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

Series IV: Sermons, 1914-1963, undated.

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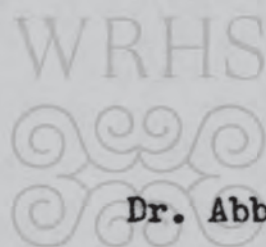
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What kind of peace do we want?, 1941.

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WHAT KIND OF A PEACE DO WE WANT

After the War -- What?



By  
Dr. Abba Hillel Silver

At  
The Temple

On  
Sunday morning, January 19, 1941



As the war drags on and the toll becomes heavier and the sacrifices become greater, the Allied peoples are coming to ask themselves more and more: "What are we fighting for?" And a satisfactory answer has not yet been given. The answer must sustain them under the terrific pounding to which they are being subjected. It must be an answer which would help them to endure the vast tribulations awaiting them. When you are fighting your way out of a death-infested jungle you can only be sustained in your best effort if you know that you will sooner or later come out in the clear. If you believe that all your fighting would only bring you in another jungle, <sup>you</sup> are likely to be disheartened within.

How is this war to end? Is it to end in another big Armistice as the last one, to be followed in ten, fifteen, twenty years by another bloody world war? Is victory, if and when it comes just going to restore the old order, the old inequalities, the old privileges as they existed in the two decades between the first and second world war, or as they existed in the decades preceding the first world war, conditions which led up to the world war? Will a victory over Hitler and Mussolini be enough? Was a victory over the Kaiser quite enough? Is America going to pour out its vast resources and convert itself into an arsenal just to help the Allied people, and for England to destroy Hitlerism and then leave the world ripe and ready for another Hitler five years after the war, or ten years after the war? Should not the American people, now that they are being even though not in the war called upon to make maximum sacrifices/so that they will have a voice in the peace and secondly, so that they will be prepared when peace discussion begin, to make an instructive, creative contribution to the discussions at the peace conference.

Was not France defeated because her people actually did not know what they were fighting for? One month they were told that France must appease Hitler. The next month they were told that France must fight Hitler. And the English, too, were nearly destroyed by the same moral and intellectual confusion.



What kind of a peace do we want? We know what kind of a peace Hitler wants. He has stated his plan for the world which he intends to construct after his final victory. It is to be a world built up on the principle of conquest, domination and subjugation, a world practically enslaved to serve the interests of the elite of the German people. It is to be a scientifically coordinated, regimented, economically rationalized world to serve the master race. The conquered people will be told how to live, what to produce, what to plant, what to import and what to export, what wages the working man is to receive, what standards of living they must accept, how they shall be educated, what ideas they shall be permitted to have. The small nations will cease to exist. The larger nations, the larger conquered nations will be tolerated as economic and political of one ruling party dynasty - Berlin.

The rights of man as we know it, as we knew it ever since the American/and French Revolutions will cease to exist, as they have already ceased to exist in those parts of the world which have come under the rule of Hitlerism. The world will move deliberately into a new dark age, an age darker, more murderous because of the total destruction of religious values, the total abandonment of the whole code of Judaeo-Christianity which somehow attenuated the brutalities of the former Dark Ages. There will be peace, of course. There will be a peace of the prison-house, a peace of slavery, the kind of peace which has now settled on Poland and Czechoslovakia. And that kind of slavery people will endure for a long, long time, until the subjugated and oppressed people revolt. And under the present scientifically elaborated system of espionage and terrorism, such opportunities and such occasions for revolt will not be many or frequent.

This is the kind of peace which awaits the world if Hitler triumphs in the next ninety days.

Surely this is not the kind of a peace the Allies want, the American people want! We are fighting to destroy this kind of enslavement, this kind



of enslaved peace, the kind of a world which Hitlerism seeks to establish. We will fight for a free peace, that is, a peace established between free peoples, a peace in which even the peoples of Germany and Italy will be free and at peace.

Therefore, the coming peace shall not be a punitive peace, a peace of vengeance, a peace of indemnities and annexations. It must not be constructed on any scheme to keep the defeated nations permanently enslaved, in bondage, in vassalage, or upon any scheme of disrupted unity, of partitioning them, in the hope of keeping them permanently disarmed in a world which will be armed. This was tried, as you know partially, after 1918. It failed. The peace which is to be established through the blood and sacrifices of free men must be the kind of peace which will throw off the yoke of dictatorship from the people.

