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Taking Stock of 1964, 1964.

TAKING STOCK OF 1964

December 27, 1964

#135

Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver

A year ago this month President Johnson described 1963 as the most prosperous year in our history. If so, 1963's record was short-lived. The year just past added an extra layer of frosting to the cake. The Gross National Product, the key index of our economic well-being moved up during the year at a comfortable rate of some 4%, its steepest rate of climb in the past dozen years. At the year's end all the major indicators of the stock market were at, or near, all time highs; indicating not only record corporate profits, but that the financial community was confident that our good fortune would last well into 1965. Now, prosperity is always welcome - but it became increasingly clear during the year that our good fortune, though widespread, was not universal. A million American families, one in every five, supported themselves on an income of less than \$3,000 a year. Our economic growth created 1,500,000 new jobs during 1964, still 4,000,000 Americans were unemployed - 5% of our total labor force. There was a comfortable America enjoying all the decencies, and there was a disadvantaged America; grey tenements, cold water flats, endemic unemployment, children who average three square meals a week; children who receive no more than the equivalent of a third-grade education.

Jesus is reported to have said that the poor shall always be among you. Based on the rather crude economy of the Roman world his bleak observation was fairly accurate. It is no longer so. We have idle plants. We have vast reserves of foodstuffs. There are jobs aplenty. There are jobs for the skilled; but the school drop-out is not qualified to be a school teacher or draftsman or nurse, and, it is becoming clear that a subsistence allowance is not a sufficient campaign against poverty. Poverty means not only inadequate housing and inadequate nutrition, but the blunting of personality, a denial of all the

amenities, stagnation, a destruction of motivation. If we wish to confront the problem of poverty in the midst of abundance, we must attack directly the social blight and the cultural disadvantage which it breeds. Our schools must, in many cases, take the place of parents, if only to provide the light and heat in which a child may study. The community must provide job re-training for the manual laborer who has been displaced by automation, and, in many cases, provide basic courses in literacy and reading skills. There must be vocational guidance and counseling advice as to available medical and psychiatric services. The families of the other America must have broader horizons. Children and adults must be introduced to the world of learning and the world of books; to such a simple thing as adequate speech, so that they can make their thoughts and their requests for employment understood. We must broaden their horizons. They must be helped into the American dream.

During 1963, the Congress began to recognize this need. Late in the summer the Economic Opportunities Act, the so-called War on Poverty Bill, was passed. But it is not yet a war on poverty - perhaps it is best described as a skirmish with poverty. Neither Congress nor the Administration has made it clear that it is willing to invest the huge sums of money and the adequate manpower, to accomplish the task. If this job is to be done, our entire tax structure will have to be re-oriented. New professional skills will have to be devised and men and women trained at great cost. The constant complaints of the thin-lipped and the selfish, those who have none of the simple milk of human kindness, will have to be met and put down. But there is a job to be done and we can only hope and pray that the war on poverty is something more than a piece of campaign sloganry; that it is, indeed, a priority of the present administration.

If we are somewhat unclear as to the urgencies of the 'Great Society,' this is true of most of the Administration's policies. Rarely has an administration

taken office with the public so uncertain as to its basic point of view. This is largely due to the nature of the past election. Senator Goldwater may have voiced many of the hesitations and the frustrations, many of the prejudices and much of the belligerency of some Americans. He failed, utterly, to suggest alternative choices. There was no debate. The election campaign lacked a focus. The President was able to slip through on the issue of prosperity. No one wanted to rock the boat and claim for himself the mantle of President Kennedy's philosophy. This was unfortunate. A democracy requires this quadrennial exercise in self-awareness, a regular updating of its thinking. However successful, an Administration must be challenged to justify its policies and to make clear its program. This justification simply did not take place.

The election campaign of 1964 had one other unfortunate effect. It seriously weakened our two-party system of government. The Republicans chose to run a man who was a minority choice within their own party and the election carnage is well known. Today, the Republican party controls less than one seat in four in the Congress, and only 17 of 50 governor's chairs. They lost control of two-thirds of the state legislatures - in many of which they had been safely entrenched. With the Federal Courts enforcing state-wide re-apportionment their losses will be still greater. Now a nation requires a loyal opposition. The minority party must raise a serious debate to the basic assumptions of the Executive. Only in this way can a consensus be evolved - only in this way are the issues met so that we the people can listen to the problems and make up our collective minds.

