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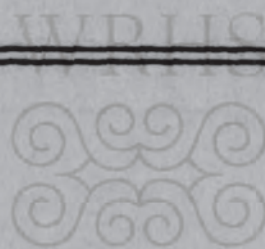
Taking stock of 1926, 1927.

"TAKING STOCK OF 1926."

RABBI ABBA HILLEL SILVER.

THE TEMPLE, SUNDAY MORNING,

JANUARY 2, 1927, CLEVELAND, O.



JOSEPH T. KRAUS
Shorthand
Reporter
CLEVELAND

It is difficult, of course, to take a brief segment of eternal time,--a year, and describe the progress of mankind within that short period. Human progress moves in larger cycles than that; the pendulum of human progress describes wider arcs. Again, it is quite difficult to make a summary of human progress based on those events which, because of their spectacular character, were brought to the attention of the public through the public press or other channels of information. It would be very misleading were you to draft a statement of human progress during the year 1926 based on the front page news of a newspaper, because what you find on the front page of your newspaper, that is what you find in the vital news of the day; it is not a record of human progress but a record of human gossip; it is the things which, for the moment, intrigue the interest of men and women, that find their manifestation and their announcements in our press,--the crime of the sensational character, the notorious trials and divorces.

But the real progress of the world, friends, is made up of those microscopic truths which the quiet men and women in the laboratories of the world and in the halls of study, quietly, unostentatiously, discover and add to the assets of the human race. If you wish to make a real inventory of mankind's gains during 1926 you would have to go to the books that were written and to the scientific

discoveries that were made, and to the successful experiments which were recorded, and to the art and the music and the fine literature which was written, and to the fine social legislation which was adopted during the year. Those things represent real progressive human achievements. And it is, of course, very difficult at the present time, being so near to the year which has just closed, to make an inventory, to take stock of these infinite, I believe minute, achievements of the past year. You know, for example, that in the scientific field the year 1926 has witnessed marvelous advances, so marvelous that they succeeded even in getting onto the front page of our newspaper,--trans-Atlantic broadcasting has been perfected, and trans-oceanic telephoning, the North Pole was twice conquered during the year, one by a dirigible and another by an airplane. Some great scientist discovered a new and marvelous ray of strange potency and rare power, which may mean great things for the human race. In the science of medicine we have read from time to time reports of distinctive contributions to the field of human therapeutics. And so in the fields of chemistry, physics, engineering. We have made rapid progress.

Just what we are going to do with all these scientific discoveries, it is difficult to say; just where all this is leading us to, it is hard to say; whether all these numerous inventions will increase human happiness it is difficult to say. There are some who fear that these very discoveries may some day destroy the human race; that

our power of self-control is lagging far behind our power of mastery over the forces of nature; or, in other words, that our spiritual and our moral development is far behind our intellectual or scientific development, and that some day mankind may be overwhelmed by the very power which his mind has let loose in society.

Be that as it may, the year 1926 has marked a steady advancement in the field of scientific thought and development, but not so in the field of human relationships and international relationships. The year 1926 has proved rather a disappointment as far as the hopes of international reconciliation and international peace are concerned. After much wrangling Germany last September entered the League of Nations. That seems to be the one outstanding achievement for the cause of sanity in Europe during the past year. But as a result of Germany's entrance into the League Spain and Brazil withdrew from the League. The preliminary conference on disarmament which was called under the auspices of the League of Nations resulted in nothing. That conference soon encountered such hurdles of obstacles which it could not manipulate. And so the hope of simultaneous and universal disarmament, if only partial, on the part of the nations of the world, has again been long deferred, and in the meantime that vicious competition in armament is going on apace all over the world, and especially among the great and the determining powers of the world.

