



## Abba Hillel Silver Collection Digitization Project

Featuring collections from the Western Reserve Historical Society and  
The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives

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

Series IV: Sermons, 1914-1963, undated.

---

Reel  
159

Box  
56

Folder  
597

The Disastrous Decade: 1930-1940, 1939.

544

THE DISASTROUS DECADE  
1930-1940

The Balance Sheet of Ten Turbulent Years



By  
Dr. Abba Hillel Silver

At  
The Temple

On  
Sunday morning, December 31, 1939



For the world, my friends, this last decade has been one of the most disastrous in its annals. It was a decade shot through with wars, disorders, depression, suffering, tyranny. It was a decade of retreat and recession both in the material and in the spiritual field - in government, in economics, international relations, in human ideals. The last ten years witnessed a liquidation of many of the great ideals which were generated by the ideals of the last World War - rights of minorities, disarmament, outlawry of war and collective security.

The decade saw the collapse of the League of Nations, of all effort at world organization for peace. There was a sharp throwback, to regional pacts, to group alliances, to military axes, to a competitive balance of military power.

The last ten years witnessed the destruction of democratic governments, the discredit of the democratic principles of one country after another, the suppression of hard-won liberties and precious human rights, the enthronement of despotism over vast areas of the earth and the increasing subjugations of people by force, terrorism and espionage.

The last decade saw the steady surrender of the individual to the state, and the state to the dictator.

The last ten years witnessed an almost unbroken series of violated international pledges and covenants, of invasions, of conquest, of revolts and wars in Africa, Asia or Europe in which free governments were systematically destroyed, weaker nations ravaged and small nations annihilated. One need but mention the names - just the names - China, Ethiopia, Spain, Austria, Czecho-slovakia, Albania, Poland, Finland; and similarly, one need but mention the cities of Shanghai, Warsaw, Madrid - and their destruction - the destruction of men and women and children in them by bombing from the air to realize the utter shamelessness of this immoral and murderous era through which mankind passed.

Three names dominated the life of Europe, to an extent, the life of the



whole of mankind - Mussolini, Hitler, Stalin - and each of these three names has come to be associated in the minds of men with cruelty, deceit and double dealing, with purges, with persecution, with aggression. Each one has been the breeder of hate, the destroyer of liberties and the maker of war.

And as the sense of insecurity increased all over the earth during the last ten years, as for example with the abandonment of the League of Nations and of the agencies for the protection of nations against aggression, a vast and ruinous race for armament set in all over the earth which has progressively impoverished the masses of mankind. And there also set in a disastrous policy of economic self-sufficiency on the part of nations as a military measure which policy has played havoc with international trade and checked the revival of business and economic activity all over the earth.

During these last ten years as in no similar short period in the history of mankind, human ideals slumped lamentably, and powerful governments set about teaching their people to hold the classic ideals of mankind - liberty, freedom, peace, tolerance in utter contempt. Men were taught to hate men in the name of race. Men were taught to destroy men in the name of class. Nations were directed to exterminate weaker neighbors in the name of national destiny. The ideal of human brotherhood and the ideals of a federated world of free peoples held together by international law - those ideals were proclaimed anathema. Scourges were set over human thought. Intellectual freedom, academic freedom, was branded as the blackest heresy, and the ideal of law, impartial, objective, over-arching law as a force for justice and civilization, law too as a concept of human justice per se were scrapped in these totalitarian countries which cover more than half the earth. Education and human culture were prostituted in the last decade by political and economic despotisms and teachers, professors, lawyers, judges, writers and journalists, in their tens of thousands all over the earth, have been either frightened, cowered or



cajoled into a cowardly submissiveness, or silenced if not enlisted actually into an active conspiracy in this work of prostituting the human mind, of discrediting the ancient and classic ideals of human thought. In over ten thousand schools and universities in Italy, Germany, Russia, Japan, not a voice has been lifted against that tyranny which is destroying the sovereignty and the integrity of the human mind.

