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What alone can save our democratic way of life, 1943.

A BSTRACT OF THE ADDRESS ON "THE FAITH OF OUR FATHERS" DELIVERED BY DR. ABBA HILLEL SILVER OF CLEVELAND, OHIO BEFORE THE MISSOURI STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 1943.

We must never forget the mistakes of the last war and of the last peace. We could have built a better world after the last war, had we not lost the vision and scuttled our ideals. The victorious nations abandoned the promising structure of a peaceful organization of the world at the very outset, or betrayed it soon after. By their disunion, selfishness and rivalry they destroyed the moral foundations of a peaceful world. They sent the world back to its cynicism and black-guardism. They paved the way for a whole crop of dictators and helped them to wax strong until their shadows darkened the whole earth. It is well that we should remember Pearl Harbor! But we should also remember Manchukuo and how we abandoned China and how we sent bursting cargoes of scrap iron and ship-loads of oil and gasoline to help Japan kill Chinese and bomb their defenseless cities. We should remember Spain and how we helped to strangle the Spanish republic by our embargo and our fraudulent policy of non-intervention. We should remember Ethiopia and how the democratic nations finally consented to her bloody subjugation. We should remember Munich and the brutal dismemberment of Czechoslovakia to which we all consented. We should remember the unheeded cries of the terribly wronged and persecuted minorities of Europe, especially the barbarously assailed and outraged Jewish minority, and how we made sure their doom by announcing that their treatment was an internal political affair of the respective nations and not of our concern. We should remember all the handy slogans and catch-words of isolationism, and neutrality by which we and other nations sought to evade our share of the moral responsibility for maintaining order, decency and justice in the world. It is true that our national sins were not so much sins of commission as of omission. We did not invade China or Ethiopia, and did not attack Czechoslovakia or Spain. We did not persecute any people. But we stood idly by the blood of our neighbors — and that is a grave and punishable sin in the sight of God!

What kind of a world did we build for our children after the last war? A world of wild inflation, bloated prosperity, disastrous panic, prolonged depression,

and appalling unemployment. Millions of our young people were denied the opportunity to work and were consigned to enforced and demoralizing idleness. Is this the kind of a world which we will again build for the youth of the world after this war?

A cleansing memory is a rare prophylaxis. History is the teacher of life. A true knowledge and frank acknowledgement of our past will teach us to understand the present and will help us to plan for a better future.

If the free nations will be aroused — and if they will have the courage to face their own past and will recall in humility and contrition all that has gone before, then it may be that they will be reborn into a new life. Then the agonies of this war may be the birthpangs of a new creation, a nobler, juster and more tolerant world. We should not listen to the cynic, the sceptic and the scoffer. They are the dregs and the lees in the cup of life. There is nothing that man has made crooked that he cannot make straight. Behind every system is man. It is possible to banish war and eradicate poverty. It is possible, even though difficult, to reconcile the sharp and bitter contradictions of our day — nationalism with internationalism, the trend towards collectivism, hastened by our industrial technology and mass production, with the rights and liberties of the individual. It is possible to give men economic security without robbing them of their political freedom. What the world needs is inspired new leadership, and the welling up from within of new faith and new courage. The dictators of our day are not in any sense such inspired new leaders. They are replicas of all the tyrants of old. They are as old as Nero and Caligula. They prate of a new world order which they plan to establish. Actually they are reaching only after new boundaries and new empires which can only be cemented in blood and at the cost of the rights and freedoms of other peoples. To the youth of the world they have to offer nothing but chains and death. Their ideas reek of the dungeon and the charnal house. They have no faith in man or humanity, nor in the power of men to transcend themselves, and through their own initiative and experience to achieve higher and nobler forms of a free and secure society. They are boastful rulers with the instincts of slaves — and they are on their way out!

The democratic faith alone can provide the new leadership; for democracy has faith in man and mankind, in an advancing human society, in a cooperative commonwealth of all free and equal peoples, in a future when each man shall dwell under his vine and under his fig tree with none to make him afraid -- and only democracy can achieve this good and gracious life for mankind.

