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War and the Alternatives to War: A Chanukah Sermon, 1960.

WAR AND THE ALTERNATIVES TO WAR

A Chanukah Sermon

THE TEMPLE
December 18, 1960

Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver

Sometimes a single incident throws into bold relief a nation's frame of mind. This year, at their annual convention, the Daughters of the American Revolution voted a citation to Werner von Braun, ex-Nazi master scientist, chief organizer of the unmanned rocket attack on London during World War II, now head of the United States Army missile development at the Redstone Arsenal. These ladies voted this honor to von Braun, to use their own words, "in respect to his significant spiritual contribution to American life."

We smile at their maladroit choice of language. Yet I wonder if all of us have not been guilty of confusing our military scientists with our national saviours, and if we have not come to believe that our single most significant contribution to world peace was our program of military preparation. Surely, it has been axiomatic in American policy that peace can be secured only by vigorous and energetic defense programs. In the last decade our nation has spent over five hundred billion dollars for armament and defense. The great debates of the past decade have been military debates concerning the unification of the armed forces, the priority of funds between manned and unmanned military instruments, limited war strategy as against global deterrence. The significant White Papers of the last decade have dealt with questions of military strategy -- the Cordiner Report, the Gaither Report; even the recent report of the Commission on National Purpose reveals more concern with military strategy and our defense posture than with programs

of peace. Its defense proposals are specific and forthright, its peace proposals vague and highly qualified.

The key policy term of the past decade has been 'deterrence'. We have been told, and we told ourselves, that to threaten Russia with a rain of holocaustial death is to preclude Soviet military adventuring and hence to secure peace. So we have armed ourselves to the teeth, and armed our allies, and armed our would-be allies, and even armed some of the most mendacious and mischief-making adventurers of the world -- all in the name of containment -- all in the name of deterrence -- all in the hope of creating a balance of terror so frightening in its proportions that no nation will dare step beyond the bounds of international propriety.

Now, reasonable men cannot question reasonable strength. But surely, reasonable men must question such a single-level policy. Rearmament is essentially negative. It makes no contribution toward the establishment of international law and international government. It does not reduce armament. Indeed, a reasonable man, viewing the history of American policy during the last decade or so, can but make this assessment: that it has been single-minded, concerned with war, not peace. The few attempts we have made toward disarmament, arms control, a strengthening of the United Nations, and the settlement of international disputes have been half-hearted, occasional, and tentative, and, because they have lacked vigor, frustrating and self-defeating.

All Americans were shocked Friday last to read of a tragic air collision over the city of New York. In that collision a hundred and thirty-five lives were lost. Already the public and its press are demanding that the various Federal aviation agencies and the airlines devote more man hours and more monies to the improvement and the refinement of techniques of air-ground safety. If atomic war were to break out, experts tell us that we can

expect thirty million casualties in the first twenty-four hours of that war. They tell us further that by the conclusion of such a war we can expect eight hundred million casualties. These figures are not rhetoric. They represent the sober testimony of General James N. Gavin before a House Committee. General Gavin is an officer of impeccable repute; sometime head of research and development for the United States Army. Eight hundred million casualties in an atomic war represents the destruction of civilization. Surely one would expect that a nation faced with such a danger would have invested at least as many man hours and at least as much money in the prevention of the tragedy of war as in the prevention of an occasional air tragedy. But the absurdity, the insanity of our current position is this: we have invested less brain power, less man power, and less monies in programs for peace than in programs for air safety; we are investing less money and less man power and there is less money and less man power programmed and blueprinted for the future. We continue suicidally to presume that, aided by Lady Luck and good fortune, we will somehow muddle through the dangers that beset us.

Today war itself is an absurdity. War in atomic terms is an insanity. Surely reasonable men facing such a war would bestir themselves to prevent it. But mark you this well. There are two Federal agencies dealing with air safety. There is no Federal agency dealing solely with peace. Our Atomic Energy Commission has spent millions of dollars in the last four years to find fault with Russian detection proposals; no governmental agency has spent a like amount to investigate and develop more accurate detection instruments. The military has invested billions of public relations dollars to fashion a language of atomic euphemisms, a language of 'clean bombs', 'limited war', designed to make us forget that any atomic weapon in our possession is neither

more nor less than an indiscriminate agent of mass murder. On the other hand, no United States agency has been organized to tell the American people the simple truth -- that war is insanity, that war itself is defeat, that we need concrete far reaching policies beyond deterrence. No agency is organized to investigate, to plan, to blueprint, to propose, to organize such proposals. So haphazard are our plans for peace that when the Russians at Geneva surprisingly accepted certain of our own arms control provisions we were forced to deny these very proposals -- they were meant as propaganda. No one believed the Russians would take them seriously.

