



Abba Hillel Silver Collection Digitization Project

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Series IV: Sermons, 1914-1963, undated.

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As I look back over 25 years - the world scene, 1943.

I Came to Temple in 1917 - during first World War.

Today 25 years later, we find ourselves in second World War. As I scan *the* world scene over this quarter century, ~~while I was~~ this fact, the two wars - which so-to-speak *frame* ~~from~~ it - stands out most prominently.

I came here as a very young man - shortly after the United States entered the war. My war enthusiasm ran high. I was uplifted, as were most Americans, by the high idealism of a new world - to which President Wilson gave such eloquent voice. War to end war! Self-determination - abolition of secret diplomacy - removal of economic barriers between nations - reduction of armaments - freedom of the seas - adjustment of colonial claims - and formation of an association of nations for "mutual guarantees of political independence and *terrible* integrity to great and small *states* alike."

I saw the young men of the Temple go off to war - in large numbers - along with millions of other American youth. I, myself, went to France in the *summer* ~~same year~~ of 1918 - for the American Committee of Public Information - and the French High Com. It was shortly after Hindenburg and Ludendorff launched their greatest offnsive on the Western front, which brought the Germans back once more to the Marne at Chateau Thierry, only 43 miles from Paris. I was there when in July the Allies, under the unified command of General Foch, began their brilliant counter-offensive which in 4 months brought the War to an end.

Together with all other Americans, I tasted victory. I cheered with boundless joy when the Armistice was announced. Here at last was the thing we had hoped for. I was in Paris July 14, 1919 for the great Allied Victory Parade *and* celebration - the very epitome of triumphal splendor, pride and happiness. Yes we had won! No doubt about it! The enemies of mankind were utterly defeated. Now our hopes for a better, freer and peaceful world could be realized. We had it in our power to bring it about. It was Spring-tide in the life of the world. How eager we all were! How full of great expectations!

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All this happened in the first few years of my ministry. As I round out a quarter of a century since that time, the Germans are back again, not on the Marne, but in Paris - in fact, in the whole of France and nearly in the whole of Europe. And America is at war again - another global war. Young men of the Temple by the hundreds are again going off to War, along with millions of other Americans. This time it is Pres. Roosevelt who is eloquently voicing the idealism of the conflict, which Wilson voiced in those days.

On the surface this fact is very disheartening. The staggering parallel between the first and second wars may well ~~shape~~^{shake} our faith in the capacity of nations ever to surmount war. At 50 I do not share this disillusionment, although I find myself less given to high and ecstatic expectations and to dreams of a perfect world in my lifetime. The experiences of the last few decades have sobered us all. We have learned how extremely difficult and complex are the problems of world pacification, how inadequate simple appealing formulas really are and how much jungle underbrush will have to be cleared away before the free and open highways can be reached.

The very fact that this is the second World War, ~~fought for~~^{encouraging} the same objectives, is ~~proof~~^{proof} that these objectives are so vital and inescapable that they will keep on pressing for a solution until the proper solution is found. We made many mistakes after the last war, some quite unintentionally and these ~~mistakes~~^{on} undid ~~much~~^{much} ~~all~~¹ the good that was intended or accomplished. But these mistakes can be avoided in the future, since we now know what they are. No great human task - whether it be the abolition of slavery, the abolition of poverty or the abolition of war - can ~~or~~^{even} ~~does~~^{does} succeed at the first attempt, but every earnest attempt brings ~~it~~^{a step} nearer to success. One need but recall how difficult it was to unite single countries like England, Italy, Germany or the United States, which ~~were~~^{after all} composed

of more or less homogenous population, possessed of many cultural, racial and historic ^{in common} ~~common~~ attributes, not to lose patience with the slow progress of world unification or pacification.

The second outstanding fact of my quarter of a century was the birth and death of the League of Nations. It was the most courageous and promising adventure of the human spirit in many centuries. Had it succeeded there would be no second World War today. At the outset I hailed the advent of the League. Then I despaired of it as I realized that it was being used by the four major powers for their own specific interests and that as soon as ~~these~~ the interest of these major powers would begin to conflict ~~with~~ ^{disrupted} one another, the entire structure of the League would be ~~destroyed~~ ^{disrupted}, and that is how it ^{really} happened. In recent years, I have become more strongly convinced than ever that a reconstructed ^{ed} League, free from its earlier faults ^{flaws}, represents the sole salvation of mankind. An allied victory in this War may not be immediately followed by a resurrected League. A long transition ^{period} may be required to heal Europe and to cleanse it of its Fascist defilements, but sooner or later, a World League, embracing all peoples, including the

former enemies of the United Nations, must be re-established ^{An enduring peace must be based upon the voluntary association of all nations as equals within a world community, regardless of past quarrels, & which no nation is entirely powerless}

