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A rabbi reviews politics, 1932.

I must state at the outset that the subject "A Rabbi Reviews Politics" was wished on me. The title sounds as if the Rabbi were trying to compete with Peter Witt, and no one in his right sense would try to do that. I know next to nothing about politics (Story of the Priest). My acquaintance with politics, like the priest's acquaintance with marriage ^{is} a matter largely of observation and neutrality.

As regards the issues of the forthcoming campaign, I am at a total loss. In 1928 I understood there was one vital issue - that between radio and radio. Today even that difference has disappeared. There has been considerable excitement, of course, over the Prohibition question. One ~~major~~ party wants liquor back with interpretations and the other ~~major~~ party is afraid that the spoon of interpretation is the enemy of the highball. This is, of course, a grave matter. But as far as I am concerned, I feel very much like that man who, very much the worse for drink, rang Dr. Fosdick's doorbell in New York city one midnight (story).

On all other matters there seems to be pretty much of an agreement between the two parties. Each agrees, and with a substantial degree of justification, that the other is rotten to the core. Each points with pride and views with alarm. Both want to relieve the farmer, relieve the unemployed, relieve the railroads and relieve the bankers. This is a great year for relief. They also want to relieve each other of office. Both parties present estimable gentlemen as candidates for the presidency. In the one instance it is a man ^{down} ~~who in three short~~ ~~years of panic succeeded in saving the world from total ruin,~~ ^{down} ~~the other,~~ ^{it is} a political explorer who shortly before convention time discovered the forgotten man. Somewhere in the dim background of both parties are vice-presidential candidates who shall here remain nameless.

And so on November 8th next ⁴⁰ ~~thirty~~ million American citizens will wend their

a man who in 1928 asked to be elected because conditions couldn't be better and in 1932 asks to be reelected because conditions could have been worse.

^{much}

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way to their voting booths and exercise their solemn sovereign right of choosing between the party of Lincoln, who ~~has been dead these sixty-seven years~~, and the party of Thomas Jefferson, who ~~has been dead one hundred and six years~~. When I see American citizens coming out of their election booths, I am reminded of the saying of Uncle Silas, "I judge by the looks of most of the women coming out of the beauty shops that they haven't been waited on."

Fundamentally the platforms of the two parties are identical. There is an air of greater liberalism about the Democratic platform. The party seeking office must naturally offer greater inducements to the voting masses. In one or two proposals such as unemployment and old-age insurance, under state laws, the Democratic platform is commendably progressive, although, even here, there is no definite commitment as to what the Federal government would do to induce the separate states to enact such desirable social legislation. On the subject of tariff there ^{are} ~~is~~ no contrasting principle^s announced, no real joining of issues. The Republican platform, in the midst of a world gone tariff-mad, incited by our own vicious example, still proclaims its time-honored credo "we favor the extension of the general Republican principle of tariff protection." This doctrine is ^{again} ~~is~~ proclaimed ^{are} in spite of the fact that in the last ^{few} ~~two~~ decades we have evolved from a debtor into a creditor nation. Our foreign investments and our international war loans amount today to twenty-eight thousand million dollars. We have been increasingly ^{for} ~~exporting~~ our surplus of capital and commodities. It is clear that these can be paid for only by imports. And yet we have ^{now} ~~elected~~ the highest tariff walls against such payments. Mr. Hoover believes that the Hawley-Smoot tariff has saved the American farmer. A few more of such providential acts ^{of deliriousness} ~~and~~ the American farmer will be beyond salvation.

The Democratic party, in its increasing conservatism, has ^{practically} ~~abandoned~~ its historic position on the tariff. The difference between the two parties is ^{now} ~~not~~ only a matter of ^{schedules and} ~~ratio~~, A large number of Democrats in Congress actually

voted for the Hawley-Smoot tariff. In 1928 the Democratic platform called for a "tariff based on justice to all" whatever that means. And in 1932 it calls for a "competitive tariff for revenue" whatever that means.

But the tariff ^{issue} ~~this year~~ will not down. It is destined to rock our political world tomorrow as it is already shaking political life in Great Britain and in many other countries on the continent. The Democratic party abandoned one of its strongest positions in ^{Europe} ~~Europe~~ ^{abandoning an unequivocal position} ~~Europe~~ on the tariff issue.

Both parties are logically enough disturbed about the mounting cost of government. Our Federal government closed last year with an operating deficit of three thousand million dollars. Under the so-called balanced budget, our government closed the first quarter of 1933, fiscal year, with a deficit of four hundred million dollars. Our public debt today is twenty billion, six hundred million dollars - an increase of three billions over last year. Both parties naturally lament this fact. They both pledge reforms and economies. But neither has the courage to face the real facts of the situation. To be sure, certain salaries may be reduced and some Federal Bureaus may well be abolished or merged, thereby effecting some economies. But the ghastly fact remains that over seventy percent of our ^{federal} budget ^{goes} ~~is~~ for our war machine, past, present and future. Seventy cents of every dollar paid into the Federal treasury are spent upon the upkeep of our military establishment, on war pensions ^{and veterans relief} and on interest charges on our internal war loans. Here is where the huge drain is to be found.

We spend more money on our army and navy today than before the world war. We made the world safe for democracy. We outlawed war. And yet in 1914 we spent one hundred ¹³⁹ thirty nine millions on our navy and one hundred ¹⁷³ seventy three millions on our army while in 1931 we spent three hundred ³⁵⁴ fifty four millions on our navy and four hundred ⁴⁷⁸ seventy eight millions on our army.