Indeed, so haphazard has been our planning for peace that in my firm opinion the strongest position the Russians could take for their own selfish benefit would be to disarm and to demobilize unilaterally. For we have no blueprint to guide the change over from a defense economy to a domestic economy. How will we absorb our excess productive capacity? How will the already swollen ranks of the unemployed absorb the workers no longer needed in defense industries and the soldiers demobilized from the military? How will our budget adapt itself to reduced taxes and long term federal domestic spending programs? In any event the change from defense to domestic economies would seriously tax our economic strength -- without an adequate blueprint such a change might be convulsive.

Now, I do not see such a peace as imminent. But surely it would be tragic, would it not, if within the ranks of labor and of business and of finance there is an unexpressed but real fear of peace, such a fear as would forestall our actively carrying out any tangible programs designed to relieve world tensions. No nation can work toward ends which it fears -- and I suspect that though latent and silent many Americans now rejoicing in our defense economy of abundance fear peace.

Such is our condition. Ours is a mad world. It is a world in which we can no longer even test the implements of war without threatening the health and the safety of mankind. It is a world in which further refinement of our instruments of destruction threatens our control over them. Scientists are today talking of what they call 'automatic deterrents', missiles containing cobalt bombs aimed at our potential enemies, triggered to be blasted off, not at a human command, but when delicate seismographic instruments reflect an atomic explosion. The purpose of such instruments is to preclude the possibility that a commander may not be instantaneously available to make the fatal decision and to preclude the reticence of a commander who may be so horrified at the murderous potential of his decision that he may refuse to order retaliation.

But presumably there can be accidental atomic blasts. Presumably some crazed officer, overwhelmed by the emotional drain of overlong duty at the edge of the balance of terror, might in his frustration set off such a bomb. There would then be no human way of stopping these missiles. We would be plunged into a war forced on us not by human malice but by the refinements of our own weapons system.

We are the prisoners of our own machines. We have added to the danger of war by cruel purpose the danger of war by accident. Further, we are daily increasing our danger by placing such arms in more and more hands. A decade ago there were two atomic powers. Today there are four. We are proposing to give atomic weapons to our NATO allies, which means to the West German government. If we do so, as surely as night follows day Russia will counter by giving atomic weapons to the satellite nations and to the East German government. Then we will have vested the power of plunging the world into atomic holocaust in a European continent which has never been able to organize peace

and which knows well how to manufacture dangerous international incidents. Surely, when the satellites and NATO gain atomic potential other nations, the Lumumbas and the Castros and the Nassers of our world, will purchase these weapons on the black market or will be given these weapons clandestinely. Then men who have not one iota of sensitivity for human life and who seek only personal power will control the fateful decision of harmony or holocaust.

Such is the condition of life today. A world enmeshed in its own armaments, a world continuing blindly to pile armament upon armament, more damning bomb upon more daemonic bomb, a world adding each day to the danger of war, and a world seeing the dawn of an era where the power of war is not vested in a people or even in government but in the instrument of death itself.

Sensitive men have increasingly been recognizing the absurdity of war and that we must organize, or rather, reorganize our thinking and our governmental activities to preclude the possibility of war. George F. Kennan, one of our leading experts on the Soviet, the original philosopher of the policy of containment, a man who as much as any American is responsible for containment and brinkmanship and the military hysteria of the last fifteen years, has made such a re-evaluation. Speaking recently at Princeton University, Mr. Kennan had this to say:

"This brings me now to the questions on which I think a Christian might, with good conscience, really take a stand. They involve not just the national interests of individual governments but rather the interests of civilization: the question of war, and the atom, and the other weapons of mass destruction.

"I am aware that the institution of war has always represented dilemmas for Christian thought to which no fully satisfactory answer has ever

been offered. I have, in the past, found myself unable to go along with the Quakers in their insistence on a sweeping renunciation of power as a factor in international affairs. I do not see the reality of so clear a distinction as they draw between domestic affairs and international affairs. The Communists have taught us that these two things are intimately connected, that civil wars have international implications, and that international wars have domestic implications everywhere. I am unable therefore to accept the view which condemns coercion on the international sphere but tolerates it within national borders.

