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What has Happened to the Conscience of the Worlds?, 1938.

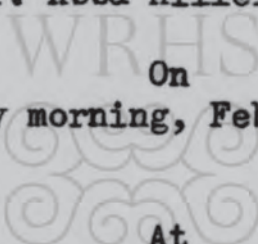
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WHAT HAS HAPPEND TO THE CONSCIENCE OF THE WORLD?  
Some Comments on the International Scene

By  
Dr. Abba Hillel Silver

On  
Sunday morning, February 27, 1938

At  
The Temple



Recent events in the world by way of the sharpened nazification of the Austrian Cabinet, the non-interference on the part of the great democracies of Europe, particularly Great Britain and France and the subsequent crisis which developed in the British Cabinet, climaxed by the resignation of Eden - all these events have brought a sense of complexity and apprehension to the people throughout the world.

A question which one frequently hears and which is, thought not always expressed, in the minds and hearts of all the people throughout the world is "What has happened to the conscience of the world?" Why isn't something done about it? Why do the nations of the world still free permit the steady advance, the augmentation of power and prestige of the anti-democratic, Fascist states of Europe? I suppose the answer to all this is that the conscience of the world today is not only asleep <sup>but</sup> that it is fast sinking into a coma.

I like to read history a great deal, for history enables <sup>get</sup> you to/a better perspective on what is happening before your eyes. It helps you to interpret, to understand that which you are unable to understand otherwise.

What is happening today is exactly what happened in the decade preceding the war of 1914. People think that all the things happening and transpiring before our eyes is unprecedented, something strangely new, something which did not happen before. Actually, everything happening today happened in the years which proved to be the prelude of the World War. Everything - the whole complexity of ideas which were in the minds of people and nations in the decade or two preceding 1914 is again exerting its sway over the minds of men and nations. The same old heresies, the same old unleashed

appetites, the same international lust. There is nothing new, only new faces.

Hitler is no new phenomenon. The things he is proclaiming and ranting over were proclaimed and ranted over by others for many years before those proclamations and those rantings finally drove the peoples of Europe headlong into the disaster of the World War. Some of you may have read the speech which Hitler delivered before the Reichstag last week. He said that "he is willing to make peace with everybody except with the Soviet Union." He implied as he has implied right along that the German Reich has a special mission in the world and that special mission is to save the world from the menace of communism. If you turn back the pages of your history, to 1905, 1910, 1912 and 1914, you will find that the Kaiser said the very same thing with this difference, that there was no communism in those days and some other slogan had to be discovered. And it is not difficult to discover slogans.

The Kaiser announced to the world: "God has called us to civilize the world: We are the missionaries of human progress." "The German people will be the block of granite on which our Lord will be able to elevate and achieve the civilization of the world."

The German people have a mission. Now it is nice to talk about people having a mission. And it is good for a people to think of itself as having a mission, as being possessed of a mission, when the idea of mission implies service and not conquest.

We Jews have been conscious of a mission. Our prophets conceived of the idea of the mission of Israel but it was not a mission to subdue mankind or to extend the political/<sup>hegemony</sup>~~highways~~ of our people over the rest of the world. It was a mission in terms of service.

Israel was to be the servant of God, was to serve God by sacrificing not other people but itself to the service of God. You may recall that magnificent 53rd chapter of Isaiah, where the servant of God was represented as one who endured the mockery and persecution of the world, who humbles himself, who endures the hatred of men for the sake of teaching men the unity of God and the sovereignty of God's moral law. That I can understand. But the mission preached from a Foreign Office through the threats of communism - that is a danger and a curse to the world and that idea of mission the German people conceived in just these terms. They made it very clear to their people and to the world.

You may have forgotten the literature which appeared in the days before the World War. You may have forgotten the following which appeared in a world of Professor Bernhardt. He said:

"The dominion of German thought can only be extended under the aegis of political power, and unless we act in conformity to this idea, we shall be untrue to our great duties towards the human race." In other words, the great duty towards the human race consisted in imposing upon the human race political sovereignty. In either instance, it is either the Kaiser or Hitler who would civilize the world - in either case, it is a cloak for imperialism on the part of a country.

And that same mission idea which is being popularized today by Mr. Hitler was popularized in Germany before 1914. And that same idea - of the superiority of the German folk over other peoples - that is not new for Mr. Hitler. In fact it wasn't new with the Kaiser. It started with the Bismarck era and it has since then poisoned the whole intellectual and emotional life of that people. Have you forgotten what was said by men of the type of Giesebrecht? He said:

"Domination belongs to Germany because it is a superior nation, a noble race, and it is fitting that it should control its neighbors, just as it is the right and duty of every individual endowed with superior intellect and force to control inferior individuals about him."

