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Shall America Help Europe and How?, 1922.

LECTURE BY RABBI ABBA H. SILVER.

SUBJECT: SHALL AMERICA HELP EUROPE, AND HOW?

AT THE TEMPLE, SUNDAY MORNING,

DECEMBER 24, 1922, CLEVELAND, O.

WRHS

AMERICAN JEWISH
ARCHIVES



JOSEPH T. KRAUS
Shorthand
Reporter
CLEVELAND

Should America help Europe? It is quite clear to me that if America will help Europe it will be not as a matter prompted by an obligation, except as an obligation that any individual or any group of individuals has towards some one or some people in distress. We are not duty bound to help Europe. Recently Mr. Balfour, of England, rather disingenuously implied in a letter he published that the United States is morally bound to assume the responsibilities for all of the European mess, that the initiative in remedying the conditions abroad should, by right, be taken by the United States; and that marvelous old man, perhaps the most dramatic figure in the world today--Clemenceau--who visited our shores recently, implied, diplomatically enough, that America ought to return to Europe, that we, in a sense, betrayed Europe by leaving it in the lurch.

I am rather inclined to resent these implications made by diplomats, and the accusations made by the foreign press. We have no responsibility to Europe other than the responsibility that one man has to another one who is in need. The European war was not of our making. Whoever the immediate cause of the war may have been, it is quite clear that it is an achievement of European diplomacy. It was the result of years and decades of intriguing, of imperialistic rivalries, of struggles for spheres of influence in the Balkans, in the Near East, in Mesopotamia. It was European in its conception and in its execution.

America came into the war when our rights were invaded, and when Prussianism, by its ruthless disregard for the rights of other peoples, proved to us that it was a menace to civilization, which we were equally bound to help crush; and we did. We sent three millions of our men abroad and we brought back sixty thousand of our sons slain and a quarter of a million of our sons wounded; we spent profusely billions of our wealth; we gave unstintingly of ourselves. When the war was over and the victors were dividing the spoils, grabbing everything in sight--and everything out of sight--when England took the German navy and the German merchant marine as a gift, and England and France and Japan divided up the whole of the German colonial possessions--vast stretches of territory, the United States neither claimed nor received a farthing of money or an inch of territory.

The United States graciously relinquished any claim upon the defeated enemy. All that the United States asked for was a lasting peace, which, of course, it did not get. Before the war, during the war and after the war, the United States spent hundreds of millions of dollars on foreign relief--Belgian relief, French relief, Italian relief; there was not a cry of distress that we did not hearken to.

So that I believe it is rather unfair, to say the least, to accuse us of selfishness and lack of humanitarianism when we insist upon collecting debts contracted in good

faith and given by American taxpayers, who assumed that these debts were being contracted for in good faith. And surely Europe of all places, and the European lands of all lands, should be the last on earth to preach today about generosity and humanitarianism and selfishness, for they do not know even the surface meanings of these words.

It is quite clear, to my mind, that Europe is not yet ready for American help; and if you need proof of this fact the affairs in the Near East during the past few months provide ample evidence. With France on the verge of bankruptcy, and England in sore economic distress, with vast unemployment and great suffering, with both nations heavily in debt, just recovering from the most terrible, most destructive war in history, they nevertheless proceed gaily to embark upon another bellicose adventure in the hinterland of Europe--in the Near East--a sort of a side show.

France and England engage in a war, but they use other peoples as their tools, as their pawns. France uses Turkey and England uses Greece; and these two nations were goaded on and urged on and supplied with arms and ammunition and diplomatic assistance in their struggle by these two nations--just three and a half years after the signing of the armistice.

We are now told that in August of this year King Constantine and the Greeks were ready to retire from Anatolia, where they never belonged in the first place; and Lloyd George, this great humanitarian, advised the Greeks not to

retire, but to stay on and defend Smyrna--because the English were interested in keeping the Turks out of Smyrna; and the Greeks stayed on until they were driven into the sea by the conquering hordes of the Turks, and thousands and tens of thousands of human lives were sacrificed in this cavalier and irresponsible fashion.