"But that we cannot rule out force completely in international affairs does not seem to me to constitute a reason for being indifferent to the ways in which force is applied -- to the moral implications of weapons and their uses. It is true that all distinctions among weapons from the moral standpoint are relative and arbitrary. Gunpowder was once viewed with a horror not much less, I suppose, than are atomic explosives today. But who is to say that relative distinctions are not meaningful? I cannot help feeling that the weapon of indiscriminate mass destruction goes farther than anything the Christian ethic can properly accept. The older weapons, after all, were discriminate in the sense that they had at least a direct coherent relationship to political aims. They were seen as a means of coercing people directly into doing things an enemy government wished them to do: evacuating territory, desisting from given objectives, accepting a given political authority. A distinction was still generally drawn, furthermore, prior to World War I at least, between the armed force and the civilian population of a hostile country. Efforts were made to see that military action was directed only against those who themselves had weapons in their hands and offered resistance. The law of war did not yet permit the punishment of whole peoples as a means

of blackmail against government.

"In all of these respects, the atom offends. So do all the other weapons of mass destruction. So, for that matter, did the conventional bomber of World War II when it was used for area bombing. In taking responsibility for such things as the bombing of Dresden and Hamburg, to say nothing of Nagasaki and Hiroshima, Americans went beyond what it seems to me the dictates of Christian conscience should have allowed.

"I regret, as an American and as a Christian, that these things were done. I think it should be our aim to do nothing of the sort in any future military encounter. If we must defend our homes, let us defend them as well as we can in the direct sense, but let us have no part in making millions of women and children and noncombatants hostages for the behavior of their own governments.

"It will be said to me: This means defeat. To this I can only reply: I am skeptical of the meaning of 'victory' and 'defeat' in their relation to modern war between great countries. To my mind the defeat is war itself. In any case it seems to me that there are times when we have no choice but to follow the dictates of our conscience, to throw ourselves on God's mercy, and not to ask too many questions."

Mr. Kennan, like so many of us, has come to the conclusion that war itself is the ultimate defeat. But one wonders at this practical man, this realist, this statesman, who can find no more practical blueprint for the future than "to follow the dictates of our conscience, to throw ourselves on God's mercy, and not to ask too many questions." Are we so enmeshed in our own illusions that we cannot see any alternative to war than "to throw ourselves on God's mercy and not ask too many questions"? I think not. There are alternatives to war. There are ways that man can achieve peace if he has

the courage, if he is willing to pay the price, if he is willing to take risks. It is in this last area that we Americans have been most behindhand. We want peace without risk. Yet it is a risk to forego further atomic tests and continue the unilateral test ban into which we were so grudgingly forced by Russian example. Perhaps the Russians are testing some bombs. Perhaps they will use our delay to good advantage. But the alternative of this risk is to exacerbate current tensions, to pollute the atmosphere with more unhealthy ingredients, and to undo the only peace arrangement now effective, and so preclude any further advance toward arms control or disarmament.

There is a risk involved in withholding atomic weapons from NATO forces. NATO will be less strong. But surely the risk is worth the gamble. The alternative is the arming of all Europe, east and west, with atomic weapons, the worsening of the Berlin situation and heightening of all the age-old European tensions, and the passing of atomic potential into many more hands, with the net result of making any arrangement for peace more difficult.

There is a risk in creating a government agency which will speak of peace, which will undertake propaganda for peace, and which will educate the American people to recognize that war is an insanity. Perhaps we will become indolent. Perhaps we will become passive and weak. I think not, but there is that risk. Yet surely only an informed America, an America which recognizes the absurdity of the present policy by terror, only such an America can deliberately blueprint that future which holds any possibility for man.

I would advocate one risk more, a risk probably greater than any of which we have spoken. I should like to see, on January next, our new administration proclaim a unilateral moratorium on all thermonuclear weapon fabrication. No more building of atom bombs, of hydrogen bombs, of cobalt

bombs, or of the missiles which will project these bombs to their targets. This moratorium would be our pledge of sincerity in the Geneva talks. This moratorium would last as long as substantial progress is being made at Geneva. We have been at disarmament conference tables for five years. There has been little, if any, progress. Why? Because each side has used these meetings for propaganda purposes. Because neither side has shown a willingness to undertake serious discussions for peace. So acid has the situation become that no one trusts the other's word. Only dramatic deeds can now break this diplomatic log jam and allow the river of realistic conversation and compromise and treaty to flow.