A third outstanding fact of my quarter of a century - one which effected the entire ~~era~~ - was the Russian Revolution. It occurred the very year that I came to Cleveland. The Russian Revolution, of course, ~~marks~~ marks one of the great moments in history - a turning point. Everything that has happened in our world since 1917 has been influenced by it and everything in the future will be. What the American Revolution was in the field of politics in the last 150 years, the Russian Revolution will be in the field of economics. It is like the weather - you may approve or disapprove of it, but it is there and always will be there. The Russian Revolution reached out

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beyond the borders of the Soviet Union. It ~~sh~~^{happened} class ~~antagonisms~~^{conflicts} among all nations. It inspired radical movements everywhere. It frightened the possessing classes terribly and rallied them into Fascist movements to counter-act it. Communism became a world battle-cry, and Nazi Fascism has been its echo.

The pact between Communist Russia and Nazi Germany three years ago was the signal for the beginning of the second World War. The end of this pact was the signal for the Nazi invasion of Russia and for what might well be the prelude to Hitler's final defeat and the destruction of Fascism in the world.

I re-acted most unfavorably, as did many other people, to the violence, ~~to~~ the terror, ~~to~~ the blood purges, the liquidation of whole classes of the Russian population, to the suppression of freedom and the attack upon religion. I see no reason for white-washing these immoral acts at this time or for re-casting history because the fortunes of war have made the United States and the Soviet Union allies. But I did not fail to see, and frequently to speak of, the remarkable achievements of this revolutionary movement in other fields - in bringing health, education and higher standards of living to the most exploited ~~the Russian masses~~^{the Russian masses} in the world. Only two visits to the Soviet Union in 1926 and 1936, I was able to observe the remarkable dynamic ~~surge~~^{upsurge} to new forms of life and the high confidence of its youth. I sensed amazing reservoirs of untapped strength. The recent evidences of power on the part of the Russian people ~~to~~ⁱⁿ resist ~~invasion~~^{any Nazi}, has amazed me, of course, but has not come as a complete surprise to me.

The world tomorrow will learn much from Russia about co-operative living, ~~central planning~~^{planned economy} and production for use rather than for profit. Russia will learn much from America about freedom with security. ~~how to keep men free and fed.~~ I am also persuaded that. Russia will not forever make idols of tractors and dynamos and sanctuaries of shops and factories. The hunger of the human soul for things beyond industrialization is even now beginning to make itself manifest in renewed interest in religion among the Russian people.

Another dramatic phase of this period has been the decline of democracy and the rise of dictatorship, or the organized conspiracy against human freedom. Democratic governments were either destroyed in civil wars as in Spain or successfully manouevured out of existence by political chicanery and gangsterism as in Italy and Germany. In the last 20 years all the gains which had been scored through ~~many~~ ^{numberless} revolutions since the American and French Revolutions were completely ~~wiped out~~ ^{obliterated} in most of Europe, ^{and} ~~an~~ ^{an} anti-democratic international came into ~~being~~ ^{existence}, both cunning and heavily financed. Whatever served its purpose was shamelessly exploited, Nationalism, racism ^{or} ~~and~~ a threat of Communism, ~~etc~~ ^{and} it was ruthless and indecent in its use of terror, violence, the concentration camp, the torture chamber and universal espionage. ^{human} ~~Scourges~~ ^{thought} were set over ^{and} education was prostituted to the level of propaganda. The world became filled with refugees and exiles. ^{This has been} ~~It was~~ the era of naked despotism, a mad, vicious and lawless era, wherein the individual was deprived of all his constitutional rights and completely submerged in the tyranny of the state.

Nevertheless, I am convinced that all this is but a passing phase in the progress of mankind, a tragic interlude, a long retreat. Mankind ~~is~~ ^{is} struggling ^{today} today toward greater economic ~~and~~ ^{and} well-being security. For a time ~~he~~ ^{it was} ~~blindly~~ ^{performed} sacrifice liberty and freedom for it; but ~~it~~ ^{it} is on the way to regain its lost equilibrium. The slump in idealism and international morality is also destined to come to an end. Because of the terrible brutality of the last decades, ~~both~~ men and nations ~~have~~ ^{have} become calloused. They ~~have~~ ^{have} hardened their hearts to human suffering. The persecution of minorities ~~were~~ ^{was} written off as domestic affairs. Moral isolationism was the refuge for the tired conscience of the world. Dictators were ~~to be~~ ^{to be} appeased. Evil was ~~to be~~ ^{to be} tolerated if it was expedient.