I say that Europe is not yet ready for American help. There is enough chicanery and trickery and scheming going on today in the Lausanne conference to brew a half a dozen wars. The European nations have not yet that chastened mood which will enable them to face realities. Europe is still seething with the passions of war and pre-war intrigues and plots and counterplots.

We are asked to cancel our debt, and yet England, in spite of its protestations and generous gestures, has not yet cancelled its debts. Nor has England relinquished its claim upon German reparations, and France has not yet signified her readiness to scale down German reparations to a point where Germany could pay. And Germany is artificially inflating its currency so that it will never be able to pay this preposterous reparations bill.

What good will come to Europe if we cancel our debt at once? This will happen: the American taxpayer will finance European armies and European navies and European wars. There is today, in the year 1922, a million more men under arms in Europe than there were in 1913. Europe today is spending annually two billions of dollars on its armies and

its navies. And Europe is supposed to be at peace! Before the war there was a German menace; before the war there was a balance of power which necessitated competitive armaments. Now Germany is destroyed and crushed utterly, and for another generation it will not figure as a military power, and yet in spite of it the heavily burdened, economically distressed European taxpayers are compelled to pay their governments two billions of dollars annually to support armies and navies.

France today has the largest army in the world, and is spending more money than any nation in the world upon its army; and it is a most interesting and significant fact that France has not yet signed the Washington pact for the limitation of naval armaments. Do you recall how we welcomed the Washington Conference, the high hopes and prospects we held out for it? It was ushering in a millennium; battleships were to be scrapped and naval competitive armament was to be stopped. Well, nothing of the kind happened. Not a battleship has been scrapped, and our naval bill for the year 1923 will be even larger than our naval bill for the year 1922.

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In September of this year Lord Robert Cecil, who is chairman of the Committee on Reduction of Armaments in the League of Nations, brought in the report of the committee, in which they urged the nations of Europe to reduce their land forces to the level of 1913--a very modest request. And like all these requests, it remained a pious wish; for

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the whole League of Nations seems to be a white-winged bit of innocence in a den of thieves--utterly helpless.

Should the United States help Europe? Yes, but wisely. It should not give the kind of help that the European diplomats are craving for, so that they will be able to carry out their nefarious purposes. It should help the European peoples to help themselves. Call a conference, by all means. Conferences are always helpful. But let this be quite clear in the minds of the European statesmen--and in our own minds--that no conference will ever succeed in the least unless there is an honest resolve and determination on the part of the leaders and statesmen of Europe to come clean to this conference.

The United States is ready to help Europe, it is willing to help Europe, it must help Europe. We no longer speak of our isolation. Even the Republican party, which sailed into power on the program of refraining from entangling alliances, is now ready to intervene in some form or another in European affairs. And even Borah--that brave, independent spirit of the Senate, one of the irreconcilables that defeated the Versailles Treaty--and wisely so--is now frightened into asking for an economic conference to help solve the frightful muddle in Europe, that is driving the peoples of Europe to the brink of collapse and bankruptcy.

The United States no longer speaks of isolation, for we all know that we have tremendous interests abroad; we have a vast trade, we have vast money investments abroad,

not to speak of a higher interest which we have in the establishment of peace and justice in the world. I am not a chauvinist, and I do not believe in exalting my people and my nation when it is wrong, but this is true--and it will redound to its everlasting glory--that three of the major efforts of its life during the past one hundred years--the three wars of the American people--were struggles for liberation; wars prompted not by selfishness and not by lust for power, but a desire to serve, to free itself or to free other peoples. Our Revolutionary War and our Civil War and this World War were, to my mind, proofs supreme of that latent idealism in the soul of America. We are not yet old enough to be cynical. Thank God we still have the warmth and the vision of youth to be ready to pour out the precious blood of our lives for the sake of ideals. bey
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We stand ready to help Europe as we stood ready five years ago to help Europe. But to help it how? The initiative, of course, must come from abroad. The nations of Europe must resolve, first of all, to live within their means; and that will necessitate a drastic, a radical reduction of armaments. That, to my mind, is a crucial point. First, as an economic measure, and, secondly, as a measure to safeguard civilization. Armaments must be reduced to the absolute minimum abroad and here. No great armies and no great navies have ever, ever brought about peace in the world. (Do not permit yourself to be stampeded into any such opinions. Vast armies and navies imply mp
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terrific rivalries, which in turn lead to war--at all times, in the past, in the present and in the future.