It is important that immediately following this war there be universally re-affirmed and re-established the Rights of Man, that complex of human rights which our country proclaimed more than a century and a half ago. The revolutionary heart of the Declaration of Independence is the proclamation that there are certain rights which belong to the individual by virtue of the fact that he is a child of God, and not merely a member of a society or a citizen of a state, and that therefore these rights are not subject to the veto power of state or society. They are unalienable -- the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. In the last two decades, dictatorships both of the Right and the Left have repudiated this basically American doctrine which derives directly from the great Judaeo Christian religious tradition and which is rooted firmly in the rich earth of Biblical doctrine. The cynical repudiation has led to a very cataract of disasters, and finally plunged mankind into a world war which is now raging. There must be a return to those fundamental doctrines of the inalienable rights of the individual after this war, for in the last analysis all social stability and progress depend upon the acceptance of this prophetic dogma. It must be written into the constitution of every state. It must also be written deep in the hearts of men. It is not an easy thing to do. But we are not dealing here with things ^{that} ~~are~~ are easy.

There will be great spiritual strain in our country after the war. Eras of reconstruction are dangerous eras. Passions, hopes and fears run high. The demagogues and the political adventurers hope to find in the very fluidity of social forms their great opportunity. Orthodox and ear-marked Fascist and Nazi doctrines and slogans will of course be discredited. Dogmatism generally, both of a political and economic

character, is likely to suffer eclipse. But this will not preclude other attacks upon human rights and liberties under other guises and with other catchwords, nor will it prevent the recrudescence of bigotry and intolerance which, for the duration, have gone under-ground in our land. The Ku Klux Klan was launched on the ebb-tide of the last war, and capitalized on the totalitarian patriotism which the war engendered. In the severe adjustment which will follow the war in our country and which will probably entail periods of inflation, depression and large-scale unemployment everybody will be looking for scapegoats. Some have theirs already well tethered in their backyards. The hope, of course, is that these things happened after the last ^{war} and may therefore put Americans on their guard against their recurrence.



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WHAT ALONE CAN SAVE OUR DEMOCRATIC WAY OF LIFE

Dr. Abba Hillel Silver
The Temple - Cleveland, Ohio

We are fighting a war today to save our democratic way of life. Why is the democratic way of life in need of saving today? What has endangered it? Surely not the scientific failures of our generation, not the break-down in our technology nor the fact that we have not had enough schools, colleges and universities. The tragedy of our generation has resulted not from our scientific, but from our spiritual shortcomings, from the disastrous moral failures of our age, and from the failures of the last war and the last peace.

We could have built a better world after the last war, had we not lost the vision and scuttled our ideals. The victorious nations abandoned the promising structure of a peaceful organization of the world at the very outset, or betrayed it soon after. By their disunion, selfishness and rivalry they destroyed the moral foundations of a peaceful world. They sent the world back to its cynicism and black-guardism. They paved the way for a whole crop of dictators and helped them to wax strong until their shadows darkened the whole earth. It is well that we should remember Pearl Harbor! But we should also remember Manchukuo and how we abandoned China and how we sent bursting cargoes of scrap iron and shiploads of oil and gasoline to help Japan kill Chinese and bomb their defenseless cities. We should remember Spain and how we helped to strangle the Spanish republic by our embargo and our fraudulent policy of non-intervention. We should remember Ethiopia and how the democratic nations finally consented to her bloody subjugation. We should remember Munich and the brutal dismemberment of Czechoslovakia to which we all consented. We should remember the unheeded cries of the terribly wronged and persecuted minorities of Europe, especially the barbarously assailed and outraged Jewish minority, and how we made sure of their doom by announcing that their treatment was an internal political affair of the respective nations and not

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A cleansing memory is a rare prophylaxis. History is the teacher of life. A true knowledge and frank acknowledgment of our past will teach us to understand the present and will help us to plan for a better future. It is we in the free countries of the earth who helped to undermine the democratic way of life in the world as much as the dictators, in that we lost our religious fervor and our crusading zeal for it. Democracy is either a religion or a clumsy political technique.