The world is atoning today in blood for this moral isolationism. Never has retribution been so swift and so great, But we are doing penance! We are confessing our sins finally ^{because of this} ~~and in a~~ contrite mood, ^{we} ~~the~~ may emerge better and

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stranger for ~~it~~ men and nations.

During the same period, mankind registered remarkable scientific progress in technology, in invention, in transportation and communication, in the protection of life. The human mind probed deep and successfully into the heart of the mysteries of nature. ~~The~~ human hand gained vastly greater power. Wealth was produced more easily and more abundantly. On the one hand this has been most heartening. On the ~~under~~hand, it is only underscored the dreadful lag between spiritual and material ~~profits~~ ^{progress} between prosperity and happiness. One becomes less discouraged, however, if one remembers that spiritual ^{or} progress is always slower than scientific or intellectual progress; ~~but~~ ^{that} every child born is a stone-age child ^{and} that with each new generation, the whole job must be ~~all over again~~ ^{all over again} begun ~~anew~~. But quite definitely, the human race is ^{ready to-day} ~~prepared~~ to make a mighty effort ~~today~~ for a new world order, wherein science will increasingly enrich the physical life of man and the principles of justice will determine his social existence. ^{These} ~~These~~ glorious opportunities ^{may} ~~await~~ our children ^{to recover} ~~and~~ that is the most blessed thought of all.

1
~~g~~ Impossible, in midst of the abnormal conditions of war, to evaluate the progress which America has made during last quarter century. For all normal processes are checked or deflected in war-time. New emergency conditions are created which have no relation to what has preceded. Our peace-time progress prior to this war, ~~must~~; wait till after the war for its proper appraisal.

~~2~~ But I do believe that American people registered certain very definite advances since 1917 when it entered first World War. And it learned certain very valuable lessons which it has tried to put to good use.

1.) First - The dangers of false prosperity. ^{The} World War followed by a decade of gilded, gaudy, giddy boom days. Vast fortunes were made. Millionaires by the thousands ^{Spring of 1919} ~~here~~. ^{unknown}. Speculation became a national past-time. Stock-markets became one vast national gambling house.

Then came the crash - in '29. The gilded era slithered into the dark, dank, desperate depression era - of bread lines, of fifteen million unemployed ~~men~~, shops and factories idle, banks failing, business bankrupt, ^{new} financial wizards ^{exposed} as crooks. It took us years to climb out, and that only partially, from the pit of economic disaster into which we had fallen.

We learned a few lessons. It is not enough to have vast resources, technology and man-power. A nation must have a just and ethical system of distribution, ^{based on} ~~solid~~ ^{solid} foundation of all people sharing equally in what is produced. When a people's purchasing power does not keep pace with its productive capacity, an economic catastrophe is inevitable. When profits are channelled into hands of relatively few, while machines ^{are} ~~geared up for mass production and consumption~~ ^{are} ~~economic~~ ^{are} makes production unprofitable; factories close down. Those who receive excessive profits - unable to put them to work - invest - artificial rise.

Out of wreck of ^{the} boom era - New Deal - A new conception of economic life, ^{and of} Government ~~relation~~ to it. Its aim - put our economic house in order. Put men back to work. Raise wages and incomes of masses. Public works take up economic lag. Extend help

to farmers, small business men, workers. Check speculation and run-away markets.

Protect ⁱⁿ against monopolies and big business. Regulate labor conditions, machinery ^{for adjustment}
Government ^{step} ~~shift~~ ^{to supervise etc}

Some measures ^{inoperative} ~~imperative~~ - invalidated. Others ^{not necessary} ~~against~~ ravages of re-current economic disaster.

New Deal damned! Plutocrats forgotten.—

~~They are economic~~ . Future — lines and principles laid down by New Deal - which is neither Socialism nor economic Bourgeoisie, but the American way of making economic progress, to benefit all.

^{means in} Important ~~meaning~~ of social security. Bitterly resented. Now generally accepted. Beveridge Plan — Nothing final.

There is enough for all! And all should share in it. After this war, freedom from want; Economic security added to political freedom.

