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Europe in 1922 - A Survey, 1922.

LECTURE BY RABBI ABBA H. SILVER.

"EUROPE IN 1922 - A SURVEY."

AT THE TEMPLE, SUNDAY MORNING,

NOVEMBER 5, 1922, CLEVELAND, O.



It is a very difficult thing indeed to attempt to give a survey of Europe in 1922, things are in such constant flux. Just when Europe was getting ready to settle down, to get to work to reconstruct itself, Kemal Pasha drives the Greeks into the sea. The repercussion of that upheaval in the East was heard in London, and Lloyd George is cast into outer darkness, and fast upon the heels of these events the Fascisti, the Black Shirts, carry out a little revolution of their own in Italy. Cabinets fall, new leaders arise, new issues emerge, and Europe is in a turmoil again.

It is four years now since that beneficent treaty of Versailles, whose manipulators have all been relegated now to deserved and merited obscurity, and everything in Europe is still in a state of unrest and uncertainty. There is nothing certain in Europe today except one thing, and that is the decline in money; that is as steady and certain as fate. The monetary values are plunging downward. It seems today as if the mark and the kronen and the ruble were running a race to see which one can reach the goal of nothingness first.

The mark used to be worth something like twenty-four cents; you can buy sixty of them now for a penny; and you can buy six hundred kronen for a penny; and you can make as many rubles as you want for a penny. Concerning the ruble a story has just come out of Russia. It would be funny if it were not too tragic. Now that the new economic policy

has been established in Russia profit and speculation is permitted. A man bought five wagonloads of nails in the Ural mountains for the purpose of trade and took them to Moscow and sold them in Moscow for a considerable profit. He went back to the Urals and tried to buy some nails and he could only buy three wagonloads for all the money plus the profit; he bought them and went back to Moscow and sold the three wagonloads for a tremendous profit, and with all the money he had he returned to the Urals to buy some more nails, and he found now he could purchase only one wagonload, which he did and took the one wagonload back to Moscow and sold it at an exorbitantly tremendous profit; but he was delayed one week in returning to the Urals. When he returned he found he could buy for all his money just one nail, and so he drove the nail into the wall and hanged himself.

This thing is certain, then,--the downward plunge of money, falling as the stone falls, with accelerating velocity; and that is bringing Europe to the verge of bankruptcy. Because when half of Europe is compelled to declare itself bankrupt, it means simply this: that it cannot buy the things it needs for life and sustenance, and it will starve and it will suffer, and when that half of Europe cannot buy, the other half which is still solvent will be unable to sell, and it will begin to experience soon the tragedy of unemployment and bread lines and suffering.

Perhaps there is still one other fact that is certain, as one stands in full purview of Europe today, and

that is that Europe has learned absolutely nothing from the war. Europe today is like the old Bourbons, who learn nothing and forget nothing. If Europe is not at war today in 1922, it is not due to any idealism or any altruism or any moral lessons which it learned out of the suffering of the war; it is not at war today because it is exhausted. Had that recent Turkish affair transpired in 1913 or 1914 the whole of Europe would be in the midst of a conflagration today.

Nowhere was the stubbornness of heart of the European statesmen, and their cynicism and their utter, utter blindness to the lessons of the war,--I say nowhere are these facts so much in evidence as in this affair between Turkey and Greece. You have read a great deal in your papers about the war between Turkey and Greece--the war between the Mohammedans and the Christians, and you were told a great deal about the atrocities of the unspeakable Turks, their greed, their rapacity, their lust for conquest, how they would some day threaten the whole of Europe; and then men began to speak of this war as a struggle between barbarism and civilization, the same as the last war.

Well, the fact of the matter is this: that this war in the East which threatened to bring the whole of Europe into its scope was fostered, initiated, stimulated and kept alive by Christian nations in Europe, and by the two most exemplary representatives of twentieth century Christianity--France and England. England has ambitions to dominate the eastern Mediterranean; and so has France. England is anxious

to weaken the power of the Turk because of the Turk's menace to Mesopotamia and Palestine; but France is anxious to weaken the power of England in the Near East; France does not wish the Mediterranean to become an English lake through the control of Gibraltar and the Suez canal and Constantinople; and England backs Greece in an effort to break the power of Turkey; France backs Turkey in an effort to drive the Greek from Turkish territory, thereby weakening the power and prestige of England.