Friends of democracy have forgotten the religious origin of the democratic dogma in the modern world. Political freedom came as a result of the struggle of the peoples of Western Europe for religious freedom in the 16th and 17th centuries. They struggled first for the emancipation of the spirit of man from the shackles of ecclesiastical tradition and domination, in the name of a higher authority -- the inner revelation of the spirit of God in the soul of man. They demanded spiritual liberty for man. As an inevitable corollary, there soon emerged the demand for political and economic liberty as well. This, too, was demanded in the name of the same higher authority which was revealed in a sacred religious book -- the Bible -- which declared that God created all men equal, that all men are His children, and that all men are

therefore entitled to a fair share in the things which God created for the sustenance and enjoyment of all.

These doctrines were carried over from the continent of Europe and England to our own country, and they became the inspiration of the first attempts to establish a free society in the new world. The Founding Fathers of our Republic were motivated by them. The American Revolution kindled its torches at the flame of these great religious convictions. It is religion which is the arsenal of democracy.

Democracy has its roots in religion. Without its religious sanction and inspiration democracy shrivels. Democracy has shriveled in ~~xxx~~ our day precisely because our age has forgotten the great religious principles which must underly all human rights and progress and, having forgotten or ignored them it has sunk into the blood, muck and horror of two world wars in one generation.

What are these great religious principles which were the foundations of the faith of our fathers to which our age must deliberately return and to which all of our education must be deliberately redirected if the larger synthesis is to be achieved which will save man from being destroyed by his own handiwork? What alone can bind and hold together all the varied subjects of our educational program and give unity, power and direction to the lives of the men and women of tomorrow?

First is the principle of the Moral Law. Just as the physical universe is governed by immutable and irrefragable Law, so is the social universe of mankind governed by law which if it is flouted, brings disaster on men and nations. Society must be governed by the authority of law and not by men. No man, no class, no fuehrer, no duce, no commissar, is above the law, and it is one law for the weak and the strong, for the rich and the poor, for the alien and the native born, for the white and the black. All races, all creeds, all colors come within the sovereignty and the protection of God's eternal Moral Law. To deny this Moral Law is to strip man of his ultimate protection against all forms of tyranny and abuse of individuals, state, or society.

It is important that immediately following this war there be universally proclaimed

anew and re-affirmed the Rights of Man under God -- that complex of human rights which our country, first among the nations of the Western World, proclaimed more than a century and a half ago. The revolutionary heart of the Declaration of Independence is the proclamation that there are certain rights which belong to the individual by virtue of the fact that he is a child of God, and not merely a member of a society or a citizen of a state, and that therefore these rights are not ~~not~~ subject to the veto power of the state or society. They are unalienable -- the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. In the last two decades, dictatorships both of the Right and the Left have repudiated this basic American doctrine which derives directly from the great Judaeo-Christian religious tradition and which is rooted firmly in the rich soil of Biblical doctrine. Their cynical repudiation has led to a very cataract of disasters, and finally plunged mankind into the world war which is now raging. There must be a return to those fundamental doctrines of the inalienable rights of man for in the last analysis all social stability and progress depend upon the acceptance of this prophetic dogma. It must be written into the constitution of every state. It must also be written deep in the hearts of men. It is not an easy thing to do. But we are not dealing here with/easy.

A second basic religious principle is that of Human Brotherhood. The classic religions of mankind declared that all men are the children of one God, and that "He hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth." This proclaimed not only the equality of all men, but also their mutual dependability and their responsibility for each other's welfare. Our age rejected this principle of human brotherhood as a guiding factor in international relations. Democratic governments proclaimed a contrary principle of moral neutrality and isolationism. When they beheld injustice, aggression and cruelty perpetrated in other lands, they absolved themselves of all responsibility by declaring that it was the internal affair of those countries, and that they could not intervene. The Nazi and Fascist states, of course, completely rejected the ideal of human brotherhood by offering

the world a blown-up race philosophy which justifies the exploitation of one race by others, and the total extermination of others. The dykes of cruelty and bestiality were burst open. A vicious blood-cult, the like of which mankind had never seen, was established in our day in many parts of the world, and upon its altars some of the noblest and bravest of the children of men were sacrificed.

