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How to unite for victory - how to plan for peace after the war,
1941.

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HOW TO UNITE FOR VICTORY — HOW TO PLAN FOR PEACE
AFTER THE WAR

WRHS

By
Dr. Abba Hillel Silver



At
The Temple

On
Sunday morning, October 26, 1941

I had intended to discuss both themes which were announced for this morning: How To Unite For Victory and How to Plan for Peace After the War. In preparation of these two themes, I decided to leave the discussion of the second theme for next week. I shall discuss with you this morning the first theme, How to Unite for Victory.

To unite for victory you have to make great sacrifices. At the very beginning of the war, you will recall, Churchill admonished his people that the war will cost them blood, sweat, tears. That same price may yet be demanded of us too if we mean to go through with it. Especially if Russia is defeated and the Eastern front is liquidated, disappears, England may not be able alone to march against the power of the Reich, which will have to draw upon the resources of the whole continent of Europe, even though she will be supplied by the United States with all possible material aid. England may not be willing to go on alone. There are still great numbers of appeasers in Great Britain who are clamoring, each in his own way, for a negotiated peace with Hitler. And if the price which England will have to pay will seem to many English too high in price, these appeasers will be listened to more and more, and their courage will mount more and more and Churchill and his policies may be displaced and men with other policies become the ruling forces.

A negotiated peace of course with Hitler, master of Europe, will simply mean the entrenchment of Nazism for generations to come. It will mean the continued enslavement of the people. It will mean the extinguishment of the last lights of Freedom, I am afraid, throughout the world.

It is clear to every thinking man and woman that a triumphant Nazism will not stay confined in Europe any more than a triumphant Nazism can stay within the boundaries of Germany. It cannot stop. It cannot tolerate other

and opposing systems anywhere in the world. Even before the last war the Nazis were sending their emissaries and agents and propaganda to the four corners of the world, especially to the Western Hemisphere to establish outposts for future invasion and conquest. A Europe dominated by a Nazi controlled economic system will have to bring the rest of the world within its sphere, within its orbit or succumb, and no free economy will be able to compete with the organized slave economy which Nazism will establish among the hundreds of millions of people on the continent of Europe.

With the United States as an active belligerent, England will stay on regardless of the sacrifices which her people may be called upon to make. She will stay on to the end. With the united power of Great Britain and America and the remaining forces opposed to Hitlerism, mankind will have a chance to reconstruct the world after the war as a decent place to live for free men. The American people have slowly come to understand all this. While still hating war, while remembering full well the sacrifices of the last world war, they are nevertheless determined, if necessary, to go into this war, determined not to live in the kind of a world which a Nazi victory will establish. They are prepared to sacrifice their lives, if necessary, rather than to sacrifice their ancient liberties, their way of life, their historic destiny. They are coming to understand^{too} that if a defeat of Hitler is essential for America, then they must be prepared to put their full weight in this war. They must not be content to supply England with weapons which they themselves are unwilling to use.

The final decision, has of course, not yet been made. Strategy, agreed on by the democratic forces may call for a deferment until the appropriate time. But it is crystal clear that the American people will demand a formal declaration of war if and when that becomes indispensable for the winning of the war.

For the winning of the war, the defeat of Hitler, our President has had occasion to repeat again and again, even as late as yesterday, "is now the irrevocable policy of the American Government."

Because that is so, the American people must prepare itself spiritually as well as physically for whatever sacrifices this task, the winning of the war, calls upon it to make. This war is likely to be long, and hard, and very costly. Our civilian life will be affected, from top to bottom. Life will not go on as usual for us. Life will not go on as usual for business, industry, labor.. There will ensue sharp dislocations as our total economic processes pass over from a peacetime basis to a wartime defense basis. We shall have to do without many of the things which we regard as necessities. Taxes will mount very high. At the conclusion of the war all of us will have less and not more than we had before. Government will impose a series of regulations, controls on the production, on the distribution, on the consumer. There may come about price regulation, the regulation of profits as well as the regulation of wages. Some of us will, of course grovel and grouse in these discomforts and these restrictions and these sacrifices. But I am quite confident that the American people, like the English, will rise to the emergency and make the sacrifices demanded of them loyally and patriotically. What wouldn't the conquered peoples of Europe give up today if they could have what we enjoy here!

To the job which will have to be done -- that requires, first of all, that we as a people close our ranks and unite. Disunity and divided counsel will cripple and disable us, and will cause the war to be won by Hitler. Disunion is the Nazis' high hope for America. It was disunion which lay France prostrate at their feet. The panzer divisions which rolled over France with such little resistance only completed the work of

disruption, confusion and the mortal wounds which party strife and party hate and class tragedy had inflicted on France. France was the human citadel on the Continent of Europe even as America is for the Western Hemisphere.

It is too late in the day now to make of our foreign policy a political football, the shuttlecock of party strife, the occasion for private political vendettas, or the opportunity for discrediting a President whose domestic policies one does not like.

Our foreign policy has been clearly and sharply defined by now in the sight of the whole world. Our foreign policy has been slow in taking shape, perhaps too slow. But democracies are always slow moving. They cannot "Blitz" their procedures without endangering their democratic system. But it has finally taken definite form with the consent of the people. To carry out this foreign policy, we have in the last fifteen months, since the fall of France, when we were suddenly as a people shocked into the realization of what happened in the world -- we have in fifteen months adopted three major programs: First a program of total defense, complete armament, a two-ocean navy; secondly, we did what was never done before in our history -- adopted peace-time conscription; thirdly, we adopted a program of all out aid to England and to all the people fighting Hitlerism. These three measures were not smuggled into American life. They were adopted after free and full discussion and were adopted by the Congress of the United States.

