



Daniel Jeremy Silver Collection Digitization Project

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Kent State University, Memorial Program, correspondence and
speech, 1971.

KENT STATE UNIVERSITY

KENT, OHIO 44240

PHILOSOPHY
(216) 672-2315

March 29, 1971

Rabbi Dan Silver
The Temple
University Circle and Silver Park
Cleveland, Ohio

Dear Rabbi Silver:

On the fourth of May, 1970, shots were fired on our campus that were heard around the world. Four students lay dead, a dozen others physically wounded, and untold others--here and elsewhere--were and are psychically wounded.

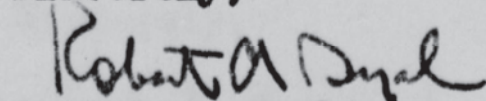
The President of Kent State University, Robert I. White, has set aside the dates of May 1-4, 1971 as days of remembrance and commitment. A sequence of events is being planned, the climax of which is to be a Memorial Service on May 4, between 11:30-1:30, on the Commons--the time and place of the fateful event a year ago. Hopefully, it will be a solemn occasion as we commemorate the past, but also an occasion for joy as we dedicate ourselves to the future. We suspect that what we do here at Kent State will be observed carefully by the rest of the nation, particularly the youth whose investment in the future is greatest.

As Chairman of the Memorial Service Committee, I have been instructed by my committee, composed mostly of students who comprise the Inter-religious Ministry at K.S.U., to invite you to participate in this Service. As you perhaps know, several of the dead and wounded students were or are of Jewish affiliation. It is our desire, therefore, to include in our Service a representative of their religion. Among several considered, you have been selected as the most appropriate person for this occasion, since you have seemingly identified yourself with the young and with the peace movement. Bob Cam, in particular, speaks highly of you.

You would not be the only person on the program, of course, but you would be a featured participant. Invitations have been extended to several others, including Jesse Jackson, Judy Collins, Rod McKuen, Pete Seeger, and Kingman Brewster; Brewster and McKuen have already accepted. As is indicated by the invitees, this will not be strictly a religious service. On the other hand, we are not reluctant to introduce the religious dimension. Probably, local and campus ministers will have a place on the program.

We cannot now promise you more than expenses, but an honorarium exceeding expenses is a possibility. We trust you will give this invitation your earnest consideration and advise us as soon as possible of your decision.

Sincerely,



Robert A. Dyal
Assistant Professor of Philosophy

April 1, 1971

Dr. Robert A. Dyal
Asst. Professor of Philosophy
Kent State University
Kent, Ohio 44240

Dear Dr. Dyal:

I shall be pleased to be part of the Memorial Services on May 4th. It is my understanding that they will take place from 11:30 to 1:30 p.m. on the Commons. It is my understanding, also, that you want me to speak as a Rabbi and to deal spiritually rather than eulogistically with the day. You are obviously thinking of something in the range of from 8 to 10 minutes, or am I mistaken?

Sincerely,

DJS:mgm

Daniel Jeremy Silver

April 14, 1971

Miss Cathy Weill
223 Metcalf Hall, Box 116
Kent, Ohio 44243

Dear Cathy:

Thank you for your kind note of welcome to Kent.
I am sure the Memorial Service will be a memorable one.
I look forward to being a part of it.

Please come up while I am there . I would love
to have a chance to spend a few minutes with you.

Sincerely,

DJS:mgm

Daniel Jeremy Silver

Kent State - May 4, 1971

"Sun and stillness. Looking down the jade green waters, you see the monsters of the deep playing in the reef. Is this a reason to be afraid? Do you feel safer when the waves hide what lies beneath the waters?"

--Dag Hammarskjöld

Why have we come?

Four died swiftly, suddenly -- too young. We have come in respect to their memories.

But have we? Do such conventional sentiments hide deeper, more frightening truths? Most of us did not know these four. Had they not died in the white glare of national publicity, we would not now know their names.