We are spending over seven hundred and fifty millions annually on veteran's relief. More than half of the veterans receiving these benefits

never saw service abroad and were ^{not} ~~never~~ disabled in service. Over four hundred thousand men whose disabilities were incurred in civil life are now drawing subsidies from the government in one form or another. Since 1918 we have paid out to world war veterans a sum equal to the combined totals paid out by England, France, Belgium, Germany and Italy to their veterans. These countries had an actual combined war casualty list forty-five times the size of ours.

We spend an additional two hundred and thirty-four millions on war pensions to the war veterans or their beneficiaries of the Spanish-American War, the Civil War, the Indian Wars, the War with Mexico fought eighty-six years ago and even the War of 1812 fought one hundred and twenty years ago.

Both party platforms have nothing to say about this enormous ^{drain which draws off} ~~drain on~~ our federal resources. ^{On the subject of armaments see military establishment} The Republican platform expresses the hope that the Geneva disarmament conference may result in some mutual reduction in armament. But at the same time proclaims to the world that "we do not propose to reduce our navy defenses below that of any other nation." And as for the army why, "it has reached an irreducible minimum." The Democratic platform regrets the fact that in time of peace our people should be burdened by an expenditure fast approaching one billion dollars annually, but it also calls for "an army and navy adequate for national defence." What this means our record of increasing outlay ^{in the past} clearly indicates.

On the subject of veteran's relief - the Republican platform heaps praise upon the party for the generous way in which it has dealt with the veterans and states with implied approval "disability from causes subsequent and not attributable to war, and the support of deceased veterans whose death is unconnected with war, have been to some measure accepted obligations of the nation as a part of the debt due."

The Democratic platform passes over the whole subject of veteran's relief in silence and merely indicates the position which every fair-minded citizen holds: "The fullest measure of justice and generosity for all war veterans who have suffered disability or disease caused by or resulting from actual service in time of war and for their dependents." But what of the four hundred thousand others who do not come within this definition and who are now the *expensive* wards of a tax-burdened and impoverished people. Not a word.

And, of course, nothing is said in the Democratic platform touching the immediate payment of the bonus. Or touching the cowardly act of the Democratic-controlled House in voting for the immediate payment of the bonus at a time when the entire financial structure of our government ^{was} ~~is~~ tottering. Mr. Hoover had the courage to speak and to act. Mr. Roosevelt has been strangely, or perhaps not so strangely, silent about the whole subject. The American people should not allow Mr. Roosevelt to get to election day without extorting from him a clear-cut declaration on this subject.

The basic weakness ^{to be expected} of both parties and their platforms lies in the fact that they seem to be totally unaware that we have entered a radically new order in our national economic life and that a new type of politico-economic leadership is required. But for their planks on emergency relief and a few up-to-date slogans, the platforms of both parties might have been written twenty, thirty, or forty years ago. The underlying and implied premise of both platforms is that nothing ^{has} ~~is~~ really changed in American economic life. ^{unfortunately} We are ~~just~~ in the midst of one of our recurrent depressions ^{but} and we will come out of it as we have come out of all the others. Only a few minor maladjustments exist in our economic set-up which the right party ^{or the right man} in power can easily correct.

But this is a gross understatement of the true conditions as they have come to exist in our national economy. America, along with the rest of the industrialized

countries of the world, has undergone most drastic and revolutionary changes. The system of free, competitive economic individualism under which we lived and which gave color to our politics in the past, has been giving way steadily and at a quickening pace, to a system of concentrated, highly corporate ~~industrial~~ syndicates of vast magnitude. Our people face today the fait accompli of corporate economic action in production, in distribution, in finance and to a lesser degree in agriculture and in labor. The small capitalist and entrepreneur is fighting a losing battle. Rugged individualism is already a ghost of bygone ages. It began to die in the early days of this century. Our anti-trust laws were the desperate and futile efforts ~~which were~~ taken to keep the dying system alive. But it was doomed. The machine doomed it. Technological progress doomed it. Science doomed it. Today the doctrine of rugged individualism whether in industry, finance, or agriculture is actually in the way of ^{our} ~~and an obstacle to~~ economic ^{stabilization} ~~stability~~. Even large scale industrial units which are still on a competitive basis have proved to be obstacles in the way of a stable, secure national economy.

This is said not in criticism of private capitalism or economic individualism. It is not a matter of moral judgment. It is not that the old system has yielded ^{is morally good & that it} no fine human values, some of which ^{at least} a different economic system may destroy. It is simply ^{by science and invention} the case where the logic of an economic process set in motion has brought about a new state of affairs. In every industrialized country in the world monopolization ^{the} tendencies have developed and are developing under the very sign and slogan of economic individualism. ^{and these tendencies call for some form of state control} Capitalism is simply passing over into a new phase. It is life and not doctrine which is calling for a new economic orientation.

Now, this capitalistic syndication which has been developing so rapidly has proceeded with ^{henceforth} practically no political or social control. ^{has been} It ~~was~~ without

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coordination and without a national plan. Its ^{sole} ~~sole~~ impetus ^{has been private} ~~was~~ the profit motive. This has resulted in the creation of a condition of economic insecurity, gross inequality and recurrent panic ~~conditions~~ ^{and political institutions} in our economic life and in the corruption of government, for at the root of all political corruption is our socially uncontrolled big business.

Never was the economic position of our American citizens less secure than it is today. This is true of our middle classes as well as of our laboring classes. The tragedy ^{is} of these depression years ^{have} ~~has~~ not all been confined to the working classes. ^{Hundreds} ~~Tens~~ of thousands of business and professional men have seen the economic foundations of their lives undermined. The old fashioned virtues of thrift, industry and ability ^{are} ~~have~~ ^{my} ~~proved~~ insufficient to insure a man a living or a career. Our people cannot plan today hopefully for their future or for the futures of their children because the factors involved are no longer in their control.