There will be great spiritual strains in our country after this war. Eras of reconstruction are dangerous eras. Passions, hopes, and fears run high. Demagogues and political adventurers hope to find in the very fluidity of the social forms their great opportunity. Orthodox and ear-marked Fascist and Nazi doctrines and slogans will of course discredited. Dogmatism generally, both of a political and economic character, is likely to suffer eclipse. But this will not preclude other attacks upon human rights and liberties under other guises and with other catchwords, nor will it prevent the recrudescence of bigotry and intolerance which, for the duration, have gone underground in our land. The Ku Klux Klan was launched on the ebb-tide of the last war, and capitalized on the totalitarian patriotism which the war engendered. In the severe adjustment which will follow this war and which will probably entail periods of inflation, depression and large-scale unemployment everybody will be looking for scapegoats. Some have theirs already well tethered in their backyards. It is not too early to begin preventive educational measures to counteract the menace to come.

The third basic principle of religion is that of Economic Justice. The prophetic leaders of religion sought to deliver man from crushing slavery and poverty and to establish a just community in which men would be secure in their human and divine patrimony. "If Thy brother wax poor, thou shalt surely help him." Unless there is social justice, there is civil strife. A reign of injustice is always followed by a reign of terror. Our age has given abundant evidence of this

fact. The many frightful social upheavals of our day, the violent swing of the pendulum between the extremes of communism and the extremes of Fascism are due in the last analysis to the struggle of the masses -- a struggle often blind and misguided -- for greater security and for a greater sharing in the economic goods of the earth. It is the latest phase of the immemorial struggle against economic degradation and misery, and the outreaching of the spirit of man for a condition in life where each man will live under his vine and under his fig-tree with none to make him afraid.

We, the people of the United States, have learned under the hard exigencies of war that we must lend-lease to other nations in order that they may help us fight our foreign foes. Religion would have us lend-lease to our own fellow citizens so that together we may wage war upon our far more dangerous domestic foes -- poverty, slums, unemployment, dependence, insecurity.

And there is yet another basic principle which religion has proclaimed, and upon which the free rights of man can alone be built. All truly good and desirable things in life are established, and conceived through sacrifice. Love and friendship thrive upon it. Honor and integrity cannot exist without them. Our freedom and liberties were won through sacrifice and were cemented in blood and tears. When men and nations no longer care enough about them to fight and die for them they quickly lose them. Martyrdom and sacrifice are not necessary to prove that two times two are four. Scientific observation and logic are sufficient for that. But love and honor and faith and truth and freedom are valid only for men and nations if they test, exalt and demonstrate them through sacrifice. Else they simply vanish from their midst and hate, deceit, faithlessness, cruelty and slavery come to take their places.

If, after this war, the nations of the world will not be prepared to make substantial sacrifices in terms of their absolute sovereignties, or their monopolistic control over the earth's resources, or their political domination of colonial or

so-called backward peoples, then our age will be granted only a very brief breathing spell before it is summoned again to the bloody massacre of a third world war.

True patriotism calls not only for self-sacrifice in defense of one's country but for the sacrifice of all those preferences selfishly held by one's country which make peaceful international cooperation impossible.

Finally, the goal of all religion has been peace among men and the sublimation of man's belligerent instincts into fruitful and cooperative efforts for the common good of all -- the beating of swords into ploughshares.

One cannot forget that the last world war was fought for the very same objectives as this war, and against the same foe. The war was won, and yet following it, the world entered one of the most disastrous periods in its history, a breakdown and blackout period, culminating in this second world war.