They lived -- yes! But do we know why they lived, what tugged at their souls?

They died -- yes. Were they martyrs who chose death deliberately to consecrate a cause? Were they frightened bystanders fatally drawn to campus excitement? Were they innocents who forgot that guards have guns and that power protects itself with bullets? Were they only passing by?

I have come because I was asked to come. Someone wanted this memorial to be consecrated by words of faith. But "Pious words do not a memorial make." No earthling can know what God is thinking about leaders who promise "peace, peace, but who do not make peace," who send soldiers to silence those who cry for an end to war and to hypocrisy -- *NO ONE CAN KNOW what God is thinking about the flood* of consoling words being spoken to those who suffered loss and wounds.

Take heart. The winter is past, springtime has come, the terror is over, all will be well. Be comforted their death strengthened many." I wonder if God does not smile knowingly, resigned at yet another classic image of human folly: The righteous perish and no one takes it to heart.

[May 4, 1971, p.2]

Legend tells that one day man spoke to God. "Let us change about. You be man and I will be God, just for one day." God smiled gently and asked man, "Aren't you afraid?" No, are you?" "Yes, I am", God said. It is easy to be God, divine, but even God trembles to be human -- a human who must contemplate that this hour's significance may lie only in ^{its} bathos, its maudlin posturing, its cathartic effect on our fears.

Ask yourself why. Why were they shot? Why this tragedy? And listen for an answer. Forget all certain answers, the words, the speeches, they ^{are} too sure. You know how you and those like you can take advantage of the flood of feelings that flows so full. But that is strategy not understanding. Listen to your silence. Do not impose your urgency on these feelings. For whom did that bell toll that day, but for ^{you} ~~these~~?

Ask why. Why did they die? As I listened to the silence, I heard another's silence -- the voice, minor-keyed, of a psalm. The voice of another lonely human puzzled by life's vagaries: "Then sought I to understand this, but it was too hard for me."

Why did they die? I do not know. Man's ways are set in folly. I only know that to some these deaths became symbolic. Many die every day, many die senselessly. These four died to history.

I wonder: did we need their deaths to shock us into wakefulness? Certainly, their deaths tore the last shreds of American pride.

We had accepted life as violent -- but violence happened in Viet Nam. We had accepted death as a statistic -- if the bodies counted were yellow. Soldiers fired at demonstrators, at the unwanted, the unwashed, the alien -- but not at ordinary, middle-class kids with middle-range ideas. Here were frightened American youth throwing stones -- at frightened American youth. Here were

[May 4, 1971, p. 3]

frightened American youth firing live bullets at frightened American youth. Why the fright? We -- they -- were caught in the whirlwind.

Was it the whirlwind of Viet Nam? Was it the whirlwind of law and order -- of racial hate, of property and privilege, of urban violence? Was it the whirlwind of parents who do not listen to their children and children who cannot speak to their parents? I do not know. I know only what others have found in this violence -- fear -- a dagger pointed at their souls -- a warning against the present.

Once we had a dream. America knew itself to be different -- blessed. There was enough for everyone, an open frontier, an abundant technology. We spoke feelingly of equal justice and the American promise -- for each man a share of a golden future. America the beautiful.

We spoke these words each Fourth of July.

The fourth of May taught the innocents that this ~~dream~~^{EAM} was a/childish fantasy. History is not ~~A~~ dark headline about the follies of others, but the dark scroll of our own stupidity.

But many have not seen or chosen to see the pretension gap between dream words and dreary reality. In America a respectable man goes to work in an office which has no blacks, eats at a club which has no Jews, lives in a suburb which prohibits public housing, sends his children to a school, where they will meet those just like themselves, gives a few dollars to charity and his vote to those who promise lower taxes -- "Less help to those bums on welfare" -- and he is unhappy with the war in Viet Nam because we did not win it.