We want a just peace. Here is the rub. No peace following a long war in which passions are aroused and brutalities are committed -- no peace made following such a war can be resolved into a just peace. It is more than human to expect it. Therefore wisdom dictates that in the peace treaties to be enacted, and in the fundamental law of any international organization which will be established following the war, provisions shall be made for periodic revisions of the terms of the peace, for the opportunity to rectify what comes later on to appear to be very wrong and unjust. Following this war, no aggrieved people which feels that it has been wronged must be left to believe that its only hope for vindication, its only hope to have its wrongs righted lie in another war. That was one of the misfortunes of the covenant of the League of Nations. It did not make ample room for revision, for a new discussion of territorial boundaries, a chance to rectify what under the pressure of the war mood, may have been wrongly enforced and not entirely fair.

A just peace, of course, must be built upon a new international order, a new organized world, whether it be a new League of Nations, a reconstituted and reconstructed League of Nations, or whether it be a Federation of Europe or a



Federation of Western Europe, or whether it be a political and economic union within the framework of a larger federation - whatever the scheme finally evolved, there must be behind the organization an ideal which is basically and fundamentally sound. The principles of the League of Nations were sound. But the League of Nations may have been too ambitious.

The principle of organizing the world for collective security and mutual defense, and enforcement of international law is the one sound idea that came out of the last war and which was rejected during the last two decades. Because it was rejected, the world finds itself in a second world war. One of the weaknesses of the League was its failure to provide for revisionism. Secondly its failure to build up an international police force to enforce its decisions simultaneously with the decisions of the League. It relied too much upon the power of the moral mandate of public opinion to enforce its decisions and it permitted the nations who won <sup>not</sup> only to call a halt to their arming, but to increase their armaments. It failed to solve the problem and the relationship of sovereign independent states in an international world order. It did not face that issue realistically, so that when any state disapproved of any action taken by the League which affected its interests, it simply seceded. The minute one state seceded, the whole idea of unity collapsed and the world was divided into two camps, and with re-armament came the events which led up to the second world war.

idea of secession by the  
The/sovereign states in this country led to the Civil War. These states who thought their interests were affected by Congress raised the clamor of sovereign state rights and seceded from the Union, and then a bloody Civil War followed had to be waged for four long years to deny for all times a right of a state to secede from the Union.

This is what the world will have to come to. There is no such right given to a nation, Once an international order is established by mutual consent, to secede and to disrupt a union. And the only hope of keeping Prussianism within



bounds, curbing their power is to deny the right of any people to secede from a national league and disrupt world unity. No people then, however militaristic, will have the chance to do what Italy, Germany and Japan did in the last years before the Second World War.

A just peace will, of course, grant the right of political self-determination to all people... But the failure of the treaties of the past were not that they were not politically minded enough, but that they were not economically minded enough. Political self-determination is not enough for nations to sustain themselves. Systems of economic orbits and economic interdependence must be worked out which will make it possible for nations to live freely and to enable them to survive politically. Political self-determination does not always spell economic self-determination and small nations who try to preserve the one through the artificial creation of the other have failed often disastrously. What would have happened in this country if the 48 states had each tried to become not only politically sovereign, but also economically self-sufficient and had erected tariff walls around each state, each trying to become economically independent of the other and organizing their economy with an eye to military invulnerability.

After the war, the channels of trade of the old world must be cleared of all political obstructions for the economic life of Europe to revive and for political units to survive. There will be a much greater need for economists than for politicians in the next period.

And a just peace, my friends also calls for an end to Imperialism. Empires must be reconstructed into free and independent commonwealths who are united by no ties except the ties of common loyalty. And England must see the wisdom as the wiser men in England have come to see, of making India one of the great independent commonwealths within the association of Great Britain. It will not be possible after the war to keep India in a state less than that of commonwealth independence. And all ~~her~~ colonies should be helped to develop into independent



commonwealths. Access to the raw materials of these commonwealths should be open to all countries on equal terms and without discrimination. It is not important for peoples to own colonies, politically to rule colonies if they have access, along with all other peoples, to the raw materials of those colonies.

A just peace following the war will require the final settlement of the minority problem of Europe. An attempt to settle this minority problem as Hitler has attempted to solve it, by transplating peoples, is a fantastic one, one doomed to failure and one which will causeneedless suffering.