The spirit of man was brutally assaulted. The spirit of man was brutally attacked during the last ten years, and as a result the personal beliefs of man have been terribly shaken. There has been a degree of spiritual bafflement all over the world. People don't know what to believe in, what to cling to. People don't know what ideals are worth striving for, living for and dying for in the world.

Liberals and conservatives and reactionaries and radicals, all alike, have been confused and disillusioned as a result first of a failure of those governments which seem to be the embodiment of their ideals, of their ideals, and secondly as a result of the strange and baffling alliances which were made between these seemingly irreconcilable governments.

And so, most fittingly therefore, my friends, this evil decade ends in another World War. It is the logical denouement of a mad, vicious, of a lawless era. And the world must again atone in blood, in human suffering for the blunders of its leaders, for the blindness of its leaders, for the sins and the crimes of those powerful people and groups who control <sup>led</sup> the destiny of mankind during this last decade.

In our own country, the United States, the decade began in the wake of a disastrous stock crash, in the midst of bank failures, unemployment, hard times and bread lines. The gildred, gaudy, giddy Twenties slithered into the dark,



dank, dreary Thirties when hunger and want and bankruptcy stalked over the land. At times during these last ten years, there were as many as ten million unemployed in these United States, in a rich and prosperous nation, the envy of the world whose stock houses bulged with the accumulation of the gold of the world and who found itself tottering on the brink of human ruin.

For ten years now it has been struggling to get out of this depression with only a fair measure of success. The problem of our economic disorganization, the problem of the catastrophic economic cycles, that problem is far from being solved.

Business within the year, within the last year of this decade received an artificial stimulus from the war raging overseas, but even business is under no illusion about the permanence of this improvement. And as regards the unemployment - there are still ten millions of them. And as regards the enormous problem of their relief - no adequate solution has yet been found. You recall the shameless break-down of relief measures in our own city, a situation unfortunately which our own press found necessary somehow to cover up in part. There is still the spectacle in this country of men, women and children hungry and shelterless.

This last decade saw the expose of many of its financial wizards, men who in the Twenties came to be looked upon as economic messiahs. The Thirties exposed them for the financial crooks that they were - the Insulls, the Eatons, the Whitneys, the Kruegers, the Stavitskys and the Mendelssohns, as racketeers on a large colossal scale.

This last decade was one of bitter industrial strife in the United States, of strikes and sit-down strikes, that internal strife and partition within the ranks of labor itself.


This decade witnessed the tail end of the Prohibition Era, with its cheap



gangsters, racketeers and speak-easies. It also witnessed the crime wave which followed its repeal.

The last years in the United States also saw an increased intolerance between Capital and Labor. There were incipient essays in Fascism and dictatorship in this country on the line of Huey Long, incipient movements which employed the same technique as the dictatorships abroad, the same slogans - "Share the Wealth", "Get Rich Quick", the Pot of Gold at the end of the Rainbow". This last decade saw quite a number of these dangerous crack-pot schemes for making one age section of our population secure by the taxation of other age groups - The Townsend Plan, the Bitelow Plan - all of which are the forerunners of democratic chais and dictatorship once they get into effect.

This last decade also witnessed increasing anti-democratic propaganda in the United States of the Nazi type and the Communist type. The anti-democratic type of the Nazis was directly tied up with anti-Semitism. For the first time in the history of the e United States there was present the spectacle of numerous groups, large and small, whose sole purpose was anti-Semitism.