Unfortunately, there is little indication that the Republican party has learned the lesson of its lack of citizenship. After the election, there was much talk of an agonizing re-appraisal; but, as far as I have been able to see, this agonizing re-appraisal has deteriorated into a hunt for the scalp of the chairman of the Republican National Committee. The Republican Party unfortunately, seems

to include a heavy percentage of heavy contributors who would rather be doctrinally consistent than politically effective. I am afraid that the Grand Old Party is suffering from an aggravated case of hardening of the arteries and unless there is a serious injection of youth and of vigor and of a new seriousness and a new sense of national purpose, I would not be at all surprised if in the next four years or in the next decade, at least, a new second party would emerge on the American scene. Democracy requires it. The people will see to it. If the minority party as it is now constituted continues to default on its responsibilities, a new opposition will be created.

The campaign of 1964 introduced a new term into our vocabulary - back-lash. Back-lash was a creation of the pollsters, and, by the way, a linguistic monstrosity. It is a euphemism coined to describe the prejudiced white man who is prepared to go against any political party which seems to give opportunity to the Negro. Back-lash became popular when Governor Wallace of Alabama campaigned in Wisconsin, Indiana and Maryland and, lacking every important credential for a Presidential candidate except his racial demagoguery, received a sizeable vote. Fortunately, when the chips were down, when America knew it was voting for a candidate, and not simply voting peeve back-lash vanished, but not before it had two serious side-effects. It misled the Republican Party as to its campaign strategy to the confusion of the Republican Party and it caused all of us to concentrate on white confusions rather than on Negro progress. Somehow the symbol of the civil rights struggle during 1964 was the image of a reporter interviewing a white housewife on a city stoop and listening to her uncertainty about the possibility of a Negro family moving into the neighborhood. This turning in upon our own uncertainties and ambivalence in the area of race, was unfortunate, not only because it gave to these uncertainties a dignity which

they did not deserve, but because it caused us to overlook some major progress in the area of civil rights.

During 1964 the 24th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States became law - an amendment which prohibits the Poll Tax. In 1964, the President of the United States, signed an executive order ordering the various departments of our government to cut off funds to any agency, to any state, to any building contractor, to any hospital, to any school which discriminates in its policies, or admissions, or residence, or sale. If prejudice was to remain, it was to become an expensive luxury. Early in 1964, you will recall, the Civil Rights people took to the streets, and their voice was heard. By late summer Congress had finally freed President Kenedy's Civil Rights Bill from dilatory committees and it was passed. No one could, for any reason, be refused residence in a hotel or a seat in a restaurant simply because of his color. The United States Government could take action against unions which barred Negroes from their membership. The United States Government would initiate action against voting registrars who had separate racial requirements for the enrollment of Negro and of the white. Few of us have recognized the importance of this Civil Rights Bill. In my humble opinion, it marks a watershed in our legal development. When the Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the public accommodations title of this Act late in the year, the Court, in effect, subordinated property rights to human rights. The Court has come to realize that property laws had, in effect, been a shield and a prop to the inherited patterns of prejudice within the community. A man could say to the Negro who stood before the registration desk, 'if you don't get out of here, I'll call the police and have you arrested for trespassing.' Today a public business must be public. In effect, the Courts have moved the law over to the side of change; they have opened up the protection and force of the law to the outraged, to the distressed and to the pushed out. In effect, we can

now have a civil rights struggle of Americans for American decency - rather than a racial revolution which must beat down the Law and use the heavy club of civil disobedience to effect its ends. When President Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act he said; "this Act is intended not to divide but to end division," and, in my humble opinion, the Act goes far towards making possible the dream of a united and free America.

There has been progress in the area of civil rights during 1964 but that is not to say that the civil rights struggle is won. It has hardly begun. Washington has acted. Cleveland has barely stirred. There has been ugliness and there has been violence and there will be further violence, I am afraid. But the law has swung to the side of the petitioner, of the man in need. Human rights take precedence over property rights. America will emerge from this period of turmoil and of confusion.

There was ugliness in the racial picture during 1964. One picture recurs: the scene is a Mississippi courtroom. Byron de la Beckwith is to be tried for the murder of NAACP organizer, Medger Evers. The court seeks to impanel a jury.

The prosecutor turns to a prospective juror: 'do you believe that it is a crime in Mississippi for a white man to kill a Negro?' The juror is silent. The judge leans over to the prosecutor and says, 'What did the juror say?' 'Nothing, judge, he's trying to make up his mind.'