Therefore, any one today in this hour of crisis, whether Congressman or Senator or private citizen who interferes with this program, who contributes to the delay of ^{its} execution, or sows distrust of it in the minds of our people, thinking to undermine their morale in this hour of crisis, is an obstructionist, is perpetrating an act of sabotage against America.

Any law upon our Statute Books, like the neutrality Law, which is the product of other times and other circumstances, times and circumstances which

could not and did not anticipate the dangerous situation in which America finds itself today -- I say, any such law which now ties the hands of our government and our nation in the face of the most brutal international desperado the world has ever known, should be repealed.

Academically, one can continue the discussion of the American foreign policy indefinitely. But when American ships are sunk on the high seas, when American life is being destroyed, when the Berlin-Tokyo axis which was formed against us is at this moment completing the conquest of Europe and is stirring ominously in Asia -- in other words, when the house is on fire, such a prolonged academic discussion which inhibits forthright action is a dangerous precedent.

The thing which must be done ^{also} calls for unity in the ranks of labor. The American people have the right to demand that the American Federation of Labor and the C.I.O. shall declare a truce for the duration of this emergency. Labor has most at stake in this war. English Labor quickly realized it. A Nazi victory means the end of trade unionism. It means the end of all the painfully acquired rights of labor. It means reduction of ^{ers} labor to the status of of serfs, rightless and defenseless. Why, Fascism was financed originally in Italy and Germany by industrialists who fatuously hoped and labor demands by destroying the democratic machinery to curb labor to which labor could resort to defend itself.

Devision in the ranks of labor in the United States lead to strife, strikes and lock-outs and interrupt our defense work. This playes directly into the hands of Hitler and Hitler's friends in the United States. It disheartends the enslaved workers of Europe whose one hope is now that the free working men of England and the United States will provide their governments with the implements to scrap that regime.

There is far more at stake in the present struggle than the prestige

of the A.F. of L. or the C.I.O. or the prestige of Mr. Lewis or Mr. Green. Mr. Lewish may score a victory here, and Mr. Green may score a victory there, but unless they grasp the full implication, the full import of the struggle on now, they may awaken some day and find that the free worker has disappeared from the face of the earth.

There must be an end to strikes during this emergency. And labor must put an end to it, not government. Government must not outlaw strikes. Labor must forego them. Accustom your government to end strikes by seizing strike-ridden defense plants and you have paved the way for an ultimate Fascist control of labor in the United States. Our government has provided ample machinery for the mediation and arbitration of all industrial disputes, and statesmanship and patriotism should dictate both to labor and to management that these facilities for the peaceful adjudication of all differences should be resorted to during the war. It is not wise labor leadership to plunge industry into chaos and to disrupt defense organizations for the sake of enforcing at this time a closed shop agreement. It is not wise statesmanship on the part of Mr. Lewis to call out a thousand men in one of the most important defense industries at a time when the President called out for patience. On the other hand it is not wise statesmanship nor patriotism to attempt at this time to capitalize on this emergency to raise unjust profits, to coin the blood and the misery of men into profit. (also statement on adjustment of wage with mounting costs).

There must be unity in our country, which is the last arsenal of the fighting democracies among our classes, races and creeds. Discrimination in defense industries, which today really means in all industries, discrimination against the worker because of color, because he happens to be a negro, or because

of his religion -- because he happens to be a Jew -- such discrimination feeds resentment, undermines loyalty, destroys civilian morale. One cannot fight intolerance, racism abroad when at home people practise the most shameless forms of discrimination, of racism, and intolerance.

Anti-semitism today is Hitler's trump card in America. By means of it he has won everywhere, and he hopes to win here, too. All those who practise anti-Semitism, all those who spread poison openly, covertly, subtly by insinuation, while protesting their innocence, are not enemies of the Jews, but enemies of America. They help to disrupt the spiritual disunity of America. They are roiling the waters. They are stirring up blind passions. Lindbergh's Des Moines speech was a calculated piece of mischief. The Nye Wheeler attempts to discredit the Moving Picture Industry because it had made anti-Nazi pictures and subtly suggesting that the leaders in that industry were Jews, was the same classic Nazi tactics which preceded the Nazi triumph in Germany. The America First Organization loyally proclaimed its American patriotism. Nevertheless it harbors and refuses to reject the Bundists and the Christian Frontists and the American Mothers, who crowd its roster. It is nothing more than a nest of serpents in the United States.

This is the time for clear thinking and clear speaking. One must declare himself. One must know where he stands -- on which side. If we mean to destroy Hitlerism in the world, then we must be prepared for a thorough unification of America, to make all necessary sacrifices. What is really required basically, is a spiritual awakening in our people, a new consecration for a braver sacrificial task which awaits us. I think it is coming. I think the American people will discover within itself those deep sources of spiritual strength which in every crisis of life, by divine Providence, it has been able to draw upon. This hour is fraught with menace; it is a desperate hour.

There is a legend among our Rabbis that when Adam, the first man, saw the first sunset, he was greatly terrified. When Adam saw the sun go down and darkness settle upon the earth, he was frightened. Then God told Adam to take two stones and rub them one against the other. The name of the first stone was "death". The name of the other stone was "shadow of death". And he rubbed them together and he discovered fire -- light. And he said: "Blessed be God, the Creator of Light out of darkness." My good friends, the sun is setting over the world. The two rocks of "death" and the "shadow of death" will be struck. Perhaps we, too, in the days to come will behold the light come out of the darkness and we will be able to say: "Blessed by God, the Creator of light out of darkness."

