



## Abba Hillel Silver Collection Digitization Project

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

Series V: Writings, 1909-1963, undated.

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American Public Welfare Association, 1956.



1). What is the Good Society?

Not necess - the opulent - affluent - Wealth may help  
build - But it may also destroy it.

Poverty will not build - One of the indispensable  
tasks which must be accomplished - abolition of Poverty

Though certain unsatisfied needs - not necess. ~~Physical~~  
material - certain unfulfilled aspirations must  
always be essential ingredients of a Good and Progressive

2). The criteria of a truly civilized, good Society are neither  
wealth - size - speed - ~~nor~~ cumulative inventiveness

Values which it places upon human personality - the  
worth of ~~the~~ <sup>each</sup> individual man, woman, child

The rewards which it bestows upon honest labor  
and real merit.

The quality of its intellectual, spiritual & artistic interests  
The encouragement which it gives through law and custom  
to those agencies and forces which make human  
life sweeter, more confident, more joyous.

3). You can put it in other words - two-hundred words

The Good Society is one in which all men are privileged to  
enjoy their inalienable rights of life, liberty & the Pursuit of

where the individual is permitted neither to exploit  
nor be exploited -

Enough Freedom to exercise initiative and enough social control  
to ensure justice for all.



Good Soc - is one free of ~~poverty~~ <sup>mass</sup> ~~hate~~, Intolerance, and  
discrimination - Free of bitter class conflict and hate. (2)

4). Can such a Soc. ever be built? Not to Perfection  
but to adequacy - to a point vitiated by the search of  
gold - "They shall sit every man under his vine  
and under his fig tree - and none shall make them afraid."

5). Is such a Soc. being built to-day? Are we helping to  
build it? Yes. - at a pace undreamt of in previous  
generations.

(Just)





- 6/ What can we do to advance the day of the coming of the G.I.? (8)
- Government can do much - By legislation much can be established -
- (1) Higher standards of education and greater support of all educat. institutions - all cultural ~~and art~~ <sup>and art</sup> centers;
  - (2) Protection of the health of our citizens - through adequate hospitals, <sup>health centers</sup> and the encouragement of medical research
  - (3) Proper housing and slum clearance.
  - (4) Adequate insurance against the disabilities of unemployment, sickness and old age -
  - (5) Recreational facilities for our ~~young~~ children and young.

7/ The municipality, the State, and the Federal Govt. can do much, indeed, to assist in the building of the Good Society - should not be overburdened - To over-tax, then, ~~to~~ is to endanger their survival as democracies appears - To demand everything of Govt - is to surround everything to Govt -

Free people, in order to remain free, must insist upon retaining <sup>for</sup> many duties and the performance of many tasks in the building of the G. Soc. - Total abdication ~~is~~ spells total dictatorship - Voluntary organization and associations of locally-minded men and women can do much in every field

8. And the individual citizen - can do much.



The forces of law should, of course, be invoked against those who by force would destroy our democracy. Active conspirators against our liberties should be ferreted out and punished by law. But the law should be clear and specific; and the laudable traditions of American court procedures which safeguard the basic rights of every accused should be scrupulously employed in the process.

In fighting subversion we must make doubly sure that we are fighting subversion, not just unpopular views. It is a great temptation to make our dislike for the unlike synonymous with patriotism and to brand and excommunicate every dissenter whose disagreement may be grounded in a profound patriotic devotion and loyalty to our country. We must ask ourselves what it is that we want to suppress and why we want to suppress it and whether the suppression will ultimately serve the best interests of free and democratic America.

~~My dear friends:~~ Among the most inspiring symbols in the speech and thought of mankind are bridges and walls. I have always been fascinated by them. They have so much to say.

Walls have their definite value and purpose in our lives. They carve for us out of unlimited space which is too vast for us to dominate, a smaller area which we can subdue to our needs. They enclose us in a manageable world which we can master. This gives us a sense of at-homeness which is good for us. Walls and fences often also serve a good purpose in defining beyond the peradventure of doubt what is ours and what is our neighbors. The poet Robert Frost put it: "Good fences make good neighbors." To the building of such walls for protection, privacy and ownership, there can be no objection. They are part of the necessary routine of civilized life.