While many white men in some parts of America were trying to make up their minds if the Negro was in fact a man, many of color, throughout the world had made up their mind that the white man was no longer going to be the dominant force in our world. Increasingly, race has become the crucial division in international affairs, and I am afraid we overlook this to our own hurt. Early in the year Chou En Lai told his 700,000,000 fellow-Chinese that the Soviet Communist Party was seeking to effect a Soviet-American accord in order to dominate the world. Imagine the paranoia behind this charge of conspiracy. Somehow the two great opposing forces

of the world are meeting clandestinely in order to dominate the world. To dominate whom? The colored man. The man of color. Only a racial paranoia could imagine that such a conspiracy could, in fact, exist. Yet, Chou En Lai spent the better part of the year traveling in Indonesia, in Egypt and Algeria, and peddling exactly this racist theory. I have long believed that race lies at the very base of Sino-Soviet split - though that split is historically explainable as a battle over the wind-swept center plateau of Asia. There is battle also for spheres of influence in India and Southeast Asia; but the venom with which it is being fought - a venom hardly mellowed by a shared ideology - can be explained only on the basis of the racial division.

Race placed a major and unfortunate part in our world's affairs during 1964. Early in the year, race was the dynamite cap which exploded the 'Yankee Go Home' mobs in Panama. Race was certainly at the basis of the charges made so forcefully and with so much overstatement in the United Nations last month against the United States and Belgium because of the Congo air-lift.

Why are the dark nations of Africa so opposed to Mr. Tshombe? He is, after all, a man of color. Is it because he was the front man to Belgian mining interests in Katanga a few years ago? Hardly. Many African leaders were in earlier colonial governments. Here is the reason. When Tshombe came back to power in August of this year, once the United Nations troops had been removed from the Congo, he solidified his power by hiring mercenaries. Whom did he hire? Whites. Whites from what nations? From the Union of South Africa and from Southern Rhodesia - the two African states in which apartheid is public policy. Why was the United States blackened with this tar? Because we have been supporting Mr. Tshombe. Why were we blackened for our mercy airlift? Because black Africans accuse us of racially-selective moral outrage. Early in the year there was bloodshed between Arab and Negro on the Island of Zanzibar, and no one in the

United States suggested a mercy airlift. Later in the spring there was an uprising of a fanatic sect in Kenya and Uganda; there was great bloodshed, and no one in the United States suggested a mercy airlift. Throughout the year there was bloodshed and blood-letting between the various tribes of the little nation of Rurundi, between pygmy and giant, and no one in the United States suggested a mercy airlift. Over the past few years there has been vast blood-letting in the Congo and no one suggested an airlift. Only when there were white hostages, only when white men's lives were in danger, did the United States bestir itself for an airlift. Now we know the decencies of our own foreign policy. We know our foreign aid program. We know how we have been the basic financial supporter of the United Nations. We know the tens of thousands of acts of mercy for which individual Americans and organizations have been responsible. The black man sees only, that in our eyes a white skin seems to be worth more than a black one. Believe me, Mr. Chou En Lai, Mr. Nasser, and Mr. Ben Bellah and the others who exploit this racist line are making the most of this charge.

Today, when Chou En Lai speaks, he speaks with added authority. This year China exploded a nuclear device and joined the so-called nuclear club. Her voice will be heard, not only because of the vast population which is hers, but because of the power now joined to these numbers. With that Asian explosion, many of the pretensions of our past policy were wiped out. We were proud a year ago when we engineered, after years of patient conference, a limited test ban treaty. Today, this treaty is a scrap of paper. Chinese nuclear ash is in the air, French fallout will soon be. How long will it be before Yugoslavia, Egypt, and Indonesia join the club? The chances of holocaustial war are now infinitely higher. We have had almost twenty years since the end of the Second World War in which to arrange matters between the two great powers. When politics were bi-polar, there was a real opportunity to organize the instrumentalities of world order. Today, matters are far more complicated. The thrust

of political life is towards a decentralization of power. In the West, France is walking alone. China walks her own way in the East. The NATO nations are increasingly restive under our strategic leadership. The Warsaw-pact nations are increasingly restive under Russian leadership. Multi-national nuclear power will increase this falling away. The world seems to have returned to the condition of 1910 and 1930 - Congeries of bickering, quarreling nations, each seeking its individual greed. The world has few, if any, instrumentalities which can band these nations together, and the nations pay little more than lip service to those that exist. We missed a golden opportunity these last twenty years. The Cold War was a costly political indulgence for both the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. The task now will be infinitely more difficult, and, frankly, I have not heard of any of the great leaders of our world insisting that peace is the essential need and that his nation is prepared to give up this and this of its prerogative if other nations will do similarly in order to strengthen the United Nations on any other instrumentality of peace. Those who dreamed of peace had many a nightmare during 1964. We saw the decentralization of power and fearsome power in the hands of unstable nations and erratic leaders. We saw a growing lack of control over events on the part of both the United States and of the Soviet Union. Little Roumania challenged the Soviet on its economic policies and refused to go along with the Soviet equivalent of the Common Market. Kruschew could not hold the glory that was Stalin's. His neck was on the block and he fell. There was a similar kicking over the traces in our camp. The so-called Free World will not dance to our tune and, I am afraid, we have not yet drawn the consequences of this domination of power - - certainly it is still the mote in our eye in Indo-China.

