

And Justice For All

Jewish Involvement in the American Public Sphere



**A Curriculum for
High School Juniors and Seniors
on Identity and Activism**

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Rationale

The question, “Are you an American Jew or a Jewish American?” has always puzzled me. Why must one choose one identity over another and what would someone’s answer, if he or she were to share it, really indicate? I have had this conversation with many teenagers, who at a pinnacle point in their identity development also feel puzzled by this question. Many feel that by choosing one, they are denouncing the other, which is most certainly not the case.

Teenagers today are pulled in many directions. Whether literally chatting online with several people at once, or figuratively completing a homework assignment while stressing about college applications, they are balancing many “conversations” at once. And yet, through all of these distractions they remain focused on one thing: themselves. In this age of individualism, teens often isolate themselves, even within the context of communal activities. They are searching for personal meaning and seeking to define their own identity while also yearning to “fit in.” Educators can provide resources that will help teens become more knowledgeable and able to begin to define who they are, how they see the world and how they see themselves in relation to the world.

Jonathan Sarna states, “Jewish education serves as the vehicle through which we train successive generations of Jews to negotiate their own ways, as Jews, in the American arena.”¹ Jewish American teens are in great need of this training. Not only do they feel pulled in many directions on a day-to-day basis, but also in a larger sense as they negotiate their American Jewish identity. Similar to the type of education that Sarna speaks of is one defined by Sylvia Barack Fishman as a “coalesced American Jewish identity, which brings teenagers’ American identity and Jewish identity together as one unified identity. It is one in which American and Jewish values are aligned in order to inform individuals’ everyday choices. Many of the choices she refers to, and those focused upon in this curriculum guide, revolve around involvement in the

¹ Sarna, Jonathan D. 1998. "American Jewish Education in Historical Perspective." *Journal of Jewish Education* 64:8–21.

American public sphere. Fishman claims that Jewish individuals who commit themselves to the pursuit of social justice within American society do so with a “coalesced American-Jewish tendency toward altruistic spiritual ideals.”² These ideals, she points out, often stem from an understanding of prophetic Judaism, and are mostly aligned with liberal American values.

While this guide addresses the essence of Fishman’s idea of coalescence, it also recognizes the tensions that may arise through attempting to integrate students’ Jewish identities with their American identities. Some argue that coalescence overemphasizes the similarities between the two identities, and leaves no room for authenticity. Rather than *integration*, Dr. David Ellenson argues for *interaction*. He says, “In [the vision of interaction], the values of Judaism are seen as complementing, informing, or standing in dynamic tension with the values of the larger host culture...”³ Rather than point to the issue of identity, Ellenson’s argument indicates there is a tension to how we might negotiate our Jewish and American value systems. He suggests that students need flexibility to struggle with the tensions between the two cultures; in contrast to a coalesced American Jewish identity, which requires resolving the tensions. This curriculum guide adopts both arguments. Its goal is to help students navigate their way through the tensions between Jewish and American history and culture, while also searching for a unified place in which the two exist. It will not always provide answers, but will continually ask probing questions that push the teenagers to think critically about who they are and what they see as their role is in their society and community.

By integrating the text and memory of both American and Jewish culture, this guide will address the important topic of Jewish involvement in the American public sphere. The following enduring understandings help to articulate the overall vision for this curriculum guide:

² Fishman, Sylvia B. *Jewish Life and American Culture*. State University of New York, Albany, NY. 2000. P.15.

³ Ellenson, David. “An Ideology for the Liberal Jewish Day School: A Philosophical-Sociological Investigation.” *Journal of Jewish Education*. Volume 74, No. 3. 2008.

- Democratic societies, such as America, which seek to promote values of compassion and equality, can serve as places where Jews can feel safe to live, prosper and contribute.
- Active involvement by Jews in the American public sphere has conveyed the Jewish community's devotion to equal rights for all citizens since the country's inception.
- American Jews can have a distinct impact on American society by integrating their understanding of their Jewish identity and their American identity.
- When a coalesced Jewish American roots his/her local pursuit of justice on the biblical, prophetic, rabbinical and modern teachings of Judaism, he/she can produce a distinct voice and perspective within the larger society.
- The tension between American and Jewish values can encourage a creative struggle for those whose lives are informed by both.