8 In 1928, Mr. Hoover chanted rhapsodically in the following ^{strain} ~~note~~: "The slogan of progress is changing from the full dinner pail to the full garage. Our people have more to eat, better clothes to wear and better homes..... A job to every man and woman has been made more secure. We have in this short period decreased the fear of poverty, the fear of unemployment, the fear of old age....A continuation of the policies of the Republican party is fundamentally necessary to this progress and to the further building up of this prosperity."

Contrast this messianic prophecy with the actual facts.

12 million unemployed and the empty dinner pail. Every where the fear of unemployment, the fear of poverty, the fear of old age

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A man's job is terribly insecure today. Even in ⁱⁿ so-called normal and prosperous years there ^{has always been} ~~is~~ a sharp and constant fluctuation in employment. In the State of Ohio for example, in 1928 the difference between the month of maximum employment and the month of minimum employment was over fifteen percent. In other words, at the low point of that year there were one hundred and thirty-two thousand fewer men employed than in the month of maximum employment.

The American Federation of Labor in 1929 made a survey of its unemployed members and found that nine percent of them were idle during the very height of the season of their respective industries. One fourth of our bituminous coal mines operated at full time could produce all the coal which is now being produced. Clearly the miners in these coal fields cannot have regular employment.

But it is in panic years that the real tragedy of unemployment occurs.

Ours is not the first instance of mass unemployment within the memory of living ^Qman. It is a constantly recurring phenomenon^{6A}. Periodically our system disgorges its victims. Periodically it pries millions of men loose from their means of livelihood and sends them broken and helpless to the doors of charity. Our highly developed industrial civilization has failed to give to its working men even that security of servitude which Feudalism once gave to its serfs. So that a new terror has now come into the world. Every generation has its own overshadowing dread - pestilence, famine, invasion, the devil, or the end of the world. Into the scientific twentieth century has come the dread terror of unemployment which hangs like a pall over the lives and the homes of our people.

Fundamentally this is due to one large factor; the surplus of production brought about through industrial and agricultural expansion made possible by improved technology, which surplus ^{is not being} ~~cannot be~~ absorbed on account of the insufficiency of the buying power of the people.

The term, surplus, of course, is only a relative term. There was never a time in our history when every American home was provided for and when every one was properly housed, fed and clothed. There is an ^{unconsumed} ~~unconsumed~~ surplus because ^{our people} ~~we~~ have not the wherewithal to buy; because the wealth of our land has not been fairly and wisely distributed among all ^{the} ~~of our~~ people through increased wages and proper allocation of the tax responsibilities. It is because of this that our people stand ^{today} ~~helpless~~ before treasure-troves of food stuffs and commodities ^{and} ~~which they~~ are unable to have ^{these} ~~for~~ their use.

Within the last thirty years production in this country has increased ^{ten times} ~~as rapidly as the payroll~~ ^{the payroll} ~~thirty-three percent while the payroll has increased only three percent.~~ ^{the} ~~The~~ ^{in working people} ~~The~~ wealth of our nation has steadily run into the hands of the few. One percent of our people own sixty percent of our wealth.

The machine has been blamed for much of our misfortune. Some naive and easily frightened economic romanticists have actually called for a moratorium on inventions and for the scrapping of machines. The machine is not to be blamed for our misfortune. It is the unintelligent and anti-social exploitation of the machine which is responsible for the sorry pass in which we find ourselves. The machine has lifted the curse of drudgery from the shoulders of the workers of the earth. It will in the future release more and more of man's time and energies for the real joyous adventure of living. We have until now stupidly misused the gifts of the machine, permitting the few to monopolize the wealth which it produced, and the leisure and the security. There was never any social control of the machine. The profit motive alone drove it at top speed. With the result that no proper adjustment has yet been made between the productivity of the machine and ^{the hours of} ~~human~~ labor, between the wealth which it produced and labor's share of such wealth, ^{we have as yet been unable} ~~no~~ provision for those workers whom the machine displaced, or for the distribution of all available work among all available workers, or for the transfer of surplus labor from one industry to another, or for a full measure of insurance against unemployment and old age.

We fondly assumed that things would right themselves automatically. We knew, for example, that machinery has, in the eight years between 1924 and 1931, displaced two million, three hundred thousand men. We ²know that with the aid of the machine a man in 1925 was producing on the average what 3.1 men produced in 1914. We ²know that agricultural output in the United States since 1910 increased twenty-eight percent while the labor force actually decreased six percent. Everywhere the development of machinery was displacing human labor and contracting the purchasing power of our people. But we assumed that all these displaced workers would be reabsorbed by new industries. This has not been the case.

New industries, themselves highly mechanized and ^{quickly} ~~readily~~ adopting ^{new} labor displacing devices, have ^{not} ~~never~~ been able to absorb all the technologically unemployed.

And so America faces today ^{the} ~~a~~ problem ^{of chronic} of unemployment for which relief is no solution. ^{The} ~~Such~~ a situation calls for a radical reorganization of our economic life with a view of controlling our economic processes, of coordinating and rationalizing them and of increasing the consumptive power of our people through a redistribution of the profits of industry.

This is our real problem today. Yet both parties and both platforms are dead silent on this entire subject.) The Democratic platform seems to be so totally unaware of what is going on in the world that in this year of 1932 it actually calls for "the strict and impartial enforcement of the anti-trust laws to prevent monopoly and unfair trade practices" and better laws to protect small business and industry.

Both parties by implication still believe that government should not interfere in business except ^{if necessary} when business goes bankrupt. Business wants no government control or interference, but it is not above digging into the public till to save itself with taxpayer's monies whenever its uncontrolled practices bring on their inevitable and implacable disasters. Even the masses of our people have been indoctrinated with the idea that government ought to have little or nothing to do with business. ^{Now the less} Nevertheless, the masses are quick to blame their government for economic ^{the} ~~crises~~ ^{misfortune} and to vent their resentment, not upon those who really control their economic ^{destiny} ~~life~~, but upon the President of the United States or some other political person or institution who were never vested with the power effectively to direct ^{the} ~~the~~ life of our nation.