There is no menace in Europe today which should justify two billions of dollars spent annually upon armies. But you will hear French statesmen and wise British statesmen tell you, "Why, there is Russia, there is that terrible bolshevik menace in the East which threatens to inundate the peaceful lands of Western Europe and destroy throne and altar and bring about the collapse of civilization."

It is all balderdash; it is all lies and falsehoods. At the Genoa conference, and again at the Hague conference, the representatives of soviet Russia offered to reduce its armies provided the allied nations would do likewise. And they were met with furious opposition. Why, it was sacrilege, it was heresy to speak of such a thing! *Begin*

Armaments must be reduced to enable the European peoples to live within their means, and these billions of dollars put into productive enterprises to help in the economic reconstruction. And then Germany must be made to realize that its finance must be controlled and organized in such a way as to compel her to pay her just debts. (Germany must spend for the restoration of France, because Germany is guilty of a great sin.) Germany devastated northern France and Germany must help to rebuild what it destroyed.

The industrialists of Germany, the vast capitalists of Germany, are not so eager to have the mark rise, because by inflating the mark they are enabled to sell their

competitors abroad, especially England. They pay their workingmen in a worthless German mark, but they get for their exports very valuable moneys, and so they have, during the past year or two, manipulated the currency of Germany to such a point where the mark has become almost worthless on the exchange.

Now, if Germany wants help, and the United States should help Germany, Germany must likewise clean house. The reparations bill was stupid from the day it was presented. We knew it was an impossible thing. The reparations bill must be scaled down to a point where Germany can pay. The United States, through its representatives in Paris, suggested that the German reparations bill be something like twelve and a half billions of dollars, which is a sum that Germany perhaps can pay; but England and France insisted to have included in that bill pensions which they would have to pay the families of their soldiers, and so the bill was raised from twelve and a half billions to thirty-five billions of dollars, a perfectly impossible and preposterous figure.

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England and not the United States should take the initiative in cancelling debts. Continental Europe owes England some eight billions of dollars. Most of it is worthless, because those nations cannot pay England if they cannot collect German reparations, and not being able to collect German reparations they cannot pay England. England should first cancel its debt and relinquish its claim upon German reparations. I say England should take the

initiative because England is primarily concerned with the revival of Germany. England is suffering today because England cannot sell its products in Germany and because Germany is underselling England in every market of the world, and it is vital to the prosperity of the English people that Germany be put on its feet again. England, therefore, must take the initiative. *Byin*

There must be a balancing of budgets all around; there must be a removal of trade barriers all around; there must be an earnest, honest effort on the part of these peoples to help themselves; there must be an earnest, honest effort to help Russia. The European nations must help Russia, and they can help Russia. They need Russia. Not so much because they need the agriculture of Russia (because they need the yield of the field and the forest and the mine--the production of Russia) but because they need the consumption of Russia's two hundred millions of people. If they can pay for food and for machinery and for the things they need, they can keep all the mills and factories and looms of Europe busy.

This stupid political scheming which has isolated Russia has brought untold misery not alone upon the peoples of Russia but upon the peoples of the whole of Europe. */ stop end.* When an earnest effort is made to do these things on the part of the peoples of Europe themselves, then the United States can do and undoubtedly will do its share.

I believe that the United States ought to cancel *[initials]*

the debts of the peoples of continental Europe. I believe that the United States ought to cancel the debt of France, and ought to cancel the debt of Italy, and ought to cancel the debts of the smaller nations. In the first place, these peoples will never be able to pay. They can pay only in commodities and in goods, and we do not want their goods and their commodities, because if they were to pour their goods into our country our mills and factories would be closed down. And we cannot force them to pay.

It would perhaps help France and tempt France to be more compromising and generous in its demands upon Germany if we would say unto France, "Your debt is cancelled." We might even come to an understanding with England about the five billions of dollars which England owes us. England can pay. English statesmen have said that England can pay. Mr. McKenna, at the last bankers' meeting in New York, stated that England can pay. England has enough investments in the United States to pay its entire debt to America. But the United States ought to be generous even there, for the English taxpayer and the English workingman is terribly, terribly burdened today.