The principle which was written into the Treaty of Versailles and which was scrapped after the war as everything else was scrapped after the war must be re-enacted. That principle declared that minorities shall live anywhere, shall have complete freedom, and shall enjoy full rights with the majority. They shall also enjoy cultural autonomy in any of the countries in which they live. Poles can live in Lithuania and Lithunaians can live in Poland.

There are Jews in most of these countries. All these minorities shall enjoy equal rights of citizenship and shall not be regarded as citizens of second class. They should be permitted to use their own language and have their own schools.

A just peace will require, finally, in connection with these minority problems, the settlement of the Jewish issue in Europe. Hitler has made the Jewish issue a burning issue in Europe. All the oppressors of mankind have made the oppression of the Jew a vital issue. The Jewish problem inEurope can not be solved by oppression. Two thousand years have proved that it can not be solved by forced emigration. You cannot emigrate nine ten million people to other parts of the world. The Jewish problem inEurope can be solved on the same basis as the minority problem of other peoples. Give them the right to live where they are born, the same rights of citizenship as all other peoples have. Wherever they are congregated in large numbers, if they want to enjoy cultural



autonomy, as under the Treaty of Versailles - they should be permitted to do so. Any other attempt will not work.

A just peace which will involve the principle of self-determination for peoples must also finally solve the problem of giving the Jewish people as a people, its national homeland, just as all other people on the face of the earth enjoy a national homeland. - Arabs already have four national homelands. It has been argued and with considerably cogency by thoughtful people, that a lasting peace, one based on national sovereignty, that there can be no lasting peace, no limitation of national sovereignty, no world free from Fascist menace no permanent world order/unless capitalistic power and privilege is first limited in each country, and unless a fundamental redistribution of economic power first transpires. That has been resolutely argued by Harold Laski in his book: "Where Do We Go From Here?" For it is the power of special privilege, threatened by democratic demands which in one country after another helped to destroy democracy. It is the power of special privilege which in one country after another has destroyed democracy; that it is these vested interests which require national sovereignty for their protection, and it is they which breed war; and the economic power must first come into the hands of the people through a larger socialization before there can be any hope of a truly peaceful world.

That may be so, and I am sure that there is great merit in that argument. On the other hand, the example of the Soviet Union completely socialized, completely in the hands of the masses has not given us the right to believe that a completely socialized state, is less militaristic, less imperialistic, more just in international relationships, more conducive to freedom of the people than capitalistic government. The process of socialization in the world is inevitable. It is going to be a slow one if it is a democratic process, as we all hope. These two movements could very well go on side by side. Socialization could be accelerated if it went on side by side with the establishment of an international world order to effect



disarmament, maintain collective security and would insure the free flow of economic life and would maintain the Rights of Man!

A just peace, my friends, will require, as H. G. Wells says, "the restoration of confidence to the individual". The individual's morale has been shattered. The individual today finds himself helpless in the grasp of a tyrannous state. He doesn't know whether tomorrow he will be cast in to a concentration camp. He no longer possesses a bill of rights, a charter of liberty, a magna carta of his own individual rights. Therefore confidence is gone ~~from~~ from the life and experience of the individual all over the world. There is need for new common fundamental law for every man. And in this interesting little book called the New World Order, Mr. Wells attempts to give an outline of the declaration of the rights of man:

"Since a man comes into this world through no fault of his own, since he is manifestly a joint & inheritor of the accumulation of the past, and since those accumulations are more than sufficient to justify the claims that are here made for him, it follows:

"1. That every man without distinction of race, of colour, or of professed belief or opinions is entitled to the nourishment, covering, medical care and attention needed to realize his full possibilities of physical and mental development and to keep him in a state of health from his birth to death.

"2. That he is entitled to sufficient education to make him a useful and interested citizen, that special education should be so made available as to give him equality of opportunity for the development of his distinctive gifts in the service of mankind, that he should have easy access to information upon all matters of common knowledge throughout his life and enjoy the utmost freedom of discussion, association, and worship.

"3. That he may engage freely in any lawful occupation, earning such



pay as the need for his work and the increment it makes to the common welfare may justify. That he is entitled to ~~may~~ paid employment and to a free choice whenever open there is any variety of employment/for him.

"5. That he and his personal property lawfully acquired are entitled to police and legal protection from private violence, deprivation, compulsion, and intimidation.

