre-Christian, Germanic heathendom. The Nazis are their legitimate descendants.

Such is the world crisis to-day, a vast and prolonged convulsion whose end is nowhere in sight.

Such a crisis was bound to affect Jewish life most adversely. The wide-spread suffering and discontent resulting from the vast economic dislocations were destined to demand some visible and personal agent upon whom to place the onus of responsibility and guilt. No readier scape-goat is ever available than a defenseless minority. The beneficiaries of the old system, frightened by the rising tide of revolutionary resentment, attempted craftily to deflect from themselves this punitive resentment and to channel it towards an already disfavored group — the Jewish group. They popularized the fiction that sinister and conspiratorial forces have misused an otherwise beneficent capitalism. There is a good, wholesome, *schaffendes*, Christian capitalism, and, *per contra*, there is a baneful, destructive, *raffendes*, Jewish capitalism. Also, there are good, patriotic, nationalistically-minded Christian bankers, and, on the other hand, there are the unpatriotic, war-mongering, international

Jewish bankers. They also hit upon the strategy of discrediting every progressive movement, agency and law which threatened their vested interests by calling it Communistic, and by branding Communism as something alien and Jewish. In this manner an existing prejudice was capitalized and affixed as an odious tabu label to the whole complex of advanced social ideals and attitudes in the modern world. By means of this new propaganda technique, the Jewish group has been made a universal object of fear and hate. A sinister aura has been cast around the Jewish worker, merchant, and professional man, quite like the aura which religious bigotry succeeded in casting around the Jew in the Middle Ages.

At a time of a world-wide contracting economy, when the number of men who seek jobs far exceeds the number of jobs available, and when diminishing opportunities drive work-and-career-hungry men into murderous competition, it is not only work standards which collapse, but moral standards as well. Men do not hesitate to exploit any and every advantage, however unfair, in their struggle for a living. The advantage of belonging to a dominant majority which can compel members of a minority group to relinquish economic positions is quickly and ruthlessly exploited. This is nothing new in Jewish experience. Frequently in the Middle Ages, this same strategy under a religious guise, was employed. It was a favorite expedient of Christian merchants, especially of German burghers in Poland in their competition with Jewish merchants. Members of the middle classes and the professional classes, many of whom have come to constitute a new proletariat, are particularly unscrupulous competitors, and it is within these economic ranges that so many of our people live.

In some countries, particularly in the old democracies, only social prejudices are invoked to insure economic preferences. But in other countries, the machinery of government is resorted to. The hands of the minority must be tied by law. In such instances, certain rationalizations are invented to justify what is palpably contrary to the spirit of all law and morality. A pseudo-scientific theory of race is furnished up and pontifically proclaimed not only as sovereign and indisputable truth, but as the sole salvation of the state. Race is exalted into a higher law and a superior

morality before which the lesser law of political equality must abdicate. Where race theories are not popular, the theory of integral nationalism is invoked. Whatever the subterfuge — race purity or national integration — the results are the same. The Jewish minority is despoiled of whatever economic position, wealth or power it may possess and the way is barred to any future economic recuperation.

The Third Reich — and as a result of the pressure of the Axis, also Italy — has carried this process to its logical conclusion — complete political disfranchisement and economic outlawry. It has determined not to curb the Jew, but to exterminate him, through economic strangulation or exile. *Juda Verrecke!* In Hungary, an economic *numerus clausus* has been imposed upon the Jew. In Poland, sporadic restrictive measures have been enacted, and only the uncertain international status of Poland, hovering between the two worlds of the Axis and the so-called democratic front, has restrained the government from enacting a drastic code of anti-Jewish legislation in order to force a majority of Polish Jewry to emigrate. In other countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the programs of politico-economic action against the Jew have varied according to the political orientation within each country and the international sphere of influence in which each country moves.

Anti-Semitism has become in our day a matter of political action not only for economic reasons — to appease the job-and-career hunger of the majority population, but also for diplomatic reasons — to realize certain imperial ambitions, and to extend political hegemony. The race theory served the Nazis well as a political weapon by means of which millions of people, Germans by race but not by nationality, were brought within the confines of the Third Reich. The seizure of Austria, Sudetenland, and Memel, was justified on the ground of the race affinity of their inhabitants with those of Germany. Race was thus exploited for political purposes. The same Nazis are exploiting race prejudices and antagonisms to weaken the countries which lie at their course of empire, by fomenting discord among their inhabitants, thereby destroying their national unity and paralyzing their resistance to Nazi aggression. Anti-Semitism to-day is the Reich's Fifth

Column, — a cunning and effective weapon of imperial conquest and domination. This explains the amazing *missionary* character of Nazi anti-Semitism and the sustained drive behind it.

