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Taking stock of 1943, 1944.



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TAKING STOCK OF 1943

A Retrospect and a Prospect



By

Dr. Abba Hillel Silver



At  
The Temple

On  
Sunday morning, January 2, 1944



As one looks back at the past year, one is amazed to find so much crowded into a short year. Momentous events followed each other in rapid succession and jostled each other for front page space. Things moved so swift that great events were quickly forgotten for still greater events.

1943 was a year of war, one which brought the end of the war appreciably nearer. The entire year of 1943 was under the sign of Allied progress, offensive and mounting might.

The year began with the astounding victories of Stalin<sup>grad</sup>. It witnessed a disastrous rout of Nazis and Fascists in Africa, the invasion of Sicily and Italy, the fall of Mussolini and the capitulation of Italy from the war.

The year 1943 also witnessed the <sup>U Boat</sup> campaign of the Nazis upon which they relied upon as a trump card smashed.

The year also reported the shattering saturation bombing of the principal cities of Germany, and of the invasion of the coast.

The year marked the gathering momentum in the Pacific, altogether, from the military point of view, a good year, a prelude year to victory.

The past year has told the Nazis that they were licked. They knew it. They no longer talk to their people about world conquest. They now talk to them about survival, which is a very different thing altogether. They try to hold them in line by the threat of utter ruin and annihilation at the hands of the Allies, if Germany quits the war.

Those "military idiots" - that is what Hitler called the Allied Commanders, have beaten them into retreat and defeat. The Nazi armies no longer bestride the world from the ages of Cairo like a colossus. They have been beaten back into the fortress of Europe, a fortress without a roof, a fortress whose walls are receding in the South and in the East.



They who always maintained that their success depended upon mobile warfare, on striking quickly, on dive-bombers, tanks, swift annihilation of the enemy, now find themselves forced to retreat behind the Maginot Line of their own long wall to defend themselves against the advancing troops of the United Nations. Behind that wall they are watching their own cities bombed out of existence, the initiative wrested from their hands and their industrial plants bombed. They are aware ~~not~~ of the growing might of their enemies and they know that it is growing day by day.

The Nazis know now that they have nothing to fight for. At the end of the war there will be nothing but defeat for them. They cannot win. Their only hope is for a prolonged and ordered defense will wear the enemies down, so that the United Nations will be prepared to consider a negotiated peace. They are hoping, too, for a possible division between the United Nations, which would work to their advantage. The recent Conferences at Cairo, Teheran have for the time being at least, blasted this hope.

Someone recently wrote: "If, before the war, it had been suggested to any well-trained German staff officer that after four years of 'victorious' battles, the armed forces of the Third Reich would have lost the initiative everywhere, that they would be spread out from northern Finland to the islands of the Aegean awaiting an Allied invasion of Europe from the west and south, that the bulk of the German ground forces would be battling for life on a two-thousand-mile front in Russia, that Germany would be at war with the only important former member of the European Axis, that German troops would be fighting in Yugoslavia to hold territory supposedly 'conquered' two years before, that enemies whose war industries were immune from a counter attack would be slowly bombing Germany's war industries to destruction, that the manufacture of all civilian clothes would be discontinued in the Fatherland and that public morale would be maintained with the headsman's ax -- he would



have dismissed such suggestions as too fantastic for serious consideration." Yet that is exactly what happened.

Some people have been expecting an inner collapse of Germany, Italy mabe following. Discout such an inner collapse at least for the time being. In an iron dictatorship, even when the morale of the people is gone, there still remains terror to keep them in line, to keep them from revolt. In a dictatorship such as exists in Germany there is no public opinion that can make itself vocal at a critical time. Discontent has no way of expressing itself. Public meetings, gatherings of all kinds, gatherings of more than three and four people are prohibited. Every person is spied upon. The terror of the Gestapo is in everyone's heart. No person is permitted to express an opinion, no press is permitted to express an opinion, only government controlled, lying propaganda sheets. Every major defeat is minimized. Every retreat is "according to plan". Vast new plans and mysterious new weapons are promised to bolster up shaken morale. The gangsters are determined to fight to the bitter end, even if it means leaving Germany and Rurope a heap of charred ruins. They know the terrible punishment which awaits them.

Only a major blow-up at the top, only a ma jor military disaster in the West, a sharp rift among leaders in the armies of the Nazi party can bring about a break-up of the present situation within Germany. But that is exactly what the Allied military leaders are girding themselves for -- the final show-down. And that is exactly what the Allied military leaders have launched. major A/military attack from the West - the final show-down. The cost of such an invasion of Europe will be high. Many will die on the battlefields, and on the invasion coasts. Think of Salerno and Tarawas! Our military leaders have warned us to brace ourselves for great losses in the battles, wherein the outcome of the 2nd World War will finally be decided. Russia moving in from the East, the armies of the United States and Great Britain moving in



from the West and South, and perhaps from the Southeast will crack the citadel of Nazi shame, crime and terror, and redeem Europe and the world from the curse of Nazism and Fascism.