Why did victory lead to defeat? Not because the Versailles Treaty was vicious. It was no better and no worse than similar treaties which are imposed by victors upon vanquished. The recognition of the independence of Belgium, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Austria, the acceptance of the principles of the rights of minorities, and the establishment of the League of Nations marked definite forward steps. The failure of the peace was due first to a lack of economic foresight. Political self-determination was confused with economic self-sufficiency. The failure was also due to defects in the structure of the League. The League was not given military power to enforce its decisions. The right of secession was reserved to the member nations and a unanimous vote was required for all important decisions of the Assembly and the Council. The failure of the United States to join the League was a nigh mortal blow, and the failure of Great Britain, France and the other principal signatories to live up to the letter and the spirit of the covenant completed its ruin.

It was this last failure -- essentially a moral one -- the failure to assume responsibility for world peace, or having assumed it, to live up to it -- which

was principally responsible for the wreck of the first important and promising experiment in world pacification. Statesmen called national cowardice non-entanglement, and the successive acts of betrayal of the League, appeasement, and so another world war was blunderingly concocted. Those nations which did not wish to intervene for peace are now intervening in war, and the peacemongers turned out to be the real warmongers.

What will come after this war? Will victory again lead to defeat? This will depend largely upon the moral attitude of the victorious United Nations towards a revived and revised world union. All the ethical promises of an Allied victory depend entirely upon it.

It will not be easy to build a peaceful world after this war. It is idle to assume that an era of peace and good will will set in right after the signing of the armistice. Europe and other parts of the globe will be ravaged after the war. Famine, poverty, misery and hate will stalk over the face of the earth. There will be ruined economies, social collapse and revolutions in every defeated country -- just as after the last war. Millions of people will seek new homes in a world which will be inhospitable to immigration. The youth of half the world which has been indoctrinated with the racial and nationalistic mythologies of dictatorship will be spiritually lost and unsuited to a democratic way of life which they had been taught to hate and despise. There will also be resentments, rivalries and recriminations among the victorious Allies -- just as after the last war.

Under these conditions the attempt to build a peaceful and stable social order will tax the intellectual and spiritual resources of human statesmanship to the utmost. Only a revived religious fervor for peace -- a world-embracing crusade for it -- will provide the driving and sustaining power requisite for the difficult and protracted reconstruction of our world on a peace-pattern.

It can be done!

If men and nations can be aroused - and if they will have the courage to face

their own past and will recall in humility and contrition all that has gone before, then it may be that they will be reborn into a new life.

We should not listen to the cynic, the sceptic and the scoffer. They are the dregs and the lees in the cup of life. There is nothing that ~~xx~~ man has made crooked that he cannot make straight. Behind every system is man. It is possible to banish war and eradicate poverty. It is possible, even though difficult, to reconcile the sharp and bitter contradictions of our day — nationalism with internationalism, the trend towards collectivism, hastened by our industrial technology and mass production, with the rights and liberties of the individual. It is possible to give men economic security without robbing them of their political freedom. What the world needs is inspired new leadership, and the welling up from within of new faith and new courage. The dictators of our day are not in any sense inspired new leaders. They are replicas of all the tyrants of old. They are as old as Nero and Caligula. They prate of a new world order. Actually they are reaching only after new boundaries and new empires which can only be laid in blood and at the cost of the rights and freedoms of other peoples. To the youth of the world they offer nothing but chains and death. Their ideas reek of the dungeon and the charnal house. They have no faith in man or humanity, nor in the power of men to transcend themselves, and through their own initiative and experience to achieve higher and nobler forms of a free and secure society. They are arrogant rulers with the instincts of slaves — and they are on their way out!

5 The democratic faith alone can provide the new leadership; for democracy has faith in man and mankind in an advancing human society and in a cooperative commonwealth of all free and equal peoples — and only democracy can achieve this good and gracious life for mankind. But only a democracy which remains continuously and vividly aware of its religious origin and destiny, and of the underlying and indispensable spiritual principles of law, brotherhood, justice, sacrifice and peace which alone can sustain the free life of man and society.

