



## Abba Hillel Silver Collection Digitization Project

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

Series V: Writings, 1909-1963, undated.

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Armistice Day, 1938.

Nov. 11, 1938

RADIO ADDRESS DELIVERED BY DR. ABBA HILLEL SILVER, OF CLEVELAND, OHIO  
ON ARMISTICE DAY - NOVEMBER 11, 1938 - STATION W.H.K.

America is celebrating today the twentieth anniversary of the signing of the Armistice which marked the end of the World War. We are profoundly grateful today, as we were twenty years ago, that the world-devastating war which took its ghastly toll of more than ten millions of human lives was finally terminated. We are saddened, however, to think that the values which we had hoped to gain from an allied victory in the World War have been completely dissipated in the twenty years of peace. The World War, you will recall, was to have been a war to end all war. But wars are raging in the world today, in the East and in the West, and nations are engaged today in the most desperate and exhausting re-armament race known in history. International law is cynically flouted, and treaties and covenants are broken with impunity. The World War was to have been a war to make the world safe for democracy. Democracy today is fighting with its back to the wall, having suffered in peace-time one disastrous defeat after another, and having witnessed the triumph in many countries of the fiercest and most ruthless dictatorships known to mankind. Bitter racial and religious intolerance is sweeping over the world when we had hoped that as a result of the multitudinous sacrifices of men of all faiths and races in the war, better understanding, tolerance, brotherhood and universal reconciliation would come to dwell among us.

In all this there is a grim and tragic lesson for all men and nations. The way to peace and human progress is not through war or through victories won on the battlefield.

Clearly we must start again from the very beginning, and patiently and laboriously lay the foundations of a new world order. This time we must build not on the passions and hatreds unleashed in a world war but on the best and noblest hopes and aspirations of the best and noblest minds and hearts among all the peoples of the earth.

The ideal of collective security has broken down, with all the resultant political, economic and spiritual chaos which we witness in our world today. It must be rebuilt. There is no substitute for collective security. It is either that or international anarchy. The League of Nations lies shattered and discredited. It must be rebuilt in one form or another. No other international agency to insure the peaceful and orderly processes of international life exists.

Peace, my friends, is a problem in international engineering. The best minds and cleanest hearts of mankind must now apply themselves to the task of rebuilding that international order which was so magnificently conceived in the midst of the war and which was so ingloriously destroyed in the peace which followed it.

But let us not despair. Every great ideal of mankind must first travel the thorny road of frustration and defeat before it can reach the goal of triumph and consummation. It will be so with the ideal of peace. It will be many years before nations will beat their swords into ploughshares and learn war no more. But no one of us who saw the war with his own eyes and experienced anything of its horror, brutality and ravage, will desist from working indefatigably for an enduring peaceful organization of international life, merely because the prospect is not at all bright at the moment, or the task is sure to be of long duration.

Ours is not the duty to complete the task, but neither are we free to desist from it.