This is clear to my mind: that the United States will never think of extending a loan of a billion or a billion and a half or two billions of dollars to Germany at the present time under present conditions, when these moneys, taken from American taxpayers, will be used not to help Germany but to pay the reparation bill of Germany to France.

In other words, that we, having spent twenty-two billions of dollars in this war, and having won the war, will now pay our Allies the reparations which the enemy that we defeated has to pay, and in turn we receive worthless paper for the honest moneys of our working people.

These conditions are met with by the European peoples, and a consistent effort is made to pick themselves out of this mire into which they have thrust themselves; and the United States, in keeping with its fine tradition of humanitarianism, will do the utmost to help Europe.

What Europe needs today, men and women--and this thought comes to my mind at this Christmas season--is a little of the spirit of Christmas, the spirit of their religion, and the spirit of their Master. Europe has never given Christianity a chance; Europe has never tried Christianity. Europe has professed Christianity for two thousand years, and has built magnificent churches and cathedrals to express the faith of the Master of Christianity; but Europe in its life and in its practice and in its ambitions has never been faithful, not for a moment, to the spirit of the religion it professed; a religion which demands, first of all, "Love thy enemy"--to forgive those who sin against thee; a religion of forgiveness, a religion of love, a religion of pacifism---for the Master of Christianity was a pacifist if there ever was a pacifist upon the earth. "If a man strikes thee on one cheek, turn the other." "And if he robs thee of thy cloak, give him thy outer garment likewise."

"Resist not evil." It is a religion which preached self-denial, a religion which preached communism; for the Master and the early disciples of Christianity were communists in the highest and truest sense of the word. They did not believe in wealth, and they did not believe in possessions, and they did not believe in private ownership, and they did not believe in competitive industry.

European peoples profess this faith but have never attempted to practice it; and when one European nation of two hundred millions of people actually tried, nineteen hundred and twenty years after the birth of this great ideal, to put a bit of it into practice, rightly or wrongly, these Christian nations, instead of rejoicing with the experiment, turned against it viciously, determined to destroy it.

I do not believe that the teachings of pacifism or of communism, the intrinsic teachings of the founder of Christianity, are sound or practical. They are not Jewish. But Christianity accepted them and Christianity preached them from the pulpit for two thousand years; and Christian Europe has never, never attempted to put any one of these teachings into practice. And so we had this last terrible cataclysm, and so we will have other wars that will engulf the whole of mankind. Because there is this dichotomy, this splitting, this partition in the soul of every European people, in profession and practice, in theory and reality. There is no unity of soul there, because they have not permitted their religion and their faith actually, vitally, really to

dominate their lives and to control their actions.

I am in full harmony with the spirit of the head of that great Catholic Church, who today, in his letter to his followers and his disciples, said that what the European peoples need today is a return to the spirit of their faith and their Master whom they worship and before whom they bend their knees.

If at any time forgiveness and love and mercy and compassion and sympathy and a desire for mutual helpfulness is vitally needed, burningly needed in the world, it is now; for Europe is sick unto death. From the head unto its foot there is not a whole spot in Europe. Economic gangrene has set in in the body politic of Europe which is corrupting and eating away its body and soul.

Europe needs a new heart and a new faith. I do not know that it will get it. But this I do know: that until such time as it does get it, until such time as there is a quick, sharp, definite reversal of policy at right about face in its attitudes, in its mutual relationships, so long will Europe be sick and broken. The Poincares and the Clemenceaus and the Balfours and the Mussolinis will not help Europe. They are of the school wherein wars are conceived and planned and executed. They are the old ravens croaking over the battlefields of a mangled and torn world.

New men with new visions and new hopes and new sympathies and new ideas are needed in the world today; and

they have not yet come, and until they come America
cannot help Europe, because Europe must, first of all,
help itself.

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Sermon
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ABBA HILLEL SILVER, RABBI
THE TEMPLE

The Temple, Cleveland

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1323 WEST NINTH STREET

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1. Should Am. help.