Oh beautiful for smoky skies, for endless littered streets. Each goes his own way confident that his is the only way. The human landscape

[May 4, 1971, p. 4]

is pockmarked with gaps -- between the races, between the generations, between *groups of* self righteous men.

The respectable are shabby. Their children see the hypocrisy of *this* respectability but do not see their own posturings -- a cult of freedom which is little more than an excuse for indulgence, a passion for change if it is exciting and there are others milling around, a contempt for history which dooms the contemptuous -- and their society -- to relive history's grimmer times, a childish desire for instant gratification and instant political achievement, and a thirst for crusade if it has style -- *IS ONE CAN* driving to the revolution in *his* Alfa-Romeo.

History has caught up with us. We are not different. We are inconstant, instinct-ridden worldlings, pompous in our pretensions, who declare our privilege righteous and occasionally engage in selective outrage.

History has caught up with us and given us little reason to be confident about man's capacity to sort out his priorities, to set sensitivity over ambition, to set a moment of human grace against a lifetime of calculation.

History records many May 4ths.-- Right does not inevitably triumph over might -- and might often proclaims itself to be right.

History does make cynics of us all. History is dark, and the only light we carry is in our soul -- a small dim flame which says -- yes,

You can,

You must,

"Toss me about, but you will not best me.

Bruise me, but you will not turn me into a beast.

Confuse me, but I will hold fast to my conviction that every human life is sacred, that in each there is a decency which can respond.

[May 4, 1971, p. 5]

A voice calls by: "You must!"
Must what? O voice, explain!
Instead of an answer, I hear that voice again.

I've known them all my life,
The caller and the call.

It cries: "You Must, You Must"
And only God can tell
Whether Must is my redemption
or Must will be my hell.

(H. Levick)

I know that to love is to lose, that to live is to be bruised. To be able to find the deep source of joy, of laughter in ourselves, that's the test. To be able to respond to the warmth that tempers the chill, the duty that claims the soul. I call it God, some call it steadiness, others grace. Call it as you will. If you have it, you can push on without pushing others out of your way.

I am only one, but faith says to me, to each of us, you are the one:
"Care, though many be calloused. In our heedless world feel hurt for another's pain, work for another's justice and your own, maintain reason when the mob howls war peacefully for peace."

Live for your soul -- not for your self. There is no goal, there are no guidelines, but there is gentleness and goodness. There is no certainty, but there is challenge. I think often of what God said to Abraham: "Leave your house, your roots, your customary ways, set out." "Where shall I go?" Abraham asked. "Go. On the way, you will be shown the way. Remember only: be always a blessing."

"May their memory be for a blessing."

Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver
The Temple

OPEN KENT!
RALLY TUESDAY, MAY 4th 1:00 FRONT CAMPUS

MAY 4, 1919: 5,000 students in Peking rally in protest of the betrayal of the young Republic of China by the "democratic" powers at Versailles, their protest sparking a mass movement which ultimately led to the founding of the People's Republic of China.

MAY 4, 1970: Thirteen students shot, four killed, in Kent, protesting the expansion of the Indochinese war. The national student strike which resulted was critical in getting the U.S. out of Cambodia by June 30th.

MAY 4, 1971: The war continues. The forces of repression are tightening their grasp. Here at Kent the Trustees, through the administration, have restricted free speech and assembly beyond the already narrow boundaries of "academic freedom".

Our campus is hearing a lot these days about "Keep Kent Open". The reality is that Kent is not "open" now, and never has been. Since the shootings last year the Ohio Legislature has enacted H.B. 1219, granting arbitrary and unconstitutional powers of suspension for "disruptors", without conviction on any criminal charge. The system of passes and validated I.D.'s is designed to close Kent to "our family". The University has failed to protest the attacks of the Grand Jury and its indictments. Even before last year the campus was patrolled by armed men, many more now than then. Kent is an occupied campus. We are here to be fitted into a system which destroys lives and whole cultures in the pursuit of its corporate interests. "Step out of line, the man come and take you away."