^{for} Learned also from Prohibition era, ^{Back to it} 1919. ^{not a} ~~It is~~ a laudible ^{with} ~~idea~~. Appealed to many of us. ^{to my} ~~Always had~~ ^{led} ~~ways~~ led to great evils. Drastic measures ^{Did not work!} ~~Created worst era~~ of lawlessness America has ever known. Bootlegging, racketeering, speak-easies - organized gangsterism. Repeal! Could not be enforced! Train men in temperance and self-control. Hardest way, but only way.

B) Industrial Conflicts . Coal and steel strikes - 1919-20-21.

Throughout period until war. Right to organize - closed and open shop. Attempt made to destroy trade unionism. Labor itself split. Labor racketeers made their appearance . Have not yet learned the answer - may wreck Democracy. Government has set up machinery - Respect - self-restraint. A knock-down and drag-out fight, inspired by one or the other, will bring Fascism to America. Call for new industrial statesmanship and new labor leadership.

5.) Spread of intolerance. Red scare and riots in 1919 -- Cleveland, May, 1919.

A. ^{H. H. Clegg} Palmer - Red hunt.

4.) Spread of intolerance. Red scare and riots in 1919. - Cleveland, May, 1919.

A. ~~Mr. K. K. K.~~ Palmer - Red hunt.

Communist menace exploited by labor-busting interests.

Just as Anti-Semitism exploited -- weapon of economic struggle.

K.K.K. -- Dearborn - More recently Nazi-inspired.

American people is learning dangerous uses to which intolerance is put, ~~abroad~~. What it has bel
to abroad -

5.) Last ten years aroused a growing devotion to Americanism. American way of life.

A determined resolve to defend it.

Rekindled an active enthusiasm for American ~~with~~ ^{with} ~~the~~ ^{the} and ideals -- Old words ~~and~~ ^{new} meaning.

What has happened abroad startled us out of our complacency.

How precious is this heritage -- Give it to the world!

More than food - Send our ideas crusading through the world -- 150 years ago.



1/ Came to T. in 1917 - during first W. War.

10-day 25 yrs. later we find ourselves in second W. War.

As I scan this scene over this 1/4 cent. which I was peruse - this fact. the 2 uses - which so-to-speak frame this it - stands out most prominently:

I came here as a very young man - shortly after the U.S. entered the war. My war enthusiasm ran high. I was uplifted as were most Americans, by the high idealism for a new world - to which Mrs. Wilson gave such eloquent voice.. War to end war. Self-determination - abolition of secret diplomacy - removal of economic barriers bet. nations - reduction of armaments - freedom, the seas - adjustment of colonial claims - and formation of an Assoc. of nations for "mutual guarantees of nat. independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike."

I saw the young men of the temple - go off to war - in large numbers - along with millions of other Amer. youth.

I myself went to France in the summer of 1918 - for the Am. Com. of Public Information - and the 1st Div. Amer. It was shortly after Henderson and Ludendorff launched their Great German offensive on the W. Front - which put the Germans back once more to the Marne at Chateau-Thierry only 43 miles from Paris. I was there when, in July, the Allies, ~~by~~ under the unified command of Gen. Foch, began their brilliant counter-offensive which in 4 months put the war to an end.

Together - with all other Americans + millions elsewhere - I tasted Victory - Cheered ^{with thousands of} when Armistice was announced. Here, at last, was the thing we hoped for! I was in Paris, July 14-1919 - for Great Allied V. Parade + Celebration - the very

same objectives is perhaps the surest proof that these objectives ~~will~~ are ~~so~~ ^{so} real, so vital, so incapable, that they will keep on ~~coming~~ ^{pressing} for a solution, until the first solution is found. Our victory in the last war - made the solution possible. But we made too many serious mistakes - some quite unintentionally ~~and~~ ^{at the time} ~~and~~ ^{they} ~~in the~~ ^{rather} process of achieving the solution, ~~and~~ ^{then} ~~we~~ ^{we} ~~undid~~ ^{undid} all the good that was accomplished. We must avoid these mistakes after this war. They can be avoided - since we know now what they were. No great human task - the abolition of slavery - the abolition of poverty - the abolition of war - succeeds at the first attempt - but every earnest attempt brings us nearer to a solution.