But there are other walls which men erect which serve no such good purpose, but on the contrary, are harmful to the best interests of society.



Prejudice, intolerance, race and group hatreds are tragic walls which men build around themselves. Our age has witnessed the erection of many such forbidding walls. Whenever there is unhappiness, discontent or unrest among men, racial and religious bigots swarm out of their dark holes, sweep over the land and sow the dragon seed of division, discord and hate.

Sometimes even good and respectable people build walls around themselves which are effective blocks to mutual understanding and good will. They build walls of social exclusiveness. They segregate themselves in some illusory eminence and hug to their bosoms the delusion that they are somehow better than the common run of humanity. In the sight of God there are, of course, no Brahmins and no untouchables - only children of the dust who, in their brief careers on earth, may find a measure of happiness by helping one another in goodness and sharing with one another in love.

Our world is divided today by political walls and iron curtains. There are those who would build these walls still higher, who resent those who suggest ways for razing these walls and leveling them off. In every age there have been the wall-building doctrinaires, the exponents of the irreconcilable. Either I or you survive! No middle road - no meeting ground - no compromise! This, of course, is the fateful road to war, and wars only serve to erect new walls on the ruined foundations of the old.

There are nations which put their trust and security in strong walls, in impregnable Maginot lines, in Chinese walls. But they all crumble sooner or later. "The Lord God hath a day upon every lofty tower and upon every fortified wall." A nation must not put its sole trust in armament, even as formidable as atomic bombs. The very strength of a nation often brings about its downfall. It becomes over-confident, and precipitate; it drains off its strength in endless



military adventures; its domestic economy breaks down, and unrest and revolution finally weaken it and prepare it for ultimate defeat.

A nation should put its trust in the strength of its moral and intellectual life, the justice and fairness of its laws and institutions, the well-being and contentment of its citizens, the moral training of its youth, and the stability of its homes.

Our religions urged men to be builders of bridges rather than of walls. Life abounds in tragic chasms which separate men, in deep rivers and their swift, dark currents. Men should learn to build bridges across them, and bridges are more difficult to build than walls. Charity, compassion, sympathy, magnanimity, great mindedness are such bridges. So is friendship; so is tolerance; so is brotherhood. "Love thy neighbor as thyself" is perhaps the noblest and most enduring of all bridges ever devised. "With malice towards none, with charity for all," is another bridge which an immortal American built across a river of blood and civil war.

Every earnest effort at international understanding and cooperation is a bridge leading to the Kingdom of God, to the good society. The League of Nations was such a bridge. It collapsed. Bridges often collapse and must be rebuilt. The United Nations is such a bridge. It is in danger of collapse. We must see to it that it does not collapse. War is never a bridge. At best it is a Bridge of Sighs leading men from doom to death.

The whole magnificent ethical message of our great historic faiths may be summed up in these symbols of walls and bridges.

*Those who set out to build bridges - are the faithful builders, the hopes for Good Society.*



THE CRISIS OF OUR AGE  
Address delivered at the  
COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES  
of KENT STATE UNIVERSITY  
Saturday, June 11, 1955  
by  
Dr. Abba Hillel Silver  
The Temple  
Cleveland, Ohio

~~My dear Friends:~~

I believe that the age in which we live is a great age and that we are moving towards an even greater age. I believe that our present age is one of the greatest in human history. We are too near our times properly to appraise them. One requires distance in order to see great objects in their proper perspective. We ourselves are too much involved in the groping and conflicts of our day to see objectively the amazing new patterns of life which are emerging.

Many people are quick to describe our age as materialistic, as lacking in idealism, in aim and purpose, as an age of breakdown and disintegration.