Of course there is no such thing existing. No person endowed with superior intellect has the right and duty to force and control inferior individuals about him. He has the right to serve, to guide them, to help teach them but not to dominate, control and exploit them. This idea of superiority is used for purposes of exploitation and is again being popularized today as it was then in the tragic days before the World War.

Woltmann said: "The German is the superior type of the homo-sapiens from the physical as well as the intellectual point of view."

Hartmann made this interesting observation: - in view of the attempt made by Hitler, Rosenberg and Goebbels to divide the world in to two classes. Hartmann said: "European family is divided into two races, male and female, of which the first is exclusively German, while the second includes Latins, Celts and Slavs.

You say the anti-Semitic motif had not become so virulent in 1914. Germany in those days set up a ruling as to the races and they proceeded to divide the world, with the inclusion of an anti-Semitic motif, in to classes, the Aryan and the non-Aryan.

Similarly the idea that war is essential in God's scheme for the world" is not new. "The inevitableness, the idealism and the blessing of war, as an indispensable and stimulating law of development, must be repeatedly emphasized." That was said by Bernhardt.

And finally also the idea of the supremacy of the state

and the subordination of the individual. That idea, too, was widespread among these peoples before 1914 and who are planning for it today. It was Treitscke who declared then that "It is the highest moral duty to increase the power of the state. "The Individual must sacrifice himself for the higher community of which he is a member." "The Christian duty of sacrifice does not exist for the State since there is nothing higher than it in the world's history."

I dwell upon this thought because I should like you to understand that these ideas are realizations of a purpose for empire building just as in 1914 it was empire building, in that same area of conflict and friction as in the days before 1914.

Hitler is anxious to absorb Austria not because he is interested in protecting the minority rights of Austria but he is anxious to absorb Austria because that would pave the way of imperial expansion towards the East just as in the pre-war days of 1914, when they spoke of from Berlin to Bagdad.

Why are these dictators permitted to do all this? They are permitted to do all these things because the conscience of the world world is asleep. The conscience of the world/will have its rude awakening only when the guns begin to roar again on the battle-fronts of the world as it did in the days before the World War. That was when they spoke of a new order, when President Wilson proclaimed his Fourteen points, which was a world covenant of nations, an international organization for the sake of establishing international territorial integrity, that was the time when they spoke of reducing and limiting armaments, of compelling peoples to settle international differences peaceably, when they had an organized moral power of nations to bear down on recalcitrant nations.

There were a few years when it looked like the jungle-man was moving out of the jungle, moving towards peace, justice and human understanding. Tragically and unfortunately that period did not last long.

The League of Nations which was built and which might have become a great instrumentality for peace and the pacification of the world was permitted by the great nations which made up the League to lose prestige. The great nations of the earth never permitted that League to gain prestige and power and authority. They used it when it served their purposes, abused it and permitted it to become broken when it no longer served their purposes.

In Parliament, Mr. Chamberlain announced a few days ago that the League was impotent, that the League was unable to protect minorities or smaller nations, therefore it was necessary for Great Britain to evolve a new Foreign Policy to try to preserve peace in Europe. He failed to mention that Great Britain was responsible for making the League weak. He failed to mention that it was the Tory Government of Great Britain for the last five years that did everything to undermine the prestige of this League and who destroyed it.

I put the blame squarely at the doorsteps of Great Britain, not because I absolve France of all blame. France is guided - by policies of England.

I do not complete absolve the United States, because the United ~~States~~ States did not enter. But after all, it did not enter. France did. Great Britain did. Great Britain continued to meddle in the affairs of Europe. The United States did not.

Ever since 1932, when Japan invaded China, when the first test of the strength of the League was made, the outcome of which would

have decided the strength of the League as a powerful instrumentality for order, international law in Europe or the reverse. The first major test was in China. And the League had the authority to determine who was the aggressor, and this pointed unmistakably to Japan, it was up to the League either to use the authority which was vested in it by the terms of the League or to acknowledge to the world that it is just a false front and the nation which decided this for the League was Great Britain.

Great Britain kept the League from moving against Japan. That was the beginning of the end. They now believe that was the blackest day in British diplomacy, I believe the blackest day in European history in one hundred years, because it set in motion a whole line of oppression, a whole line of national gangsterism, racketeering, all the anarchy and chaos in the world today.