It has become clear that our Indo-Chinese military adventure was a mistake from the beginning. We had no valid reason to rush in after the French defeat at Dien Ben Phu. We lacked the military strength to pull it off. I know of no

other American military undertaking which, from the beginning, was so obtusely and inadequately handled. No one made it clear to the American people why we envolved ourselves in Southeast Asia. We have no traditional interests there. We certainly did not move into South Viet Nam to protect democracy and freedom. Ngo Diem was an absolutist. His rule was autocratic. Surely we did not go into South Viet Nam in order to protect the free-enterprise system. South Viet Nam's economy is feudal - was and is feudal. What then? I have always suspected that we went into South Viet Nam because of a geography lesson which the **erst-**while Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, gave to the American people a dozen years ago. He pulled down, as it were, a map in his office - a map on which all the Communist states had been colored in red. He drew a line around these states and said: 'thus far shall they come and no further, all that is outside this line, we will protect.' There were no equivocations - no ifs, ands, or buts, no qualification as to the kind of government, the quality of the economy, the will of the people involved. We would protect everything outside this circle from whatever we claimed was Communist whether the people envolved willed it or not. We went into South Viet Nam to draw lines on our maps and the results are patently clear. The generals of the South Vietnamese army have told us point blank. 'We want no more of your domination.' 'Call back your pro-counsels; Let South Viet Nam find its own political destiny.' The handwriting is on the wall. The Viet Cong is outnumbered five to one - but they have won the major victories. There were, in 1964, five governmental shake-ups in **Saigon** and no one has been able to gain the support of the Vietnamese peoples. The handwriting is on the wall. I have long urged publicly the neutralization of this entire area. I urge it now and I urge it before it is too late. Today, President Johnson is at the apogee of his power. With this strength he can take a pull-out in stride. Potential McCarthys will howl and there will

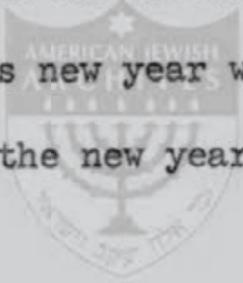
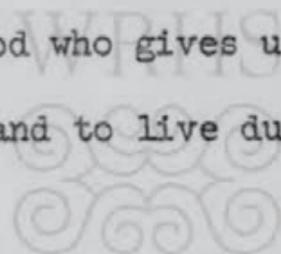
be cries of treason, the usual thing, but I believe that the American people are mature enough to understand that the price of escalating the war is not worth the prize - that we would have to commit our entire army to jungle warfare in the most impassable terrain in the world in order to conquer this nation, and that even if we could conquer it, we can not possess it. The countryside supports the Viet Cong. A conquered nation sooner or later rebels. If we take the easy way out, or what the war-hawks tell us is the easy way out, and unleash our atomic weapons, what of our own homes? The prize is not worth the price. The longer the President waits the more lives are lost needlessly. The longer we wait, the more difficult a pull-out will be, the stronger the cries of the reactionaries, the greater their appeal to an American people which has never known defeat - which does not yet understand the strict limitations of our power.

Nineteen sixty-four, my friends, was a fat year. Nineteen sixty-four was a year in which our homes were not immediately threatened. Though our professional armies were involved in Southeast Asia, there seemed to be peace. Yet, 1964 was anything but a carefree year. Violence seemed to be its dominant element. We read of bloodshed and blood-letting in Cyprus, the Congo, Kenya, Uganda, Tangyanika, Zanzibar, South Viet Nam, in Laos, Indonesia, Malaysia, in Singapore, Bolivia, Venezuela, and on our streets. The exhaustive report of the Warren Commission on the assassination of President Kennedy, was, in a way, symbolic of the year. Like all modern scholarship it was erudite and extensive, but, I submit, that after we have read this entire report, when all the facts are known and in, we know little more how to control the pathology and the violence which is about us - and that is our dilemma.