There are very few people who evaluate properly the historic events, so great in amplitude and consequence, which are taking place all about us. I am not thinking at the moment of the new worlds which science is continually disclosing, the new insights into the nature of matter and energy, the new sources of power and wealth, the new methods of production, distribution, transportation and communication. I am not referring to the amazing progress in the medical sciences which has so markedly improved the health of the human race and increased the average length of life, nor to the marvels of engineering and the miracles of construction.



and illiteracy and to raise the standard of living of people, regardless of race or color or creed? Is it trying to satisfy the legitimate aspirations of peoples to national freedom and independence? Is it trying to organize the world for peace and for international cooperation? I believe that in all these major trends, our age has given welcome evidence of great determination and considerable progress. It is moving purposefully in the right direction - the abolition of war, the reduction of poverty, and the elimination of racial inequality. These are the three major trends of our century. What is tearing our world apart is a difference not in objective, but in method.

Ours is a great age, and I believe that we are entering into an even greater age. The wave of the future, the true direction of man's pilgrimage and destiny may be, from time to time, thwarted and opposed, drawn off and retarded, but it cannot be permanently stopped.

In our day this forward thrust of man has encountered the stubborn and insolent resistance of Nazi Fascist and Communist dictatorship. These have violently resisted the spiritual aspirations which constitute mankind's wave of the future. They put shackles on man, even when they promised him larger freedoms. They divided and stratified men, even when they prated about a classless society. They fomented war even when they preached peace. But the onmoving tides of man's spirit, fathoms deep and irresistible, have now swept over the ruins of some of these sinister aberrations and dark conspiracies, though they have not as yet entirely obliterated them. And the tides are now swirling around the bastions of the remaining dictatorships of the earth. They will surely succumb. They cannot, in the long run, win in the contest for man's heart and man's loyalties. Man has struggled through the long, weary centuries to free himself from the bondage of nature. He will not voluntarily and for



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# AMERICAN PUBLIC WELFARE ASSOCIATION



**CENTRAL STATES  
REGIONAL CONFERENCE**

**HOTEL CLEVELAND  
CLEVELAND, OHIO**

**APRIL 15, 16, 17, 18 - 1956**



## Registration

Conference registration will be on the mezzanine floor. The registration desk will be open from 4:30 to 8:00 Sunday and all day Monday and Tuesday, and Wednesday morning.

Registration fees are as follows:

Members, students and agency designates	\$2.50
Non-members	\$5.00
Members - one day	\$1.50
Non-members - one day	\$2.50

## American Public Welfare Association Membership

Information about membership in APWA will be available at the membership desk. All persons interested in public welfare are urged to become members. \$2.50 of the Conference registration fee may be applied on a new membership at any time during the Conference.



## Certificates of Attendance

The Ohio Director of Public Welfare is issuing an official invitation to officials and employees engaged in the administration of public assistance and public child welfare to attend these meetings. Certificates of attendance will be issued on request to Ohioans at the time of registration.

## Conference Dinner

Dinner tickets will be available at the registration desk. Tickets should be purchased as soon as possible after registration.



## **SUNDAY**

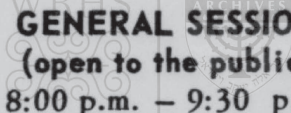
**April 15, 1956**

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**Meeting of APWA Membership Committee**  
2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

**Meeting of**  
**Central States Regional Conference Committee**  
3:15 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.

**Movies**  
3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

The logo features a shield with a star and the text "AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES" above it. To the left, the letters "WRHS" are visible.  
**GENERAL SESSION**  
(open to the public)  
8:00 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.

**Chairman:**

JUDGE HENRY J. ROBISON, Director, Ohio Department of Public Welfare and Conference Host, Columbus

**Secretary:**

MRS. CLYDE C. SHIVELY, Member, Advisory Board, Ohio Division of Social Administration, Columbus

**Invocation:**

THE REVEREND HOWARD M. WELLS, D.D., Pastor, First Presbyterian Church, East Cleveland

**Welcome:**

THE HONORABLE ANTHONY J. CELEBREZZE, Mayor of the City of Cleveland

**Speaker**

ABBA HILLEL SILVER, Rabbi, The Temple, Cleveland "Building the Good Society"