



## Abba Hillel Silver Collection Digitization Project

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

Series IV: Sermons, 1914-1963, undated.

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New Year, 1939.



RH-39

ABSTRACT OF ADDRESS DELIVERED BY DR. ABBA HILLEL SILVER AT THE TEMPLE, ANSEL ROAD AND EAST 105TH STREET on NEW YEAR'S EVE, SEPTEMBER 13, 1939.

A year ago we met for our Holy Day worship under the sign of "Munich". Today we meet under the sign of the "Second World War". Between last New Years and this, there stretches a fateful and stupefying year, a year of aggressions and conquests, of strident war alarms and feverish war preparations, a year of devious and desperate diplomatic maneuverings which have led to Armageddon.

For our people, the past year was a frightful one, the area of persecution widening as the Nazi orbit was extended. The number of our helpless refugees, broken and impoverished, scattered to the four corners of the earth seeking new homes, mounted tragically.

That year, and the brutal years which preceded it, now shrivel up in a world conflagration. It could not have been otherwise! The world had become too much of a madhouse. So much evil and madness simply could not endure any longer. The sins of our generation cried to heaven.

How long could nations live in such imminent and nerve-racking fear of war? How long could they endure such dread uncertainty which made all normal planning and enterprise impossible? How long could they continue to drain their thought, substance and energy into armament? How long could the world tolerate the spectacle of small nations, one after another, ground under the heel of aggression? How long could the world tolerate in the heart of Europe a ruthless regime which contemptuously violated all international covenants, which idolized war, and converted a nation into one huge war machine, which flouted all human decencies and persecuted men for their religion and their race? The world could not be handed over indefinitely to such reckless and desperate adventurers, to such international gangsters and black-mailers.

The irrepressible conflict which some of us have long predicted has finally broken out. There were those who believed that this was not an irrepressible conflict, just as there were men who believed that the issue of Slavery in the United States was not an irrepressible conflict. These people deprecated what they called ideologic



warfare. They preached appeasement. They hoped that by sacrificing smaller nations to the insatiable maw of the aggressors they would have peace in their lifetime. The political leaders of England and France in recent years were of that opinion. By refusing to recognize the menace of the new political barbarism which had been unleashed in Europe, by feeding it and allowing it to grow strong, in spite of all warnings and clear signs, by failing to draw its fangs when such an operation would have been quite simple, these blind and inept leaders have unwittingly prepared this Second World War, and their mistakes must now be atoned for by the death of countless men upon the new battlefields of Europe.

No one knows what will come out of this war. No one dares to prophecy. The last World War destroyed three empires, turned one-sixth of the globe over to Communism and ushered in the Era of Dictators. We can only hope and pray that the suffering which awaits the nations of Europe will teach them - and us - repentance, that they will return again, after their dread chastisement, to that vision which they repudiated after the First World War - the vision of an international order based upon law and morality. We can only hope that this war will mark the end of Nazism and of that whole complex of aberrations - Force, Militarism, Aggression, Intolerance, Racism - for which it stands. The Second World War will also prove vain and futile unless as a result of it the rights of all peoples and of all minorities ~~xxx~~ are finally firmly established and freedom and democracy are fully vindicated.