Mussolini took his cue from China. If they got away with it, why can't I get away with it in Ethiopia?

If Mussolini got away with it, why couldn't Mr. Hitler get away with it. Why can't he tear up international treaties which he did. And he did get away with it.

The authority of the League continued to decline. Then came the Spanish affair. A legitimate government was attacked by a group of Fascist adventurers who were being financed by Italy and Germany - that government was entitled by all the rules of the world to defend itself. ~~xxx~~ Again Great Britain interfered. She forced upon France a non-intervention policy in Spain. The Popular Front government of France was in sympathy with the Loyalist government of Spain. England forced France to adopt the non-intervention plan whereby necessary implements of war would not be sent into ~~Spain~~ Spain. That was forced

upon France. They knew full well that neither Italy or Germany would live up to that treaty, with the result that the Spanish war is being prolonged.

In the same way/<sup>when</sup>the Japanese made their second attack upon China, which is even now going on, the United States was persuaded or was willing to join some international action to force Japan to get out of China, our President Roosevelt was persuaded or moved to make his famous speech in Chicago. That was to be the preliminary to the Brussels Conference. And again action at the Brussels Conference was stifled by Great Britain.

And now there is Austria and Hitler's rape of Austria with the knowledge, with the consent, some say of the Foreign Office in Great Britain.

Please remember that I am not attacking the British people. I have the highest regard for them. I am attacking the Tory Government of Great Britain. The excuse given was that they were not militarized. That is an excuse, which in my judgment, is not valid.

Great Britain and France, in 1932, together were far more powerful in relation to the would be aggressor than they are today to the same nations in spite of the fact that Great Britain in the last two years has been building up a war machine at a furious rate. IT was the will to act that was lacking, because British politics at the moment controlled by the Tory element . Their idea was that nothing should be done which would extend the power of radical movements on the continent. They feared that the collapse of Hitler and Mussolini would be followed by an upsurging of radical movements in Europe, an increase of power of the Soviet Union. Rather than that they put up with everything on the continent. An excuse which is frequently given is that they must yield to these dictators. Otherwise there

will be war. Nobody believes that.

You never solve a problem by yielding to a Blackmar .  
You merely whet the appetite when you yield on things on which you must not yield.

No, the conscience of the world, particularly in the chancelries of the world is asleep.

Perhaps some day the people, the masses, the soldiers, the young people who are sent into the dirty trenches to be killed will take hold of the reigns of governments. Perhaps the increasing menace which is becoming clearer and clearer to everyone, the menace of another world war will arouse the nations of the earth to realize that there must be a higher law established in the world, a law which must be binding upon nations just as there is a moral law which is binding upon individuals.

It is not true that there does not exist ~~any~~ anywhere in the world anything higher than the state. It is not true that the state is a law unto itself, a will unto itself. It is certainly not so recognized in the great tradition of Judaism and Christianity. In the eyes of God, nations are as a drop in the bucket. Nations can sin just as individuals. The great prophets of the Bible turned against the nations of Israel just as often as against the individual man or woman.

Benjamin Franklin once said that "a highwayman is as much a robber when he plunders in a gang, as when single. and a nation that makes an unjust war is only a great gang."

This idea which is being made to surround the state or nation with an air of mysticism, romance and sanctity, a law unto itself, transcendent, is just preliminary agitation to prepare the minds

of individuals for war. That must be resisted. I don't know who it was that said: "Conscience born when man had shed his fur, his tail, his pointed ears." As far as the nations are concerned, they have not shed their fur, their tails and their pointed ears. The higher they climb on the tree of self-glorification and self-adulation, the more then expose their tails. I think it was in one of his books who spoke of a group of monkeyes who were dressed up in uniform to represent great heroes and who were trained perfectly to represent great heroes. They appeared in the circus and were acclaimed as great heroes. Their tails were hidden. Their pointed ears were hidden. They were covered with beautiful uniforms. All at once one of the spectators threw some peanuts into the arena. They all made a desperate plunge to get the peanuts. And the people saw them as monkeys.

This is what is happening in the world today. All this beautiful pseudo-masquerading of mission, destiny and superiority and the moral autonomy of the state are just so many uniforms to cloak the basic primitive monkey.

