



Abba Hillel Silver Collection Digitization Project

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The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives

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

Series V: Writings, 1909-1963, undated.

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605

The League of Nations, 1942.

- 1) Stirring Memories: - Desperate Hour - Anxious -
Saw Ravages - Saw life reduced to Barest Necessity
Severe rationing - Heavy Taxation - Whole Nation
mobilized in Hard Discipline of Costly + Punishing War
- (a) No grumbling - Take it in their stride - Race has
character - A deep and quiet patriotism - England
is worth sacrificing for & the English can make sacrifice
- (b) Ordeal by no means over - 20 M. from Front -
Face future with stout Fortitude - See it through!

- 2) They are thinking a good deal about the Future -
Not only the Future, the War - After the War -
Persistent demand for clearer Definition of War Aims -
"The Inspiration of a Plan". What "New World" are we
fighting for?
- For a compelling Dis-ling, sustained + sacrificial
War effort - more & Negative Propaganda -
Free Peoples must have Prospect of something
Fairer - Juster - nobler - compensation for Blood
Atlantic Charter - 4 Freedoms too Abstract - Vague -
What Form of Inter. Org. to insure Peace?
What Liberties & what Econ. security with them & Nation -
Br. Empire + Colonial Policies - comes in for much
criticism + heart-searching - Failure -
they are looking ahead - Now, in midst of War and
danger - And so must we!
should

League of Nations

Peace Com. 7 Cleveland - May 4-1942

Alvin - Fed. Workers Club May 6-1942

WRHS



- 3) After Armistice it is too late to Plan for World Reconstruction + Peace.
Too hectic, Too confused, Too short.
Mood likely to be - Revenge, Reparations, Loot - Intrigue
Now is the time to work out - Broad Outlines -
Blue-print of world org. - Phoney Peace to
be followed by ^{war which} anything but ^{another} Phoney war.
- 4) Not enough to defeat Hitler! Altho the defeat of H.
condition precedent to any world org. of a fair kind.
In Axis-dominated world - no chance for our best-
laid plans - Masking - Scapegoats - Exploiters - Exploited
- Defeated Kaiser 14c ago - Disarmed Germany -
- Not enough! Ger. must powerfully armed again
and in Berlin - another World Lord!
Must eradicate conditions which make ^{for the} recurrence
of Kaiserism + Hitlerism
Must create the conditions which will make comp
rearmament not only impossible - unnecessary.
- (This is possible)! Tho far from simple! It can be
done - Not here. we are better than Men who Failed
at Versailles - Wiser - here we have their
Failures before our eyes - learn from them.

- 5) Their idea of a League - ① To establish Collective
security ② To adjudicate intern. disputes ③
to act as instrument of continuous Adjustment
was a sound one - a Radically sound one -
I, for one, do not know of any Substitute Plans

which are sounder - which do not grapple with ⁶
even greater difficulties - are involved in this one.

- World Peace is a (Global) Matter. It is not Regional. - Pax Britannica - Americana - Humana - Orbis Terrarum
- An Anglo-American Federation or Commonwealth, even if possible of realization, will not be able to champion the Peace, the world (Russia etc)
- A Federation of Europe seems also unlikely. Europe is a Geogr. Unit - but not a Pol. or Econ. Unit - Countries interwoven imperially & econ. with all the other continents - ~~and~~
- A Confederation of Regional Federations will take decades in the making, will multiply the difficulties of cooperation & may create new & dangerous balances of power based on comp. econ. interests - ~~Confederation~~ ~~Parliamentary~~ - all Regional Pacts have failed!
- ✱ They are all new and untried -

6). But the structure of the League - discredited tho it is - is still here.

- The reasons for its Failure are now quite clear.
- It is not impossible to rectify the mistakes and start afresh with a greater prospect of success.
- Great New Ideas do not necessitate the First time
Our own First Attempt at Union under

'Articles of Confederation' broke down - (no real power to enforce the execution of its own decisions)
Civil War - Union again in danger of disruption

2/. What were weaknesses?

I. Member Nations did not abandon concept of Absolute Nat. Sovereignty.

(No inter. order can ever be built on this utterly immoral notion of indep. sovereign states -

Can do whatever they please - to own citizens and other states - except as Prudence dictates otherwise

- In the kind of a chaotic world - econ. interdependence - Peace in h.y. - unintegrated and uncoordinated.

- Peoples should be Free - autonomous but, like birds, subject to inter. obligations voluntarily assumed for mutual benefit.
Gov. limited by law!

- Not forcible surrender of Nat. freedom & unification under Hitler (Nazi)

- But Voluntary legal self-restraint - define duties towards one another - not only Rights vis-a-vis one another

- In a sense, never had real Nat. Sovereignty
- Strong -

Too Pr. Mindset - Self-determ. - Econ. interdep. (5)
II Right of Secession - Civil War
No individ. has right "to secede"

III Unanimous Vote required for import. Matter
Puts Veto power in one State over

IV. Did not create adequate organs of coercion - No Inter. Army - Air Force - Navy -

- No orderly soc. - except in Utopia - was even possible without it.

- Instead of having its own Police Force
allowed each nation "to be its own police"
hoping Gun would be a little one!...

- Nations will not disarm - under (Cathol)
arsenal + military Protection Force.
They should not!

un-self-governing
V No frank approach to problem of
colonies + so-called back-ward peoples

- Supervision of an Internat. Admin. that
to insure (a) Administered primarily in the
interests of the Native races (b) Equality of

econ. opportunity - to all persons & enterprise -
unrestricted, their nationality - 'Open Door'.
20th C. - End was
- The End of Empires!

VI. Failure of G.B. - France - U.S. to
stand by League - Moral Failure - Retribution

(a) Eng. at Manchukuo - France - Ethiopia
completed ruin & League - whose Fovodates
were undermined by Failure of U.S. to act

(b) Br. & Fr. Imperialism and Am. Isolationism

8) No New Order (Mundane) Am. is prepared
no American Role ^{our interest} Share!

No place for us in Neutrality or Isolation
Two Ways!

Forced to accept armed resp. in war -
Why not Peace?

Must intervene!
Why not ^{intervene} corporate they req. with procedure
to stop aggression

Alternatives: Not Isolation. Intervention
Either corporate for World Peace or intervention
in every World War.

9/ Peace is not pre-destined!

6

~~Total Peace~~

Requires same complete transfer. of Nat
econ-pol + att. to be, Mind-as Total War
(Bus. as usual) - (Surv. as usual)

10/ League is the Inevitable Idea!

Corrected - Revised ^{For the} Implemented

Inherently sound - cannot be permanently
defeated.

11/ Nationalism is not enough!

Sovereignty

Neutrality

Preparation

Preference

Assessment



12/ Only one security - Collective

A League, all nations - for the benefit &
security of all -

13/ We gave world example, Federation

Adam.