The war is financed by the allies, and it is said that some of the Turkish troops, at least, fought in American uniform--the uniforms which were sold to France and which France in turn sold, probably at a great profit, to the Turks. And these two nations summoned the world to help against German imperialism and German trade domination of the East; and these two nations taunt us for refusing to enter the League of Nations, when they snap their fingers at the League of Nations, refuse to consult it at all, and carry on a little war of their own in the back yard of Europe, and then tell the world about a struggle between Mohammedanism and Christianity, between civilization and barbarism.

Europe has learned nothing--at least, the statesmen have not. Europe today is afflicted by three kinds of terrors--the red and the white and the black; and the symbols of these terrors are Lenin and Horti and Mussolini, of Italy. Europe today is still in the hectic, frightened, disturbed state, where it moves from one extreme to the other.

Four years ago Europe was afraid of a red tide, of the fervor of revolution, of the domination by the workingclass. Europe today is suspicious of democracy, Europe today is in danger of being strangled by the other type of revolution--the black and the white, the domination of reaction and tyranny. The red revolution has abated; responsibility has sobered the leaders of bolshevism. Russia has gone through a terrible period of suffering. I read where nigh onto twenty-nine percent of men of working age--twenty-nine percent of the whole manpower of Russia--were wiped out by famine, disease, blockade, war, civil war in Russia, during the past few years. I read where one third of the children born in the last eight years in Russia perished.

Russia has gone through the tortures and the agonies of hell, and that has sobered the leaders of sovietism. Bolshevism as such is dead in Russia today. Communism is dead. I say that not in a spirit of glowing satisfaction at all. It may be that communism died because it was too good for the people; it may have been too high an ideal to be realized; it may be that it is inherently weak and unsound. But the fact is that there is no communism in Russia today.

The attempt to nationalize land was given up very early. It was found that the peasant--and the peasant constitutes eighty-five per cent of the population of Russia--loves his soil with a passionate love which craves for proprietorship, for ownership; that the instinct to own, to call a thing one's own, could not be driven out by any manifesto or

any proclamation; and it was found that as long as the peasant did not feel that that parcel of land was his in perpetuity, his to hand down to his children, that the peasant would till just enough to supply him with food and sustenance and no more, so that there was no surplus to be sent to the working population in the industrial centers of Russia, and hence there was starvation.

And so theoretically while the land is still in the ownership of the state in Russia, practically and for all intents and purposes the man who tills the soil possesses it in full and in perpetuity. And then the soviet authorities likewise discovered that initiative cannot be kept alive in a communistic state. Rightly or wrongly, morally or immorally, that is a fact; and they learned that fact after every attempt to unlearn it had been made.

It was found that if Russia is to develop economically, industrially, commercially, that opportunity must be given to individuals, to the individual man to exercise his initiative and to be rewarded for the exercise of his gifts and talents. And so they introduced what is now known as the new economic policy, which permits profit, bidding, exchange, barter, private banking, in fact, all the paraphernalia of capitalism in a slightly modified form.

There is growing up in Russia today a bourgeoisie, a middle class, which is consolidating itself, and will before very long be a very vital factor in the political life of Russia. So that Russia, given help and

opportunity, will soon evolve into a strong, fine industrial democracy. The more prosperity Russia will enjoy during the coming years the less of bolshevism it will have. And that, of course, vindicates our position which we maintained with regard to Russia ever since the Bolshevik revolution of 1917.

I said then, as I say now, kill bolshevism with love, kill bolshevism with justice, with helpfulness. You can't kill it with "beneficent" blockades and fastidious aloofness, such as this country is attempting to do. The red terror has abated and a new terror is now afflicting Europe--the white terror. Germany is a republic, but the republic of Germany is in constant menace of the reactionary forces that are determined to overthrow it.

Germany today is faced with the possibility of a civil war; and these Junker element, the powerful magnates and industrialists of Germany--all the privileged classes who suffered through the revolution of the establishment of the republic, are determined to use every means, fair and foul, to undermine it and to destroy it. The German Nationalist party is sworn for the destruction of the German republic.