There still persists the myth of efficient ^{honest} American business versus inefficient ^{corrupt} American government. But ^{surely} ~~I have to say that~~ no government in the world ~~could~~ could survive for a day if it were found guilty of as much stupidity,

dishonesty, greed and betrayal as investigations have shown American big business, corporations, and bankers to have been guilty of *in recent years*.

Our conditions clearly call for more rather than less political action in the economic field, ~~but~~ ^{however} both major political parties still cling to ~~the~~ ^{their} old doctrines and ~~the~~ ^{their} old catch phrases.

It is to the credit of the Socialist party that it faces frankly
The Socialist party of ~~course~~ ^{frankly} faces the issues of the new day and offers a program. It is miles ahead of both Republican and Democratic parties in its grasp of economic realities and in its scientific ~~and pragmatic~~ approach to them. It refuses to ~~subordinate~~ ^{subordinate} the issue of bread to beer and to satisfy itself with the palliative of relief proposals or the patchwork of emergency measures. Boldly it faces the new age in which a new set of economic facts and problems have arisen for which ^{it believes} the technique of private capitalism is not *longer* adequate. It ~~knows~~ ^{maintains} that economic stability can come about only through some form of socialization. It advocates the socialization of industry ^{and banking} and the public ownership and exploitation of all of our national resources.

It is, of course, a minority party. And in the United States at least, *It is not likely to sweep the country.* the Socialist party has yet had very little experience in government. But like so many other minority parties in the past political history of America, the Socialist party has planks in its platform which will subsequently and in piecemeal fashion be taken over by one or the other or both of the major parties.

Minority parties first initiated the movement for
~~This was the case with the~~ Inheritance and Income Taxes, Women's Suffrage, popular elections of United States senators and legislation against the use of injunctions. ~~Capitalism will attempt to do some of the things which Socialism advocates.~~

Whether capitalism can plan a national economy for the benefit of the

whole people remains to be seen. Clearly it will have its chance in this country before any outright socialist planning will be resorted to.

The strength which the Socialist party will muster in the forthcoming election, if it ~~will prove to be~~ *impressive* enough, will undoubtedly propell American political thought forward. *undoubtedly* It is the party which is today pointing the way.

The hope of establishing a Liberal party in the United States as distinguished from the conservative major parties on the one hand and the Socialist party on the other, is, *I am sure to believe shadows* ~~I am afraid~~, a rather ~~weak~~ hope. The fate of liberal parties throughout the world today is a very sorry one. They are being ground into powder between the upper millstone of radicalism and the lower millstone of reaction. The trouble with the American liberal is that he cannot make up his mind. He believes and does not believe in the soundness of the capitalistic system. He wants socialization without Socialism. The label of Socialism is *still* a bit ~~too~~ odious. He is not capable of doing the spade-work of political organization. The meetings of the League for Independent Political Action which met here in Cleveland recently reminded me of the German couplet:

Drei hunderd fünfzig professoren!
O, Vaterland! Du bist verloren!

The American liberal may well find his way into the fold of the Socialist party. For in spite of the ultimate Marxist theses to which the party lends theoretic allegiance, it has been, throughout the world, a party of evolution rather than revolution, and has ~~been satisfied~~ *contented itself* with a slow approximation to *its* ~~those~~ ultimate objectives through the ~~patient~~ *continuous* processes of trial and error.

*It is clear to my mind that the year 1919 has marked a turning point in American political history. A new ~~radicalism~~ *radicalism* will emerge which will ~~proceed~~ *grapple with* the refuse to worship at ancient shrines. It will demand a secure and orderly economic world in which to live, and will call upon government to establish it—*

1. "We favor the extension of the general Republican principle of tariff protection."
2. "Tariff based on justice to all" ^(what does that mean) "Competitive tariff for revenue" ^(what does that mean)
3. "We do not propose to reduce our navy defenses below that of any other nation."
4. "It has reached an irreducible minimum." ^{And as for the army, why -}
5. "An army and navy adequate for national defense." ^{The Dem. platform requires part-peace-time - but it also calls} ^{and what does that mean - understand}
6. "Disability from causes subsequent and not attributable to war, and the support of deceased veterans whose death is unconnected with war, have been to some measure accepted obligations of the nation as a part of the debt due." ^{The Dem. platform passes over silence - truly -}
7. "The fullest measure of justice and generosity for all war veterans who have suffered disability or disease caused by or resulting from actual service in time of war and for their dependents." ^{But what of 400,000 - warrels}
8. "The slogan of progress is is changing from the full dinner pail to the full garage. Our people have more to eat, better clothes to wear and better homes.... A job to every man and woman has been made more secure. We have in this short period decreased the fear of poverty, the fear of unemployment, the fear of old age.....A continuation of the policies of the Republican party is fundamentally necessary to this progress and to the further building up of this prosperity."
9. "The strict and impartial enforcement of the anti-trust laws to prevent monopoly and unfair trade practices" ^{and better laws to protect small business and industry}

- 1) I must state at the outset - I know next to nothing (Priest) - My acquaintance
- 2) As regards the issues of 1932 - total loss -
In 1928 - Considerable excitement -
(Fosdick)
- 3) On all other matters - Each agrees - Each points
Both want to relieve - Present estimable -
Background -
- 4) And so on Nov. 8 - 40 m. - Whenever I see - (Under Silas)
- 5) Fundamentally the platforms - air of greater
in one or two proposals
- 6) On the subject of the Tariff - no contrasting
The Rep. party in midst - Read
this doctrine is proclaimed in spite - Our foreign
investments = 28 b. - Increasingly exporting
Mr. Hoover ^{casual} Hawley - Smoot T. -
The Dem. party - in its increasing course - abandoned
schedules - many dem. actually voted -
In 1928
But the Tariff issue will not down - will rock
The Dem. Party abandoned one of its - unequivocal.