- ① Not an obligation.
- ② Balfour - Clemenceau.
- ③ Resent - war not our making -
- ④ asked for nothing - Allies took all -
- ⑤ Foreign Relief.
- ⑥ unfair to call desire to collect - Selfish
- ⑦ Europe has no call to lecture -

2. Just clear Europe not yet ready for Am. help.

- ① chartered movement - see thing
- ② War East Tragedy - In face of Econ. dis. etc. embarked on it -
- ③ August, Lloyd George - Anatolia - Constantinople - actual call for war.
- ⑤ Belgium to help this side shows -
- ⑥ Fausse - chitany - another war -
- ⑦ Europe not yet cancelled debt nor reparation

5 - But How?

- ① Initiative from abroad. Cow Chan.
- ② Live within their income.
- ③ Uli samment, 2 billion put to use.
no Menace, Russia.
- ④ Germany - must submit. Industries
① must pay for recon. - guilty
~~② Gos - industrial - ret. - the~~
- ⑤ Reparation, U.S. = 12 1/2 billion
Revisions - 7. Eng - 356
- ⑥ Eng. must take initiative in
Cancellation - German recovery
- ⑦ Balance budget - renewal Trade
barriers -
- ⑧ Russia -

⑧ No France - unpardonable - German inflation
of currency - making for bankruptcy

3 - Cancellation - 12 billion - what would it do?

① France vast armies troops of Algeria

② 1 million - 2 billion - In fact Econ.
ruin -

③ France - largest army - no enemies -

④ Washington has not yet ratified

⑤ U.S. to spend more in 1923 & 1922

⑥ Sept. 26, 1922 and Robert Cecil -

4. - Should U.S. help? yes wisely -

① no longer speak of Isolation

② Jaeger

③ Higher interests 3 wars not
old enough to be cynical -

I should. Not an obligation - except
as it is oblig. of any one to help me
in distress.

1. Recently Balfour, & disingenuously,
Clemenceau diplomatically ~~debat~~ im-
plied that we are duty bound, bec. of
forced position, wealth, to cancel
debts, & thereby, the marked stress of
depl. Europ. conditions.

(2) Am. may well resent this. (a)
was not of our making - Am. not responsible,
& infernal - Hallam, Thurgood

(b) Entered when our rights were invaded
by Germany - when Prussianism bound
us as absolute force in evil. (c) We
lost 3 million men abroad - we lost
100,000 slaves & 1/4 million wounded.

(d) When peace was made we asked not
for a farthing of repara, as with
Germany. Engl. lost for. Many thousands
maimed, & lost for. col. France re-
sounded also in ruins, & germ. colonies.

(e) We spent 100,000 million before we
entered war & during times of relief
Belgium, Fr. Italian etc -

(3) We asked for justice, fair treatment

of common enemy - We did not get it.

- ④ It is unfair to wish that our
desire to collect debts, undertaken in
good faith, advanced by American payers
in the process that these be paid -
should be branded as penny-pinches,
selfishness, lack of humanitarianism.
- ⑤ Europe ^{of all countries} has no call to lecture other
nations about the saving face of
government and human - for they
don't seem to understand even
the simple meaning of these terms.

II. It is quite clear that Europe is
not yet ready for Am. help or Am.
intervention. - It is not yet in
the chartered round to face reality.
It is still reeling with the passions
of war & post-war intrigues.

- ① War East Tragedy - In face
of Fin. on verge of bank. Br. terribly
Econ. distress & unemployment -
Embark upon speculation in Asia
Minor - cutting 10,000,000,000,000!
② Post August-freak, opened to
Evacuate Anathema. F. & Europe

sent back and sending fleets
to hold up Turkish Army outside
Smyrna + preventing subbut
thousands of useless deaths
Vlode + L. George's collapse—

③ When Turks threatened to invade
Europe - Europe was actually pre-
paring for another war! —

④ I suppose we are to recruit 5
billions to Eng - our taxpayers to
bear burden of it - to enable it
to carry on this war in its
hinterland of Europe -

⑤ There is enough of debt, chicanery
+ scheming going on in Sansam
to-day - relations to Europe +
Asia, and the oil fields of Persia
+ the Caucasus - to embroil the
world in another war! —

⑥ It is well to note, that Eng. with
all its pretensions - has not yet re-
mitted the 8 billions which the
Cont. countries owe her - and
has given up claim to German
reparations, upon which L. G.

invested, and which he purchased
the M. Electra;

⑦ He has fr. yielded on all his
unprintable demands. Demands
which fr. cannot meet, & which
fr. is determined, thus anticipated
inflation & currency & currency
banks. not to pay.