Many laugh off any possibility of settlement. Ought we to read off the possibility of Russian agreement so easily and so completely? I wonder. Russia's aims are not our own. Russia's aims are selfish, but then our own aims are selfish. But remember this, my friends. Russia has in the past two years been involved in a major and costly philosophic struggle with its ally, China, precisely over the necessity of peace. Russia has uniformly insisted on the necessity of coexistence. Remember this also. It was not the United States, but the Russian government which unilaterally announced a moratorium on atomic tests.

Already in the West sensitive men, brilliant men, men of the caliber of Bertrand Russell and Victor Gollancz are arguing that the times are so dangerous that the West ought to adopt a policy of total unilateral disarmament. 'It is better to save life', they say, 'to save the basis of our civilization, than to maintain what we call national honor and national freedom.' I do not believe that we have now to choose between these two radical alternatives. We can have our freedom, we can have our national self-respect, and we can have peace. But the more we take the work of peace

half heartedly the more cogency Russell's arguments assume. The longer we persist in our precipitous rearmament without working with equal urgency for peace the more difficult and extreme do our choices become.

We can only pray that January next, when the new administration takes office, it will sound a clarion call to the American people, one which will speak not only of our military posture but of our moral principles, not only of preparedness but of peace, and that it will not only speak of peace but work energetically to achieve it.



A committee was organized to secure funds and a national study of
minds. At the 1960 Convention of the Patriotic Organization, Dr. R. R.
Howard, D. W. D. Van Buren, Jr., and other members of the
the mentioned no doubt belonging to the same group; Howard had of
abandon the study of the U.S. group. Howard was a member of the
Van Buren was also a member of the group. Howard was a member of the
D. W. D. Van Buren, Jr. to American life.

[illegible]

American Imperialism

The original ideas of the 1550's were purely military ideas - more
moral & more mercenary; concerned chiefly or exclusively; to build 'civilized
world' states on global dimensions. The original words reflect of the 1550's
were military concerns - The Carbone Report; The Lushan Report; but
the words were still old-fashioned military purposes and more with military
purposes than peace programs, during the 1900's was a new over 500
billion dollars to investment, military strength.

hills down to some extent.
The system in our schools was different, our rules foreign, unlike,
to domestic parents that we could know Russia only by building the most
solid military machine of which we were capable. We would consider it
normal as well. We would succeed in all this and not a few international
men would make us the best and on many things better than they and
force. Basic to their policy of containment was the trend of Soviet-American
cooperation. If Russia stood as a united power with new ideas
in her midst.

in the future. These proposals are not general ones but are made for reasonable thought - but many of the details are correct. The proposals are correct in principle and strong enough to be made.

Ammonites were showed by the collector. Finding only two cylinders one W.L.C. 135 was lost. Many bones on ground and more fresh to having the upper end of the cylinder. Some of the cylinders to improve the quality of the ground and to be used at the same time.

Now therefore we will not even - 800 million
 have all the money under the gift of such a law -
 have ^{before} ~~under~~ that much. There is no need to be afraid of
 embarking for the other people's money. This one need be the other way
 and this money is not for the other people's money - ~~the other way~~
 of political responsibility - the other money is for the other people's money
 and of course it is not for the U.S. - on the other hand it is not for the
 other people's money.

[illegible][illegible]

placed on the table at the first place - the one was some Jewish Russian
but engaged in the business.

So happened as the peace policy - that the most likely blow Russia
would strike at the cold war would be to open to disarmament &
demilitarization. The rest of the world has been wonderfully known
economically and industrially. The aging of the world has no way proper to connect
an military production to industrial war - Our economy would undergo
a crisis of over production - Our military would be employed with increased
power and not from cloud square of the world but from military release -
Our budget would have to be cut - most professional military
experts of opinion - men to whom we have guaranteed employment.
Even if peace does not ^{be immediate} ~~come~~ the world - what we must be sure
some program is cast on the new world & political energy to
meet the world, facing the fact of industry, labor & the military of a peace
oriented society ought not to stand in the way of any reasonable
discussion of peace.