7/ Both parties are, logically enough, disturbed - mounting
cost of govt.

Our fed. govt. closed last year

Under so-called balanced

Our public debt 20.600..... - an increase of 3

Both parties lament - pledge -

Neither has courage to face

To be sure, certain salaries

But the ghastly fact - over 70% - war machine

Seventy cents - Here is where - huge drain

8/ We spend more money - Army - Navy to-day - War.

We made world safe for - Outlawed War -

	<u>Army</u>	<u>Navy</u>
1914 =	173	139
1931 =	478	354

9/ We are spending over 750 m. annually - Veterans relief

More than 1/2 of the Veterans never

Over 400,000 whose disabilities incurred - Civil

→ Since 1918 we have paid out - a sum equal
45 times

10/ We spend an additional 234 m. on war pensions

S p. Am. War -

11/ Yet neither party - bungle -

On the subject of our military Est. - Rep. platform

expresses hope - Geneva -

But at same time it declares (read)

The Dem. platform regrets the fact - peace - time
but it also calls - (read)

→ On the subject of Vietnam Relief

Rep. platforms heaps praises - and states (read)

Dem platform - passes over - silence - indicate (read)

12) And, of course, nothing is said in Dem. platform - (Horus)
→ cowardly act -

Mr. Hoover had the courage -

Mr. Roosevelt - strangely - Am. people should not

13) The Basic weakness of both - unaware -

But for their planks - 20-30-40

→ The underlying + implied premise - Unfortunatly
Only a few minor

14) But this is a gross understatement

America, along with the rest -

the system of free, competitive

and people face - fait accompli

→ the small capitalist - fighting -

Rugged individualism - ghost - began to die -
doomed -

→ To-day doctrine of rugged - obstacle -
Even large scale

- 15) This is said not in criticism of private (4)
It is not a matter of moral judgment - It is not
- logic -
→ In every industrialized - monopolistic - Soc. self-defence
It is life and not doctrine
- 16) Now this cap. syndication has been done - no pol.
It has been without - national plan -
Impetus -
This has resulted in the creation - Econ. insecurity
- 17) Never was the econ. position of Am. citizen less secure
→ Middle class - Tragedies - Hundreds of thousands
→ The old-fashioned - plan futures -
- 18) In 1928, Mr. Hoover charted rhapsodically (read)
contrast this - 12 m. - unity - fear -
- 19) A man's job is terribly insecure to-day
→ Even in so-called normal - fluctuations
→ In State of Ohio, in 1928 - diff. bet month
→ The Am. Fed. Labor - in 1929 - census
→ One fourth of our bituminous Coal mines -
- 20) But it is in panic years - real tragedy.
Ours is not just - mass Un
Constantly recurrent - Periodically

Our highly devel. indust. Civilization failed - Feudalism⁽⁵⁾
So that a new term - Every generation -

21/ Fundamentally this is due to 1 large factor - the Surplus
of production brought about

22/ The term "Surplus" - relative - There was never a time
there is an unconsumed surplus -
It is because, this - stand

23/ Within last 30 years - production increased 10 fold
The wealth - steadily ran - 1% owns 60%

24/ The Machine has been blamed - Naive
lifted - will release - Stupidly
no social control - profit motive drove it
with the result no proper adjustment

25/ We fondly assumed - right themselves - automatic.

→ We knew - 8 years - 2,300,000
" " A man in 1925 - 3.1 men
" " Agriculture - 1910 - 28%

Everywhere machinery - displacing men
but we assumed - absorb - not the case -
new industries, themselves

26). And so America faces to-day problem "Chronic Un⁶"
for which Relief - Situation calls

27). This is our real problem. - Yet both parties
→ The Wom. platform seems to be so totally unaware
Read

28) Both parties by implication still believe - Gov't
should not interfere - business - bankrupt
Business wants no Gov't meddling - digging in
Even the Masses - indoctrinated - quick to blow
vent -

29). There still persists myth - efficiency, honesty
But, I maintain, no Gov't - survive 4 day -
→ No Gov't. in business !? Why we have gone
more in direction of Gov't in B. in 6 months
- than to stay! Stupid!

30). Our conditions clearly call for more Gov't.
yet both major pol. parties still cling

31). It is to the credit of Socialist Party -
Miles ahead - Refuses to subordinate broad
gating - palpatives; Boldly
It maintains that econ. stability - Advocate

32/ It is, of course, a minority party - U.S., at least, ⁽⁷⁾
not negligible - plants - like other minority

33/ Whether caps. can plan -

34/ The strength which - must -
points the way -

35/ The hope of est. "Liberal Party" -

fake - ground -

The trouble with Am. liberal - He believes and

the mischief, the "League for Fed. Pol. Action" (conspir.)

→ The Am. liberal may well find his way
for in spite, the ultimate Marxist thesis -

36/ This is clear to my mind that the panic of '99
was wanted

A new pol. radicalism - shrines -
demand a secure -

It will face the fact that an old civ. legal

we must build a new civilization - spies

The essence
The criteria
Measured

{ we must build -
we must way war Chaos
The Creator -
This is, in no sense.

Amos Ty 32-7

I must state at the outset that the subject "A Rabbi Reviews Politics" was wished on me. The title sounds as if the Rabbi were trying to compete with Peter Witt and no one in his right sense would try to do that. I know next to nothing about politics (Story of the Priest). My acquaintance with politics, like the priest's acquaintance with marriage - a matter largely of observation and neutrality.