III. What would cancellation of '2
billion & debt on our part effect
other than.

① Finance the West armies
& navies & the allies.

② Europe to-day has 1 million
men under arms more than 1914.
Spending 2 billions on its armies
& navies annually. -

③ Fr. spends more than any nation
in the world on Army! With no
one to fear for a generation to come.

④ Let get rippled Washington
Conference Agreement. Let One
billion has been reached

The U.S. is spending more money
this year on its navy than
last year - 205 millions of
dollars!

⑤ That is fact of unfolding Econo.
catastrophe! -

⑥ On Sept. 16, 1922, Lord Robert
Gecil - Reductio in Absurdum. Com.
Banned nations to reduce to
1913 level - Mexico with like
the League itself - a white winged
angel lost in den of thieves!

IV. Should the U.S. help Europe? Yes.
but wisely - Help people - Help them
not as their diplom. blindly would
be helped in their nefarious pur-
sues.

① We no longer speak of isolation.
Even Repub Party that sailed into
power on this basis has given
it up. Wittens our unofficial
observer at Sansone
Ern Brach - that Wicewick
who defeated Treaty of Ver. is

no frightened into asking for another World Econ. Conf. at Wash. any time —

① We cannot with equanimity see Europe go to perdition — on our hunt. Our body, you cannot have sympathy set in in our heart & respect us & body to escape.

② Tremendous foreign trade. Repurchases & income abroad.

③ Any future Eur. conflict will engulf us again!

④ And our higher interests prompt us, too. It is to our lasting credit that if major war ever was not for selfishness.

Rev. (2) Civil (3) Spanish (1)

World War — We are not yet old enough to be quarantined

Yes But How!

① Initiative must come from abroad. They must open doors.

② Attempt to live without their recourse

③ Disarmament to Ministers.

no excuse now. Germany is crushed!
Has no army. Will not have!
No menace. Russian menace
gone! At Fiume + Hague R.
offered to disarm - + allies
regarded furiously at such sancti-
mony! — (B) 2 billions cost
annually, by likes of bread &
taxation, + put into new Eu. En-
terprises —

(4) Germany must submit to
close scrutiny + org. of her finances.
No juggling! Industrialists
~~as~~ rather join inflation. Paris
understand in world markets.

(B) must pay reasonable Repa.
for she is guilty! She must re-
construct devastated France.

(5) Reparations paid down to point
of Ger. was ability to pay. U.S.
insisted in Paris 12 1/2 billions
- reasonable. Fr. Gov. demanded
inclusion of pensions which placed
it up to 135 billions! Eng. as
guilty as Fr. in Repar. affairs!

⑥ Eng. must take initiative in
cancell. debts. ① Her debts are
unthinkable. ② Recovery of war
reparations to her Econ. prospects.
Germany is ruining England.
If repar. are not lowered world
will not rise. Repar. will not
be covered if Eng. insists upon
Fr. & Ita. pay up their debts!

⑦ Balancing of budgets, lowering
of trade barriers all around.

⑧ Warning to keep Russia out of it
first - not for her protection - consumption

VI. Then U. S. will help.

① Likely to cancel Tent. Am.
debts. Cannot be collected. Cannot
be collected by force

② Likely to compromise with Eng
on her debt to Am. for Eng -
can pay. Her own states men
have said so. Rep. under McClellan
former Chancellor of Exchequer
- Eng. has enough commitments in
U.S. to pay debt -

③ U.S. will never make a
loan to Germany - before there

terms are met. Money to be
used to pay Allies' Repar. So
that we, having spent 22 billions
in war, will now also have to pay
the enemies repara. bill, & yet
in return worthless paper!

VII. A Conference by all means
always desirable.

① But, Allies should first
declare challenges to come
clean. The Conf. will not last
longer than the Hague, like
last London Conf. in 1911!

VIII. Let Europe say Christmas
quit - stop Christmas &
Chances! They haven't for 2000
years!

① Europe must save itself!