All too often, we teach Jewish history and values in a vacuum that we label as “Jewish education.” Through this narrow lens, students may find it challenging to understand how their Jewish identity can inform their civic involvement. However, an integrated education that fuses together Jewish and American history, and compares American values with Jewish values, is one upon which students can base a life-long commitment to both their civic and Jewish communities. This curriculum guide will bring to life issues central to students' growth by finding the points where the fusion take place. In his article, *Integration and Interaction in the Jewish Day School*, Michael Zeldin lists a number of reasons for promoting integrated education. Among them, he points out that it can help students recognize the role they can play as American Jews. He says, “Integration helps students discover what their roles in society can be; and teaches them the perspectives and skills they will need in order to fulfill those roles.”⁴ This curriculum guide approaches American Jewish integration and interaction from the point of view of history and values. How do the actions of those who came before us inform our own call to the pursuit of social justice? Upon which values do we base our commitment to bettering the society in which we live? These are the very questions that this curriculum guide seeks to address.

⁴ Zeldin, Michael. *Integration and Interaction in the Jewish Day School*. P. 581.

Students will be introduced to a number of these inspiring individuals throughout the curriculum guide. They'll meet people who were active in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s; those who committed their lives to public education; members of labor unions who fought for workers rights, and more. Though this guide focuses primarily on events of the Twentieth Century, it serves as an excellent companion to secular American history, which, in most schools, is taught, in the eleventh grade. Therefore, this curriculum guide is best suited for high school juniors and seniors who have the background to mirror this content. The Jewish narrative of oppression also informs much of Jewish involvement in the political and social justice arena.

Through a variety of sources, this guide will help students enhance their ability to articulate how Jewish and American values inform their actions and choices. As indicated, primary American Jewish historical sources will play a major role in helping students to relate to what has been achieved. Students will have a firsthand look at historical issues including civil rights, healthcare, hunger, immigration, Israel advocacy, public education, workers' rights, and more. Each of these issues still has great relevance to our lives today, and teens will participate in conversations that inspire action and response. They will understand that just as their American Jewish predecessors involved themselves in the American public sphere, so to do they have the ability and responsibility to do so. Additionally, a variety of Jewish sources will help create a dialogue with each other and with biblical and prophetic, rabbinic, and modern teachings. These sources will give students access to language that helps them define what values they see as central to their own lives, and will provide students with a sense of how Jewish values can inform their actions. Through the lenses of American historical narrative and Jewish text, students will be guided through a historical and modern look that will inform their own experience of Jewish American involvement.

Note to the Facilitator

Dear Facilitator,

Get ready for an amazing adventure of exploring history, identity and activism with your students. The journey you will guide your students on will be inspiring both for them and for you. It will take a lot of planning and hard work on your part, but will be well worth it in the end. I've outlined some important things for you to keep in mind as you begin planning the lessons and activities. Be sure to stay on top of your calendar far in advance to plan for everything.

Learners and Setting

This guide is designed for high school juniors and seniors to complement their secular school education in American History. It's designed to be used in a congregation, although could be altered for use in a day school setting. Most lessons are designed to occur in one-hour sessions, although some lessons could last for two or more sessions (indicated in the lessons themselves). Also, a few lessons are field trips and special events; these will certainly last more than one-hour.

Units and Lessons

Included in every unit is a reminder of the curriculum enduring understandings (originally found in the Rationale); essential questions and goals for the unit; and a list of lessons. Every lesson is complete with objectives and suggested activities. One lesson per unit is a scripted lesson (denoted by *Scripted Lesson), which also includes a materials list, timeline, and detailed lesson plan. The four units focusing on historical figures, Cardozo, Abzug, Heschel and Vorspan, run parallel to each other. Therefore, each contains the same four types of lessons (with similar objectives and different types of activities). Each of the four units highlights a different type of lesson as the scripted lesson so that you gain a strong understanding of my vision for the overall curriculum. I should also note that these four units can be taught in any order, and you may alter the order depending on when you are able to schedule the lessons with Memorable Moments.

In addition to scripted lessons, other special things come up in the lessons. Some are considered memorable moments (denoted by **Memorable Moment). These are special activities or events that take place outside the normal classroom walls, and which the students will hold with them long after the curriculum is over. Authentic assessment (denoted by ***Authentic Assessment) is also an important thing to notice. Throughout the curriculum are lessons that measure the students' learning in practical and applicable ways to their lives.

Facilitator

The facilitator of this curriculum guide should be someone who is passionate about domestic social justice issues, American history, and issues of Jewish identity. There are also plenty of opportunities to engage other facilitators and adults in the learning process with the students, and this is detailed more below.