This last decade in the United States also witnessed - and this should  be put on the credit side of the ledger - brave and courageous experiments to put our economic house in order to avert disaster and to save democracy, experiments which have come to be associated in the minds of American people with the New Deal and with the name of President Roosevelt. Some of these measures were found to be inoperative, some were invalid by our own Supreme Court. Some of them remained as helpful measures for the protection of our people against the ravages of economic disaster. Large scale help has been extended by our Federal Government, in some instances by our State Governments to workers, farmers, the small home owner, through large scale federal relief measures which were introduced in these desperate years to keep our people from starvation and revolt. Large scale measures



of public works were introduced which have provided work for many of our unemployed and which have given to our country many important and necessary and beautiful institutions, buildings, schools, colleges, airports, roads, dams. Important measures for social security, insurance for the unemployed, insurance for the aged are now on our statute books and the ground work has been made for sound and sane wholesome measures of security for all the people of these United States - measures to adjust the increased conflict between employer and employee, such as the Wagner Labor Act; machinery for the amicable adjustment between employer and employee. None of these measures is perfect. None is in its final form. But all of these measures will contribute to the establishment of greater stability, greater security and greater well being in this country, where there is enough for all, and where the well-being of one need not be purchased at the expense of any one group for another group.

During these ten years, especially during the last part of the decade, there has been an aroused and growing devotion on the part of American people for America, for the American way of life, for American democracy, and an increased resolve to defend it. There has been rekindled an active enthusiasm for American institutions and American ideals. What has happened abroad and what is happening abroad has startled the American out of his complacency. He has come to know that his way of life is precious to him and he is determined to defend himself against all forms of intolerance and Old World propaganda. He is organizing the Americans, all groups and all classes to appreciate the American ideals of human equality, liberty and human freedom. So that for the United States, this last decade has not been an altogether lost decade.

For our people, the Jews, it has been a decade of agony, one of the blackest in our history. One-third of our people were shattered. One need but think of the Jewish communities in Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Germany, to



realize just what has happened in ten short years. The Jewish people in the neighboring countries of those I have mentioned were terribly deteriorated. Was it really a case of persecution? Was it really a case of subjecting Jews to certain disabilities? It was something far more horrible. It was a case of Jews, of five million Jews having been declared outlawed, entitled to no consideration of law or of human compassion. They were not merely deprived of their citizenship. They were deprived of the right to live, deprived of the right to own their own homes, their own possessions and given the choice of exile or of slow death or of quick suicide.

The last ten years saw the world suddenly filled with tens of thousands of Jewish refugees, homeless. You know the stories of how they were cast about on sea and on land knocking at doors which refused to open, begging a chance for a foot of ground upon which to stand on God's earth.

The last ten years saw anti-Semitism becoming a world movement and a political program of many nations or parties within nations.

During the last ten years Jewries throughout the world - those Jewries which were not persecuted had to take care of those who were persecuted, and their chief concern has been a relief concern - to provide food raiment and shelter for them. During the last ten years instead of permitting ourselves and devoting our the betterment of substances to/our own lives, we had to devote most of our energies to an unnecessary cause, man-made, so futile, so purposeless.

During these last ten years one can report perhaps two bright spots in the Jewish picture: One was the steady upbuilding of the Jewish community in Palestine which in these ten years rose from a population of two hundred thousand to a population of over five hundred thousand... And even that community had to pass through serious disturbances, riots, political checks and disorders of all kinds.



The second bright spot was the growing and evolving Jewish community in the United States which evidenced fine community-self-consciousness, fine community leadership and good community organization, and a sense of Jewish solidarity and responsibility which is a credit to the Jews of this country.

And history records, and I am not trying to explain it, I can only record as our history records, that whenever one large Jewish center of Jewish life was destroyed, somehow another center of Jewish life arose to carry on the life of the Jews. When Palestine was destroyed, Babylon became a powerful Jewish center of Jewish life. When Babylon declined, and the Jewish community disintegrated, that marvelous Spanish center of Jewish life sprung up, and for a hundred years it was the pride of the Jewish people. It gave us poets, scholars and statesmen. When that center of Jewish life was destroyed, the great Eastern Polish and Russian centers of Jewish life appeared and for hundreds of years it was the citadel of Jewish life which produced splendid scholars. Now that the Jewish communities of Europe are being destroyed, there is growing up a great Jewish center, numerically and spiritually, in these United States.

So, my friends, if one takes a hasty survey of these last ten years, one does not encounter a very cheerful picture. It was not a happy decade we have lived through - you and I and others. "This, too, shall pass over".

