



Abba Hillel Silver Collection Digitization Project

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

Series IV: Sermons, 1914-1963, undated.

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The Dawn of Peace, 1918.

I. My object in designating The Dams of Peace as the theme for my address this morning is not that we might indulge ourselves ^{for a spell} in the pleasant prospect of an early peace. ~~as it assuredly was not my intention~~ to assume the role of a knowing prophet and prognosticate the end of this war. The prophets even the best of them have hazarded little in this war, and assuredly ~~it was~~ ^{the thought} was farthest from my mind to mesmerize you with the idea of the imminence of peace so that you would slacken your efforts and lessen your contributions, mental, manual ~~and~~ ^{or} monetary, to this war.

B. To be sure we are ^{materially} nearer peace - that is a victorious peace - to-day than we were three months ago. Thanks to the genius of Foch and his staff, the revived spirit and bravery of our allies and the astonishing demonstration of the American army - the military initiative has been wrested from the hands of the Germans and the pursuers of yesterday are now the pursued. There is an evident decline in the victory, both of the Teutonic allies - else that cheat of the Balkans - Bulgaria - would not have left that invincible Union and thrown herself upon the mercy of ~~the~~ our allies. ~~And~~ the cabinet upheaval in Germany which scuffed that doddering bit of senility, Bismarck - and raised to power Prince Maximilian of Baden -

There must be a demand for the possibility of a general peace.
 Elder

a man distinctly distasteful to the Pan-
Germanic group, ~~which purposed name~~²
~~have tolerated such a change had they~~
~~not been convinced that their peculiar type~~
~~of germanism - the Pan-germanism - had been~~
~~shipped to the size of a Pan-cake - would~~
never have taken place. And that heroic

lot of German Socialists who peled the world
with their loud pretensions in the days before
the war but who remained so eloquently
silent during the days of Great Dictatorship -
they ~~have been~~ ^{have become} full of life again - sure signs
that something is wrong within the Empire.

For these intrepid disciples of Marx and Lassalle
two brave souls who endured exile and
continually for conscience sake, prefer
prison to Paris - and only sing the
Marseillaise when Deutschland
isn't in the air.

And poor Karl whose father played the mean trick
on an inconvenient time and bequeathed unto
him a throne of thorns and a crown of
thorns - is feverishly writing pathetic epistles
to unwilling correspondents - conveying
the novel information ~~about the horrors~~
~~of war~~ and pleading for peace. Now
Karl does not write letters isn't old
enough to write his own letters. It is
his school master in Wilhelmsstrasse
that dictates them and corrects
the spelling. And it is evident that

God's Assistant in Berlin would ^{never} have receded
to the humble task of penmanship unless
he were convinced that the Pen & Karl
might prove mightier than the sword &
~~Maine~~ and the Marine.. War was just
as terrible and peace was just as desirable
when the Boerishan birds were pouring over
the Rhine and the Germanic hordes were
invading France in March & Apr. & May. Why
did not Karl go peace-hunting then? Where
were his Cliffs and his pleas then? No! The Tenton
waves soft and humanitarian only when
he is homeward bound and his coat
tails are flying!..... Now, this, too, is a
good one.

And the Turk, who won such brilliant
victories in Armenia against three
hundred thousand women and children,
is also thinking of Peace... ~~How~~ that apparently
the sacred union of the Mussulman Allah and
the Teutonic Gott has failed and the
breathless Turk, on his ceremonious exit
from the Holy Land, is ~~dreaming~~ thinking hard
and fast of Peace. Well, that, too, is
a welcome sign!

Then are all welcome, encouraging signs -
but only signs! We ~~hope~~^{trust} they are all ~~deceiving~~
we ~~hope~~^{pray} that the ~~threats~~^{fragrant} of pent light which are
eyes are beholding are in very truth the
signs of ~~the coming~~ a dawn - We pray that the Wakhman
upon the ramparts shall ~~not~~^{never} say -

Verily the dawn ~~was~~ ^{will} come but it is night
again!.... ^{hope}
We shall ~~pray~~ ^{hope} for the best but we shall
prepare for the worst! If this is not the real
dawn of peace which our eyes behold but
only a mirage then we shall steel ourselves
to further endurance and wait patiently
and bide incessantly until the dawn does
come! It is very likely that Germany is stronger
than we are led to think, it may be that
Germany is re-educating to strongly fortified positions
in order to shorten its lines, conserve its man-
power and wage a bitter and determined de-
fensive war! It may be that the Hohenzollern
dynasty will fight to the last ditch and sacrifice
the last beleaguered Triitz ^{rather than yield} ~~before it will sacrifice~~
any of its prerogatives or abdicate completely.
In that case we must prepare for another
year or two of bitter fighting and great
sacrifice.

It is dreadful to think of another year or
two of war but it is ^{far} more dreadful to
think of a compromise peace now. To make
an interlunium - patched-up - barker-sal-
peace now would be to mock the heroic dead
who died not for expedient but for prin-
ciple and our age would be eternally
damned for the cowardice we proved when
the great opportunity came. We entered the
war not to save our skins but to save
our souls and shall we now

sacrifice our souls to save our skins. &
An inhuman peace to-day means war
to-morrow. A humane war to-day means
peace to-morrow and forever more! We
are fighting not for peace - that is a mere ^{empty} repite
from hostility - we are fighting for the establishment
of society on such sound bases of justice as will
bring everlasting peace with it. -

We shall remember that often times the
triumphs of freedom must go round the
walls of despotism seven times before they
crumble to earth.