Last January the United States Senate voted

that the United States should enter the World Court. That was a distinct gain. But due to the many reservations with which this admission was surrounded, the nations of Europe practically refused to admit the United States into the World Court on those terms, and so that victory turned into a defeat. Europe today is in the grip of dictatorships of one kind or another, little or big. The latest dictatorship to be added to the great list is that of the dictatorship of Pilsudski in Poland. Two-thirds of the peoples of Europe today are ruled not by parliament but by men who seized power and are ruling at the moment. The arch dictator of Europe today, Mussolini, has had his life thrice in danger by assassins, and thrice has the freedom of the Italian peoples been tightened even more rigorously. How long the Italian people will be satisfied to have their freedom denied them remains to be seen. But it is clear to any observing student of history, that the dictatorship of Italy, as well as the dictatorship in all other countries where it now seems entrenched, is traveling the old historic road, beginning in triumphs and swift victories and ending in blood and terror and tragedy.

The year 1926 saw China turn into a seething cauldron of conflict and unrest. China, a people of nigh unto four hundred million souls, has been exploited, abused and bled by the mercenary peoples of Europe for nigh unto a hundred years, and the Chinese are today beginning to clamor for their rights of self-determination. The national-

ist spirit has been aroused and a great bitterness against foreigners has been engendered. Strikes and boycotts and armed conflicts have been the order of the day in China, some of the nations of Europe contributing to the confusion by massacre and bloodshed. Sooner or later the foreigners will have to get out of China, just as sooner or later the foreigners will have to get out of all these so-called backward countries, who are backward only towards their industrial exploiters. But that process of cleansing each nation from foreign exploitation will be a process stained in blood and marred with ugliness.

The United States was generally unsuccessful in its diplomatic activities during the year 1926,--sadly so. I pointed out that we failed to enter the World Court. We failed in another situation where tact and wisdom might have won for us great prestige,--in the Tacna-Arica arbitration matter. In that matter we bungled, with the result that we left this outstanding problem of the Pacific, the struggle between Chili and Peru, with Bolivia as a third and very much interested party, concerning a stretch of land on the Pacific coast which is vital to all three parties,--we have left that problem, a delicate problem, unsolved and irritating, and our prestige has suffered among the Latin-American republics.

We have threatened and bullied Mexico. Of that I spoke last week; and we have come to a deadlock, a deadlock fraught with extreme menace, a situation loaded with

dynamite. The Mexican government is 100% right and the American government in its relations to Mexico within the last year has been 100% wrong; and it is astounding that the President of the United States found it necessary, during the last week, to ask the American people to give him a blanket endorsement of his foreign policies, to stand behind the administration in its foreign policy activities. One wonders why the American people should be asked to indorse foreign policies which are distinctly hostile to the principles of America. Are we to criticize our government when its policies touching national affairs are wrong? And thus be restrained from criticizing our government when its policies touching international affairs are wrong? Are we to say, "My State Department, right or wrong"? Or are we to say as free American citizens, when our government pursues policies unwise and unjustifiable, that we do not approve of them? The American people is now saying through its spokesmen and its leaders and its press that it does not approve of cowering and browbeating a free and sovereign people, a neighboring people which is trying to regain control of its own natural resources without denying any foreigner or any foreign company its rights, and without confiscating an inch of its property or a dollar of its investment.

We have bungled and are bungling in Nicaragua. We are mixing into quarrels which are not ours, and our prestige is suffering both in Latin America, in Central

America, and in Europe. And the last year has seen an even more serious situation in the Philippines, where our rule has been less successful last year than in almost any previous year. Our role as the benefactor of mankind, as moral leader of nations, seems to be accepted today nowhere. There is an opportunity, as I see it, for us to regain our moral leadership in the world, if we have the courage and the vision. On December 9th Senator Borah introduced in the United States Senate a resolution towards the outlawry of war, the sanest, the most practical, and therefore the most far-visioned resolution on the subject of international peace and the establishment of permanent peace among nations, that has yet been introduced. This resolution aims to cut out the whole system of war by outlawing war, by declaring war a crime, just as we have declared in our statutes that murder is a crime.

