



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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Some things I learned in Europe, 1933.

ABSTRACT OF ADDRESS DELIVERED BY DR. ABBA HILLEL SILVER AT THE TEMPLE, ANSEL
AND EAST 105TH STREET ON SUNDAY MORNING, OCTOBER 22ND, 1933.

MORE THINGS I LEARNED IN EUROPE

The line is very sharply drawn in Europe today for the oncoming fight to a finish between Democracy and Dictatorship and between Facism and Bolshevism.

For more than one hundred years, both Capitalism and Socialism have been content to develop these within the Democratic society. Each was confident that it could obtain its maximum objective within the Democratic framework.

Within the last generation and particularly since the war it has become clear that both were largely mistaken. Years before the war, government had to interfere and restrict the freedom of private Capitalism by social legislation to protect workers from exploitation. When the Capitalistic Economics Program broke down following the World War, government had to step still further in and take control of the economic situation, and government is everywhere falling more and more into the hands of the working classes, because they had the numerical strength. Labor, Socialist and Capitalist parties were everywhere in ascendancy. Capitalism, thus hard pressed, turned anti-Democratic or Facist. Thus the whole meaning of Facism when boiled down to its quintessence. Facism is Capitalism embattled and is fighting what it now regards as its deadliest foe, Democracy.

The Facist war upon Democracy is not an item on its program. It is the program and the dictatorship which it sets up is not ad-interim ~~xxx~~, but must, by its very purpose, be permanent.

The militant wing of Socialism came to regard Democracy as its deadliest foe. Democracy maintained it did not hasten but rather retarded Socialism. Lenin scrapped the entire Democratic apparatus quite as ruthlessly and thoroughly as did Mussolini and Hitler.

Militant Capitalism believes that it can save itself by restoring the autocratic system in Europe. The people of Europe have, since the French Revolution,

been taught to think in terms of liberty, fraternity and equality, in terms of man's inalienable rights, the supreme importance of the individual, freedom of thought are now to be re-educated into a revised code of medieval, political and economic concepts. The State is supreme. The individual counts for little. He has no rights other than those which the State wishes to grant him. He must obey unquestioningly the leader which is another name for ruler or the Czar. He must not criticize or express unorthodox views. He must not look ~~manx~~ beyond the frontiers of his country and think in terms of international cooperation. All thought of international peace is treason and cowardice. He must prepare himself to be a brave obedient soldier in the next war. "Woman must exhaust herself," declared Herr Von Papen, "in order to give life to children so that the Fatherland may have strong fighting men."

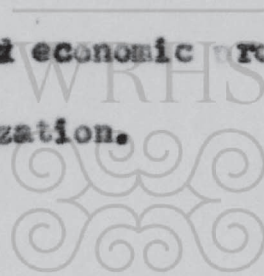
New names have been invented for all this... The "Totalitarian State," the "Corporate State," or "National Concentration." But is nothing more than the stale medieval potage warmed over and spiced with twentieth century propaganda.

But it is immensely popular in Europe today. It is a new form of Feudalism. Feudalism arose in Europe out of just such a sea of chaos, insecurity and bewilderment as Fascism arises from. Democratic governments have failed to give their governments security, peace, work and bread. Millions have lost faith in Parliaments, parties and elections. They want quicker emergency, even desperate action and they are ready to rally around any strong leader who promises to restore prosperity quickly, to bring order out of chaos and who offers to think, plan and act for them. "Pledge me your undying allegiance. Be my vassals and I will protect and help you." That is Feudalism. That too is Fascism.

Between the new opposing armies of ~~xxix~~ Fascism and Bolshevism, bitter and relentless are the Democratic forces of Europe, poorly lead, disheartened, retreating, but still fighting to save all that can be saved for the free life of man.

It is quite possible that the whole of Europe will go Fascist or Communistic, if economic conditions do not improve or if the new competition in arms and the inflated and the rampant militarism lead to another war. The Democratic ideal would then go under and stay under for a long time., and the World War which was to have made the world safe for Democracy will be known in history as the war which made the world safe for Autocracy.

Perhaps the hope of the Democratic ideal today lies in the great historic Democracies of the world, England, France and the United States. The countries which have gone Fascist or Bolshevist never really had a Democratic tradition and never understood the Democratic discipline. Perhaps the great Democratic peoples of the world for whom Democracy has become part of their very life, blood will discover ways of solving ~~and economic problems~~ without destroying the cherished values of Democratic civilization.



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