"Seek ye me, and live; But seek not Bethel, nor enter into
Gilgal, and pass not over ~~to~~ ^{to} Beer-sheba; For Gilgal shall
surely go into captivity, and Bethel shall come to nought.
~~Seek ye me for the good life.~~
Seek the Lord and live!

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A second basic religious principle is that of Human Brotherhood. The classic religions of mankind declared that all men are the children of one God, and that "He hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth." They proclaimed not only the equality of all men, but also their mutual dependability and their responsibility for each other's welfare. *Adam* Our age rejected this principle of human brotherhood as a guiding factor in international relations. Democratic governments proclaimed a contrary principle of moral neutrality and isolationism. *Secure in a violent world* When they beheld injustice, aggression and cruelty perpetrated in other lands, they absolved themselves of all responsibility by declaring that it was the internal affair of those countries, and that they could not intervene. *It was only after we were invaded, first with* The Nazi and Fascist states, of course, completely rejected the ideal of human brotherhood by offering the world a blown-up race philosophy which justifies the exploitation of one race by others, and the total extermination of others. *The dykes of cruelty and bestiality were burst open.* A vicious blood-cult, the like of which mankind had never seen, was established in our day in many parts of the world, and upon its altars some of the noblest and bravest of the children of men were sacrificed.

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Free life is not-experience. Hard demands. - Threatened - Land

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We should not listen to the cynic, the sceptic and the scoffer. They are the dregs and the lees in the cup of life. There is nothing that man has made crooked that he cannot make straight. Behind every system is man. It is possible to banish war and eradicate poverty. It is possible, even though difficult, to reconcile the sharp and bitter contradictions of our day — nationalism with internationalism, the trend towards collectivism, hastened by our industrial technology and mass production, with the rights and liberties of the individual. It is possible to give men economic security without robbing them of their political freedom.

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The democratic faith alone can provide the new leadership; for democracy has faith in man and mankind in an advancing human society and in a cooperative commonwealth of all free and equal peoples -- and only democracy can achieve this good and gracious life for mankind. But only a democracy which remains continuously and vividly aware of its religious origin and destiny, and of the underlying and indispensable spiritual principles of law, brotherhood, justice, sacrifice and peace which alone can sustain the free life of man and society.

The first function of education is to teach man to think intensively, to think critically, and to think imaginatively; to endow his mental life as far as possible with the power of concentration, with canons of judgment and with the urge to adventure in the undiscovered continents of truth. But this is not the whole of education. Education for efficiency is only one-half of education. Education which stops with efficiency may prove the greatest menace to man and to society. Perhaps the most dangerous epochs in civilization are those in which the mind of the race has outdistanced its spirit, in which the increased power of the race, made available through new discoveries and inventions, is not harnessed and guided by an equally increased ethical purpose and by higher consecrations.

Intelligence is not enough. Intelligence plus character — that is the goal of true education. To integrate human life around central, focusing ideals, and to supply the motive power as well as the technique for attaining these ideals — that is the highest effort of education. The complete education gives us not only power of concentration, but worthy objectives upon which to concentrate, not only a critical faculty for precise judgment, but also profound sympathies with which to temper the asperity of our judgments, not only a quickened imagination, but also an enkindling enthusiasm for the objects of our imagination. It is not enough to know truth. We must love truth and sacrifice for it. It is not enough to be quick of perception. We must be quick to respond to the appeal of human loyalties. Our lives need much more than a precise, eager and powerful intellect. They need not only knowledge which is power, but wisdom which is control. They need not only truth which is light, but goodness which is warmth. They need love and loyalties and the lift of aspirations. They need charm and dignity and a splendid restraint. They need quietness and peace and kindly human contacts. The broad education will, therefore, transmit to us through a comprehensive curriculum in which the sciences and the humanities are planned to interpret and supplement each other not only the accumulated knowledge of the race, but also the accumulated experiences of social living. It will translate truth into a way of life. It will

educate us for the good life.