Of two things you can be sure, and in that assurance you can find great comfort, namely, that the human mind, assailed and attacked though it has been, and fettered though it is in many parts of the world, that human mind has not ceased to function, to think, to quest, to adventure, to explore, to invent. It has never stopt its eternal activity. That human mind will ultimately break through every confining bar. Even during these hard and cruel years, the human mind was active, unfortunately not in the field of the spirit, but in the fields of science, invention.



I know three great world fairs in the last few years which I had the opportunity to visit which showed in concrete form the amazing progress which the human mind made in human technology, in the arts, sciences, physics, chemistry and medicine. New healing drugs have been discovered. Life expectancy has been increased. Trans-oceanic passenger services have been established in the last ten years. Great water dams have been built - the TVA and Boulder Dams. Progress has been recorded in the fields of radio. The human mind has not stopped thinking.

Nor has the human heart stopped feeling. The eternal ideals of goodness, compassion, and sympathy have not been killed from the human heart. And even during these years of widespread intolerance and cruelty, there have been so many fine manifestations of deep human understanding and compassion and self-sacrifice on the part of so many many millions of people in all parts of the earth that one need not despair that the human mind and the human heart will score the last, the ultimate victory.

And so one feels like repeating with more fervor than in any previous years, the words:

Ring out the old, ring in the new,  
    Ring, happy bells, across the snow:  
The year is going, let him go;  
    Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,  
    And ancient forms of party strife;  
Ring in the nobler modes of life,  
    With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,  
    The civic slander and the spite;  
Ring in the love of truth and right,  
    Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease;  
    Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;  
Ring out the thousand wars of old,  
    Ring in the thousand years of peace.



△

deposition

+ retreat

peoples, human liberties, right of minorities, disarmament,  
~~and~~ outburst, war and collective security, which were

Nations - and the all efforts  
a throw-out to regional pacts,  
~~(can be)~~ military alliances - to "open"  
peace.  
+ discredit; the Year principle/  
the other

in one country after  
the other

the state to the dictator. (L. H. inter. covenants)

(broken inter. covenants of

Czechoslovakia - Albania - Poland - Finland + 10

bring to mind the fact utter <sup>in words and</sup> thunder and  
this <sup>in words and</sup> murderous decade.



6

These names dominated the life of Europe - & to an extent -  
the life, the world: Hitler, Musolini and Stalin - and each  
is associated with cruelty, deceit, double-dealing, <sup>lying</sup> brother  
plots, murders, persecutions and aggressions. Each  
has been a breeder, hater, a destroyer, hunter and a  
maker of war.

~~Under~~ As internat. insecurity increased with  
the abandonment of the League and its instrumentality for  
preserving peace + protecting nations ag. aggression - "vast  
and disastrously <sup>costly</sup> ~~expensive~~ <sup>rate</sup> in armaments began - which  
has steadily impaired the masses and ~~thought about~~ <sup>has increased</sup>  
rather decreased internat. security - and has also  
encouraged a disastrous policy of nat. econ. self  
isolation <sup>among nations - as a war-preparation</sup> which has played havoc with inter. trade  
and the revival of econ. activity in the world.

- Human ideals shranked lamentably in this decade.  
Powerful great thought men to hold the classic ideals  
(universal - liberty - freedom - peace - tolerance - in con-  
tempt). They were told to hate men in the name of  
race. They were taught to destroy men in the name  
(class). They were directed to exterminate weak  
peoples in the name of racial destroying. The  
preachers of peace and disarmament <sup>were</sup> ~~was~~ bandied and hounded  
as a traitorous pacifist. The ideals of human brotherhood  
and a federated world of free peoples governed by international  
law ~~was~~ were proclaimed anathemas. Scorpions were  
set on human throat - and the ideal of universal