The year 1944 is also likely to witness a mounting offensive in the Pacific, in the Far East, on land, sea and air to keep Japan occupied until her time of accounting comes. Altogether it will be a hard year, a testing year and a trying year, a year of sacrifice. Prayerfully we hope that it will be a year of victory.

The past year also recorded some very momentous conferences between the leaders, military and diplomatic, between the United Nations at Casablanca, Quebec, Washington, Moscow, Cairo, Teheran. At these conferences presumably not only military unity was reached for and the preparation of plans for the successful prosecution of the war, but also political issues of great moment were discussed. Concerning these political issues we will be informed. Of some we have already been apprised, and it is of utmost significance.

The four major powers in the world today within the world's far-flung boundaries, representing more than one-half the population of the globe, have resolved to collaborate not only for the duration in the prosecution of the war, but to collaborate now and after the war to establish a just peace and to maintain peace in the years to come. They agreed to recreate a world organization for the maintenance of peace, and to implement that world organization with all the power that it will require to carry out its objectives to maintain law, order and peace in the world. Significant our country also is the fact that our own Congress has officially voted/out of isolation. Congress, after the last war, voted our country into isolation. Now it has voted us out of it and has put the United States of America squarely into a plan for the creation of such machinery, such collective action and organization after the war as will maintain peace in the world. That does



not mean of course that following this war there may not be a powerful isolationist movement again rising among our people to force our Congress to reverse its position. There is that danger. There is the danger of our people becoming so exhausted by war, and so disillusioned at its outcome, that we will do what we did after the last war -- wash our hands of the whole thing and retreat behind neutrality and isolation. The cry will go up again: Mind your own business... We hope that will not happen.

And it is also to be hoped that during the coming year <sup>which</sup> will be an election year, when both major political parties will jockey for positions and seek to exploit each other for partisan purposes, it is devoutly hoped that our foreign policy so vital to the people of our own and the people of the world will not become a shuttlecock or football in the campaign of 1944. The Republicans in their eagerness to defeat the Democrats in 1944, and the Democrats in order to preserve their position should not in all conscience permit themselves to confound and to confuse our own people about our foreign policy. There is definitely the danger of wrecking the peace in the election year of 1944.

On the debit side of the ledger for the past year has been the trend towards inflation. Our people seemingly is not willing to pay enough out of its income for the sacrifice, out of its standard of living to pay its share in the cost of the war. We all want this war to be carried on without undue inconvenience to ourselves. Our people are demanding more money for their services at a time when consumer's goods has sharply decreased, because of defense needs. People are spending more than ever before and prices are accordingly ~~soaring~~ soaring, and as they soar, the demand is still higher and wages and income naturally increase. Thus the dangerous inflation spiral has been set in motion in our country. It is still in its early stages but there doesn't seem to be anything on the horizon to suggest how



it is maintained to stop it. Pressure groups of all kinds, farmer groups, industrialists, manufacturers are plugging away, each group for itself, through legislative lobbies, through strikes, through threats of strikes to get more money out of this war. That is what ~~the~~ it amounts to. When one group in our population gets more money than other groups at the expense of the others, and forces the cost of living up, the other group, in self-defense demands its share. One group denounces the other, the pot calling the kettle black. The farmers oppose food subsidies because that puts a ceiling on their farm prices. Business men fight renegotiation of contracts lest they be forced to return to the government excessive profits. The labor group see the cost of living mounting and the real value of wages declining, demand increases in wages and launch strikes to bring about a compliance to their demands. So the merry-go-round of group competition within our domestic economy in is going on war time/apace.

Fortunately the danger point has not yet been reached. Our war production has not been seriously affected as yet. The great industrial plant of our country has been producing amazingly -- 25 million tons of new shipping within eleven months, 150 thousand air-planes since Pearl Harbor, and similarly in every other field of production. But if this trend of which I speak is unchecked and will gather momentum very quickly, we will find ourselves in a very grave and menacing situation, and our responsible leaders, lay-leaders and political leaders of all sections of our population -- labor, manufacturer, merchant, farmer. And responsible leaders should face this difficult situation squarely and try to solve this problem ~~in~~ not in a partisan basis, but on a national basis. This problem is one that concerns everyone. And if our war effort is interfered with, it is the American soldier from every walk of life, from every section who will suffer, not from one. In this tragic hour the blood of our best men will be poured out without measure in defense of us. It is infamy, it is defilement of spirit for groups



to aggrandize themselves to try to win economic advantages contrary to the best solution to our problem...