Generally speaking, the trend toward political concentration which has characterized the post-war era, has affected the status of the Jew unfavorably. More and more of economic activities and areas of national life are coming under the partial or total control of government. Government will, in the last analysis, reflect the economic interest not of a racial or national minority group within the state, but of the majority group. Unless there are strong constitutional guarantees to protect the rights of such minorities, they are likely to be brushed aside. Unfortunately, constitutional guarantees do not hold out very long against sustained social pressure. The revolutionary impatience of the forces both of the Left and the Right with the slow process of the democratic procedure has undermined the moral authority of constitutional guarantees. In a dictatorship, the individual is stripped of all those rights which democracy declared to be inalienably his. The individual becomes subject to the will or whim of an autonomous political party in control of a rigidly coordinated state, and so do all minorities.

The Jew thrived best under a political system of constitutional guarantees and limited state power. This was the prevalent trend in the Western World from the time of the American Revolution to the World War. The Jew could claim his rights as an individual in a world which acknowledged that every individual, regardless of his race or class or creed, did possess definite rights which were his inalienably — rights which were not granted to him by the State, and which were therefore not revokable by it. With the spread in our day of the opposing doctrine of state absolutism, the position of the Jew who is everywhere a member of a defenseless and exposed minority, was bound to decline sharply. And it has so declined.

Such is the world crisis, and such has been its impact upon Jewish life. Can the Jew survive this crisis?

If there is one thing which can be predicated with any degree of certainty about Jewish life, it is its complete unpredictability.

Two eminent Jewish sociologists, representing sharply divergent points of view, one an assimilationist, the other a Zionist, were able, nevertheless, to agree upon one or two things. Dr. Maurice Fishberg in his study of *The Jew*, wrote: "If, in addition, it is considered that history shows conclusively that as soon as the Jew is emancipated and given human rights, he always discards his separative practices and does his best to assimilate, and that reactions, such as were witnessed in Spain and in other countries during mediæval ages, are at present unlikely, it is not difficult to foresee which tendency will prevail among the Jews in the near future." (p. 503)

Dr. Arthur Ruppin, writing in *The Jews of Today*, declared: "It is unthinkable that either in Europe or America anti-Semitism could ever bring about legal disabilities for Jews. Any such legislation would be a direct break with the political tradition of the nineteenth century and no State could well take such a step. We must also remember that all anti-Jewish laws are directed against the Jews as a religious community; anti-Semitism is not directed against the Jewish religion — it is perfectly indifferent to it. It is hostile to the Jews as a race, and as promoters of certain kinds of industry and politics. Here legislation is powerless . . .

"In Europe and the United States it is easy to deal with negroes, Indians or Chinese — any child can tell the difference between these races and whites. But special treatment for Jews founded on such a basis would present insurmountable difficulties in practice. *Jews, as a race, are beyond the reach of legislation*, and still less can they be assailed as followers of certain branches of trade, etc., since there is today no one such branch exclusively in Jewish hands." (p. 203)

Dr. Fishberg and Dr. Ruppin both assumed that the complete assimilation of the Jew was a foregone conclusion. One welcomed it; the other sought to forbid it by Zionism. Both men were persuaded, on the basis of their extensive studies and research, that reactions such as occurred in Spain were not likely to happen in the Western World, and that no modern State would or could pass discriminatory legislation against the Jew, based on race. But learning, logic, and statistics notwithstanding, the Nuremberg

laws were enacted, in the year of grace 1935, in one of the most civilized countries of the world, and the reactions which took place in Spain in 1492, and the manifold tragedies of the Spanish expulsion, pale into insignificance alongside of the horrible streamlined reaction in modern Germany, and the brutal expulsion of Jews from Germany now going on. Here, in the twentieth century, one can witness reaction, cold pogroms, terror and tragedy at full tide.

It is no reflection upon these scholars that they wrote as they did. They were influenced by the same optimism which characterized the entire thought-life of the Western World in the decades which preceded the World War — an optimism which nurtured itself upon the truly remarkable achievements in every field of human endeavor, upon scientific discoveries, the popularization of education, the extension of franchise, the improvement in the standard of living, and the increased facilities for inter-communication among men and nations. Few could look beyond the facade, or underneath the surface of things into the dark, bitter primordial waters below. Few could anticipate that great human documents, constitutions, charters of liberty, long cherished and sacrificially achieved, could shrivel up over night like some parched scroll, and few could foresee the sudden twist which a world war would give both to human destiny and to Jewish destiny.