freedom was branded as blackest heresy. ~~The ideal of~~  
Academic freedom is a totalitarian states it's a <sup>chance</sup> mockery.  
So also with the <sup>all the</sup> ideal of Law - as a force for further  
and civilization. <sup>in fact</sup> Education, law and further have been  
~~of~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~virtually~~ <sup>virtually</sup> ~~prohibited~~ <sup>prohibited</sup> by pol. and econ. ~~dictators~~ <sup>dictators</sup> - and  
teachers, professors, lawyers, judges, writers, journalists ~~and~~  
the ~~republicans~~ <sup>republicans</sup> have been ~~exiled~~ <sup>exiled</sup> or covered in  
~~with~~ <sup>with</sup> ~~infamy~~ <sup>infamy</sup> ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> ~~not~~ <sup>not</sup> ~~suborned~~ <sup>suborned</sup> into active conspiracy.  
Other ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~consequences~~ <sup>consequences</sup> -

✓ There has been an increasing sense of sp. insecurity;  
the foundations of belief & conviction have been shaken.  
The spirit of man has been brutally assaulted in the last  
decade, even more than in previous post-bellum decade.  
Liberals, conservatives, and reactionaries and radicals alike  
are confused and disoriented as a result, the ~~collapse~~  
~~of~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~their~~ <sup>their</sup> ~~chief~~ <sup>chief</sup> ~~considerations~~ <sup>considerations</sup> ~~facture~~ <sup>facture</sup>, their ~~points~~ <sup>points</sup> ~~which~~ <sup>which</sup> ~~seemed~~ <sup>seemed</sup>  
~~in~~ <sup>in</sup> ~~practice~~ <sup>practice</sup> ~~to~~ <sup>to</sup> ~~embody~~ <sup>embody</sup> their philosophies even to approximate them ~~as~~ <sup>as</sup> ~~a~~ <sup>a</sup> ~~result~~ <sup>result</sup> also, the ~~charge~~ <sup>charge</sup> and ~~reply~~ <sup>reply</sup> ~~alike~~ <sup>alike</sup> ~~which~~ <sup>which</sup> ~~have~~ <sup>have</sup> ~~been~~ <sup>been</sup> ~~made~~ <sup>made</sup>  
~~but~~ <sup>but</sup> ~~too~~ <sup>too</sup> ~~often~~ <sup>often</sup> ~~unreasonably~~ <sup>unreasonably</sup> ~~go~~ <sup>go</sup> ~~into~~ <sup>into</sup> ~~which~~ <sup>which</sup> ~~seem~~ <sup>seem</sup> ~~to~~ <sup>to</sup> ~~be~~ <sup>be</sup>  
~~unreliable~~ <sup>unreliable</sup> ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> ~~in~~ <sup>in</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~beginning~~ <sup>beginning</sup>

Most fittingly ~~therefore~~ <sup>therefore</sup> does this evil decay ~~close~~ <sup>and</sup>  
~~against~~ <sup>against</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~in~~ <sup>in</sup> ~~another~~ <sup>another</sup> world war. It is ~~its~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~logical~~ <sup>logical</sup>  
~~denouement~~ <sup>denouement</sup> ~~It~~ <sup>It</sup> ~~could~~ <sup>could</sup> ~~not~~ <sup>not</sup> ~~be~~ <sup>be</sup> ~~other~~ <sup>other</sup> ~~wise~~ <sup>wise</sup>. ~~The~~ <sup>The</sup> ~~world~~ <sup>world</sup>  
~~must~~ <sup>must</sup> ~~again~~ <sup>again</sup> ~~atone~~ <sup>atone</sup> for the blindness, ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~leader~~ <sup>leader</sup>, ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~policy~~ <sup>policy</sup>  
~~its~~ <sup>its</sup> ~~stakeholders~~ <sup>stakeholders</sup> & the ~~sons~~ <sup>sons</sup> & ~~crimes~~ <sup>crimes</sup> of those men of power  
who contributed to darkness.