The speakers ban for May 1-4 is only the latest of these abuses, but it puts into focus the whole trend of our campus, indeed our country. As Dr. Sites, of the sociology department, said, critical rights go unnoticed in ordinary times. But if they are restricted in times of crisis, they lose all significance. For it is in times of crisis that all voices must be heard.

Therefore, we are going to break the speakers ban. We will be sponsoring a rally on front campus at 1:00 Tuesday, right after the Memorial Service. Off campus speakers, Tim Butz of Vets Against the War and Mark Lane and others, will speak outside. We feel this action is a part of our remembrance of Sandy and Bill and Jeff and Allison. They were killed as a result of anti-war protest. To carry on the movement is a living memorial, and one which can serve to change the system that led to their deaths.
(over, please)

May 5, 1971

Dr. Robert A. Dyal
Assistant Professor of Philosophy
Kent State University
Kent, Ohio 44240

Dear Dr. Dyal:

I was very moved by yesterday's service. It was a privilege to be part of it. My expenses to Kent were minimal -- \$5.00 ought to cover the lot.

With all good luck to you and the University,
I remain,

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mld

This action constitutes civil disobedience. By violating this ban we hope to challenge the constitutionality of the Trustees action. This will be the first step of a campaign to "open Kent". We want the injunction on the old sds leaders lifted, 1219 repealed, the passes system abolished, the police disarmed, undercover agents barred from campus, a condemnation of the 25 indictments, and a real commitment to creating an open community.

The planned rally is separate from other acts of non-violent civil disobedience which may or may not follow it. Attendance at this rally in no way exposes anyone to suspension or arrest.

RALLY TUESDAY, MAY 4th 1:00 FRONT CAMPUS

Tim Butz Vietnam Veteran, now organizing with Vietnam Veterans Against the War, former KSU student.

Mark Lane Prominent author and anti-war speaker, Civil Rights lawyer.

Barbara Dane Blues singer for twenty-five years, spent the last three years organizing G.I.'s, was at Berkeley during the Free Speech Movement, active in Mississippi with the early civil rights movement.

George Takey Quaker activist, Friends Peace Committee, a Quaker action group.

RALLY TUESDAY, MAY 4th 1:00 FRONT CAMPUS

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Kent MayDay Coalition

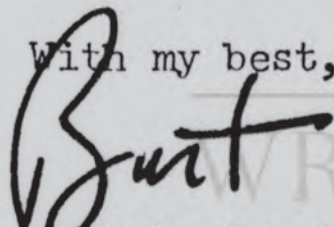
CBS NEWS

A Division of Columbia Broadcasting System, Inc.
524 West 57 Street
New York, New York 10019
(212) 765-4321

Dear Dan:

It was awfully good seeing you on the
Cronkite News last night at Kent State,
and hearing what you had to say.

With my best,



BURTON BENJAMIN
Senior Executive Producer



Rabbi Jeremy Silver
The Temple
East 105th Street
Cleveland, Ohio

May 5, 1971

McDowell Hall Box 12
Kent, Ohio 44243
May 5, 1971

Rabbi Daniel J. Silver
2841 Weybridge Rd.
Shaker Heights, Ohio 44135

Dear Rabbi Silver

I wish to thank you for the very inspirational message that you gave at the Memorial Service yesterday here at Kent State.

Several of the Graduate Counselors here in McDowell Hall have discussed what we could remember of the speech and we would like to know if you would forward or send us a copy of your message.

Thank you very much for your part in the program and if it is available a copy of the talk.

Sincerely,

Jim Holcomb
James E. Holcomb
Graduate Counselor
McDowell Hall



Sent 5/12/71 mgm

May 6, 1971

Dear Rabbi Silver,

Here is the poem I promised to send. I was proud to be on the platform with you. If you have a chance, I would love to have a copy of your speech, which to me was the inspiration of the afternoon.

Sincerely,

Maggie Brock

Maggie Brock
KSU Theatre Box Office
Kent, Ohio 44242



LEE RUBINSTEIN, M.D.