Just as difficult as it is to predict how nations will act towards the Jew in the future, so is it difficult to predict how the Jew himself will act. There is history which we ourselves make, and there is history which others make for us. Most of our political and economic history of the past twenty centuries, other hands fashioned for us. Most of our cultural and social history, we fashioned ourselves. The inner and outer forces playing upon Jewish life, however, have constantly interacted. What seems passive acceptance of influence and impact is not entirely so. Israel was never just קרקע קולם or just marionettes; and what appears to be original, volitional, and autochthonous, is also not always so. Furthermore, just as there never was a consistent and unvarying direction in the outer propulsive forces which played upon Jewish history, so there was never any consistence of action or reaction in our own inner world. It is unprofitable to over-

simplify Jewish history. There are certain cliches about Jewish history which are universally accredited which, nevertheless, upon closer investigation, turn out to be grossly inaccurate. Thus, it is not true that persecution always helped Jewish communities to survive, and that prosperity always tended to disintegrate them. This is a form of easy-going determinism applied to Jewish history which is not borne out by the facts. Our history records many an important Jewish community which was destroyed by sharp and prolonged persecution — in Persia, Babylonia, Arabia, the Byzantine Empire, Egypt, Northern Africa, Spain, Portugal, and elsewhere. Conversely, many a Jewish community survived and retained its identity through long periods of tranquillity and prosperity — in the great Diaspora of the era of the Second Temple, in Hellenistic Alexandria, in pre-Christian Rome, in the Babylonia of the early talmudic era, in Western Europe before the Crusades, in Eastern Europe before Christianity was firmly established, in Islamic Spain, in 17th century Holland, in 19th century America, and the British Empire. Our history also records a phenomenon of cycles: many *wadis* contain the beds of water courses altogether dry and desolate which, however, become torrential streams in the rainy season. Close students have not failed to notice how often the cycle of recuperation is repeated in our history. The generation whom the Psalmist characterized as a despised generation and as *עַם תָּקִי לִבָּב* is followed by a generation which conquered Canaan. The generation whom Jeremiah charged with apostasy *וְעַתָּה שְׂכָחוּ יְמֵי אֵין סֹסֶר* and with treason *כִּי בָנוּ בָנוּ בִי* is soon followed by the generation of Zerubbabel, which rebuilt Judea in loyalty, struggle and sacrifice. The age of the Hellenizers is followed by the age of the Maccabees. The Jews of Spain whom Rabbi Solomon Alami found ~~as~~ deserving of censure for their materialism, their pride and their corruption, are followed by descendants, many of whom were crowned with martyrdom for their faith, myriads who preferred exile to apostasy. The generation for whom Judah Leib Gordon sang, fearful lest he was the last of all the Hebrew bards and they the last to understand, is followed by one of the most remarkable periods of flowering of Hebraic culture and by a generation of the Builders of Zion.

The confluence of many factors, outer and inner, personal and impersonal, some purely fortuitous, a matter of time and place, determine whether a given Jewish community will survive a persecution or will succumb to the enticements of a welcoming alien civilization.

Only one fact can we postulate with confidence about the history of our people. As a people, we have survived! There may be a difference of opinion as to how or why, but none as to the actual fact. We have survived — the one people that has come down intact from antiquity, that can trace an unbroken line of physical and spiritual continuity through thirty-five centuries, the one race that exemplifies in the modern world historical continuity and survival *par excellence*.

It should be borne in mind, too, that our survival transpired not in some secluded Shangri-La, sheltered from danger and attack by ramparts of impassable mountains. We did not vegetate in passivity in some quiet, sequestered land away from the world's stern stresses and struggles. We achieved our survival in the very midst of the world's mad and murderous arenas. We were invaded. We were attacked. We were exiled. We were driven over the face of the earth. We were scattered and broken, hounded and harassed, through long and weary centuries. We clashed with great empires. We resisted mighty civilizations. We were surrounded by militant faiths which sought to absorb us or to destroy us. We are today again upon the rack in the torture-chambers of the earth. Nevertheless, we survived! And, for our size, we are today the most alive and creative people in the world.

Some will call it a mere accident of history. But that is an evasion not an explanation. Such a strange accident can be accounted for only as the accidental result of ten thousand equally strange accidental survivals in our long history. Such an explanation must tax the incredulity even of the most resolutely incredulous person.

