



Abba Hillel Silver Collection Digitization Project

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Synagogue Council of America, 1943.

PROGRAM DIRECTOR

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PHILA.

The Synagogue Council of America has set aside this day as a day of prayer and intercession for the 2,000,000 Jews who have been martyred at the hands of the Nazis within this last year. The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America has also set aside this day as a day of compassion and has invited all churches to pray for these innocent victims of Nazi terror and maniacal brutality. It is a fathomless tragedy which has overtaken our people, and at such times we must turn for strength, consolation and light to our Heavenly Father, the guardian of Israel through^{out} the ages, Who neither slumbereth nor sleepeth. We have no refuge but in Him. We have passed through the deep waters time and again in the past, and through the fires of persecution, and God has not forsaken us. He will not forsake us now as millions of our people walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death.

The slaughter of these innocent ones binds us to two sacred obligations; to remember, and to resolve. The graves of our martyred dead are nameless ones. No monuments will ever rise above them. Their lives must be their monuments and our hearts must be their final resting place.

We shall remember these martyred dead.

The loving, the upright and the blameless ones
who laid down their lives for the sanctification of God.

Who were lovely and pleasant in their lives

And in their death were not divided.

May God remember them for good

With the other righteous of the world;

And avenge the blood of His servants which hath been shed.

We shall remember the innocent blood outpoured of our kith and kin

Their tortured lives, their ruined homes

Their synagogues destroyed and their honor dragged into the dust.

The glory of their name will endure forever

But the Kingdom of the heathen shall pass away like a shadow.

They died as their fathers died before them
at the hands of tyrants and cruel oppressors of men,
Helpless victims of the world's madness,
Dread atonement for its sins.

Those who suffer for truth, for justice, for freedom, for peace
Are the light and the hope of the world.

They sanctify us by their sacrifices.

They bind us to the cause for which they died.

They have challenged us, these Precious Dead,

And we shall never forget that challenge.

A better day will come for us and for all mankind.

The fury of the oppressor will not forever prevail

And those who made the earth to tremble will sink into oblivion.

Fair cities will rise again where ruins now are heaped

And the voice of song will be heard again in the company of the
just and the free.

Men will cast aside their fears and their hates

And will be reconciled in a blessed brotherhood.

Then wreathes will be laid upon these nameless graves,

Tribute and blessing and thanksgiving.

The world will some day remember them

And we shall remember them!

For a long time
~~Some day the world will remember, but today it hardly wished to be reminded.~~
Especially governments who had it in their power to do something about it.
~~With some rare exceptions, the world's reaction, and particularly the reaction~~
which is
of governments, to this appalling tragedy and to the greater tragedy in the
making, has been formal and perfunctory. Statesmen and officials have dropped
in, so to speak, and have left their calling cards. ~~There has been no burning~~
expressing sympathy. was evidenced
indignation, no consuming sense of outrage, no quick, decisive, energetic action,
~~no real determination to do something about it.~~

All this, I am afraid, is part of a widening orbit of insensibility to human suffering and degradation, which is evidence of a prolonged hibernation of the human soul. Our age no longer has a vivid conception of great tragedy, for man has lost his stature and his dignity. To appreciate and react to a great tragedy, an age must think of man as noble, as significant, as possessed of inalienable and inviolable rights. But man today has been so humbled by the state, so stripped of all rights and so cheapened in value, that his dignity is gone and his suffering, sorrows and bitter wrongs ~~therefore~~ ^{to channel and} ~~arouse~~ no great human emotions, and no appropriate actions ~~in which they express themselves~~. Even such pity as has found expression has spent itself in words. Has the world nothing for those who still suffer in Hitler's

Europe, for those who will be led tomorrow or the next day like sheep to the slaughter, ^{nothing} but pity? Has every avenue of rescue been truly explored? Cannot that ^{feeling} ~~sense~~ of compassion ^{which} ~~expressed by~~ ^{express} governments reach beyond political expediency and