FIVE SEVERANCE CIRCLE

OBSTETRICS AND GYNECOLOGY . . . TELEPHONE 382-7780 • CLEVELAND HEIGHTS, OHIO 44118

5-7-71

Dear Rabbi Silver,

I had a chance today to read the excerpts of your speech at Kent State printed in the Jewish News. I had to write you because it is one of the most moving and eloquent pieces I have ever read. In my mind, it caught the absolute essence of what happened last May 4.

Sincerely
Lee Rubenstein

May 12, 1971

Rev. Jesse Jackson
Dr. King's Workshop
SCLC Operation Bread Basket
Chicago, Illinois 60620

Dear Rev. Jackson:

It was a privilege to share the Memorial Services
with you at Kent State University.

As per your request I am enclosing a copy of my
remarks on that occasion.

I hope we will have a chance to talk again in the
near future.

Sincerely,

DJS:mgm
Encls.

Daniel Jeremy Silver

May 12, 1971

Dr. Lee Rubinstein
5 Severance Circle
Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44118

Dear Lee:

I am most grateful to you for your kind note of which I am deeply appreciative. It was a moving occasion and I was pleased that I could be a part of it. I appreciate your taking the time to write.

Sincerely,

DJS:mgm

Daniel Jeremy Silver

May 7, 1971

The Fines
3776 Hillbrook Rd.
Cleveland, Ohio 44118

Dear Rabbi Dan,

It seems hard to find the words that I want to use to express my feelings about what happened last Tuesday. But I am home now for the weekend, and read the excerpt of your speech, and suddenly a very different feeling is in my heart.

I cried that day, as I did one year ago, for I not only lost a sorority sister, but one of my closest friends, Sandy Schreuer. I felt "sure and stillness," and I also felt hate, but I was not sure for whom. I realize now that no rational reason could be found for my hate, for there is no real answer to why it all happened. It just did. I walked around campus that afternoon after you left, alone and silent, and again asked myself the question you posed, why the fright, why the fear that it could happen again? I again realized why, I too was almost caught in that whirlwind. But I listened to my silence for a while, and for another time I realized that I am not dead, but alive because maybe that is the way God wanted it. For Sandy and the other three it was not.

The Fines
3776 Hillbrook Rd.
Cleveland, Ohio 44118

and now you are probably wondering if what I have said has made any sense, and what I intend to do. as I said the feeling in my heart is different. The hate has simmered and the stillness has become more lively. and as for my fear well, the fear of death is not uncommon especially in the manner in which it took place at Kent, but to live my life is more important to me, and therefore let God give me the strength to do so, and may my memory of Sandy, be for a blessing.

Thank you for your concern and ever present understanding.

Sincerely,

Karey

May 10, 1971

Mr. Burton Benjamin
Senior Executive Producer
CBS News
524 West 57 Street
New York, New York 10019

Dear Ben:

Thanks for your note on the Kent State lecture.
It was an interesting experience.

I remember with pleasure our lunch of a year
ago and wonder if the program on the history of
Jewish Jerusalem ever evolved. Hope we can do
it again.

Sincerely,

Daniel Jeremy Silver

DJS:mld

May 12, 1971

Miss Maggie Brock
Kent State University
Theatre Box Office
Kent, Ohio 44242

Dear Maggie:

Thank you for sending me the copy of Yetushenkov's poem. I am returning the favor by sending you a copy of my words at Kent State. I hope some day we will have time to do more than shake hands.

Sincerely,

D JS:mgm
Encls.

Daniel Jeremy Silver

May 12, 1971

Miss Karen Fine
3776 Hillbrook Road
Cleveland, Ohio 44118

Dear Karen:

Thank you for your note. I am pleased that you were able to handle the understandably confused feelings about May 4th.

It was good seeing you and I hope to see you again soon.

Sincerely,

DJS:mgm

Daniel Jeremy Silver