The resolution of the Senator reads:

"Whereas war is the greatest existing menace to society and has become so expensive and destructive that it not only causes stupendous burdens of taxation now afflicting our people, but threatens to engulf and destroy civilization, and

"Whereas civilization has been marked in its upward trend out of barbarism into its present condition by the development of law and courts to supplant methods of violence and force, and

"Whereas the genius of civilization has

discovered but two methods of compelling the settlement of human disputes, namely, law and war, and therefore in any plan for the compulsory settlement of international controversies we must choose between war on the one hand and the process of law on the other, and

"Whereas war between nations has always been and still is a lawful institution, so that any nation may, with or without cause, declare war against any other nation and be strictly within its legal rights, and

"Whereas we must recognize the fact that resolutions or treaties outlawing certain methods of killing will not be effective so long as war itself remains lawful, and that in international relations we must have not rules and regulations of war but organic laws against war,

"Now, therefore, be it resolved that it is the view of the Senate of the United States that war between nations should be outlawed as an institution for means for the settlement of international controversies by making it a public crime under the law of nations, and that every nation should be encouraged by solemn agreement and treaty to bind itself to indict and punish its own international war breeders or instigators and war profiteers, under powers similar to those conferred upon our Congress under Article 1, Section 8 of our federal constitution, which clothes Congress with the power to define and punish offenses against the law of nations.

"Be it further resolved that a code of inter-

national law of peace, based upon the outlawing of war, on the principle of equality and justice between all nations, amplified and extended and adapted and brought down to date, should be created and adopted. Second, that with war outlawed, a judicial substitute for war should be created, or, if existing in thought, adapted and adjusted in one form or another, of an international court modeled on our federal Supreme Court in its jurisdiction for controversies between our sovereign states. Such court shall possess affirmative jurisdiction to hear and decide all purely international controversies, as defined by the code or arising out of treaties, and its justice shall not be enforced by war under any name or under any form whatever, but shall have the same power for their enforcement as our federal Supreme Court, namely, the respect of all enlightened nations for judgments resting upon open and fair investigation and impartial decisions, the agreement of nations to abide and be bound by such judgments and the compelling power of enlightened public opinion."

Now, to my mind, this is the real solution of the problem of war, and all others are makeshifts. The World Court and the League of Nations and any similar agency is a makeshift, until the fundamental act of outlawing war, of declaring it a crime, is adopted and made part of the organic law of mankind.

Now, this is an American idea. This idea of outlawing war was evolved in the best minds of the American

people, and this may become our great contribution to the peace of the world; and had we the courage, the vision to take the leadership in this work, as I am afraid we haven't, we would be placing ourselves in the van of moral leadership.

Had I the time I would speak at greater length about our conditions at home. We have had a year of comparative prosperity,--not the flood-time prosperity which we had a few years ago, but by and large the people enjoyed a fairly prosperous year. But while there has been no check to our prosperity, there has likewise been no check to the spirit of lawlessness which is rampant in our land, to the flagrant disregard of laws which we, ourselves, enacted. There has been no check to crime, to juvenile delinquency, to the increase in divorces,--things which are eating at the vitals of our national life. Had I the time I would dwell at length about certain conditions in our own city of Cleveland. Last May our city witnessed a disastrous strike in the building trades. These strikes have become almost periodic. They are costly to the citizens of Cleveland. They are the ones who, in the last analysis, pay the full price for all this periodic industrial chaos. Such strikes are likely to occur next year and the year after, and the city of Cleveland, which had such splendid visions in so many other things, seems to be unable to make provision for the checking of these periodic industrial disorganizations which are so costly to the economic well being of our community.

Back in 1921, following that disastrous building strike, a board of conciliation, of which I was a member, was called into existence to adjust the difficulties and plan a wage scale for the following year, and among the things we suggested then, perhaps the most important recommendation which that board of seven disinterested impartial citizens of Cleveland made to the employees and the employers of the building trades, was this: that a permanent board of conciliation or arbitration be established, and that a permanent expert be engaged by the employers and the employees together, who would look after the collective interests of the building trades and adjust the minor difficulties which are bound to arise in any industry from time to time, or, failing in such adjustment, to call into conference this impartial board of conciliation, in which the public will be represented and in which the public interest will be protected, to adjust these difficulties.