As regards the issues of the forthcoming campaign, I am at a total loss. In 1928 I understood there was one vital issue - that between radio and radio. Today even that difference has disappeared. There has been considerable excitement, of course, over the Prohibition question. One major party wants liquor back with interpretations and the other major party is afraid that the spoon of interpretation is the enemy of the highball. This is, of course, a grave matter. But as far as I am concerned, I feel very much like that man who, very much the worse for drink, rang Dr. Fosdick's doorbell in New York city one midnight (story).

On all other matters there seems to be pretty much of an agreement between the two parties. Each agrees, and with a substantial degree of justification, that the other is rotten to the core. Each points with pride and views with alarm. Both want to relieve the farmer, relieve the unemployed, relieve the railroads and relieve the bankers. This is a great year for relief. They also want to relieve each other of office. Both parties present estimable gentlemen as candidates for the presidency. In the one instance it is a man who in three short years of panic succeeded in saving the world from total ruin. The other, a political explorer who shortly before convention time discovered the forgotten man. Somewhere in the dim background of both parties are vice-presidential candidates who shall here remain nameless.

And so on November 8th next ⁴⁰ ~~about~~ million American citizens will wend their

way to their voting booths and exercise their solemn sovereign rights of choosing between the party of Lincoln, who has been dead these sixty-seven years, and the party of Thomas Jefferson, who has been dead one hundred and six years. When I see American citizens coming out of their election booths, I am reminded of the saying of Uncle Silas, "I judge by the looks of most of the women coming out of the beauty shops that they haven't been waited on."

Fundamentally the platforms of the two parties are identical. There is an air of greater liberalism about the Democratic platform. The party seeking office must naturally offer greater inducements to the voting masses. In one or two proposals such as unemployment and old-age insurance, under state laws, the Democratic platform is commendably progressive, although, even here, there is no definite commitment as to what the Federal government would do to induce the separate states to enact such desirable social legislation. On the subject of tariff there is no contrasting principle announced, no real joining of issues. The Republican platform, in the midst of a world gone tariff-mad, incited by our own vicious example, still proclaims its time-honored credo "we favor the extension of the general Republican principle of tariff protection." This doctrine is again proclaimed in spite of the fact that in the last two decades we have evolved from a debtor into a creditor nation. Our foreign investments and our international war loans amount today to twenty-eight thousand million dollars. We have been increasingly expecting our surplus of capital and commodities. It is clear that these can be paid for only by imports. And yet we have elected the highest tariff walls against such payments. Mr. Hoover believes that the Hawley-Smoot tariff has saved the American farmer. A few more of such providential acts and the American farmer will be beyond salvation.

The Democratic party in its increasing conservatism, has abandoned its historic position on the tariff. The difference between the two parties is not only a matter of ratio. A large number of Democrats in Congress actually

voted for the Hawley-Smoot tariff. In 1928 the Democratic platform called for a "tariff based on justice to all" whatever that means. And in 1932 it calls for a "competitive tariff for revenue" whatever that means.

But the tariff this year will not down. It is destined to rock our political world tomorrow as it is already shaking political life in Great Britain and in many other countries on the continent. The Democratic party abandoned one of its strongest positions in pussyfooting on the tariff issue.

Both parties are logically enough disturbed about the mounting cost of government. Our Federal government closed last year with an operating deficit of three thousand million dollars. Under the so-called balanced budget, our government closed the first quarter of 1933, fiscal year, with a deficit of four hundred million dollars. Our public debt today is twenty billion, six hundred million dollars - an increase of three billions over last year. Both parties naturally lament this fact. They both pledge reforms and economies. But neither has the courage to face the real facts of the situation. To be sure, certain salaries may be reduced and some Federal Bureaus may well be abolished or merged, thereby effecting some economies. But the ghastly fact remains that over seventy percent of our budget is for our war machine, past, present and future. Seventy cents of every dollar paid into the Federal treasury are spent upon the upkeep of our military establishment, on war pensions and on interest charges on our internal war loans. Here is where the huge drain is to be found.

We spend more money on our army and navy today than before the world war. We made the world safe for democracy. We outlawed war. And yet in 1914 we spent one hundred thirty nine millions on our navy and one hundred seventy three millions on our army while in 1931 we spent three hundred fifty four millions on our navy and four hundred seventy eight millions on our army.

We are spending over seven hundred and fifty millions annually on veteran's relief. More than half of the veterans receiving these benefits

never saw service abroad and were never disabled in service. Over four hundred thousand men whose disabilities were incurred in civil life are now drawing subsidies from the government in one form or another. Since 1918 we have paid out to world war veterans a sum equal to the combined totals paid out by England, France, Belgium, Germany and Italy to their veterans. These countries had an actual combined war casualty list forty-five times the size of ours.

We spend an additional two hundred and thirty-four millions on war pensions to the war veterans or their beneficiaries of the Spanish-American War, the Civil War, the Indian Wars, the War with Mexico fought eighty-six years ago and even the War of 1812 fought one hundred and twenty years ago.

Both party platforms have nothing to say about this enormous drain on our federal resources. The Republican platform expresses the hope that the Geneva disarmament conference may result in some mutual reduction in armament. But at the same time proclaims to the world that "we do not propose to reduce our navy defenses below that of any other nation." And as for the army why, "it has reached an irreducible minimum. The Democratic platform regrets the fact that in time of peace our people should be burdened by an expenditure fast approaching one billion dollars annually, but it also calls for "an army and navy adequate for national defence." What this means our record of increasing outlay clearly indicates.