II. However, ~~the~~ peace near ^{as far} as the time has
definitely arrived when ~~we must give as~~
much thought to the ^{subject of} peace as ~~we~~
to the subject of war. Not to the fact of peace -
but to the nature and quality of ^{the} peace
which we seek to establish. The question which
should concern us is not when will peace
come but what ~~kind~~ sort of peace ^{shall it be}
when it does come ^{how is it to be established and secured}
and by whom, and who shall make that
peace. What ^{shall be} the principles that
should ^{guide} the Peace Congress,
what shall be the minimum of ~~war~~ ^{war} -
construction which we ought to expect of
it?

A. Assuredly we shall not be satisfied
with merely crushing Germany. The

crushing & German military power and the
~~concepts~~ ~~absolute~~ discrediting & its military group are
essential and elemental prerequisites but
they do are, after all, but incidents to a
greater program of reconstruction. To defeat
Germany is necessary just as the defeat of
the ancient Amalekites was necessary before
the Promised Land could be reached. But
the goal was not the defeat of the Amalekites
but the Promised Land. And the goal
for which a humanity has paid this ~~four~~
~~years~~ ~~of suffering~~ waste and wilderness for four
years is not the defeat of this or that nation
but the Promised Land of international justice
and peace.

B. No one has so swiftly grasped the full im-
port and significance of this struggle, no one has so
keenly analyzed ~~the~~ confused motives and aims of this
and no one has so bravely & magnificently vocalized
them, as has that ~~champion of freedom and peace~~
of the new day - Woodrow Wilson. It was with
prophetic insight he seized upon the heart of the
problem, and the ~~new~~ ideal crystallizing in the wake
of war. This is not a war of one nation against
another, of one group of nations against another. And
it cannot and shall not end merely in the triumph
of one nation or group over another nation or group.
It is a struggle for a new balance of power.
This is a war of new ideals against old government
nationalism, ~~and peace~~ ~~international relations~~ against the old ideals and it
can only be terminated when these new ideals
receive acceptance by all the belligerents.

c - These ideals which Pres. Wilson has succinctly defined as the ^{establishment of} principle of democracy, the prin. of national self-determination and the prin. of internationalism - in the League of Nations - are the paramount issues involved in this war. These principles, maintaining an axiom of human society, as such they are not subject for discussion ~~fundamental and~~ not subject to compromise a concession. All else - indemnities, reparation, colonial ~~possessions~~ ^{possessions} are subjects for discussion and arrangement but these are basic the same great issue. They must form the preamble of the coming peace! This is what the Pres. has in mind when, in speaking of the League of Nations, he says - "I see it, the construction, that League of Nations and the clear definition of its objects must be a part, in a sense the most ^{essential} important part of that peace settlement itself"

These principles are not vague, uncertain gropings after unattainable ideals. They are practical suggestions for saving humanity from recurrence of such catastrophes and they must be asked upon immediately. There are tremendous difficulties involved but then there are also tremendous energies ~~loose~~ awaiting to solve them. We have seen what the so-called practical men of the world - the wise and knowing diplomats and capitalists - have accomplished. They had the world in their hands and they ^{the man who doesn't give him} ~~drugged~~ it in blood. Now the idealist, the practical ^{pragmatist} will take ~~that~~ ^{that} ~~precedent~~ ^{precedent} and tradition.

bold things - He can do no worse. He will do much better!

III. Democracy There can be no peace with autocracy. Autocracy is making this way unmade itself. It signed its own death warrant. The peace coming Treaty of Peace will be signed not by the plenipotentiaries of kings but by the representatives of peoples. Whether a ~~nation~~^{people} prefers a democracy such as ours or a Constitutional Monarchy such as that of Great Britain is a matter of taste and choice, but no ~~nation~~^{people} can be admitted into the League ~~unless it is~~^{that} a free ~~nation~~^{people} - controlling its own destiny and regulating its own life from within and not from abroad.

IV. Self-Determination, Every struggle for human freedom has led to the suffering submerged races & nations that claimed their rights. This war has proven established the principle of nationality. You cannot destroy a people, or the soul of a people once it becomes conscious of itself. Poland, Belgium, Alsace-Lorraine, France! A people is a corporate individual. It must be given right to live its own life. The greatest menace to peace, the world is a weak undeveloped nationality. It becomes an object of exploitation & ~~and~~ already competition among strong nations living in amity with one another.



V. League of Nations. The only possible + practical solution.
The duplication of 13 Colonies on a larger scale. The
adjudication of all difficulties & the enforcement
The creation of an elastic institution which will
leave room for other peoples who will interest
ourselves too.

a. does not mean surrender, sovereignty
but a strengthening, for. then cooperation
just as every ind. grows by contact.

b. Cooperation in place of Competition.

c. Of course there are difficulties.

1. Reduction of Armament

2. Representation of nations in League.

3. Organization.

d. But they are surmountable if public
sentiment is back of it

VI. This is just opposite. Reconciliation is
1. to buy with Paris Conference Resolutions -
2. That means another balance of Power.
3. Wilson again, - Read -

VII. This is our ^{present} task. Let's think about it.
As often lets think about methods, technique
ways & means. Lets talk less, let's
and more, let's, ~~less~~ ^{more} action of that more
~~possibility~~.
As here. who follow the leadership of
W. - this is our opportunity to lead the
the new world movement. Let's
before nations. 1916-1921. It's possible