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A year with Roosevelt, 1934.

A YEAR WITH ROOSEVELT

By
Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver
At
The Temple
On
Sunday morning, March 4, 1934.



1. Country has every reason to be grateful that during past year F.D.R. was at the helm of govt, directing its affairs. This last year has been about as momentous a year as this country has experienced in 50 years. That we found ourselves on Mar 4, this year in a healthier and happier cond. > last year is due largely to the initiative and leadership, F.D.R.
2. In surveying the past year, his admin. ~~from~~ on most practical business if he is opposed, the Pres. policies, against our statement; and if he is a for opponent understatement. Exaggeration and hyperbole are no aids to clear thinking and are neither ^{serious} ~~wisdom~~ ^{serious} ~~tribute~~ ^{serious} ~~nor~~ ^{serious} ~~helpful~~ ^{serious} ~~criticism~~. (March) has clearly been accomplished - now, Pres. critics would acknowledge. March has as yet not been accomplished - now, Pres. friend would care to acknowledge.
3. A fair and impartial judgment would be that while no triumphs have been achieved, definite and important progress has been registered in meeting the depression. Since March, 1933, our country has gone up and not down. The disastrous downward trend, ~~there is action~~ the econ. life of the country under the H. admin. has been reversed.
- (1) Un. has been ~~reduced~~ reduced by 2 m. who have been "absorbed" in working. An additional 4 1/2 m. have been given temporary employment under Civil Works Act - Public Works Act - Civilian Conservation Corps.
- (2) By March 1933 - 1 out every 4 - unemployed, 13+ million.
1 " " 6 families received public relief.
~~and pay all the higher 2 years ago 25% increase in buying power~~
- (3) These figures have been reduced. Significant achievement. Still. 10 million are still unemployed! - Problem, giving a job to every worker who wishes to work - still the great unsolved problem of Am. econ. life.
4. Similarly the disastrous fall in prices has been checked, and the trend reversed - Farm products alone
- | | Jan. 1933. | 1934 |
|--------|------------|----------|
| wheat | 33 cents | 69 cents |
| corn | 19 " | 44 " |
| cotton | 6 " | 12 1/2 " |

5. It has been estimated that there has been a gain, 10% in production and trade. In building & construction, due largely to P.W.A. a gain of almost 500% -

6). In an effort to disrupt under NIRA shortened hours, later. And in an effort to increase purchasing power, people - it fixed a minimum wage. The lowest wage employee has been benefited by this act. The higher-wage employee has not only not benefited, but in many many instances has had his wages reduced. In many instances there has been a total gain in the total pay roll of over 25% over 1932. And child labor under the NIRA has been abolished.

7. Labor generally has gained under NIRA - after bitter years, things are labor has finally won right to org. and to bargain collectively. Membership now exceeds 5 million. Company union has also greatly increased. Section 7A, NIRA has been interpreted as a new Magna Carta for Amer. labor.

(1) There is a hard struggle ahead. Enemies of org. labor have not been quiescent. The best ind. leaders, the large manuf. industries, steel - autom - oil are as unyielding as before to org. labor. Comm. Unions are sometimes an camouflage for an anti union shop. It does not seem likely that in the emergent econ. order 2 types of labor org. will be tolerated.

8. The Amer. dollar has been devaluated by 40%. Our currency has been placed on a modified gold basis. The noise & great standard is not likely again to strangle Amer. ind. The country is launched on a program of a managed currency - a currency sufficiently flexible to meet the econ. needs of our people whose real wealth is not gold, but goods and commodities - A year ago Hervan prophesied disaster if country went off gold. Stung by in his campaign in Spain. We are off of it - partially. England is off entirely. Their Econ. cond. have appreciably improved - Story not ended!

9. A.A.A. Agricultural Adjustment Act - ^{most farm incomes} central agr.

production - reduce acreage - apply nat. planning -
① compensate farmers.

(1) There is sound idea behind it. but agr. planning.

(2) But whether creation of art. scarcity, is rather stimulates buying power, is the way.

(3) Whether it can be put on self-sustaining basis then the process tax - for govt. cannot indefinitely pay out subsidies for things which are not being produced...

(4) Whether it is wise to build up income farmers at the expense, the worker worker and the consumer - remains - as yet - undecided.

(5) This anomaly still exists: Welfare has not enough of food & clothing etc. We are expected to produce all that they need. Our govt. ^{there} is consciously reducing production in order to create a scarcity.

10. Under NKA - govt. has taken first steps to nationalize ind. industry. ^{to establish codes with its industries} to eliminate that competition which was being tought to destroy the life of trade. defining & reg. practices & conditions & standards - which, in days of rough and ready we believed our role being ind. manuf. merchant -

(1) A means of guiding indust. life & com. - then intell. central supervision.