Our people ought to be aroused very quickly about the situation. I believe that our public press would do more effective work in arousing the conscience of the American people if they did not concentrate their repugnances and disappointment exclusively on labor when it is wrong, but in the same spirit utter its sharp criticism of every other group who is similarly guilty. It is not wise nor fair to attack labor and forget the profiteering of industry or the self-seeking lobbying of agriculture. Why is John L. Lewis a self-righteous in the defiance of our government any worse than James F. Lincoln? Is a miner pilloried because he asks for an extra dollar a day in pay, but an industrialist to be applauded when, asked by his government for some return out of his millions of excessive profits allowed him, he insolently refuses? Are Fifty thousand dollar profits in war-time patriotic? When an extra five or ten dollar bill in the pay envelope is disloyalty? Where is the line drawn? Why is one permitted to wrap himself in the American flag and act as a patriot ~~really~~ while he is war profiteering shamelessly?...

A quick halt must be called clear down the line to this dangerous trend which might turn into an inflationary stampede, endangering the entire economic structure of our country, now and especially after the war.

On the devit side, too, of 1943 have been the race riots, the increasing intolerances evidenced on many sides in our country - race riots in Los Angeles, in Harlem, in Boston, Detroit -- thirty four men killed, 700 wounded. Those are serious matters. We don't like to think much about them. We don't like to talk much about them. They are festering wounds in our bodies. There are many conditions which have contributed to these international conflicts, nearly all traceable to the war - migration of people into new centers, housing shortages, inadequate recreational facilities. But basically and



fundamentally there is the fact of a potential race intolerance among sections of our people which is capable of being aroused, capitalized upon and incited. That is a dangerous situation. The powder keg is there. There are increasing anti-Semitic flare-ups here and there. It is heading into a form of hoodooism - the children of Boston and New York. These pathological manifestations ~~which~~ call for great concern, quick and decisive action on the part of city authorities, political authorities, public leaders, of those who control agencies, ~~for the~~ of those who control public opinion - ministers, clergymen... It is an anomaly that while our country is fighting for the four freedoms, sending its armies against other nations which have made racism their doctrine and their program, it sees its own national life from time to time disfigured by these infamous race attacks and race bitterness.

What avail will it be for us to win the war if we ourselves cannot take to our hearts the lessons of brotherhood, good will?

As far as the Jewish people is concerned, the past year - I have spoken of it before -- has been a terrible year of massacre and persecution, organized attempts at annihilating them in the world. It will not wear well in history. There is no use to lacerate our spirit over and over again over a situation which we cannot help. But there have been also manifestations within that dark period in the little countries under the heel of Nazi terrorists. Denmark which rose so magnificently to the defense of the Jewish population and saved them, helped them get out of the country when the Nazis marched in to destroy them. Sweden which threw her gates wide open and its arms wide open to receive these refugees, ~~show~~ show compassion, brotherhood and human sympathy. And in Holland from time to time we hear of the Christian population demonstrating in sympathy for their Jewish fellow citizens.



Evidently the Nazis have not succeeded in poisoning the heart and mind of Europe entirely. Decency, kindness, the spirit of religion are still there and they can be counted on once this evil id destroyed to come to the fore again to recapture and make the world into a decent place for civilized human beings.

On the threshold of the new year we face events of great moment. It will be a year of decision, a turning point in the history of the world. May God give us all strength to bear whatever burdens will come to us. May God give us the courage to endure with faith...





No longer, best made -

Beaten back - Fortresses, Europe - without a roof

They who always maintained - "Magical line" - scattered  
perimeter - watching their cities - night & day

No thing to fight for - cannot win - wear enemy down  
possible division - Tehran. (Info)

2/11 2/11

3/ Iran Collapse! Best informed -  
In a dictatorship - morale may be - Terror - Keep  
No public opinion - Discontent cannot  
Terror & Gestapo - No Press - Every major defeat -

"According to Plan" - Secret new weapons -

(Gangsters) - charred ruins

= Only major military defeat - Allies - Final Showdown

Cost - many will die - Sabers - Tanks

Our military leaders - lose

1944 - giant battle - finally - Russia - cost

4/ Japan

5/ 1943 - Conference - military - political

4 Major - pledged to collaborate



~~arrogant~~ & self <sup>highly</sup> ~~righteous~~ <sup>pride</sup> ~~James F. Finckh~~. Is a  
mine to be pillaged ~~he~~. he asks <sup>for</sup> an extra dollar  
a day ~~for~~ <sup>but is</sup> pay, ~~and~~ an undertaking to be afforded  
he. his part, after allowing <sup>capacities</sup> ~~him~~ a handsome profit  
on <sup>and he</sup> ~~was~~ <sup>asked</sup> for a return of millions <sup>grossly</sup> ~~of~~  
~~the~~ <sup>excesses</sup> ~~profits~~? ~~to~~ <sup>for</sup> \$50,000 ~~business~~  
in war-time <sup>patronage</sup>. but an extra 5 or 10 dollars  
lost on the way <sup>multiple</sup> ~~disloyalty~~?

