



Abba Hillel Silver Collection Digitization Project

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The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives

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

Series V: Writings, 1909-1963, undated.

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Faith of an unconverted American, undated.

- 1) Faith is an unconverted American. 11
- ① Many. ① Patriotism - not specifically Am - universal -
 - ② Anti Communism - synonymous - only one phase
 - ③ Some bipts - identified it - history - racial tree

② much more - a revol. way of thought challenged 18C and again 20C.

① I emphasize Revolutionary bc. some have associated it with econ. orthodoxy - status quo and assert that whatever calls for change is upso facto - un-American. Thus Rugged Individualism - unregulated private capitalism - equated with True Americanism.

② Nothing could be further Am. began in Revolution - A pol. Rev. with strong econ. overtones -

Declaration of Independence - Bill of Rights were most revol. + inflammatory ideas

③ And they in turn were based on the Revol. rel. ideas, the Judeo-Christian.

④ Revol.

That's why present-day America
known for its present-day ideas

2) These ideas are still revol. in 20C, & attached more vigorously & dangerously -

By same false doctrines, under diff names, 2
or in 18c-19c.

What is new & challenging in 20c - is
not Sovietism but Americanism - if
we had the steady vision to realize it

3/ Our can still be the crusading ideal
ideas of Manhood -

For Sovietism, like Fascism & Nazism,
~~represent~~ Reaction - Retrospection - not
progress.

4/ But we act as if new order has gone out
of them. - new guard return -
Our battle-cry is not to all peoples to
throw off Yokes - pol. nation, econ., spiritual

But to contain the expansion, Soviet Union
and join hands with Reaction - (Mussolini)
fight with thieves - even - (Hitler)
Nazis -

World has deficient impression - fighting not
to democracy - but for capitulation -
for loose ends.

5/ And that we are prepared to divide and - (3
run the half - by-pass UN - to achieve this

6/ Hope held in UN.
Neither Marshall Plan. but Att. Post have
strengthened it - but our taking as in these

our slogan ① All power to UN!
- all enforcement then UN! - so envisaged by Charter

② Veto

7/ Could do it
We are most powerful - need not be afraid -
Our best creative energies should go into
① in world, UN - ② our ideals relevant

① We are strong
(a) 150 years long - Crisis - Self writ Self Not for freedom
(b) Vast Nat. resources - Contentment
- with a steward - downed to low standards
(c) Whole raw capacity for self - appraisal
- but given to planned exhibition was
- acknowledge mistake - Reverse direction
- Rehearsal
(d) W threatening Neighbors
(e) Not slaves past - but belong to us

8) We can without pause & complicity pursue
our way up - & bad -

9) But - we must remember

- ① no democ. in us free anti-d. attack
- values or ideas - Faces bent - will exploit
freedom to destroy freedom -
- ② Dem. can be as known even without violent
revolution In united states, at least, the Parliamentary
form can be used to establish dictatorship -
- ③ no automatic success, Dem
- ④ Unilateral power way to dictatorship,
- civilian control will weaken
- ⑤ Can there be any means prevented
hiss & persecution

10) Mean & Guarding Thrive - Hostile prop

① Dem. in sp armer - Thrive - Hostile prop
agencies exposed themselves - Agents exposed and
left under mischievous

② Elevation for dem. - in Pop - in T Dem - see hpts

③ but tax can sent too much - Bread &
circumstances - Turn to sent for all things
Turn on to sent all power -

④ Extra - legal methods to achieve - Instant dis put

self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness", they were giving political expression to seminal religious, Anabaptist doctrines. When they countered the claim of the Divine Right of Kings with the counter-claim of the Divine Right of the People to resist the tyranny of kings, when, they proclaimed that resistance to tyrants is obedience to God, when they engraved upon the Liberty Bell the Biblical proclamation: "Proclaim ye freedom throughout the land unto all the inhabitants thereof", or when they placed on the first seal of the new-born republic of the United States, the figure of Moses leading the children of Israel out of Egypt, they were summoning religious truth, authority and tradition to under-write and sanction their revolution. ~~Edmund Burke was entirely right when he declared, "The religion most prevalent in our northern colonies is a refinement on the principles of resistance; it is the dissidence of dissent, and the protestantism of the Protestant religion."~~ stop

Struggles for human freedom, uninspired by a living faith in God, often lead mankind to disaster. In recent years, Russia attempted to build a free and happy society without God. It succeeded only in forging a dictatorship and an enslaved society. This is most unfortunate, for 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 it appear philosophically 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.

Fascist and Nazi states in Europe also sought to build happier socialized communities on the basis of a Godless materialism, vitiated still further by an anti-spiritual racism and chauvenism. They succeeded only in effecting, with the aid of rubber truncheons and concentration camps, a brutally regimented and terrorized society. The "new" orders which these Godless revolutionary movements achieved were only variant forms of older despotisms. Though they pride themselves on being young and dynamic, they are so only in the sense of being immature, raw, untempered and cruel. A society achieved real renewal only through inner spiritual renewal. If freedom is ever to speak again everywhere, its speech, to quote Heine, will again have to be Biblical.