Some say that the Jew survived because of his religion. I have no quarrel with them, for there is much truth in what they say. But I would remind them that it would be equally true to say that the Jewish religion survived because of the Jew. Had the

Jews been made of weaker stuff, had they been incapable of converting the vision of a few inspired seers into the *life-motif* of a whole people, had they not been endowed by nature with the peculiar genius to translate their faith into expressive and evolving laws and institutions, to keep it forever fresh and vigorous by pouring new concepts into old forms, and adapt it ever anew to profounder insights and higher intuitions, had they been unwilling or unable to suffer long for an ideal, and had they failed to match the heroic quality of their faith by a corresponding quality in their own nature, both they and their religion would have perished. It was Judah Halevi who declared *לא היה תורה לולא בני ישראל*, "If there had been no Jews, there would have been no Torah".

It is of less moment now to determine who sustained whom, and how the intertwined strands of cause and effect can be separated, than to grasp fully the amazing fact that a long, unbroken covenanted relationship did exist between the people of Israel and the faith of Israel, that Israel from of old, athirst for life and immortality, evolved a faith which exalted life and emancipated it, and that this faith, in turn, through the long centuries, nurtured the life of Israel and fed its powers of survival. In a word, it is important to understand the miracle of *אין נשוא את נשואו*.

But this is certain — we have survived! Not in protective isolation, nor yet on a plane of primitive life or a low cultural *niveau*, where long and changeless survival is not uncommon, but in the very thick of life, near the nerve-centers of civilization, in all the fields of conflict, and, frequently, persecuted and oppressed.

This fact of our history, we cannot write off as a mere accident. To us and to our ancestors, all history is re-relation and testimony. We hold history in great reverence. We were the first people to write history, and to interpret it *לדבר הימים אלא לידרש*. Our people were encouraged to rehearse and to cogitate upon the great moments of their national history *וכל המרבה לספר ביצאת מצרים הרי* for in them is guidance and prophecy for the future. *זה סשורה* (M. R. Num. XI. 3). Our spiritual guides grounded their faith in God, not in any cosmological proofs, but in history — in those significant events in their own and in the world's history and in those processes of the unfolding spiritual

life of man which revealed the presence of God. History to them was evidence for faith far more valid than philosophical proofs!

The Jewish people today is therefore warranted in drawing deep draughts of confidence from their past history. What we were able to do over and over again in the past, under all conceivable circumstances and in all parts of the world, we may yet do again and again in the future. Nothing has fundamentally changed for us, neither the world's mania for persecution, nor our own unbroken will to live. Our forces are not less today, but more. Our powers of adaptability, which the strong life-sense of our people developed, have not been dulled. We were able in the past to adapt ourselves to all forms of economic life and activity — the pastoral, agricultural, commercial and industrial, and to all forms of political systems and arrangements. We adjusted ourselves to conditions of utter rightlessness, to restricted rights, and to equality of rights. If in the future, Jews will be faced with the necessity of adjusting themselves to new economic and political arrangements, to new forms of capitalism or socialism, or to new conditions of restrictions and disabilities, or if they will be again confronted, as many of them already are, with the necessity of emigrating to new countries and of establishing a new Diaspora, they will be able to make their adjustments in the same way as their people have done throughout the ages.

The annihilationist policy of the Nazis is not likely to become the norm which will fix the actual relationship between Jews and non-Jews in the days to come. Such policies never assume worldwide dimensions. The Jewish dispersion is too far-flung for one policy to embrace it all. Undoubtedly many a Jewish community will receive hard hammering in the future. Many of them will be liquidated and their members scattered to the four winds. A new era of Jewish wandering and migration has already set in. Everywhere Jewish life will for a long time to come find itself under the discomfort of hostile propaganda and the threat of an overhanging menace. But unless the entire world plunges back into barbarism, and the pathological obsessions of the Teutonic dervishes seize hold of the whole of mankind — a condition conceivable but hardly probable — the exterminationist policies of the Nazis are destined

to be localized. Perhaps even in the Reich itself time will neutralize them. In other lands where governments are resolved to circumscribe the participation of Jews in the political, economic and cultural life of the nation, some legal *modus vivendi* will have to be evolved by those governments. The legal status of the Jew will have to be defined. In such countries, the Jews will have to learn again how to live worthy and undefeated lives, even under the duress of formidable disabilities. They will have to seek refuge again and they will find it in their own culture and *faith*, in their own communal organizations, and in the pride of *קיום והתורה סעתי*, and they will wait and work for a better day.