The consicence of the world has to be aroused again, my friends. It is asleep. It is sinking into a coma. And one of the most gratifying things to me is to see the very wholesome fine reaction on the part of so many fin men and women to all that has been transpiring in the last few weeks across the seas. Let us keep alive the spirit of condemnation, of indignation, of resentment against the prostitution of human life, against the desecration of moral law which is going on today in the cabinets andchancelries of so many nations of the world.

1/ G.B. allows Hitler - Austria - Eden resigns - Cous. asleep  
as in 1914.

Old heresies - appetites unleashed

H. no new phenomenon -

What he is ranting - Kaiser -

2/ Complex of Ideas.

① Mission - "Communism" - Kaiser (Jude)

In either instance - "cloak" - "pretext"

"Mission" is good - (Jude)

Jewish mission -

5328 -

1221

② Superiority - as pretext for domination (Jude)

③ Force - is moral  
war - (Jude)

④ Supremacy of State - subordination of indiv. (Jude)

3/ Same ideas employed to-day. "Drang nach Osten"  
"same of Empire" -

Minorities - stepping stones - Austria - Greek.

Hitler - sanctimonious - Press

4/ Make head-way - he. Conscience is asleep - Cous  
World head a c. for a moment - 14 Points - L. Covenant

① Reduce of human.

② Disphes

② Preserve Ten. Integ. & Ind.

④ Sanctimonious ⑤ Minorities (Jude)

② mission  
"The dominion of German thought can only be extended under the aegis of political power, and unless we act in conformity to this idea, we shall be untrue to our great duties towards the human race"

Bernhardt

③  
Right to carry out mission - brute force  
Force is moral.

④ War  
"War is an essential element of God's scheme for the world" Maret

⑤ State supreme

"Its highest moral duty is to increase its power"  
"The individual must sacrifice himself for the higher community, which he is a member."

"The Chr. duty of pacifism does not exist for the State. since there is nothing higher than it in the world's history"  
Trentelle

⑥ War.

"The inevitableness, the realism, and the blessing of war, as an indispensable and stimulating law of development, must be repeatedly emphasized." - Bernhardt

'God has called us to Mission civilize the world: we are the missionaries of human progress'

"The German people will be the block of granite on which our Lord will be able to elevate and achieve the civilization of the world"

Superiority -

Giesebrecht: "Domination belongs to G. because it is a superior nation, a noble race, and it is fitting that it should control its neighbors, just as it is the right and duty of every individual endowed with superior intellect and force to control inferior individuals about him."

Woltmann: "The German is the superior type of the homo sapiens from the physical as well as the intellectual point of view"

Hartmann: European family is divided into 2 races, male and female, of which the first is exclusively German, while the second includes Latins, Celts and Slavs

- Aryan Non-Aryans!

1) C. gone to sleep again - as 1914  
2) Old ~~plans~~ heresies - again.

Hitler - no <sup>new</sup> ~~isolated~~ phenomenon! His ranting -

Complex of ideas - Mission - Supremacy - Force - State  
Supreme - War - here again as prelude to  
next war - as they were to last  
(Belmont)

4. Same game, Empire! "Drang" -  
Exploit minorities - Sanctuariums - Press.

3. Complex of ideas - rationalization of conquest  
represented also by Mussolini -

4. Conscience - World asleep - steadily sinking into coma  
Make Head-way because

- ① Aroused for a moment - League - Covenant  
④ Minorities Treaties ① reduction of armaments  
② Discredited - cynicism ② Preserve Terr. integrity of all  
③ Disputes ④ Sanctions -

5. Tory front - largely responsible  
(Note) ① Chamberlain - impotent - 1932  
② Ethiopia - 52 - ⑤ Remilit. of Rhineland  
④ Brussels ⑥ Soc. Austria  
① not bee. it was weak - armaments - but Tory  
② Apprehension - Blackmail -

6. "Conscience born when man had shed his fur, his tail  
his pointed ears"  
Monkeys - higher the climb - Nuts - Trained monkeys  
- uniform - Baden  
- tails -

## 7/ The Higher Law.

"The nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance"

① Nations can sin!

"A highwayman is as much a robber when he plunders in a gang, as when single; and a nation that makes an unjust war is only a great gang" - Benj. Franklin



8/ Organization. League.



5/ To-day - discredited - England - Tory

Chamberlain - important.

1932 - Japan - Ethiopia - Rhineland - Spain - Brussels

Austria

France - tail to kite

America - did not enter . .

① Excuse: not adequately prepared - Tory

② Apprehension - black-mail

6. "C. born when man had shed his fur, his tail & his pointed ears"

Monkeys - higher than chimps

"nuts"