On the subject of veteran's relief - the Republican platform heaps praise upon the party for the generous way in which it has dealt with the veterans and states with implied approval "disability from causes subsequent and not attributable to war and the support of deceased veterans whose death is unconnected with have been to some measure accepted obligations of the nation as a part of the debt due."

The Democratic platform passes over the whole subject of veteran's relief in silence and merely indicates the position which every fair-minded citizen holds:

✓ "The fullest measure of justice and generosity for all war veterans who have suffered disability or disease caused by or resulting from actual service in time of war and for their dependents." But what of the four hundred thousand others who do not come within this definition and who are now the wards of a tax-burdened and impoverished people. Not a word.

And, of course, nothing is said in the Democratic platform touching the immediate payment of the bonus. Or touching the cowardly act of the Democratic-controlled House in voting for the immediate payment of the bonus at a time when the entire financial structure of our government is tottering. Mr. Hoover had the courage to speak and to act. Mr. Roosevelt has been strangely, or perhaps not so strangely, silent about the whole subject. The American people should not allow Mr. Roosevelt to get to election day without extorting from him a clear-cut declaration on this subject.

The basic weakness of both parties and their platforms lies in the fact that they seem to be totally unaware that we have entered a radically new order in our national economic life and that a new type of politico-economic leadership, is required. But for their planks on emergency relief and a few up-to-date slogans, the platforms of both parties might have been written twenty, thirty, or forty years ago. The underlying and implied premise of both platforms is that nothing is really changed in American economic life. We are just in the midst of one of our recurrent depressions and we will come out of it as we have come out of all the others. Only a few minor maladjustments exist in our economic set-up which the right party in power can easily correct.

But this is a gross understatement of the true conditions as they have come to exist in our national economy. America, along with the rest of the industrialized

countries of the world, has undergone most drastic and revolutionary changes. The system of free, competitive economic individualism under which we lived and which gave color to our politics in the past, has been giving way steadily and at a quickening pace. to a system of concentrated, highly corporate industrial syndicates of vast magnitude. Our people face today the fait accompli of corporate economic action in production, in distribution, in finance and to a lesser degree in agriculture and in labor. The small capitalist and entrepreneur is fighting a losing battle. Rugged individualism is already a ghost of bygone ages. It began to die in the early days of this century. Our anti-trust laws were the desperate and futile efforts which were taken to keep the dying system alive. But it was doomed. The machine doomed it. Technological progress doomed it. Science doomed it. Today the doctrine of rugged individualism whether in industry, finance, or agriculture is actually in the way of and an obstacle to economic stability. Even large scale industrial units which are still on a competitive basis have proved to be obstacles in the way of a stable, secure national economy.

This is said not in criticism of private capitalism or economic individualism. It is not a matter of moral judgment. It is not that the old system has yielded no fine human values some of which a different economic system may destroy. It is simply the case where the logic of an economic process set in motion has brought about a new state of affairs. In every industrialized country in the world monopolization tendencies have developed and are developing under the very sign and slogan of economic individualism. Capitalism is simply passing over into a new phase. It is life and not doctrine which is calling for a new economic orientation.

Now this capitalistic syndication which has been developing so rapidly has proceeded with practically no political or social control. It was without

coordination and without a national plan. Its soul impetus was the profit motive. This has resulted in the creation of a condition of economic insecurity, gross inequality and recurrent panic conditions in our economic life and in corruption of government, for at the root of all political corruption is our socially uncontrolled big business.

Never was the economic position of our American citizens less secure than it is today. This is true of our middle classes as well as of our laboring classes. The tragedy of these depression years has not all been confined to the working classes. Tens of thousands of business and professional men have seen the economic foundations of their lives undermined. The old fashioned virtues of thrift, industry and ability have proved insufficient to insure a man a living or a career. Our people cannot plan today hopefully for their future or for the futures of their children because the factors involved are no longer in their control.

A man's job is terribly insecure today. Even in so-called normal and prosperous years there is a sharp and constant fluctuation in employment. In the State of Ohio for example, in 1928 the difference between the month of maximum employment and the month of minimum employment was over fifteen percent. In other words, at the low point of that year there were one hundred and thirty-two thousand fewer men employed than in the month of maximum employment.

The American Federation of Labor in 1929 made a survey of its unemployed members and found that nine percent of them were idle during the very height of the season of their respective industries. One fourth of our bituminous coal mines operated at full time could produce all the coal which is now being produced. Clearly the miners in these coal fields cannot have regular employment.

But it is in panic years that the real tragedy of unemployment occurs.

Ours is not the first instance of mass unemployment within the memory of living man. It is a constantly recurring phenomena. Periodically our system disgorges its victims. Periodically it pries millions of men loose from their means of livelihood and sends them broken and helpless to the doors of charity. Our highly developed industrial civilization has failed to give to its working men even that security of servitude which Feudalism once gave to its serfs. So that a new terror has now come into the world. Every generation has its own overshadowing dread - pestilence, famine, invasion, the devil, or the end of the world. Into the scientific twentieth century has come the dread terror of unemployment which hangs like a pall over the lives and the homes of our people.

Fundamentally this is due to one large factor; the surplus of production brought about through industrial and agricultural expansion made possible by improved technology which surplus cannot be absorbed on account of the insufficiency of the buying power of the people.

The term, surplus, of course, is only a relative term. There was never a time in our history when every American home was provided for and when every one was properly housed, fed and clothed. There is an unconstant surplus because we have not the wherewithal to buy because the wealth of our land has not been fairly and wisely distributed among all of our people through increased wages and proper allocation of the tax responsibilities. It is because of this that our people stand helpless before treasure-troves of food stuffs and commodities which they are unable to have for their use.

Within the last thirty years production in this country has increased thirty-three percent while the payroll has increased only three percent. The wealth of our nation has steadily run into the hands of the few. One percent of our people own sixty percent of our wealth.