Should the Fascist movement spend itself and should nations return to the primal sanities of civilized life, then constitutional guarantees for individuals and minorities will be re-established in the world and anti-Semitism will cease to be a matter of political policy and program. The pressures upon the Jewish group will then be greatly relaxed.

A substantial section of Israel now lives under a Communist regime. Whether Jewish life can retain its identity under Communism and whether Judaism or, for that matter, any of the historic religions, can long survive under such a regime, remains to be seen. The Soviet Union has not only not been hostile to the perpetuation of race and nationality groups within its borders, but it has actually fostered their autonomy and self-determination. As an ethnic group, the Jews of the Soviet Union have been given equal opportunities to develop their own soviets in localities where they are the majority of the populations, to build their own schools, and to employ their own language in judicial and administrative transactions. The Yiddish press and literature have been steadily expanding. "The departments of Jewish studies in the universities and academies of Moscow, Kiev, Minsk, Odessa, etc. have employed a larger personnel and offered greater facilities for Jewish research than perhaps all European and American universities combined." (Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, Vol. 2, page 314).

Whether the Jewish people of the Soviet Union will, in spite of these favorable opportunities for self-determination, choose the

road of assimilation, only time can tell. Whether their Yiddish proletarian culture, which is denuded of all the religio-Hebraic elements of the classic Jewish culture will become so completely different as to set it off as a totally different culture, and whether the Jews of the Soviet Union will be able to re-establish vital bonds of spiritual and cultural unity with the rest of world Jewry, remains to be seen. Certainly there are at present no indications of any imminent dissolution of the Jewish group in Russia.

Russian communism has been anti-religious. Judaism, along with all other religions, has been severely repressed. But irreligion is not an essential of communism. Historically, it was the religious motif which nurtured, and religious bodies which fostered communism. Modern Socialism received its comprehensive and scientific exposition at the hands of Marx and his disciples at a time when materialistic determinism, now largely discredited, was the philosophic vogue. The theoreticians of the movement, in an effort to make their socialistic hypotheses up to date, drafted it upon those extreme materialistic hypotheses with which, of course, they have no essential connection. The fact that organized religion evinced little sympathy for the struggling masses was also a contributing factor to the anti-religious attitude of the founders of the modern Socialism. But it is becoming clear to many that in turning anti-religious, Socialism has needlessly sacrificed a most powerful ally and has drawn to itself antagonisms which would otherwise not be directed against its real purposes.

It is quite possible that in time the Soviet Union may come to modify its attitude towards religion in the same way as it has already modified its attitude towards nationalism and patriotism and towards certain economic dogmas. In that case, Judaism in Russia, along with other historical religions, which a generation of repressions has not succeeded in stamping out, may yet enjoy a new lease on life. Certainly there is no warrant for assuming that all future experiments in collectivism and socialization in all other parts of the world will, of necessity, be anti-religious in character.

Surveying the world scene, one is accordingly led to the conclusion that while there are manifold threats today to Jewish security, to Jewish rights and to Jewish peace, there is no imminent

threat to Jewish survival — at least none different from those which Jews were able to circumvent in the past.

The Jewish people will remain intact. In a sense the problem of Jewish survival, as I had occasion to indicate elsewhere, is much simpler in our day than at any time in the past. The doors of escape from Jewish destiny have been shut in many parts of the world. בעל כרחא Jews must now remain and be counted as Jews. Unto the third and fourth generation an inescapable, even if unwelcome, racial identification is forced upon them. The modern anti-Semite does not want the Jew to assimilate, to intermarry, to be converted, or give up his distinctive way of life. On the contrary, he wants him to remain the Jew *integral*, isolated, quarantined, exiled or annihilated, but always the Jew.

What should, therefore, concern us today is not whether the Jewish people will survive, but how? Shall it be greatly or meanly, affirmatively and challengingly, as in the great periods of our past, holding our banners high in a day of battle and storm; or negatively, creeping into the nooks and crannies of the earth, waiting for the wrath to pass over and grateful for the mere gift of existence and survival? We can do either. Apart from all else, apart from the mighty energies which the past has stored up in us, mere inertia and social lag can keep us going for an indefinite period. Many Jews, especially the more prosperous ones, out of fear and personal interest, are choosing the latter course. But the Jewish people, as a whole, I believe, will not, because it cannot, consent to such a role of passivity, abdication and escapism. There is too much leaven in its spirit, too powerful a dynamic in its faith and too much of the unquenchably prophetic in its traditions. When dangers threaten, when the enemy appears on the horizon, then the Ark of the Covenant begins to move — the Ark which "carries those who carry it" — the Ark which rests with the people, and marches with the people — and the cry then goes up: "Arise, O Lord, and let Thine enemies be scattered!" and a militancy, a bitter stubbornness, a sharp defiance comes into the hearts of our people, and they are ready for battle.