Kaddish

Friday DEC 16

Sunday " 18

Those who passed away this week

IDA BERMAN

Vahrzeits

IGNATIUS SCHOENBERGER
ADOLPH KOHN
ISADORE D. WERTHEIMER
MINNIE FULDAUER
BENJAMIN MESHORER
JOSEPH HAYS
SAMUEL KANGISSER
BERNARD A. RUBIN
CATHERINE S. WEGLEIN
JEROME JAMES NEWMAN
SIGMUND KORACH
SARAH FAIGIN WEISS
HERBERT NEUBAUER

MORT S. SILBERGER
SOLOMON S. FIRTH
SAMUEL FRIEDMAN
BENJAMIN LOWENSTEIN

TO BE READ FRIDAY DEC. 16 ONLY
SOL R. BING

temporarily immobilized - a commander entrusted with the
to order the destruction of a million lives - But what if
the superpower danger of multiplication with the weapons;
what if the least accident was a accident ~~At one of our~~
own missiles - what if some danger was used off
beyond a least just to meet the frustration - We needed
to be in the game because the very engineering required here
allowed the control of life itself to pass out of our hands -


Further nuclear refinement can only add to our confusion - enough
the stability of the world hangs on our hands in a period of such
being predicted - We are in an age when the very tools
of our weapons present a threat to the world and greater
future of the human race - We are in an age when we are still
not only remain the world but the world itself - not
only man alone but the whole population -

Do it not time that we build to see our occupation with
multinational military and become energy & renewal
multinational peace. It is. The time has come
provisions, ~~for~~ peace, our best minds are turning
their attention from the cold war to the even more terrible
George F. Kennan for example, brilliant Russian scholar - able
diplomat - Kennan was the original architect of our policy
of containment. Letter to Mr. Kennan now as he speaks
to a group of friends seriously

Mr. Kerner's message is a kind of warning to us in Congress - the
reason to recognize the simple truth that "we are always in defect" -
that our national energies must be directed towards the
preparation for war - But the how therefore and where Mr. Kerner
seems a bit hazy - a brilliant man has handled
nuclear weapons and the American people on a number
of military build-up & concerned - and such men
could express some more positive, practical viewpoint
than "to follow the dicta of our conscience, to have
confidence in our own strength, and not to ask to any questions".

Mr. Kerner's defense is that a great deal of proof is needed - that
what we are not is not accidental - accidents have occurred
and policy for it is not in your hands - but
accidents - men make mistakes - we will live for peace -

The rule of a peace program is very - There is no peace
system of inspection - if we insist on such peace process
before any ^{actual} agreement is reached there will remain a
monitoring or armament - There is a real crisis in
not following the advice of an ABC & unilaterally breaking the
atom bomb, monitoring which we have no jurisdiction
shared with ten years ago by the Russians - the peace in
my country is a very small matter - but such a crisis
of this nature will only aggravate the armament process
out of all proportionally control. There is danger in unilateral
action away from NATO - but such the control of nuclear
arms remain under European control in for the years
days.

I would like to propose that we accept one further round
greater use - Army control & Government will have been
Anquidly & concern for 5 years - Temporarily because we still
Russia ~~but~~ but we prefer another to Russia - have been
unusually - refused - of any solid results - You will recall the
~~disruption~~ in Washington when Russian delegates accepted in principle
Dr. K. K. K. group proposals on inspection - This meeting -
of course to establish as my proposal - must have some tangible
been. I would report that the U.S. Government would be able
to deal all atomic, biological & chemical problems immediately
as a prelude to immediate economic meeting - but we
will continue the negotiations on way to the talks on
science and hold out hope of solution. On intention we
have not been able to see suspicious -  values too much
disputed with each other - It is a mind - but one
which will address itself to the results - For we
sought not need out of hand the Russian threat a peace -
Mr. K. has made peaceful intentions a plank of his program -
has fought ^{repeatedly} a ~~bullet~~ ^{bullet} - develop we will be able to
our total policy - It is not by and the rules of responsibility
that some real organized work needed - Russian makes
will not be able - but of the amount of cost to economic
computations - we must be able to meet them on their
terms - they are needed for preparation for war.
We are not short, prepared to risk 800,000,000 lives
or more - surely there can not be any further production
in peace