2) In U.S. - decade began in bank failures - stock-crash - (4)  
hard-times, unemployment and bread-lines.  
The gilded, gaudy, giddy twenties slithered into the dark  
dank, dreary thirties. - when hunger & want & bankruptcy  
stalked the land.

At times there were as many as 18% unemployed.  
~~There still are some 10%.~~

- A rich & prosperous nation - the envy of the world. suddenly  
found itself tottering as the result of economic ~~collapse~~ <sup>crisis</sup>.

- And for 10 yrs. since it has been struggling to get out  
of the depression - with only <sup>unprofitable</sup> fair success.

- The problem is far from solved. But has recurred  
an artificial stimulus from Gov. aid - but it is under  
no illusions about the permanence, the imperfect credit.  
And those who are unemployed - and as relief - are still  
a major problem. - and a potential danger. Recall  
the shambles heart-damn Relief program in our  
city - & spectacle of men, women & children - hurrying  
in our own midst.

- Financial wizard & crooks - Russell - Eatons - Whitneys - Knapp  
Stevenson - <sup>Mundt</sup> ~~Stevenson~~  
(a) A decade of bitter voluntary strife - of strikes and  
sit-down strikes - of men slain in industrial disputes.  
A decade of bitter strife & partition within the ranks plagues  
themselves.

(b) A decade which witnesses the tail-end of the Prohibition  
era - its vice, gangsters, racketeers & speakeasies -  
and the counter-wave which followed its repeal -



(5)  
(c) Increasing intolerance - Capital & Labor -

- Imperialist Essays in Dictatorship - Henry Lutz  
same tempo - "Share the wealth" - "Pot of Gold"

Crack-pot schemes - get-rich-quick - something for  
nothing - Tausend - Big game - numbers  
for numbers of democratic chaos - Dictator hatched

Increasing anti-Dem. Propaganda - Nazi-Communist  
coupled with Anti-Semitism - Cynicism -

(d) But also courageous Experiments to set our  
house in order - assoc. with New Deal - Roosevelt

- Many measures - NRA - AAA - invalidated

- Others - validated - Help to worker - farmer -  
to small-business owner - to business -

- Federal Relief - Public Works -

- Social Insurance - Unemployment - Old Age - Health

- Wagner Labor Act - machinery for adjustment of  
employer-employee relationships -

(e) Growing devotion of Am. people for their own way  
of life - defend it -

- Rekindled enthusiasm for Democ. -

- Against intolerance - old-world propaganda - Antisemitism

- For Peace - Help to free nations -



- For U.S. - not ~~an~~ altogether a lost decade.

(6)

- 3) For our people - Jews - a black decade - Disaster -  
Recession almost every - where - Pol. Factors -  
a 1/3 of our people starved -  
great J. centers - from America - Greece - Poland destroyed.  
In neighboring lands - hunger killing on hunger.  
No persecution - disabilities - but outlawed -  
Filled with Refugees - a new disaster - million 1492  
- Antisemitism - a world movement - and a pol. program  
of many nations a parties with in nations.  
- Our Relief activities - continuous -  
(a) only bright spot - Palestine - 500,000 -  
But not - White Paper.  
(b) U.S. - giving & sending great J. centers.

- 4) Not a cheerful picture - not a happy decade we have  
lived thru - But not lost its eternal activity. Still growing,  
① Human Mind - not lost its eternal activity. Still growing,  
adventuring, exploring, venturing.  
3rd highly used Factors - Progress - Medical - Psychological fields  
Healing drugs - Trans-oceanic passenger planes - Great  
dances - TVA -  
Progress in radio - movies - television -  
② Human Heart - Goodness - Kindness - not lost. Compassion  
Cooperation - Truth - Endures - Beauty.