The Jewish people, through its thoughtful guides and leaders, has been quick to appraise the issues which are involved in the

present day world crisis and to grasp the true significance of the murderous attack which is being made upon it. It has come to understand that the present conflict which is tearing the world apart is but another phase of the eternal conflict between the *עַם יִשְׂרָאֵל* and the *עַם עֵדוֹם*, between Jacob and Esau, Israel and Edom, Rome and Jerusalem, Judaism and Paganism. The Neo-pagans of the 20th century want to destroy the Jew because they hate and fear the spirit of the Jew, which has been the implacable and indefeasible foe of paganism throughout the ages and which will not rest until it has destroyed the new paganism too. They are not afraid of the Jews' physical power. The Jews were never numbered among the conquering peoples of the earth. They never built empires. Their legions never swept over continents with fire and sword. No Cyrus sprang from their loins, no Alexander, no Hannibal, no Ghengis Khan and no Napoleon to shake the world. Against such conquerors one can protect oneself; one can build Siegfried lines of defense and fashion weapons in Krupp and Skoda works. But the Jews are foes of another stamp, and the fear which they inspire is a greater fear, and at bottom a justifiable fear. They sense a real menace, a threat to them and to their world.

John Macmurray writing in his book, *The Clue to History*, sums it up admirably: "It (Fascism) discovers that the source of all this pressure towards progress, equality, freedom and common humanity is the Jew. The persecution of the Jews in Germany has, of course, the same source as their persecution throughout the history of Christian Europe; but it has a significant difference. It is secular, political, conscious and organized in a way that it has never been, and it is felt to be the central problem of society in which all other problems have their roots. This new anti-Semitism of Germany looks completely irrational to us. From a purely intellectual point of view the problem seems, to say the least of it, absurdly exaggerated, and the practical reasons advanced to prove that the Jews are a real menace to Germany, the source of all her misfortunes and defeats, and the organizers and creators of all internationalism, and of Bolshevism in particular, are clearly nothing but rationalizations of an emotional impulse. Yet we have to

face the fact that the Leader of the German people has no doubt in his own mind that the Jewish problem is the centre of all problems, not merely in Germany, but in the world. It is useless to dismiss this as an illusion, because if it is, it demands explanation.

"But it is no illusion. It is the truth. Hitler's declaration that the Jewish consciousness is poison to the Aryan races is the deepest insight that the Western world has yet achieved into its own nature; and his capacity to realize this is the proof of his genius as well as the secret of his power and of the curious fascination which his personality exerts. One has only to attend to the form of the statement to see that it is not the practical power or wealth of the Jews that he fears, but the character of the Jewish mind. It is the Jewish consciousness which is the enemy, not an organized Jewish army, not even an insurrection of the Jews in Germany. It is the hidden penetration of the Jewish spirit into the Gentile mind that is the danger; and it is a danger because the "Aryan" mind cannot resist it, but must succumb. The task is to extirpate the influence of the Jewish consciousness upon the world. At all costs the leaven must be got out of the lump, or very soon the whole will be leavened, and the result will be the final end of the "Aryan" (sc. pagan) tradition. Europe will be so false to itself that it will create a universal communism, [Note: Communism, לא צדק but Justice!] which will destroy blood and race as the basis of civilization, destroy the beauties and the heroisms of the struggle for power, deny the natural superiority of the white races, and of Germans in particular, and produce universal equality and brotherhood. The Jewish spirit is not merely under the illusion of these ideas; it is the force, in the world, which creates them in ideas and compels the rest of humanity to achieve them in practice. I need ask for no greater testimony to the truth of the whole thesis of this book than Hitler's. His inspiration corroborates my own pedestrian reflection. The only difference between us is that his will and mine respond to the truth in different ways. The thought of the triumph of the Jewish consciousness fills me with joyous exhilaration, while it casts Hitler into the depths of despair. For Hitler the Jewish consciousness is a poison. I have learned from

the greatest genius of the Jewish race to recognize it as the Water of Life." (pp. 225-227)

The Jewish problem is thus the world problem epitomized. The present world conflict again finds the Jew the symbol, and his traditions the battle-ground of contending armies of mankind. The Rabbis of old apprehended this recurrent role which Israel plays in the drama of civilization and they welcomed it. *אשרים לישראל בכל מקומות מושבותיהם אף על פי שהם מתיזעים לארבע רוחות העולם כצפון לדרום וסדרום לצפון כמזרח למערב ומערב למזרח הרי הם באמצע* (Tana d'be Eliyahu, Chap. 5). Always in the center! Halevi called Israel the heart of the world. That is our horoscope! In that house of destiny was our life cast!