We are fighting a war today to save our democratic way of life. Why is the democratic way of life in need of saving today? What has endangered it? Surely not the scientific failures of our generation, not the break-down in our technology nor the fact that we have not had enough schools, colleges and universities. The tragedy of our generation has resulted not from our scientific, but from our spiritual shortcomings, from the disastrous moral failures of our age, and from the failures of the last war and the last peace.

We could have built a better world after the last war, had we not lost the vision and scuttled our ideals. The victorious nations abandoned the promising structure of a peaceful organization of the world at the very outset, or betrayed it soon after. By their disunion, selfishness and rivalry they destroyed the moral foundations of a peaceful world. They sent the world back to its cynicism and black-guardism. They paved the way for a whole crop of dictators and helped them to wax strong until their shadows darkened the whole earth. It is well that we should remember Pearl Harbor! But we should also remember Manchukuo and how we abandoned China and how we sent bursting cargoes of scrap iron and shiploads of oil and gasoline to help Japan kill Chinese and bomb their defenseless cities. We should remember Spain and how we helped to strangle the Spanish republic by our embargo and our fraudulent policy of non-intervention. We should remember Ethiopia and how the democratic nations finally consented to her bloody subjugation. We should remember Munich and the brutal dismemberment of Czechoslovakia to which we all consented. We should remember the unheeded cries of the terribly wronged and persecuted minorities of Europe, especially the barbarously assailed and outraged Jewish minority, and how we made sure of their doom by announcing that their treatment was an internal political affair of the respective nations and not of our concern. We should remember all the handy slogans and catch-words of isolationism, and neutrality by which we and other nations sought to evade our share of the moral responsibility for maintaining order, decency and justice in

the world. It is true that our national sins were not so much sins of commission as of omission. We did not invade China or Ethiopia, and did not attack Czechoslovakia or Spain. We did not persecute any people. But we stood idly by the blood of our neighbors -- and that is a grave and punishable sin in the sight of God!

What kind of a world did we build for our children after the last war? A world of wild inflation, bloated prosperity, disastrous panics, prolonged depression, and appalling unemployment. Millions of our young people were denied the opportunity to work and were consigned to enforced and demoralizing idleness. Is this the kind of a world which we will again build for the youth of the world after this war?

A cleansing memory is a rare prophylaxis. History is the teacher of life. A true knowledge and frank acknowledgment of our past will teach us to understand the present and will help us to plan for a better future. It is we in the free countries of the earth who helped to undermine the democratic way of life in the world as much as the dictators, in that we lost our religious fervor and our crusading zeal for it. Democracy is either a religion or a clumsy political technique.

Friends of democracy have forgotten the religious origin of the democratic dogma in the modern world. Political freedom came as a result of the struggle of the peoples of Western Europe for religious freedom in the 16th and 17th centuries. They struggled first for the emancipation of the spirit of man from the shackles of ecclesiastical tradition and domination, in the name of a higher authority -- the inner revelation of the spirit of God in the soul of man. They demanded spiritual liberty for man. As an inevitable corollary, there soon emerged the demand for political and economic liberty as well. This, too, was demanded in the name of the same higher authority which was revealed in a sacred religious book -- the Bible -- which declared that God created all men equal, that all men are His children, and that all men are therefore entitled to a fair share in the things which God created for the sustenance and enjoyment of all.

These doctrines were carried over from the continent of Europe and England to our own country, and they became the inspiration of the first attempts to establish a

free society in the new world. The Founding Fathers of our Republic were motivated by them. The American Revolution kindled its torches at the flame of these great religious convictions. It is religion which is the arsenal of democracy.

Democracy has its roots in religion. Without its religious sanction and inspiration democracy shrivels. Democracy has shriveled in our day precisely because our age has forgotten the great religious principles which must underly all human rights and progress and, having forgotten or ignored them it has sunk into the blood, muck and horror of two world wars in one generation.