The soldiers of Cromwell marched into battle singing Psalms. For three centuries the spirit of Cromwell and of his Puritan hosts has molded the free life of the English peoples. Roger Williams established the first free society in the New World in the name of a God of Freedom, whose faithful minister he

Democracy shrivels when its religious source dries up. An early and friendly critic of American democracy, De Tocqueville, cautioned it: "Despotism may govern without faith, but liberty cannot."

Why do all present-day enemies of human liberties persecute religion, even though in Nazi and Fascist lands they sometimes come to terms with clericalism which is a totally different thing? Because religion in its spiritual essence is their death warrant. They see in Judaism and in its offspring, Christianity, the last unwearied watchmen over the ramparts of human liberties, who must be destroyed before their own freedom-annihilating materialistic revolutions can be firmly established. Thus, fundamentally, it is not the Jews whom the Fascist dictators wish to drive out of Europe, but Judaism, that entire complex of ethical and spiritual ideas rooted in the principle of the sacredness of human personality, the worth of the individual and the transcendent moral law which are at the very heart of the Judeo-Christian civilization, which they wish to supplant.

Dictators hold man in utter contempt. Hitler called the masses "eine Hammelherde von Hohlkopfen" ("Herd of sheep and empty-heads"). Otto Strasser a close collaborator of Hitler in the early days of the Nazi movement, declares that Hitler surrounds himself with depraved and vicious accomplices because they confirm his profound conviction that man is essentially vile. "From this conviction I will never depart...Man is congenitally evil. He can only be controlled by force. To govern him, everything is permissible. You must lie, betray, even kill when policy demands it."

Herman Rauschning, from his intimate knowledge and observation both of the Nazi movement and its Fuehrer makes this summary: "It may be said in general that at the back of the whole tactics and method of propaganda of National Socialism there is a complete contempt of humanity: the whole system is based on taking men as they are and pandering to their weakness and their bestiality. Such is its universal recipe. National Socialism banks on human sloth and timidity - just as much in the case of the intellectuals, the middle classes, and the old ruling classes, as with the masses...The exploitation of envy and ill-will, of the lowest human instincts, the sowing of dissension between opponents, and the appeal to their ignoble qualities and notorious weaknesses have thus far unfailingly helped National Socialism to success, incidentally destroying the basis of a general sense of morality which was weak enough to begin with."

Dictators are anti-Semitic because they know or sense that liberty is Semitic in origin and character. "Democracy", declared Hitler, "is fundamentally Jewish, not Germanic". And by Jewish, he meant not only Abraham, but Jesus as well, for they were kinsmen in blood and spirit. The so-called Aryan must trace his political traditions back to the oriental despotisms and King-worship of ancient Persia and to the caste system of India. Even the Greeks had no strong consistent democratic tradition. Thucydides, Plato, and Aristotle opposed the democratic form of government. Aristotle actually defended slavery. "The Greek political thinkers," declares Professor Zimmern, "do not recognize, or do not make proper allowance for the rights and responsibilities of the individual soul. Just as they failed to distinguish between Nationality and Government, so they failed also to distinguish between Conscience and Public duty...Their work was vitiated by their failure to realize the extent and urgency of the claim of the individual soul. Men must be spiritually free before they can co-operate politically on the highest terms." But the Semite of the desert, from whom Israel is descended, and from whom Judaism and Christianity are descended, neither knew nor tolerated any despotism. The democratic motif runs like a golden thread through the whole political, social, economic and religious history of Israel from the earliest nomadic period to the present.

The spiritual foundations of modern democracy lie deep in the religious dogmas of Judaism and Christianity -- in the concept of man as a child of God, physically circumscribed, but capable of reaching levels where he is "just a little lower than the angels", in the concept of doing justice, loving mercy, walking humbly and seeking peace as the only ways of reaching those high levels; in the concept of Human Brotherhood - One God - One Humanity; in the concept of rulers and governors, as servants of God and men, subject to the same moral law, and not as a law unto themselves; in the concept of a Messianic future of universal knowledge, freedom, security and peace which men, through their righteous labors and sacrifices - sacrifices of self, not others - , will someday bring about: "when every man shall dwell under his vine and under his fig tree with none to make him afraid".

It is abundantly clear, on all sides, that humanity has sickened of its Godless civilization. Because the spiritual interpretation of human destiny was allowed to languish, other interpretations have come to life and are now driving mankind mad. For when God is dethroned, His throne does not remain empty for long. Some false God, some Wotan, Moloch, Mammon or Mars soon occupies it. In place of piety, reverence, humility, compassion, self-sacrifice, other qualities -- insolence, cruelty, aggression and combativeness are now extolled. Because men have rejected the ideal of the sanctification of human life under God, they now have a world in which human life is held cheap, in which the stature of the individual has been reduced, his rights usurped by the state, his labor looked upon as a commodity and his life, just a statistical item. Because men have ignored the sovereignty of God's moral law, they have a world in which men, parties and governments have set themselves up above all law. Where there is no longer the law of God, there ensues the law of the Duce, the Fuehrer, of the Commissar, before which all men must tremble.