The machine has been blamed for much of our misfortune. Some naive and easily frightened economic romanticists have actually called for a moratorium on inventions and for the scrapping of machines. The machine is not to be blamed for our misfortune. It is the unintelligent and anti-social exploitation of the machine which is responsible for the sorry pass in which we find ourselves. The machine has lifted the curse of drudgery from the shoulders of the workers of the earth. It will in the future release more and more of man's time and energies for the real joyous adventure of living. We have until now stupidly misused the gifts of the machine, permitting the few to monopolize the wealth which it produced, and the leisure and the security. There was never any social control of the machine. The profit motive alone drove it at top speed. With the result that no proper adjustment has yet been made between the productivity of the machine and human labor, between the wealth which it produced and labor's share of such wealth, no provision for those workers whom the machine displaced, or for the distribution of all available work among all available workers, or for the transfer of surplus labor from one industry to another, or for a full measure of insurance against unemployment and old age.

We fondly assumed that things would right themselves automatically. We knew, for example, that machinery has, in the eight years between 1924 and 1931, displaced two million, three hundred thousand men. We know that with the aid of the machine a man in 1925 was producing on the average what 3.1 men produced in 1914. We know that agricultural output in the United States since 1910 increased twenty-eight percent while the labor force actually decreased six percent. Everywhere the development of machinery was displacing human labor and contracting the purchasing power of our people. But we assumed that all these displaced workers would be reabsorbed by new industries. This has not been the case.

New industries themselves highly mechanized and readily adopting labor displacing devices have never been able to absorb all the technologically unemployed.

And so America faces today a problem of unemployment for which relief is no solution. Such a situation calls for a radical reorganization of our economic life with a view of controlling our economic processes, of coordinating and rationalizing them and of increasing the consumptive power of our people through a redistribution of the profits of industry.

This is our real problem today. Yet both parties and both platforms are dead silent on this entire subject. The Democratic platform seems to be so totally unaware of what is going on in the world that in this year of 1932 it actually calls for "the strict and impartial enforcement of the anti-trust laws to prevent monopoly and unfair trade practices" and better laws to protect small business and industry.

Both parties by implication still believe that government should not interfere in business except when business goes bankrupt. Business wants no government control or interference, but it is not above digging into the public till to save itself with taxpayer's monies whenever its uncontrolled practices bring on their inevitable and implacable disasters. Even the masses of our people have been indoctrinated with the idea that government ought to have little or nothing to do with business. Nevertheless, the masses are quick to blame their government for economic panics and to vend their resentment, not upon those who really control their economic life, but upon the President of the United States or some other political person or institution who were never vested with the power effectively to direct the life of our nation.

There still persists the myth of efficient American business versus inefficient American government. But I have to say that no government in the world could survive for a day if it were found guilty of as much stupidity,

dishonesty, greed and betrayal as investigations have shown American big business, corporations, and bankers to have been guilty of.

Our conditions clearly call for more rather than less political action in the economic field but both major political parties still cling to the old doctrines and the old catch phrases.

The Socialist party of course frankly faces the issues of the new day and offers a program. It is miles ahead of both Republican and Democratic parties in its grasp of economic realities and in its scientific and pragmatic approach to them. It refuses to sublimate the issue of bread to beer and to satisfy itself with the palliative of relief proposals or the patchwork of emergency measures. Boldly it faces the new age in which a new set of economic facts and problems have arisen for which the technique of private capitalism is not adequate. It knows that economic stability can come about only through some form of socialization. It advocates the socialization of industry and the public ownership and exploitation of all of our national resources.

It is, of course, a minority party. And in the United States at least, the Socialist party has yet had very little experience in government. But like so many other minority parties in the past political history of America, the Socialist party has planks in its platform which will subsequently and in piecemeal fashion be taken over by one or the other or both of the major parties. This was the case with the Inheritance and Income Taxes, Women's Suffrage, popular elections of United States senators and legislation against the use of injunctions.

Whether capitalism can plan a national economy for the benefit of the

whole people remains to be seen. Clearly it will have its chance in this country before any outright socialist planning will be resorted to.

The strength which the Socialist party will muster in the forthcoming election if it will prove to be enough will undoubtedly propell American political thought forward. It is the party which is today pointing the way.

The hope of establishing a Liberal party in the United States as distinguished from the conservative major parties on the one hand and the Socialist party on the other, is, I am afraid, a rather vain hope. The fate of liberal parties throughout the world today is a very sorry one. They are being ground into powder between the upper millstone of radicalism and the lower millstone of reaction. The trouble with the American liberal is that he cannot make up his mind. He believes and does not believe in the soundness of the capitalistic system. He wants socialization without Socialism. The label of Socialism is a bit too odious. He is not capable of doing the spade-work of political organization. The meetings of the League for Independent Political Action which met here in Cleveland recently reminded me of the German couplet:

Drei hunderd funfzig professoren!
O, Vaterland! Du bist verloren!

The American liberal may well find his way into the fold of the Socialist party. For in spite of the ultimate Marxist thesis to which the party lends theoretic allegiance, it has been throughout the world a party of evolution rather than revolution and has been satisfied with a slow approximation to those ultimate objectives through the patient processes of trial and error.

In 1928, Mr. Hoover chanted rhapsodically in the following vein: "The slogan of progress is changing from the full dinner pail to the full garage. Our people have more to eat, better clothes to wear and better homes..... A job to every man and woman has been made more secure. We have in this short period decreased the fear of poverty, the fear of unemployment, the fear of old age....A continuation of the policies of the Republican party is fundamentally necessary to this progress and to the further building up of this prosperity."

Contrast this messianic prophecy with the actual facts.