During the last two years three hundred and fourteen political assassinations took place in Germany, culminating in the tragic death of the one man who was perhaps able to lead Germany out of the darkness of night, out of bankruptcy--Rathenau. The White Terror is sweeping over Germany; a separatist movement has been established in Bavaria, looking to the time when the republic will collapse

and the monarchy will be restored.

I think it might be well here to say this: that the insistence of the Allies, and more especially the insistence of France, upon reparations--the uncompromising, unyielding demand of France to force Germany to pay an immense sum at this time is embarrassing the hands of German republicans and is strengthening the hands of the German monarchists; and it may well be that should this constant threat of impossible reparations hang over the republic, and should France carry out its threat to use force, the republic will collapse and another monarchy will be established in Germany and the whole purpose of the war will be defeated, even though the war was won by the Allies.

The White Terror has swept over Hungary. Hungary has to its credit today five thousand political murders. Admiral Horti is the head of a gang of assassins in Hungary. Liberalism has been stifled; the press has been suppressed; labor unions have been shut down; those who are responsible for liberal views are put into prison camps and tortured, and it is a very common sight to have mangled bodies whose eyes have been torn out fetched out of the waters of the Danube. That is the White Terror; that is carried on in the name of law and order.

And now comes the Black Terror in Italy. The Fascisti are a motley crowd. It is difficult to say now who they are. One thing is certain: they are the sworn enemies of and socialism and communism and labor movements of all kinds of

liberal expressions. They are intensely nationalistic, which means ultimately intensely imperialistic, which means ultimately war. And there is dynamite in the Italian situation today.

Now Europe is troubled and Europe cannot be helped by the Red Terror or the White Terror or the Black Terror. There are two needs that Europe should have today: one is peace, tranquility. We call it here normalcy. And the other is honest money, a dependable medium of exchange of exchange. Now there will be no peace in Europe until the old diplomats are finally and utterly discredited; there will be no peace in Europe until new men with new visions will supplant the old men with the old prejudices; there will be no peace in Europe until the masses of the people and the thinking intellectuals in every land will realize that the hope of Europe is to be found not in a perpetuation of national and racial animosities, of trade competitions and rivalries, of extreme revolutionary measures, of force, of suppression, of brutality; the hope of Europe lies in the youth of Europe who may soon come to realize that the path which they have been pursuing in the last four years is leading them to the brink of the abyss, to an utter collapse, to ruin.

And honest money can come to Europe only when the reparation demands are reduced to a minimum compatible with the resources of Germany; honest money can come to Europe only when Russia is opened to the trade of the world; honest money can come to Europe only when trade and tariff

barriers within Europe are removed; honest money can come to Europe only when there is a concerted, universal movement for disarmament--when Europe ceases to be the armed camp which it is.

And these two ends may be furthered by America. America has a claim upon Europe; Europe is in debt to us. We will never collect that debt; it is folly to think that we shall ever collect that debt. We ourselves are making it impossible for Europe to pay us. Europe cannot pay us ten billion dollars in specie, in gold; there is not that much gold in the world. Europe must pay us in commodities, in products. But we do not want Europe to pay us in products. That is why we put up a high tariff wall; we do not want our markets glutted and flooded with cheap European products. But if we do not permit the European nations to pay us in commodities, how else are they to pay it? It is a very simple problem, almost an axiom, which we somehow refuse to see.

But in spite of the fact that Europe will not pay us, this claim we have on Europe places a powerful tool in our hands to exercise a beneficent influence upon the affairs of a disturbed and troubled Europe. I do not mean that we should entangle ourselves in the detailed political and racial problems of Europe, but I do mean that we can insist, that we have the power, the financial and the moral power to insist that the European nations disarm; that Russia be thrown open to the trade of the world; that irritating and

oppressive trade barriers within Europe be removed, and that the reparation bill be reduced to a minimum. If we do that we shall help Europe; we shall help humanity.

One word about the condition of our own people in Europe. The charge has been made that the Jews made the war. Well, if that is true the war has unmade the Jew in Europe. Never, since the Dark Ages, never, since the vile-ness and the viciousness of the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries, has Europe witnessed such a universal, such a ^{with} venomous, such a brazenly shamelessness, anti-Jewish propaganda and passion as it is witnessing today.