This recommendation, for one reason or another, has never been adopted. I wonder why. I wonder what other substitutes there are, other than conflict and trial by ordeal and brute force, which is so stupid, so costly, so antiquated, whether by the strike on the one hand, the boycott on the other, so antiquated, so primitive, so junglelike, and whether intelligent people living in a modern twentieth century, progressive city, cannot discover a more just and equitable way for settling industrial disputes.

I want to say a word about conditions in

Jewish life in 1926, and I shall be through. This last year has not been a red-letter year in the annals of Jewish life abroad. Economic demoralization compelled almost nine million of our fellow Jews in Eastern Europe to make a second appeal to our generosity. After the joint distribution committee was liquidated, believing as it did that the need was no longer present, those millions of our unfortunate brothers who have gone through so much during the last twelve years, were compelled to stretch out their hands again begging for help, to save them and their little ones from starvation and their entire economic life from collapse; and again, be it said to the eternal credit of the American Jew, again he responded; he responded heroically, he responded generously. When you figure up to the year 1926 the American Jews had sent to Eastern Europe sixty-five millions of dollars,--and by that I mean the money raised collectively, not including individual aid which was extended from one Jew to another, to families or relatives abroad,--when you stop to think on top of sixty-five million dollars which was sent, an additional twenty millions of dollars was raised within the year, which sum is likely to reach twenty-five million dollars before the half of 1927 is over, you realize that the American Jew does feel the record of fraternal unity, does respond to the needs of his people.

One of the most gratifying things within the last year has been the response of our non-Jewish friends in America to the appeal of our Jewish brothers in Eastern

Europe, spontaneously of their own accord. The outstanding Christian Americans resolved to raise a sum among themselves to help our unfortunate brothers, and a few weeks ago an historic meeting, as momentous as it was unique, was held in the great cathedral of St. John the Divine,--a meeting of Christians, addressed by Christians, called to initiate this campaign for the relief of Jews in Eastern Europe. And some historic words were spoken there by some of the great leaders of America. I say, a meeting like that is tremendously significant. It shows that the great heart of the American people is sound; it shows, too, that regardless of sporadic manifestations of ill-will here and there on the part of this one or that one, the soul of America is a soul of good will and kindness and helpfulness; that the great Christian communities of America are ready to extend a hand of co-operation and helpfulness in every great humanitarian effort and in every worthy cause. The arch-enemy of Israel in his bailiwick over there in Dearborn may reach you, but the American people, with its fine tradition of fair play and tolerance and freedom, is not misguided by his rantings and by his calumnations.

Last week I attended a conference in the city of New York at which were representatives of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ, representing forty million Protestants of America, and representatives of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, who met to discuss practical ways and means of encouraging good will, not through the

spoken word but through the deed, through the act; and to our great surprise and gratification the draft of a resolution was brought in by the Christian contingent of this body to the representatives of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ, protesting against the atrocities in Roumania within the last few months, sending an appeal to the churches of Roumania and to the Roumanian government in the name of the Christians of America, calling upon them to exert themselves to the utmost to wipe out this shame of Christendom and protect the Jews of Roumania in their legitimate rights.

These acts, to my mind, are very gratifying and very significant. Had I the time I would dwell at greater length about the conditions of the Jews in Roumania, which is now the sore spot, the black spot in Jewish life in the world. The Queen waited until she got out and returned to Roumania, or the Roumanian people waited until the queen returned from the United States, to inaugurate a new campaign of anti-Jewish excesses. Students are being systematically beaten, Jewish students, and thrown out of universities; Jewish merchants are being attacked; riots and small pogroms are a daily occurrence in Roumania.