(2) NKA has made many evening. It is in a large measure disappointed many of its friends. The former think that it goes too far. The latter not far enough. It has not radically cut into un- only 15 out of 234 codes has it estab. have 1 week at less > 40 a week - in many ways in many instances it is very low - general of wage level has not improved - any industry has unsuccessfully ignored it - and the nat. planning phase

5 it - has not even begun.

(3) Nevertheless it contains revel. seeds within it - if Pers. works to follow through - The beginnings at least of a new structure, ind. have been made.

(4) Whether it is possible to plan nationally under our present system - whether we do not really exclude the other - remains to be seen -

11- Year has witnessed first stages in a long struggle to reorg. banking system & currency - to eliminate private clones - to bring nat. credit out, the hands of a few bankers into the hands of the govt - for neither credit nor currency can not any longer be left to the control of private ind. bent on private gain -

12. Similarly movement has been initiated - an extraordinary immense undertaking - to clean up that Giggle 1st table & corruption - the Stock Exchange - and the securities market.

(1) The success, the effort is as yet very much in doubt.

13. Tenn. Valley Authority - to develop area - + use muscle shores

14- Relief - change of date - 950 m. C. W. A - Feb. 15 -

15- Along the year - Prohibition not repealed - Russia reopened -

Relations with S. Central Am. republics def. improved.

16. Nothing can be said in favor of the Pers. encouragement to this big Army thru them - We are encouraging Naval Arms. Race - It has done nothing for world peace a disarmament. We talk new t do less -

17. To run up

1. It is too early to strike a balance. Yet, new movements have been set a-foot - some with a short duration.

6 ~~these~~ ^{most} ~~permanent~~ ^{still remains to be done - perhaps - long range - recovery, work} which will work - which will - only time will tell - whether the total will lead us on way to "the life we are abundant" - greater power & security - that two remain to be done - we are in the midst of a crisis - supply planning experiment - and new machines & out - Test & Recover - Effective - Efficient - Direct ?
2/ But new structures have been planned - bold new experiment are being tried - The leader has not been up to lead - The old order is breaking down ! Something new radical has to be tried - Perhaps not radical enough - only time will tell -

✓ 3/ If it breaks down - we will have not been paid for it - but we are - therefore we must come to the means of supreme state control ! Recovery is not enough to bring in the new tech - but to use as much of it as possible in the new tech - even when we have entered - If he fails - complete failure - regimentation & most disorder will take place - Control by vested interests -
Dear Mr. Hoover for his success. F. pray for his failure!

Pay price - 3 billion - 5 billion -

4/ But first moves are important - They indicate direction and goals reached after - They also reveal both the dominant ideas and the lines , characters , the man who makes them - Mr. H. has shown by his first decisions means the things he is interested in - & qualities , characters which he hugs to play to achieve them -

✓ 1. He has courage - He can face troubles of position - He does not waver under criticism - He dares to play new tricks - He is not afraid of the new - order in the future - He is not held captivity by slaves or catches words - He is not afraid to lead - He is willing to assume the responsibility for unmistakable decisions in critical moments -

He talks with ^{frankly} people - ~~lays bare~~ ^{exposes} ~~carefully~~ ^{unflinchingly} informs them, the
true state of affairs, the difficulties ^{to which they are faced} involved, and, the true
prospects - He evokes confidence and trust. There is a man who
will not consciously mis-lead them. He will not betray them.

6). He ~~has~~ does not play upon their fears or upon their
passions. He excites them with ^{a large measure of} intelligence and
common-sense, and good-will. He has so far not been
disappointed.

7). The remarkable outpouring of affection on the occasion, his
52nd birthday on Jan 30 - was ample testimony to the hold
which he has over the hearts and minds of his people.

8). His past year - in spite of many exciting & difficult tasks - will
undoubtedly prove to be his hardest year. The times ^{very} ^{vol. of} ^{past}
desperate and a Congress leader could count upon ^{cooperation}
even from those who were his ^{past} enemies. The hard years
are coming. ^{The heavy} ^{weight} ^{will} ^{be} ^{borne} ^{by} ^{himself} ^{and} ^{his} ^{people}. Partyanship, reaction, vested interests, the old
guard, will begin - have already begun - their sipping
and their sabotage - He will be attacked bitterly. &
They will seek to discredit him and his measures.
Friends will become critical and desert. That is the
path of all leaders, men. All, his plans & projects
cannot succeed. ~~Most~~ ^{He may} ^{however} ^{pass} ^{uneasy} ^{that} ^{which} ^{will} ^{succeed} ^{will}
succeed only partially. These desperately critical times
have many of breaking and ~~destroying~~ ^{saddening} all
leaders.

9). It is $\therefore$ well that at this juncture, his pres. career
~~the~~ the con. people should voice its ^{high} ^{faith} ^{confidence} in him
^{and} that he may draw from the conscience, the active
good-will, his countrymen - strength and for service
for the hard years ahead.