Integrating Members of the Congregation and the Jewish Community

An important factor of Jewish education and involvement in the American public sphere are building community and relationships. This curriculum guide offers students many opportunities to interact with adults in your congregation and your Jewish community. Adults from various backgrounds and professions should be invited to help lead and participate in individual lessons. Not only does this provide a rich experience for the teenagers who will interact with the adults, it is also an excellent way to connect adults (who may have limited interaction with Jewish education themselves) to the educational program at your congregation.

Throughout the units you'll find information about the adult that should be included. Below is a list of the lessons that include additional people; this should help you plan ahead in inviting them to join you. I've also included places and events you may need to reserve as part of the lesson. Before beginning the year, get out your calendar and reserve as much as possible! Also think about transportation and other logistics.

Unit 2

- Lesson 4: A panel of judges or lawyers
A courtroom to have the meeting with the panel

Unit 3

- Lesson 4: Meeting with a government representative (local, state or federal)

Unit 4

- Lesson 4: Group of teenagers from another faith organization to participate in the service learning project with you
Site where you will participate in the service learning project

Unit 5

- Lesson 1: Actor to play Albert Vorspan
- Lesson 2: Meeting with congregation board members about environmental policies
- Lesson 4: L'Taken Seminar at the RAC in Washington D.C.

Unit 6

- Lesson 2: Journalist to explain principles of interviewing
- Lesson 3: Community members who will be interviewed by students

Unit 7

- Lesson 2: Clergy member to help prepare for service
- Lesson 3: Invite community members who students interviewed as special guests to the Social Justice Inspired Shabbat

Fonts and Formatting

Different fonts and font styles are used throughout this curriculum guide, and they note different headings and audiences. Please note below what each font means:

Headings

This font refers to unit and lesson headings, as well as list headings such as materials lists or objectives. When you see this font within a paragraph, it means that it matches a heading also found in the unit and is meant to refer you to that heading.

Speaking to you, the Teacher

This font is simply everything directed at you, and listed for your own information.

Speaking to the students

This font is used to indicate directions that should be given directly to the students. It will be found both in your copy of lessons as well as in resources that are meant to be handed out to the students.

Direct Quotes

This font will be used when directly quoting primary sources. The quotes will be from and/or about the subjects of this curriculum guide.

Possible Student Responses

Blue color font will be used when suggested responses are provided for you

Resources

There is an abundance of resources provided in this curriculum guide. Much of this is for your own learning in addition to the students' learning. The annotated bibliography in the back also offers suggestions of books and resources you should take advantage of and familiarize yourself with.

This is going to be an incredible journey for you and your students as together you pursue justice! May the year be filled with much learning, insight, and inspiration!

B'hatzlacha!

Emily Walsh

Unit 1

How Does my American and Jewish Identity Inform My Sense of Justice?

Enduring Understandings

- Democratic societies, such as America, which seek to promote values of compassion and equality, can serve as places where Jews can feel safe to live, prosper and contribute.
- Active involvement by Jews in the American public sphere has conveyed the Jewish community's devotion to equal rights for all citizens since the country's inception.
- American Jews can have a distinct impact on American society by integrating their understanding of their Jewish identity and their American identity.
- When a coalesced Jewish American roots his/her local pursuit of justice on the biblical, prophetic, rabbinical and modern teachings of Judaism, he/she can produce a distinct voice and perspective within the larger society.
- The tension between American and Jewish values can encourage a creative struggle for those whose lives are informed by both.

Essential Questions

- What does it mean to me to be Jewish in America?
- What are American interpretations of justice?
- What are Jewish interpretations of justice?
- How can my sense of justice inform my actions?

Goals

- To provide students with the opportunity to grapple with their Jewish and American identities.
- To open the doors for dialogue around social justice issues which will be explored throughout the entire curriculum.
- To begin exploring the notion that American and Jewish values may sometimes be the same, but are not always.

Outline of Lessons

Lesson 1: What Does it Mean to Me to be Jewish in America?

Lesson 2: What is Justice?

*Scripted Lesson

***Authentic Assessment

Lesson 3: How Does Justice Inform our Actions?

Lesson 1: What Does it Mean to Me to be Jewish in America?

Objectives

- SWBAT describe how their values are informed by Jewish tradition.
- SWBAT describe how their values are informed by American tradition.
- SWBAT explain tensions they feel living as Jews in America.