The conditions of our people in Russia are difficult to determine because information is so hard to get. Their economic plight is a serious one, and thousands are being driven to the soil through enforced colonization and the efforts to earn a living in Russia. One of the saddest things in Russia, as far as Judaism is concerned, is

the suppression of religious instruction by the soviet government. No Jewish community is permitted to establish a religious school, and no religious school is permitted. No child is allowed to receive religious instruction under the age of eighteen, with the result that a generation of godless young Jews is growing up in Russia, in whose eyes religion is despised and the sacred values of our people are mockery. Should that condition persist for any time, I fear me that the whole of Jewry in Russia, which up to the war was the greatest reservoir of Jewish life in the world, is doomed--doomed to disappear.

I have always favored recognition of Russia by the United States, but I, for one, would make such recognition contingent upon one thing, surely, upon one thing, and that is the granting by the soviet government to the religious bodies of Russia, Jew and non-Jew, the right of religious freedom. For if there is anything that smacks of the darkness of the darkest ages, if there is anything that is medieval, it is that desire, for one reason or another, to deny a group or a people or a race its religious rights; to deny a father the privilege of transmitting to his child the faith of his ancestors.

In 1926 Palestine suffered somewhat of a setback due to an economic depression. The great inrush of new settlers which came into Palestine in 1924 and 1925 created a situation of inflation of the boom town period, and the deflation period has set in, with the result there is a

serious amount of unemployment in a large city like Telaviv. That economic situation is slowly adjusting itself. The colonists are fortunate in not suffering, and Jewish life in Palestine is slowly developing itself, and that remarkable experiment in Hebrew renaissance, in the revival of an ancient people in its ancient home, is progressing.

We hope that in 1927, we pray that in 1927, in this coming year, many of the deferred hopes, many of the ideals frustrated during the past year, may have a chance of realization; and upon all the efforts of the best souls of mankind and the finest minds of the world, and upon all the hands that labor for the amelioration of the world, for the improvement of life, for the improvement of life, for the bringing of a little more of sweetness of life in the habitations of mankind; upon all men of good will, upon all social servants, and upon all leaders of truth and path-finders of mankind, we invoke God's blessing for the coming year.

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TSB 1926

1. Jewish. 1926 not a rest. little year. Conditions in E. Europe have been desperate again. The economic life in Pol. due to valuations, & in Russia due to Communist theories, was such that a despairing appeal for relief to keep them from starvation & with collapse was again made - after J.W.C. was liquidated.

1. And again the great heart of Am. Jewry responded. Nearly more than 15 m. dollars was given, and given with remarkable spontaneity, by our people in this country. Our own committee suggested it further as a challenge, by a general over-subscription. When you add this sum to the 65 m. already sent - you have the Thompson sum, 80 m. sent by Am. J. to their suffering brethren abroad & my word - the most heroic philan. achievement of modern times.

2. Within the year in response to the same appeal our non-J. fellow-citizens, their own accord undertook to raise a fund for our brethren. Our historic meeting was held in the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist at which the Christian camp for suffering Jews was launched. A ~~was~~ meeting as momentous as it is unique. Indications that the great heart of Am. Christendom is sound, that regardless of sporadic manifestations of prejudice here & there - the spirit of Am. citizens & their faith is friendly and helpful. This is an evidence of good-will in deed & not in words which is most gratifying - The Arch-bishop of Am. is his little barren in Western way, sputter from time to time. The Am. people is too head-headed and too fair - to be misled by such venomous slanders.

3. Good Will Meeting - Federal Council of Churches & Am.

power may ultimately destroy him - for ^{the} moral
Central is lagging far behind his material power.
In the field of int. 1926 has been an accomplished year.

2. Not so in field of Internat. Relations. 1926 has
proved rather a disappointment - The cause of
better understanding - & the hope of permanent peace
has both not been advanced. After much
wringing and wringing - Germ. was finally ad-
mitted to the League - But there is one outstanding
achievement of year - But in protest of injured
rights - Spain & Brazil withdrew. ~~and the Council~~
~~was augmented and complicated by addition~~
✓ of the preliminary Conference on disarmament held
under auspice of League could not agree on any-
thing, at every turn it encountered hurdles
which it could not manipulate. It adjourned -
and it is not likely that a disarm. Conf. will
be held in near future.