~~and~~ calculation, and ~~really~~ open doors of deliverance to the doomed men, women and children? ^{lost indeed is a world that cannot give sanctuary to men fleeing from death} There is a callousness which is almost as black as iniquity, and we pray that no government among the United Nations is guilty of such callousness. (A)

This war is being waged for humanity, for the freedom and the protection of the rights of all men. Our brave young men are dying on a dozen battlefronts for these ideals. The United Nations, and especially our own beloved country, have the opportunity to demonstrate the utter sincerity of their devotion to ^{these ideals} ~~them~~ by acting at once to rescue as many European Jews as can be rescued from the clutches of the henchman Hitler. (B) Courageous statesmanship can find the way ^{now} to save hundreds of thousands of human lives.

Our obligation is to remember our sacred dead and also to resolve not to rest until ^{those} ~~the~~ ^{their deaths and for the inhumanities and} ~~criminals~~ responsible for ~~these barbarities and the many others~~ ^{perpetrated upon non-Jews} ~~all the~~ myriads of the oppressed and tortured of the conquered lands of Europe, are brought to justice, until ^{this} ~~their~~ breed and ~~their~~ brood ^{of persecutors} is destroyed from off the face of the earth. All men who love freedom, who revere the decencies of life, who hope for brotherhood and peace are ^{to-day} heartened by the ^{which has for so long defiled the sanctuaries of mankind} thought that the great infamy is finally running its course. On the steppes of Russia

and on the sands of Africa it is fighting savagely but hopelessly to stave off
~~the hand of doom and retribution.~~
~~its inevitable doom.~~

We dedicate ourselves to the redemption of mankind from all forms of
~~and the dark heritage of intolerance~~
tyranny and servitude. We shall fight along with all the oppressed and menaced
peoples of the world, for the total annihilation of the Axis regime of brute
aggression, treachery and mass murder. We shall fight for a just peace after the
war, for the rights ~~of all men~~ ^{of all the children of man} to life and liberty, and for the rights of all
nations to ~~their~~ ^a secure national existence, ^{within a cooperative international order} as well as the right of the Jewish
people to a secure national existence in its national homeland of Palestine,
~~which Jews are even now rebuilding.~~

We offer up our prayers to-day for our brothers who live
in the shadows, in imminent danger, the executioners ~~and~~ we thank them
to-day as we have them many a day. We thank, their tired hearts, their silent
tears, their broken and scattered families, their lives drained of hope
and their pride lowered into the dust.
We pray that a measure of comfort may come to them and
the realization that ~~they~~ ^{they} though their wounds manifold may
again be healed. The horrors which has been visited upon them and
their kith and kin has finally shocked mankind into a full under-
standing of the nature of the Beast which must be destroyed, if
mankind is to survive. The moral ~~war~~ ^{war}, men have been
convinced as never before.

We pray that a measure of comfort may come to them
of the realization that they are or their people has frequently
been thrust the age the symbol or was a the first victims
of the ~~and~~ struggle between freedom and tyranny, between
light and darkness, between progress and reaction. Perhaps
by their wounds mankind will again be healed.

(A) The world's sense of outrage and horror has twice forced the hands of governments to do something decisive and constructive, and twice the world's clamor has been deflected into intergovernmental refugee conferences. When the refugee problem reached alarming proportions before the war, the Evian conference was convoked. It accomplished nothing beyond giving a way out to governments who really never intended to do anything commensurate with the scope of the appalling tragedy. And now a second such conference has met and adjourned - an informal and exploratory conference. Its decisions are still unrevealed but from the ~~the~~ terms, references and from the tone of the opening statements its chief spokesmen we are afraid that another futility has been accomplished.

(B) It is not enough to remind us that it is very difficult to do anything for these doomed people under present war conditions. Of course it is difficult! It is not enough to counsel patience and to ~~remind~~ point to the obvious fact that an Allied victory will be the major solution, the entire refugee problem. But worst, these people may be dead - slain by the Nazis - before the ultimate day of liberation arrives.