A quick halt must be called ~~clear~~ <sup>down</sup> the line  
to this dangerous <sup>trend</sup> ~~process~~ - which ~~unjust~~ <sup>is</sup> ~~being~~ <sup>being</sup> ~~into~~  
an ~~unpleasant~~ <sup>unpleasant</sup> ~~standstill~~, endangering the ~~whole~~ <sup>entire</sup> ~~even~~  
structure of our country.

- 8). On Debit side, too. Rosa Parks - Los Angeles, Hankins,  
Brooklyn, Detroit. - 34 killed. 700 wounded  
Flare-up of antisem. hoodlums - Boston, Brooklyn, N.Y.  
- growing intolerance.  
- war conditions - unpatriotic - housing shortage -  
recreational facilities - areas of friction.  
- There are no negligible factors! Much power left  
by Nazi propaganda: Nature groups - still active  
Anomaly - Fighting Racism  
400 Yellow - 400 Brown - 400 White.  
- Small Groups  
- Organize against this menace in every community  
- of what awful raw world - / 9 - Jews - Kiev.  
Denmark



as one group seizes a point at the expense of the other - and (5)  
from the cost, hung up - the other group, in self defense, demands  
its share. One group denounces the other. The first calling the  
little black. The farmers oppose food retailers who that put  
a ceiling on their farm prices. Poor men fight rent, other  
here. That forces them to return to the point. Excessive profits  
Railroadmen, Steel makers, Coal miners, seeing their wages  
low in real value here, the increased cost, hung, by  
down their tools, a threaten to, to force compliance with their  
demands.

Fortunately, all this has so far not seriously affected  
our war production <sup>25 M. tons, 100,000,000 lbs. 150,000,000 lbs.</sup> ~~altho~~ <sup>altho</sup> it has done so to a degree. But, if unchecked, it may become a menace. Our republican  
pol. and civilian leadership - labor - farmer - industrialists -  
must face this dangerous situation - not from partisan  
resentment - but from material. The problem is one - It  
cannot be solved to the advantage of one group only.  
All groups are endangered by inflation. And if an war effort  
is lessened interfered with - it is Amer. who suffers - pay  
all costs, who will be made to pay the price. I  
believe that our public press could do a much  
better job in arousing the conscience, Am. people - if  
we keep of concentrating their refugees solely against  
exclusively on labor - when it is wrong - they would  
direct their criticism equally against against  
other groups - the farmers group or the industrialists  
when they are at fault. Why is John L. Lewis  
defamed, the part does more than that, the



to establish world organization to maintain peace. Our ~~Senate~~ <sup>Curran</sup> has voted our country out of isolationism by its declarations. There is def. prospect - every generation -  
The problem of boundaries - power & just - still for fine key solution.

6/ It is devoutly to be hoped that our foreign policy will remain constant. Party politics not wreck it as it did after last war. 1944 - an Election year. A fear of party strife - & rivalry. When everything which can serve partisan interest & victory is exploited. In their eagerness to defeat the German - it is hoped that the Refuel. will ~~do nothing~~ <sup>do nothing</sup> which might carouse an ally - and ~~create chaos~~ <sup>stampede our own people with</sup> a new isolationism which will wreck our world again. Isolationism is not dead in U.S. - America First.

7/ Debt Side 5 pages 9 1943.

① The trend towards inflation. Our people not willing to pay out <sup>enough</sup>, their current wisdom <sup>they want to pay without financial consequences</sup> act their standard living for the rest of the war. Our people have demanded more money for their services at a time when costs - prices <sup>have</sup> sharply decreased bec. of defense needs. Prices are rising again - and as they rise the demand for higher wages increases. The dangerous inflation is upon us - or yet in its early stages. But there is nothing in the horizon suggesting that it will be stopped. Pressure groups - labor - farmers - manufacturers - are plugging away - through leg. lobby or strikes, or threats or strikes, to make get more money out this war.



one group scores a point  
one group denounces - (Pot)

Ag. group - no subunits

Ind. Group - no renegotiation

Lab. Group - sub- compliance

Fortunately - 25 M - 150.000

But, if unchecked -

our resp. leaders - dangerous situation - national

Problem is one - for all -

If inflation - If war effort

In this tragic hour - black

our Public Press - conscience - responsibility

Why is John F. Lewis - defiance - unse.