Three hundred years ago Europe was in darkness, mental and spiritual, and there may have been some excuse for it--ignorance. But today the source and fountainhead of this vileness and viciousness are not the low classes, the working classes, but the higherclass, the middle class, the aristocracy, the nobility, the governing classes; the student classes, the universities, the halls of learning; and churches, the places where the God of love is worshipped. Go through Germany today and you will find tens of thousands of people carrying in their lapels a swastika, a hooked cross, with the inscription "Death to the Jews!"

And the awakening Magyars in Hungary are sworn to a program of pogroms. Rathenau was killed not by an individual assassin but by an organization of the German Nationalist party, and the men who assassinated him were almost children--boys. The oldest was twenty-two and the youngest

was seventeen years old. The whole youth of Germany has been poisoned; its minds have been poisoned by this iniquitous propaganda on the part of the discredited Junker elements, who use anti-Semitism as a tool to disturb the German republic and to effect its downfall, just as Dreyfuss was used in the early days of this century as a tool on the part of the reactionary and clerical forces to overthrow the French republic.

Germany is afflicted with magazines and newspapers. I came across one called "Die Sturm," printed in Hamburg, which gives a list of the Jewish butchers, and alongside of that a list of the Christian children which they butchered! Now it has reached a state of viciousness unparalleled in the annals of civilized nations. Hungarian highschools are now closed. And do you know why? Because the Hungarian students in the high schools, like their older brothers in the universities, do not want any Jews to attend high schools, and so riots take place daily; and the authorities, in self-defense, had to shut down the schools. I read where Professor Kuntz, professor of economics in Budapest, was attacked by the very students to whom he was lecturing in the classes and ejected.

England today has its Belloc and its Chesterton; Italy has its representatives. These are sad times for our people who were supposed to have made this war in order to put themselves in power. There is one consolation in the midst of it all; to me a great consolation; and it is this:

that wherever these things take place you will find, upon examination, that the forces back of these things are the forces that are the enemies not alone of the Jew but of all progress. Whether it be the Junker in Germany, or the awakening Magyar in Hungary, or the Fascisti in Italy, or the Tory in England, or the aristocrat in Poland, you will find that they are the pledged enemies of all liberalism, of all progress, of all human freedom. And they hate the Jew and fight the Jew because the Jew has been and is today and will continue by the grace of God to be identified with the movements, all movements everywhere, that make for emancipation, for expansion, for enlightenment, for freedom, for increased opportunities for the children of mankind.

And that is our immemorable task, is it not? That is the heroic destiny of our race, is it not? Through our stripes, that the world may be helped through our stripes. He suffered for our sins; the chastisement of the world was upon Him. We have been chosen, for weal or woe, the burden bearers of mankind, and we, by our sweat of body and soul and the blood of our sons and daughters, are paying, as we always have paid, for every forward move that mankind has made. And we are not doing it in a spirit of resentment, of vindictiveness or anger.

I read this letter that the mother of Rathenau sent to the mother of one of the men who assassinated her son. And tears came to my eyes, for I saw in it not alone the magnificent forgiveness of a woman, not alone the magnificent

soul of a Jewish woman, but I saw in it the magnificent attitude of the whole race that is today facing a world that is blinded with passion and hate.

The mother of Rathenau writes to the mother of Teschow these simple lines: "In the deepest grief I extend my hand to you--you, the most pitiable of all women. Tell your son I forgive him in the name and in the spirit of my murdered son. May God forgive him, too, if he makes an full an open confession before the earthly tribunal and repents before God. Had he known my son (there is the pride of the mother that speaks), rather than help to assassinate a man who always strove for the best, he would have turned the weapon upon himself. May these lines bring peace to your soul."

That is how we are going to face the world; and if conquest is our mission and destiny in the world, that is how we are going to conquer the world--not the physical things of the world, not its treasures and its wealth and its possessions--we shall conquer its soul with the love of God and the service of the world.

We shall conquer the world with this spirit of self-sacrificing loyalty and devotion that remains constant and fervid within us. We shall conquer the world for truth, for justice, for freedom, for love, for brotherhood--for God!

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