"6. That he may move freely about the world at his own expense. That his private house or apartment or reasonably limited garden enclosure is his castle, which may be entered only with his consent, but that he ~~shall~~ shall have the right to come and go over any kind of country, moorland, mountain, farm, great garden, or what not, or upon the seas, lakes, and rivers of the world, where his presence will not be destructive of some special use, dangerous to himself, or seriously inconvenient to his fellow citizens.

"7. That a man, unless he is declared by a competent authority to be a danger to himself and to others through mental abnormality, a declaration which must be annually confirmed, shall not be imprisoned for a longer period than six days without being charged with a definite offence against the law, nor for more than three months without a public trial.

"8. That although a man is subject to the free criticism of his fellows, he shall have adequate protection from any lying or misrepresentation that may distress or injure him.

"9. That no man shall be subjected to bodily assault, except in restraint of his own violence, nor to torture, beating, or any other bodily punishment; he shall not be subjected to imprisonment with such an excess of silence, noise, light, or darkness as to cause mental suffering.

"10. That the provisions and principles embodied in this declaration shall be more fully defined in a code of fundamental human rights which shall be made easily accessible to everyone. This Declaration shall not be qualified nor



departed from upon any pretext whatever. It incorporates all previous Declarations of Human Right. Henceforth for a new era it is the fundamental law for mankind throughout the whole world."

The Rights of man - these things will come to be again, I am sure. The day is coming when men will live in security. Dignity will be restored to them and their freedom. But these things will not come to pass unless that arch-foe of all time is first destroyed, unless this colossus who strides the world is first overthrown. These things will not come to pass without tears, toil and much and great sacrifice. But even as we are engaged in the task of destroying this evil which threatens these values, our best minds should devote themselves not only to the problem of how the war can be won most successfully, but how the ensuing peace shall be built most successfully. Here, Americans further removed from the bloody struggle, have an opportunity more calmly and deliberately to think through the plans of how an enduring peace may come to be built.



What kind of a Peace Do we want?

- 1) As the war drags on - toll heavier - sacrifices greater - <sup>allied</sup> peoples are asking ever more + more - "What are we fighting for?"
- And they must have a satisfactory answer - to sustain them under the terrific pounding - subjected <sup>endless</sup> to fighting your way out of a death-infested jungle - out in the clear - not another jungle -
  - Is this bloody war to end in another brief armistice - to be followed in 10-15-20 yrs. by another world war?
  - Is victory, if and when it comes, <sup>just</sup> going to restore the old order as it was in the last 2 decades but the 2 wars - or as it was in the decades leading up to 1st world war?
  - Will a victory over Hitler + M. be enough? Was a victory over the Kaisers enough?
  - Is Amer. going to pour out its vast resources, and convert itself into an arsenal, only to help E. crush Hitlerites and have the world ripe and ready for other Hitlers 5 or 10 yrs. hence? Should have idea in Peace (not now in war).
  - Was not E. defeated b/c, its people did not know what they were fighting for? One month they were told that E. must appease the dictators and the <sup>next</sup> month - that E. must fight the dictators.
  - And the E. too, were warily destroyed by the same moral + unkill. confusion.

2) What kind of a Peace Do we want?

- We know what kind of a Peace Hitler wants. Conquest - domination - subjugation - enslavement - of world - to serve elite of Ger. race!
- A world re. coordinated, regulated, econ. rationalized to serve <sup>the</sup> Master Race.
- Conquered peoples will be told how to live, what to produce, what to export - import - wages - standard - education - ideas -
- Small nations will cease to exist. Larger conquered nations will be tolerated as sem. civil. sacrifices of no rubbing <sup>part</sup> partly by us in Barbarism.
- Rights of Man will cease to exist - as they have already in



The world will move into a new Dark Age - more darker & more murderous by the total destruction of religion - freedom - law - which attack the fundamental of the former Dark Ages. There will be Peace - the Peace, the Peace on Hunger - the Peace, Slavery - of Hitler wins - next 90 days - that the land, a world he will establish - already <sup>begin to</sup> established - in countries conquered - Poland - Czechs - and that world will endure for a long time - until overthrown by ~~the~~ Revolution - & perfected espionage, terrorism - makes Peace, extremely difficult.

3) Surely this is not the kind of a Peace the Allies want - Amer. wants! We are fighting to destroy the menace of a Hitler world! " " " for a Free World - and a Free Peace - a free & peaceful world in which even the people of Germany & Italy will be free and at Peace.

