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National Peace Conference, 1936.

ADDRESS BROADCAST BY DR. ABBA HILLEL SILVER, RABBI OF THE TEMPLE, CLEVELAND, OHIO
ON SATURDAY EVENING, MARCH 28, 1936 IN THE SYMPOSIUM CONDUCTED BY THE NATIONAL
PEACE CONFERENCE.

The religion which I have the honor to represent to-night - Judaism - has an ancient tradition of peace. The vision of universal peace - of nations beating their swords into ploughshares and learning war no more - was first born in the soul of the people of Israel. 2700 years ago, Isaiah and Micah, voiced the high hope that a redeemed and reconciled humanity would stream into the mountain of the Lord's house in Zion - a spiritual Geneva - where the law of nations would be proclaimed and just international arbitrations rendered, so that thereafter all nations would walk in the ways of God, and not in the ways of strife and war.

Just as peace has been an historic and essential doctrine of Judaism, so has it been an indispensable factor in the security and well-being of the Jewish people. No people suffers as much from war as does the Jewish people. Every war takes a double toll of misery from the Jew. The brutal persecutions of the Jews in Germany to-day, and the menacing spread of anti-Semitic agitation in so many parts of the world, are directly traceable to the World War - to ~~the~~ the economic disorganization and impoverishment of peoples and all their attendant conflicts and bitterness which bear down with particular harshness upon a minority group - and to national frustrations and wounded national pride which seek compensation in chauvenism and intolerance. Perhaps more than any other people, the Jew has a momentous stake in world peace.

That church and synagogue, while pledged to peace and preaching peace, have nevertheless failed to bring it appreciably nearer to realization, goes without saying. That both church and synagogue, were tragically helpless either to prevent or to end the last war and that they docilely lent themselves

to the warring states as channels for war propaganda, is acknowledged in sadness and contrition by all the best spirits of both religious organizations. And that the drive and compulsion of another war, when once it is declared, and the political emergencies which that would create, and the patriotic madness which it would unleash might compel the church and synagogue to do the same thing over again - that too is clearly and fearfully envisaged by them. They realize that the opportunity to work for peace, and to avert war, is in times of peace. When war is once declared, the choice is blind obedience to the authority of the state - or martyrdom. And the martyrdom of a few or even of a large number of brave spirits who refuse to fight never has and never will put an end to war.

Peace will never come to pass through pacifism. Pacifism is an ideal not adapted to the Western World. It is questionable whether outside the lives of some few saintly individuals or some small detached religious communities, pacifism can ever be a decisive factor in the pacification of the world.

Peace will never come to pass through peace-time pledges on the part of earnest and sincere youths never to fight. It is a noble gesture, but quite inadequate to meet the situation. There always will be enough young men ready to fight either out of a sense of duty and loyalty, or out of sheer adventure - and their number will far outweigh the others who will be overwhelmed, drawn in by suction, or destroyed.

Peace will never come to pass through extolling the virtues of peace, and, by contrast, through painting the horrors, the tragedies, the destructiveness and the futility of war. People know all that! The desirability of peace does not have to be sold to the masses of the world! Outside the

ranks of the professional militarists, Fascist adventurers and munition merchants who profit from war - the great masses of the world desperately want and long for peace. Peace will never come to pass through disarmament conferences. Every disarmament conference has led to increased armaments. Nations will disarm only when they will feel secure. Back of all competitive armament is fear. Until the nations of the world are assured of a strong, competent international agency which will protect them against aggression, they will not disarm - and competitive armament is a sure provocative of war.

The world's hope, therefore, lies in the establishment of such institutions and agencies for collective security, backed by force, swiftly and impartially employed, as will give all peoples the confidence of protection against attack and the invasion of their rights. A League of Nations, restrained by its own avowed friends, from enforcing its findings through automatic sanctions, is actually an unwilling accessory to treaty violations and definitely a menace to world peace. The failure of the League to act against Japan when it invaded China, encouraged Mussolini, a few years later, to invade Ethiopia. The failure of the League to act effectively against Italy, encouraged Hitler, a few months later, to scrap the Locarno pact. The failure of the League to act against Nazi Germany will undoubtedly be responsible for the next international crisis, pregnant with war.

Only a world organization which has the economic and military power to back up all international covenants, and which is free to employ it when the occasion arises, can be of any significance in the kind of a world in which we live.

And it is upon the building or the rebuilding of such a world organization, that the constructive thought and energy of all peace-loving men

and women throughout the world should be concentrated. This, in our judgment,
is the practical way to Peace.



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