The Jews of this generation should welcome this role, hard though it be, even as their fathers before them. God has again sent us a great, testing hour! We must again find the strength not only for survival, but for a stiff-necked resistance to the *פרא אדם* who is again trampling under foot all that is noble and kindly and decent in life. We must arouse and join forces for a major offensive with all men of all faiths and of all races who have remained faithful to the spiritual vision of life. It is not enough to defend the *status quo* against reaction. Reaction must be defeated by destroying those evils in our present system which made it possible. A courageous attack all along the line, summoning all our courage and employing all of our resources, upon poverty, upon the economic insecurity of the masses, upon corruption and special privilege, upon the excessive concentration of wealth in the hands of a few, upon monopoly and exploitation, upon the war machine and the merchants of death, upon chauvinism, national exhibitionism and patrioteering, upon race arrogance and race domination — in a word, upon all that our religion and all the great religions of mankind have branded and outlawed. Reaction is attacking the Jew today. Let the Jew defend himself by an audacious counter attack. Let the Ark of the Covenant begin to move again! There are no weapons which reaction can forge strong enough to destroy us. *כל כלי יוצר עליך לא יצלח*. And there are no fortresses strong enough to protect reaction against the mighty thunderbolts of the

human spirit once they are unleashed. The Jews have been singled out for destruction. This is their holy and destined hour when "the exaltations of their God should be in their throats and double-edged swords in their hands."

Just as democracy and liberalism will perish unless they resume their offensive, so the Jewish people will be defeated and beaten into servitude unless they fling themselves resolutely into the fight with Amalek and unless the hands of their leaders remain firm and uplifted all through the long day of battle until the sun sets upon their victory.

In a sense the present state of spiritual conflict and struggle in the world is a more normal and congenial one for the spirit of our people. The life of our spirit was always a life of sword. Judaism was fused in struggle from Canaanitish days onward. Prophecy was born in protest and militancy. The prophet was a man of strife and contention to all the earth. The spirit of the Jew was never relaxed, even in Palestine. It was always braced against alien influences and the *חוקות הגוים*. Our position as a people was always *abnormal*, even in the ancient world. For the ancient world was all idolatrous and Israel was not. Our position was abnormal in the medieval world. It is abnormal in the modern world. It is meant to be. Judaism always conceived of life as progress and progress as the struggle of the spirit, to wrestle with gods and men and to prevail. Even in the world to come, Judaism allowed no repose to the righteous: *חלמידי חכמים אין להם מנוחה מפילו לעולם הבא* (M. K. 29a). Our people are thus not likely to be shaken spiritually by the tensions and stresses under which they are living and will continue to live. Rather are they likely to be healed and made whole by becoming more truly and more intimately themselves and more at home with their own racial genius.

Otherwise, no new technique for Jewish survival is necessary. Adequate communal organization, the proper education of our youth in the religion, language, history and literature of our people, the encouragement of Jewish scholarship and the devotion to and active participation in the upbuilding of the Jewish homeland in Palestine — these are the ways which have proved adequate in the past and which are likely to prove adequate in the future also.

To the everlasting credit of this sorely-tried generation of Jews be it said, that in spite of the tragedies which were piled up upon it, Ossa on Pelion, in spite of the frightful disruption of numerous old centers of Jewish life, in spite of the impoverishment, exhaustion and persecutions which made of the whole household of Israel one vast hostelry of pain, it nevertheless was able to find within itself the energy, the courage and the resources to build in Palestine in twenty short years a new and resplendent center of Jewish life, already the fifth largest Jewish center in the world, and first and foremost in the richness and vitality of its intrinsic Jewish spirit and culture. Here in Palestine a new and powerful bulwark for the survival of the Jew and of Judaism has been established, as great and as rich in promise, and to be sure, under as great difficulties, as in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah. Regardless of any future developments, something great and heartening and reassuring has already been achieved there.