- 1) As one looks back - amazed so much crowded into 12 months - innumerable events followed each other in rapid succession <sup>and</sup> followed and jostled each other for front-page ~~space~~ <sup>space</sup>. Things moved so fast that great events were quickly by-passed in still greater events.
- 1943 was a year, war.. but one which brut the end, the war appreciably nearer.
  - 1943 was entirely in the sign of Allied progress, effort and mounting might.
  - It began with the astounding Russian victory at Stalingrad, witnessed the disastrous defeat, the Axis in N. Africa, the invasion of Sicily and Italy, the fall, Mussolini and the ~~collapse~~ <sup>with almost</sup> Italy from the war.
  - It saw the V boat campaign, the Nazis - upon which they relied as upon a trump card - smashed.
  - It recorded the gathering momentum shattering saturation bombing of the principal cities of Germany, and the invasion coast.
  - It also marked the gathering momentum of the ~~allied~~ <sup>our</sup> offensive in the Pacific.
  - Altogether a great year from the military point of view - a prelude year to Victory.

2) The Nazis know that they are beaten. They no longer talk to their people of world-conquest - but of survival! They try to hold them in line by the threat of utter ruin and annihilation at the hands of the Allies - if G. ~~loses~~ <sup>loses</sup> the war.

The "military idiots" - for that is what Hitler called the Allied commanders, have beaten them into retreat & defeat.







There is no public opinion in F. <sup>Discontent has</sup> no way to express itself. No assembly or gathering is permitted. Every man is thrust upon. The term, the dictator is in every heart. There is no press only govt controlled, lying purple sheets. Every major defect is unmuzzled. Every revelation is "according to plan". Vast new plans and mysterious new weapons are promised to break up shabby morale. The paragons are determined to fight to the bitter end - even if it means being for. Europe a heap of charred ruins - They know that the terrible punishment which awaits them.

Only a major military disorder in the West - is likely to break their backs. So that the Allies are now finding Europe the final show-down! It will be terribly costly! Many will die on the invasion coasts. Think of Salerno and Taranto! Our military leaders have warned us to brace ourselves for great losses in the present battles to come. 1944 will be a year of peripatetic battles - wherein the outcome, the end result will all finally be decided. Pressure pouring from the East the Anglo-American from the West, North, & perhaps South East - will crack the crust of shame, crime and terror - and redeem Europe and the world from the curse of Nazism, Fascism.

4) It will probably also witness unusually active campaigns in the Pacific & Far East, on land, sea & air to help Japan occupied until her time comes.

5) 1943 Sign. for Conferences - not only to achieve united military action in the war - but united pol. actions during & after the war. Work not completed - But 4 major powers have pledged to collaborate for world peace -



1942, were fighting on the Volga and before El Alamein—and which one year later were fighting on the Dnieper and Volturno—were waging a victorious war. With their own eyes, they could see the steady decline of German air power on all fronts.

On September 30, 1942, Hitler spoke at the Sportpalast in Berlin. At that time the position of the Reich seemed so strong, and he was still so blind to the realities of the changing war, that he dismissed the military leadership of the United Nations with typically crude German humor. (That was before Stalingrad, El Alamein, and the Allied landing in North Africa.) He could not tell what the Allied leaders would do next, he said, because they were merely a pack of "military idiots." Yet one year later not even a malignant sorcerer out of the pages of the Nibelungen legend could have drawn up a hypothetical military situation involving much greater disadvantages to the Reich than the one actually confronting it.

X If, before the war, it had been suggested to any well-trained German staff officer that after four years of "victorious" battles, the armed forces of the Third Reich would have lost the initiative everywhere, that they would be spread out from northern Finland to the islands of the Aegean awaiting an Allied invasion of Europe from the west and south, that the bulk of the German ground forces would be battling for life on a two thousand-mile front in Russia, that Germany would be at war with the only important former member of the European Axis, that German troops would be fighting in Yugoslavia to hold territory supposedly "conquered" two years before, that enemies whose war industries were immune from a counter attack would be slowly bombing Germany's war industries to destruction, that the manufacture of all civilian clothes would be discontinued in the Fatherland and that public morale would be maintained with the headsman's ax—he would have dismissed such suggestions as too fantastic for serious consideration.

It was inevitable that the declining power of the Third