Now that lights are going out everywhere in the world, men must turn again to the light of God, and the youth of the world should be led to it. By that light men will find their way to a kingdom of just human values, achieved through just human methods. They will then not seek freedom through slavery, or peace through war, or justice through class-struggle, or knowledge through the burning of books, or abundance through confiscation, or unity through blood-purges and liquidations.

They will move steadily and resolutely forward, along the road of social progress, economic justice, human freedom and international peace, guided by the prophetic ideals of the sacredness of the individual and his inalienable rights, which must never be sacrificed to state or class sovereignty, the sacredness of the moral law which is not a changeable human convenience, but eternal as the laws of nature and the sacredness of method - the almighty Holiness of the "How".

In such manner will they safeguard for themselves and for those who shall come after them, what is even more precious than life itself -- Dignity and Freedom.

revolution, which was available to all.

The demand for spiritual liberty soon expressed itself in demands for other forms of liberty. Peasant revolts followed. Political and economic rights were demanded by humble people. By what authority? They had no authority. They had no human law to which they could appeal. In whose name did they speak? In the same name and by the same authority as the ancient prophets of Israel presumed to challenge kings, high-priests, the noblemen, and the rich, and to denounce them for their injustices. They spoke in the name of God, in the name of a revelation from God. All men were equal because God made all men equal. The things which they demanded were the things which the Bible, the revealed Word of God, conceded to them and to all men. The social revolutions of the sixteenth century which were quenched in the blood of a hundred thousand peasants received their inspiration from religion and revelation.

James Martineau, the eminent English divine of the last century, eloquently summed up that socio-theological movement of the sixteenth century whose repercussions are felt to this day: "The full thunder-cloud of the Hebrew prophets, stealing over a world in negative stagnation, waked the sleeping lightnings of the soul, and for a while streaked the atmosphere of history with fearful portents...The downtrodden serfs of Franconia had not long heard the glad tidings from Wittenberg, ere they began to draw parallels between themselves and the old Israel when the desert had been passed...The earth was the Lord's and the army of the saints was come to take it...The time of jubilee was come, when every believer should have his field of heritage...Throughout the great movement which in the third decade of the sixteenth century spread insurrection from the Breisgau to Saxony, the peasants were animated with the belief that the Gospel, armed with the sword of Joshua, was to subjugate the world, and that all the conditions of property, of law, of civil administration, under which secular communities exist, were to be superseded by institutions conformed to a divine model."

The quintessence of the spiritual idealism of the Protestant Reformation, which later on affected the life of the American people, lay with the various Anabaptist sects which sprang up in the wake of the Reformation. Some of these sects were hundreds of years ahead of their time. They believed in the absolute moral responsibility of the individual, in his inherent spiritual sovereignty and in the right of private judgment in matters of religion. They held that the duty of the State was only to protect the good and to punish the evil and beyond that the State itself was evil. The State had no right to circumscribe the freedom of the individual. These sects were the first to demand absolute dis-establishment — the separation of church and State. They were the first to preach universal toleration and freedom of worship. They maintained that all property belonged to God. Some of them, like the early Christians, practised voluntary communism — which is a very different thing, of course, from the secular dictatorship communism of our day — in fact, is the violent negation of it in everything but surface similarity.

Thus, out of victories won for religious freedom on the battlefields of the spirit, there stemmed other victories for man's political, economic and social emancipation. The absolutism of king and state was first curbed by the religious spirit of man, demanding at the point of revolution, the right, not of universal suffrage or better living conditions, but the right to worship God as it saw fit.

Those doctrines of the Anabaptists were carried over from Germany to Holland and England, and then to the United States. The Founding Fathers of our country adopted many of the doctrines of these religious "fanatics". When they wrote into the Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be

⑤ Democ. Athens - Example

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① ~~Is not~~ Most effective answer to Luss

- highest standards of living -

② Greeks in an answer

~~Is not~~ Shines

~~Is not~~ ~~Is not~~ ~~Is not~~

Discrimination - ~~Is not~~

③ - With hunting -

~~Is not~~ ~~Is not~~ ~~Is not~~

- affirmative ~~Is not~~ ~~Is not~~ ~~Is not~~

11/ R. v. d. American

to our appearance in parliament



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 it appear philosophically} ~~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.

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vile. "From this conviction I will never depart...Man is congenitally evil. He can only be controlled by force. To govern him, everything is permissible. You must lie, betray, even kill when policy demands it." ~~(Hitler and I - Boston 1940, p. 78).~~

out

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