2. He is not a non-water, pants reformer. He set powerful hands ~~not~~ to work at reconstruction. He knows how to lay the axe to the roots of an evil. ^{He acts - and acts bravely!} ^{and decisively.}

3. He is not ~~an~~ a deductivist. He does not ride any hobby. He is not out to reconstruct or theory. He is a pragmatist and an experimenter. He will reject his own ideas as quickly as he finds them impractical. He has no pride of premises. He will corrupt the best brains & best thought available. He will seize them a chance to show their worth - and when found wanting he will discard them for others.

4. He is a man who cannot not be will not be stagnated - by friends or enemies. He will work forward freely after due deliberation. Pressure of individuals or groups or lotteries may cause him to talk stall again renewed but they will not debar him from his path, if he believes that it is the right path.

5. His human instincts are sound. - His human instincts are fresh and strong. - He likes folks - He wants all men to enjoy in the good things of life. He is not a demagogue, not a humanitarian. That's why for common folks with their sound instincts - like him. They will forgive mistakes in him which they would not in others. They know that he is with them - in their hard struggle for a better chance for themselves & their children. He is not perfunctory - a distant - a vulgarely demagogue. He does not talk at people. He does not make pronouncements from the height of any superior sin.

<sup>No does not bluster, & state
themselves, and does not seek the annihilation of his
opponents</sup>
He is not a wavering, ~~doctrinal~~ dictator. He does not
need the excuse of the tyranny of dictatorial metaphysics to an
excuse for assuming leadership which dem. ~~it~~ always
plant their chief executives in times, emergency.
He has done ~~no~~ violations to the essential principles, Am.
democr. and has not used class, antagonism as
a counter-foil in a political game.
Hitler



A YEAR WITH ROOSEVELT

First moves are significant. They indicate direction and the goal reached after. Mr. Roosevelt has shown by his first decisive moves through the first year of his administration the things in which he is interested and the qualities of character which he brings to play to achieve them.

He has courage. He can face and out-face opposition. He dares to blaze new trails. He is not held captive by slogans or catch-words. He is not afraid to lead. He is willing to assume the risk and the responsibility for momentous decisions in critical times.

He is not a swaggering dictator. He does not bluster of State supremacy or ruthlessness or violence and does not seek to annihilate opponents. He does not require the theories of dictatorship as an excuse for assuming positive and personal leadership which democracies are always ready to grant to their chief executives in times of emergency.

X He is not a rosewater, parlor reformer. He can set powerful hands to work at hard tasks of reconstruction. He knows how to lay the ax to the roots of an evil. He can act quickly and decisively.

He is not a doctrinaire. He is not out to vindicate any theories. He is a pragmatist and an experimentalist. He will reject his own ideas as quickly as he finds them inoperative. He has no pride of opinion. He will coopt the best brains available. He will give them a chance to show their worth, and when found wanting, he will discard them for others.

Abstract of "A Year With Roosevelt"

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He is a man ~~who~~ cannot and who will not be stampeded -- by friends or enemies. He will move forward fearlessly after due deliberation. Pressure of individuals or groups or lobbies may cause him to take stock and reconnoiter but ^{it} will not deter him from his path if he believes that it is the right path.

His human instincts are sound. His human sympathies are fresh, warm and strong. He likes folks. That is why common folks, with their own sound instincts, like him. They will forgive mistakes in him which they would not in others. They know that he is with them -- in their hard struggle for a better chance for themselves and their children. He is not pompous or distant or vulgarly demagogic. He does not talk at people. He does not make pronouncements from the heights of Olympus or Sinai. He talks with people frankly, simply, earnestly. He informs them of the true state of affairs, of the difficulties to be faced and of the possible outcome. He does not play upon their fears or upon their passions. He credits common folks with a large measure of intelligence, common sense and good will. He has so far not been disappointed.

The remarkable out-pouring of affection on the occasion of his Fifty-second birthday on January thirtieth last, is ample testimony to the hold which he has over the hearts and minds of his people.

Mr. Roosevelt's first year in office will undoubtedly prove to be his easiest year. The times were critical and even his opponents were *moved* ~~driven~~ to voluntary or forced cooperation with him. The hard years are coming. The heroic mood will vanish. Partisanship, reaction, vested

Abstract of "A Year With Roosevelt."

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interests will begin -- have already begun -- their sapping and their sabotage. He will be attacked bitterly. Foes will seek to discredit him and his measures. Friends also will become critical and desert. That is the fate of all leaders. All of his plans cannot succeed. Those which will succeed will succeed only partially. He, himself, may grow weary -- these desperately critical times have a way of breaking and saddening all leaders of men.

It is therefore well that at this first milestone of his administration, the American people should voice its high faith and confidence in him so that he may draw from the knowledge of the active good will of his countrymen strength and spiritual sustenance for the hard years ahead.