The Peace must not be a Punitive Peace - a Peace of vengeance, and indemnities and annexations. It must not be constructed on any scheme to keep the defeated countries in perpetual bondage or vassalage, disrupt their pol. unity, <sup>particular their, perhaps,</sup> & keep them disarmed in an armed world. This was tried, partially at Paris, after 1918. and failed. Must help these countries throw off Yoke of their dictatorships.

4) We want a just Peace - no Peace, preparing a war wherein hates are aroused - enemies committed - passions unleashed, can be an utterly just peace. Provisions must not be made in the Peace Treaties and in the internat. org. which will undoubtedly be created for periodic revision and rectification. No aggrieved people <sup>with the best of</sup> can feel that its sole hope for further <sup>lies in</sup> another war.

5) New inter. org. - a League, a Federal Union, a Federation of Europe, a Federation of Western Europe, Regional Pol. Econ. Unions within a larger Federation - of free people. Inevitable - League private round - perhaps two ambitions -



- no room for Revisionism - no International Face -
- Too doctrinaire on Princ. of Nat. Sovereignty.
- Nat. Sov. within Inter. Law! - Private rights within Public Law.
- No right to Secede! - <sup>Prussians can be permanently united with an inter. org. which he should have to join</sup> Amer. Union. as soon as a nation secedes - it disrupts World Unity - Establishes 2 camps - Faces re-armament! And the whole entire Devil's Dance begins again.

6/ Rights of Nations to Pol. <sup>large or small</sup> ~~freedom~~ <sup>models</sup> - self determ. - re-established But not enough - Econ. Independence - Econ. orbits must be defined wherein smaller nations of Europ. can cooperate Econ. closely & freely - to enable them to survive politically. Pol. self-sufficiency - does not always spell econ. self-sufficiency - and small nations who try to possess the one then the artificial creation of the other - have failed of their destination. Imagine the US & the Union, each trying to become econ. indep. of the other - erecting tariff walls ag. each other - and org. their economy with an eye to military invulnerability.

The ~~same~~ channels of trade, the old world must be cleared of all pol. distinctions, for the econ. life of Europe to revive and for pol. units to survive.

7/ There must be an end of Imperialism. Empires should be reconstituted into commonwealths, free peoples within the larger frame-work of a world organization <sup>as E. did with India</sup> ~~as E. did with India~~ <sup>we must do with India</sup> ~~we must do with India~~ <sup>to an extent</sup> ~~to an extent~~ <sup>which is</sup> ~~which is~~ <sup>possible</sup> ~~possible~~ <sup>for the</sup> ~~for the~~ <sup>benefit</sup> ~~benefit~~ <sup>of the</sup> ~~of the~~ <sup>indigenous</sup> ~~indigenous~~ <sup>populations</sup> ~~populations~~ - first & foremost - access to their raw material open to all on equal terms.



8/ <sup>Racism, nationalism</sup> W. Montagu Druce - not transplanted - Sound prin. of Logic 14  
~~Seems Palestine~~

9/ It has been argued - ~~that~~ and also by Harold J. Laski - "When Do we go From Here"? that - there can be no lasting peace - no <sup>- no world free from frontiers</sup> limitation of nat. sovereignty, no permanent world order, unless capitalistic power & privilege is first limited in each country, and a fundamental redistribution of econ. power transfers. For it is the power of Special Privilege, threatened by democ. demands, which in one country after another helped to destroy Democ. It is the vested interests which require sovereignty for their protection.

It is they which so frequently breed war.

~~It is the~~ Econ. power must come into hands, the people. then begins socialization.

This may be so! But the process is desidered to be slow - ~~should preferably be slow~~ if it is to be democ. and dictatorial - and could very well go on side by side - in fact - could be accelerated if it went on side by side with estab. of better world order - to ~~win the effect~~ disarmament - ~~maintain~~ collective security - ~~prevent the~~ plan of econ. life - and maintain rights, man!

10/ "Restoration of Confidence" - shattered - helpless in grasp of a tyrannous state - to be divested of citizenship, of possessions, of freedom at will.

Need for a Common Fundamental Law - a new Magna Carta for every Nation.

Inalienable Right - Child of God -



11). These things will come to be!

First - to destroy the arch-foes of them all - who now beset the world like a Colossus! - wage successful war -

But even as we are engaged in that struggle - the best means should devote Ees to - Build Successful Peace,