U.S. Am. voted to enter the World Court in Jan.
of last year. Hailed as a great help to int. peace.
But we remembered our adherence with so many
reservations, that Eur. powers ^{practically} refused to accept
us on those terms - & so another defeat for the
cause of int. good-will.

3) We were generally successful in our

6/1. We have opportunity to regain leadership in movement to outlaw war to destroy the war system by cutting at its roots - on Dec. 9.

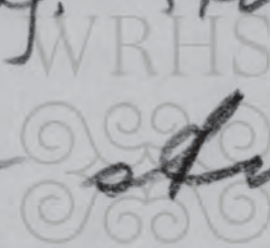
Senator Borah again introduced a Resol. in U. S. Senate to outlaw war. (Just)

a) This is the courageous, provisioned & truly practical step for mankind to take. I wish my lot to be

3. Our persistent at home not checked flood-tide crime

~~4. Cleveland - Bldg. Strike - May. (Just)~~

5. Cleveland - strike



diplomatic activities.

11 1. WE failed in World Court.

2. WE bungled in the Tacna-Arica arbitration which has the most delicate problems of the Pacific involved + interest.

3. WE threatened Stalin's Mexico - without conveying that Republic with the our Big Stick -

4. WE freed our way into Nicaragua - at the behest of Am. financiers - and lost our prestige is bound to suffer -

5. And in the Phil. - there is greater disrepute. With our rule - than at any previous time.

Our role as the benefactor of mankind - and moral leader of nations is nowhere accepted.

b) See next page

d) China was a battle-field in 1926. and is to-day - with Europ. nations as the actual conspirators in the situation. China wants to be master in her own house - & is tried by the foreigners who have abd., & oppressed the people it there over 100 years - Nationalist spent asserting itself - against in armed conflict, in strikes, boycotts & demonstrations, against foreigners - The Engl. retreat with massacre and bloodshed. But without a real force. Some e - We were Generalissimo

1. Whiffnet to take one brief segment of time, - and describe progress of mankind during that it. Human progress seems in larger cycles and describes wider areas. The real inf. appears in human that are the results; the small almost microscopic truths which are discovered in a hundred laboratories and study halls where great men, whose work is heralded in the public press - quickly carry on research & investigation - and laboriously fashion the little path the way for main advance. If we should really wish for a true statement, we progress in 1926 - we should go to books + sc. magazines, to the records of successful experiments which were made. To the fine art and music and poet literature which was produced during the year. It is difficult to make an estimate of such progress. But that there has been much progress - esp. in the field of science and invention - no one can doubt. Within the year Trans-Atlantic broad-casting and telephoning were perfected. Within the year the North Pole was twice reached, once by air carrier. Aeroplane and again by a Europ. airship. We saw Ray, the Catholic ray - of strange potency, was announced during the year, and at the recent Sc. Congress in Phila. numerous theories great & small were recorded - Many sc. congresses go on a pace. Man's mastery over the world plays forces of nature increases. Whether it will lead or - no one can say. Whether will man advance sp. & usually as rapidly as he is advancing. Scientifically - no one can say. Some fear that man's new found

The Chr. group but in a protest draft, an appeal
to Rumania - requesting in name, Christians that
persecutions cease! - And the sign. act of God-will!

2. Rumania - ^{the Black in Central Eur. before war -} a ~~spot~~ ^{spot} within ^{since} month series 7
outrages in many cities. Students attacked. Kept out
of colleges. Frequent riots. Propag. unexplained peasantry
against Jew. Traders & merchants - and intellectuals
against Jewish invasion, the profers. Cultural life
of R -

3. Russia. colonization - anti-religious - no protest!
form of recognition - no emigration - freedom of Rel.
instruction

Palestine - Economic depression - following month, many
unemployed - certain industries ^{notably building} greatly uplaked. Unemployment
in Tel Aviv - slowly recovers. Colonies
are sound - Wesphalia - Baden - Rottenberg - A glorious
experiment.