And so the Jewish people faces the critical days ahead not without fears and misgivings, not without dark moments of agony and despair — for great is the wrath and terror and the menace — but fundamentally unshaken. Jews are carrying on, many of them magnificently. Witness the remarkable outpouring of loyalty, compassion and help on the part of Jews throughout the world for those of their fellow-Jews who find themselves in the iron crible of affliction. All this is evidence of an inner soundness, of an unbroken solidarity. Thoughtful Jews know their history. They know their resources. They have taken the measure of their enemies. They understand the world significance of their great tribulation. In all this there is balm and healing. They know too that hope is a cardinal dogma of their ancient faith which they must not abandon. The first question which a man is asked on Judgment Day is: *צפית לישועה* "Did you hope for salvation?"

Hope — and Will!

Solomon ibn Verga tells this story in his *שבת דור*. A ship-load of Jewish refugees from Spain was swept by the plague, and the captain of the ship cast them all ashore upon a barren and uninhabited coast. Most of the unfortunate refugees perished from hunger. Some of them pressed on desperately to find some human

habitation. Among them was a man, his wife and his two children. They struggled on through the barren waste, until the wife fainted and died. The man then carried his children in his arms and upon his shoulders until he, too, fell down and fainted from hunger and exhaustion. When he came to, he discovered that his two children had died. He then arose and said: רבון העולמים: הרבה אתה עשה שאני צועד דחי. הרע נאמתה שעל כרחם של יושבי שטים יהודי אני ויהודי אחיה, ולא יועיל כלום שהבאת וחביא עלי. "Master of the Universe, Thou art doing much to force me to forsake my faith. Know, for sure, that in spite of Thee, I am a Jew and I shall remain a Jew, and that nothing that Thou hast brought upon me or art likely to bring upon me will make any difference." He then covered the bodies of his dead children with earth and scrub and walked on into the wilderness to find a human abode.

Here is spiritual resoluteness which matches divine omnipotence! Here is will-power which says to the mountains: Be ye removed! Here, in the bitter cry of challenge wrung from the heart of this tortured Spanish refugee, is another key to the mystery of Jewish survival....



# Israel Will Be The Centre Of The World

## JEWISH LIFE AND DESTINY

Selections From The Works <sup>South African</sup> Of <sup>James</sup>

Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver <sup>9-53</sup>

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JUDAISM is concerned with the unchanging needs of man and of society, the needs which can take on new forms in new settings, but which remain fundamentally the same, the basic and perennial conflicts and adjustments in individual and collective lives. From Abraham and Moses to the last of the great and the wise teachers of our faith, there stretches an unbroken chain of spiritual continuity, changeless principles in mutable forms which were the fixed points of reference for each generation. Each generation faced the same problems: how to achieve freedom under the sovereignty of God, justice under the mandate of His law, and dignity in kinship with Him; how knowledge was to be made whole through the fear of God, and courage heightened through trust in Him; how brotherhood and peace could be covenanted in the sight of Him who is Father of all men and all nations.

Judaism has offered men the faith and the code sufficient and adequate to every age. Men have not heeded it. Jews have not heeded it. Their was the inadequacy, theirs the insufficiency. Many believed that mankind could dispense with Israel's faith and code, and could achieve freedom, justice, dignity, courage, brotherhood and peace without reference to God and the techniques of religion. But they achieved only dictatorship, slavery, littleness of stature, fear, hate and war. They put their hope not in spiritual conversion, not in moral regeneration but in a precipitous scientific and intellectual progress which has now hurled rider, horse and chariot alike into one bloody and ruinous tangle.

(1942)

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Some say that the Jew survived because of his religion. We have no quarrel with them, for there is much truth in what they say. But we would remind them that it would be equally true to say that the Jewish religion ~~survived~~ because of the Jew. Had the Jews been made of weaker stuff, had they been incapable of converting the

vision of a few inspired seers into the leit-motif of a whole people, had they not been endowed by nature with the peculiar genius to translate their faith into expressive and evolving laws and institutions, to keep it forever fresh and vigorous



RABBI ABBA HILLEL SILVER

by pouring new concepts into old forms, and to adapt it ever anew to profounder insights and higher intuitions, had they been unwilling or unable to suffer long for an ideal, and had they failed to match the heroic quality of their faith by a corresponding quality in their own nature, both they and their religion would have perished. It was Judah Halevi who declared: If there had been no Jews, there could have been no Torah."

It is of less moment now to determine who sustained whom, and how the intertwined strands of cause and effect can be separated, than to grasp fully the amazing fact that a long, unbroken covenanted relationship did exist between the people of Israel and the faith of Israel, that Israel, from of old, thirst for life and immortality, evolved a faith which exalted life

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