Ring out the old, ring in the new,  
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:  
The year is going, let him go;  
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,  
And acient forms of party strife;  
Ring in the nobler modes of life,  
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,  
The civic slander and the spite;  
Ring in the love of truth and right,  
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease;  
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;  
Ring out the thousand wars of old,  
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

In Memoriam  
By  
Alfred Tennyson





ABSTRACT OF ADDRESS DELIVERED BY DR. ABBA HILLEL SILVER AT THE TEMPLE,  
ANSEL ROAD AND EAST 105TH STREET ON SUNDAY MORNING, DECEMBER 31, 1939

THE DISASTROUS DECADE  
1930-1940

For the world this has been one of the most disastrous decades in its annals. It witnessed the liquidation of the ideals of the self-determination of peoples, the rights of minorities, the outlawry of war, collective security and disarmament which were generated by the last World War. It witnessed the collapse of the League of Nations, and all efforts at world organization for peace. It saw the destruction of democratic governments and the defeat of the democratic principle in one country after another, the suppression of hard-won liberties and precious human rights, the <sup>enforcement</sup> enrollment of despotism over vast areas of the earth, and the increasing subjection of peoples to force, terrorism and espionage. It saw the steady surrender of the individual to the state, and the state to the dictator.

The last decade recorded an almost unbroken series of violated international covenants, of invasions, conquests and wars in which weak nations were ravaged, and small nations destroyed.

Three names dominated the life of Europe, and to an extent, the life of the world - Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin - and each is associated with cruelty, deceit, double-dealing, purges, persecutions and aggressions. Each has been a breeder of hate, a destroyer of liberties and a maker of wars.

Human ideals slumped lamentably during the last decade. Powerful governments taught men to hold the classic ideals of mankind - liberty, freedom, peace, tolerance - in contempt. They were taught to hate men in the name of race. They were taught to destroy men in the name of class. They were directed to exterminate weaker neighbors in the name of national destiny. Scourges were set over human thought. Intellectual freedom was branded as blackest



Law as a force for justice and civilization ceased. Education and culture were prostituted in the interests of political and economic despotism. The spirit of man was brutally assaulted, and as a result, the foundations of belief and conviction have been dangerously shaken. There is an increasing sense of spiritual insecurity and bafflement in the world.

Most fittingly, therefore, does this evil decade end in another world war. It is the logical denouement of a mad, vicious and lawless era. In the United States, the decade began on the heels of a disastrous stock crash and in the wake of bank failures, unemployment and hard times. The gilded, gaudy, giddy Twenties slithered into the dark, dank, dreary Thirties when hunger, want and bankruptcies stalked the land.

It was a decade of bitter industrial strife, of strikes and sit-down strikes as well as of strife and partition within the ranks of labor itself. It witnessed increasing intolerance in the relations between capital and labor, incipient essays in dictatorship of the Huey Long variety, fantastic and crack-pot schemes for making people rich, and increasing anti-democratic propaganda on the part of Nazis and Communists.

But the decade also witnessed brave experiments in setting our economic house in order which are associated with the New Deal and with the name of President Roosevelt. Some of these measures were found inoperative, or were otherwise invalidated. Others have remained as helpful factors in a rational organization in American economic life. Towards the close of the decade <sup>has</sup> there ~~been~~ also been an effort and an aroused devotion on the part of the American people for democracy and for the American way of life, and an earnest resolution to defend them against all forms of intolerance and Old World propaganda. For the United States this has not been an altogether lost decade.



For the Jews this decade has been one long agony. One-third of our people were shattered. Millions were not merely persecuted but outlawed, and homeless, stripped and impoverished wanderers filled the highways of the ~~xxx~~ world seeking new homes. The moral collapse of mankind was nowhere more tragically apparent than in the fate of these millions of human beings.

While the general picture is certainly depressing, one should remember that in spite of all that has happened, that human mind heart have not stopped their eternal activities. The mind of man is still questing, adventuring, exploring and ~~inx~~ inventing, and will not remain forever ensnackled even in the lands of despotism. Nor has the human heart permanently surrendered its eternal ideals of justice and kindness. There have been inspiring manifestations during these cruel years of boundless sympathy, compassion and self-sacrifice on the part of countless men of good will throughout the earth. The undefeated mind and heart of man will yet claim the ultimate victory.