And so we begin 1965. We live in a world of many wars. We live in a world of roiling and restless masses. We live in a world where many people are led and

ruled by megalomaniacs and demagogues. We live in a world which is grasping and greedy. We live in a world which is not at peace with its prejudices; nor at peace with its own decency. For all our knowledge, we have not yet learned to control human pathology and human violence. We write about it, but, frankly, we do pathetically little about it, and that is our challenge. As the new year dawns we can do no better than to re-dedicate ourselves to the building of wholeness. Let us begin in our own homes, in the raising of children in love and decency. Let us begin in our cities in the war against poverty and blight and squalor. Let us begin in our national policy and work towards a policy beyond the stockpiling of arms to an understanding of our nation's, and every nation's responsibility, co-existence; the building of bridges and world order.

Nineteen sixty-four was a sobering year, but we are alive. A new year dawns. We pray that the Kind God who gives us this new year will give us the strength to meet its challenges and to live during the new year with a finer degree of citizenship.



to suggest an alternative course for the nation, as a result the
 campaign had no focus, P. Johnson was in prosperity & P. K.'s program.
 S. Goldwater was on hardship & budget, all that was decided
 was that the next majority of Congress had no liberalism as P.T.'s
20th act, - Dec - 3.6' 1964 before by of the majority & actual results.
 In so far as the 1964 campaign decided serious debate
~~was~~ - it was an important campaign, a major
 need the fundamental structure to include the thinking and be
 develop a new consciousness, all that decided in Nov. was the
 clear message and message to reach the people - that is only it is
 that needs a new idea, a new direction - that is only it is
 my impression has been the 1st and played it no consciously being to
 compare - could also be - slide of the history of the country and the people from now
 to let us see the thinking and it is not just for a people group
 to be stably along.



The 1964 campaign was important in several respects - it
 successfully reinstated a 2 party system, The Rep. was winning
 candidates middle class and poor - Today the middle class has been
 1 cent 4 of the Congress, only 1.7 of 50 government and they had
 control of 12 of the 17 state legislatures and they had been
 from attorneys, The S.C. was mandatory state representation
 would make still public and the people

Now more it is clear that you may not be in the party
 the principles of the party - is the principles of other and is not clear
clearly. Further, it is clear that is not a democracy the
 "and" has a responsibility to the people to maintain the country
 a primary commitment - to have an administration to explain itself

to justify its policies - without such details, the assumed ^{one of} ~~purpose~~ ^{purpose}

violation of a law. can not operate

it is not clear what the leg. party recognizes ^{the} foundation of its integrity

responsibility, The most responsible agency reappearance of party

in leg. party seems to ^{be} deliberate more than to try for the scope of the

leg. Hall Democrat, The less many members the party members should

rather be legitimate consist with public of affairs, The best of it

Party has an abundance of the backing of the public, In for one

reasons not be required to see in the past details the essence

of a new social party - entirely and with an active + effective

opposition

During the campaign a new idea seems to be emerging -

building - based on the principle of responsibility

responsibility of individuals and institutions and of every kind

every concern posed the major opportunities and against that

put into effect through major opportunities, the will of the

seems to be the responsibility of public in the past, and the

present,

It is a challenge to conscience every that, the responsibility of the

at the public, The truth, however, has the major effect - it helps

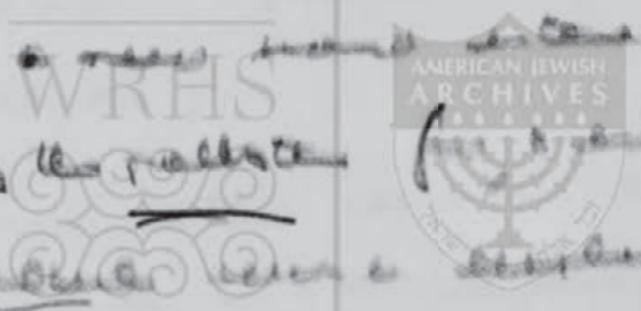
to justify not Rep. party - to Rep. conference, it will be confronted

on public issues public the on major issues, Somebody

through, increased of social rights 1964 - is not that of a house unity

should not be long intended and the idea of major

was to show a heart beat.



Report on P. K. Commission. Subsequent - can also include membership -
at present on the subject, but we do not yet know how to disclose
the publicly & the agencies of the human body. There are few
too many John Orwell in an unusual - not all are original and
some -

The second document. I intended to include part of what
is to all that is a document - to tell that person under
to your not responsibly - to a review of the sub purpose which
will behold the document is subsequent to model document order
order