I believe, now more than ever, with a faith matured by a measure of experience, in the perfectibility of man and of humanity - capacity to master - one to become possessed - The very fact that the first experiment

~~The~~ The second attempt will be more successful - one need but recall how difficult it was to unite single countries like England, Italy, or Germany - men of less homogeneous populations - with cultural, racial, ethnic attributes in common - The United States of America was accomplished only on at first attempt - and was actually destroyed in Civil War - but rebuilt -

3/ The second extraordinary fact - The birth & death of League of Nations - most courageous & hopeful adventure of human spirit in last 1/4 C. Had it succeeded - no doubt way - Grave inherent weaknesses, which I have the feeling - I still - suspect have ~~not~~ ^{been} ~~against~~ ⁱⁿ ~~it~~ ^{the} ~~all~~ ^{the}

- to the masses, R - the most exploited & threatened in Europe - (5)
 In my two visits to Soviet Union - in '26 and '36 -
 - I observed the remarkable dynamic response to the new life -
 the high confidence & its growth - the tremendous exertions
 - There must be great strength & idealism in R. comm.
 - At the very beginning - 18-19-20 - they succeeded - Kolchak -
Denkikin - Gudimov -
 - And now - met head-on - greatest military power on
earth - Wehrmacht & Reich - took physical punishment
lost territory - population - industrial centers -
 but only held it - but is working it back

World will learn much from R - production
 for use and for profit - cooperation living - ^{+ Global Planning} ✓

R. will learn much from America - freedom
along with security = Relaxation - not free market
^{sanctuary, ship & factory, etc. of the future of life - Europe, Human soul alive? ~~the world~~}
^{even now -}

5) Fourth Fact - Decline of Democracy - Rise of Dictatorship -
 or Bribe or Conspiracy against Human Freedom.

Never in last 150 yrs. has there happened such an org. & successful
attack upon democracy & liberalism as during last 50 yrs. In
 that short time all the pains & sorrows that numberless peoples
 have suffered in most of Europe - German govt are
 either destroyed in blood and have as in Spain - or
 maneuvered out & exposed by pol. chicanery & intrigues
 as in Italy and Germany -

an anti-democratic international came into being - ~~unlike~~
cunning & heavily financed - Black Reaction placed itself
in the saddle - [now country it exploited chambers - in
another - racism - to get a third - fear & communism -
whatever served its purpose best:-

And it was shameful spectacles in use of Terror,
vi. device - the whip - the torturer chamber - the concentration
Camp - Scourge were set over Human that - Educat. was prohibited
At ~~vigorous~~ ^{vigorous} lawless ~~persecution~~ ^{persecution} ~~the world became filled with refugees~~ ^{the world became filled with refugees} -
Men we taught to Hate - to debase - ~~Humanity was stripped~~ ^{Humanity was stripped}

6/ ~~As a corollary~~ - went Fifth Foot - Decline of the
Individual - State subjugated him - Deprived of
all constitutional rights - Charters, Liberty
His freedom of expression - to think - to dissent -
denied -

I am convinced - passing phase - a ^{brief, harrowing} ~~tragic~~ but
~~brief~~ phase in progress / mankind - a tragic inter-
lude - a hard & desperate detour ^{as mankind}
struggle towards greater econ. well-being & security -
in which blind it has in the moment ~~sterilized~~
liberty & freedom - It will soon seek the
equilibrium again - It is even now seeking it.

7/ Sixth Foot. Shrieks in ^{idealism} ~~world~~ world conscience
and Morality - So much brutality - men & nations

became calloused - insensitive - hardened their hearts - (7)
Moral isolationism - Domestic concern - Sins &
crimes / sorts of actions / then our people & their
flight / Refugees -

Apprehension / Dictators -

World is atoning in blood for the blunders / it had -
+ for the moral callousness; There has retribution
been so swift & so great!

But we are doing penance! - We are heaving our
breast now in confession and contrition -
We are resolved not to do it again! -

8/ Let us remember the fact - Remarkable Scientific
progress - in Technology - in physics chemistry - we have
invented discovery - Global transportation & communication
have been extremely speeded up & facilitated - Human
mind has probed deep & successfully into heart &
nature's mysteries - Human hand has found vastly
greater power - Human wealth can be produced more
easily than abundantly -

This is both heavenly & discomfying - So much
abused - to destroy - to incite rivalry & hatred &
conflict - to extravagant -
Not discouraged - Progress always slow - Must
begin all over again with each new generation White etc.

Rebukes are readily transmitted -

But work will go on - God's purpose will be fulfilled -
"They shall not hurt - nor" - I believe on it -

Gaining a human heart to day is assurance
that a mighty effort will be made in this &
next generation -

^{World - without Love - Charity - etc -}
The most precious possessions await our children

And this that is the most blessed of all -