What are these great religious principles which were the foundations of the faith of our fathers to which our age must deliberately return and to which all of our education must be deliberately redirected if the larger synthesis is to be achieved which will save man from being destroyed by his own handiwork? What alone can bind and hold together all the varied subjects of our educational program and give unity, power and direction to the lives of the men and women of tomorrow?

First is the principle of the Moral Law. Just as the physical universe is governed by immutable and irrefragable Law, so is the social universe of mankind governed by law which if it is flouted, brings disaster on men and nations. Society must be governed by the authority of law and not by men. No man, no class, no fuehrer no duce, no commissar is above the law, and it is one law for the weak and the strong, for the rich and the poor, for the alien and the native born, for the white and the black. All races, all creeds, all colors come within the sovereignty and the protection of God's eternal Moral Law. To deny this Moral Law is to strip man of his ultimate protection against all forms of tyranny and abuse of individuals, state, or society.

It is important that immediately following this war there be universally proclaimed anew and re-affirmed the Rights of Man under God — that complex of human rights which our country, first among the nations of the Western World, proclaimed more than a century and a half ago. The revolutionary heart of the Declaration of Independence is the proclamation that there are certain rights which belong to the individual by virtue of the fact that he is a child of God, and not merely a member of a society or a citizen of a state, and that therefore these rights are not subject to the veto

power of the state or society. They are unalienable -- the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. In the last two decades, dictatorships both of the Right and the Left have repudiated this basic American doctrine which derives directly from the great Judaeo-Christian religious tradition and which is rooted firmly in the rich soil of Biblical doctrine. Their cynical repudiation has led to a very cataract of disasters, and finally plunged mankind into the world war which is now raging. There must be a return to those fundamental doctrines of the inalienable rights of man for in the last analysis all social stability and progress depend upon the acceptance of this prophetic dogma. It must be written into the constitution of every state. It must also be written deep in the hearts of men. It is not an easy thing to do. But we are not dealing here with things that are easy.

A second basic religious principle is that of Human Brotherhood. The classic religions of mankind declared that all men are the children of one God, and that "He hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth." This proclaimed not only the equality of all men, but also their mutual dependability and their responsibility for each other's welfare. Our age rejected this principle of human brotherhood as a guiding factor in international relations. Democratic governments proclaimed a contrary principle of moral neutrality and isolationism. When they beheld injustice, aggression and cruelty perpetrated in other lands, they absolved themselves of all responsibility by declaring that it was the internal affair of those countries, and that they could not intervene. The Nazi and Fascist states, of course, completely rejected the ideal of human brotherhood by offering the world a blown-up race philosophy which justifies the exploitation of one race by others, and the total extermination of others. The dykes of cruelty and bestiality were burst open. A vicious blood-cult, the like of which mankind had never seen, was established in our day in many parts of the world, and upon its altars some of the noblest and bravest of the children of men were sacrificed.

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WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY

IN THE CITY OF CLEVELAND



CONVOCATION

SEVERANCE HALL
MONDAY, DECEMBER 6, 1943
ELEVEN O'CLOCK



PRESIDENT WINFRED GEORGE LEUTNER,
presiding

PROCESSION

Army Air Forces No. 28 College Training Detachment

PRESENTATION OF COLORS

THE NATIONAL ANTHEM

MUSIC — Dutch Traditional Melody "Not Alone for Mighty Empire"
University Chorus

ADDRESS

Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver

TAPS — Withdrawal of Colors

RECESSION

Army Air Forces No. 28 College Training Detachment

THE STAR-SPANGLED BANNER

O, say, can you see, by the dawn's early light,
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming,
Whose broad stripes and bright stars, thro' the perilous fight,
O'er the ramparts we watched, were so gallantly streaming?
And the rockets' red glare, the bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof thro' the night that our flag was still there.

Chorus

O, say, does that star-spangled banner yet wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?



O, thus be it ever when free men shall stand
Between their loved homes and the war's desolation;
Blest with vict'ry and peace, may the heav'n rescued land
Praise the Pow'r that hath made and preserved us a nation!
Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just,
And this be our motto: "In God is our trust!"

Chorus

And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!