Ice Breaker Activity

If this is the first time the group is meeting together, you may want to lead an icebreaker activity for them to get comfortable with each other. One of my favorite games that helps build community is the “Grid Game.” On the floor you create a 6x6 grid made out of masking tape. On it, is a “secret” path from one corner to another that only you know (you may want to have it written on a sheet of paper so you can refer to it yourself). Students are instructed one at a time to step on a box in the grid in order to guess the correct path. If a student steps in a correct box, they can try to step in another one, and so on. If they guess wrong, they go to the end of the line. Once one student has stepped on the correct box, other students should know to step in that box each time. Students go one at a time, watching and helping each other. The game is not over until everyone has successfully completed the correct path. **If you want to make it even more challenging, tell students they cannot talk. This will force them to communicate in other ways.

Activity (Alternative 1)

Part 1

As a large group, ask students to brainstorm a list of values that “guide one to be a good member of the community.” The intentional vagueness in this question will hopefully lead to some broad answers, which will be helpful throughout this lesson.

Once you have compiled a list, ask the students to decide which values go well together, which ones complement each other. Then, ask them to share which ones seem to be in conflict with each other.

Have students pair up into *chevruta*, and direct them to pick two values from the list that they brainstormed and explain how the values may seem in conflict with one another. Then, they should describe a way that this conflict could be resolved. It may help to do an example of one of these such as justice and compassion.

Chevrutot should share their work with each other, and the teacher should help them debrief. Students should be encouraged to challenge other pairs as well as offer suggestions and ideas.

This discussion should be used as a transition to understanding how values can, simultaneously, be seen as complementary and in conflict with one another. Much of how one views this comparison depends on the lens through which they are looking. Beginning next lesson, and throughout this curriculum students will be encouraged to

look through their “American” lenses and their “Jewish” lenses – both separately and at once together.

Part 2

Divide students up into pairs and instruct them to divide the values brainstormed earlier in the class into two groups based on how they believe they should be separated. Once they have placed every value into one of the two groups, they should title both. Once they have done this, they should reshuffle the values and begin again. This process should be repeated as many times as possible in the given time.

After pairings have shared their titles with the entire group, they should be instructed to return to the pairs and reshuffle the values once again, and this time they will be given the titles for the two groups: “American” and “Jewish.” They should divide the list of values into two categories, “American” and “Jewish.”

After pairings have completed this process, bring them together to share. Using a chalkboard, whiteboard, or large pad of paper in the front of the room, divide the board into three parts labeled: “American,” “Jewish,” “Both.” (I would recommend not doing this until they have completed the activity, as seeing the word, “both,” might influence them to not work as hard to make distinctions.) Ask each pairing to share one or two values that they clearly labeled “American,” one or two clearly labeled “Jewish,” and one or two that were the hardest to decide between.

Have a discussion around these values, and explain that throughout the rest of the curriculum the students will be focusing on the value of justice. By exploring justice, as it is situated in Jewish and American tradition, they will have the opportunity to better define their own relationship to Jewish and American traditions. They’ll also be able have a better sense of how they can better incorporate justice into their lives.

Activity (Alternative 2)

JustAction.org, a website created by Hillel and Panim, offers great resources and lesson plans about Jewish and American views of justice. One of the lesson plans on this site fits perfectly into this lesson, and I want to offer it as an alternative. It is included in this guide as Unit 1 Appendix A, and can also be found on their website at

<http://www.justaction.org/lessonplans/index.htm>.

Lesson 2: What is Justice?

*Scripted Lesson

***Authentic Assessment

Objectives

- SWBAT identify the sources of quotes about justice.
- SWBAT compare and contrast American interpretations of justice with Jewish interpretations of justice.
- SWBAT begin to construct their own definitions of justice.

Materials

- Paper
- Pens
- List of quotes about justice (provided in Unit 1 Resources)
- Butcher paper
- Markers

Timeline

0-10 minutes	Introduction: Begin definitions of justice
10-25 minutes	Look at justice quotes and match to sources
25-35 minutes	Categorize justice quotes
35-50 minutes	Construct definition of justice
50-60 minutes	Conclusion: Present definitions of justice

Lesson

0-10 minutes Introduction

Ask the students to write down a definition of “justice.” What does justice mean to them? Invite them to share their definitions with each other, if time.

10-25 minutes Look at justice quotes and match to sources

Divide students into small groups or *chevruta*, and give them the “Justice Quote Sheet” found in Unit 1 Resources. Instruct them to read the quotes, and match the names of the sources, found at the bottom of the sheet, to the quotes that they believe those sources authored. After ten minutes, bring the group back together and go over the responses.

25-35 minutes Categorize justice quotes

In the same groups, ask students to put the different quotes into different categories based on how they think they are similar and different. They should title each category, and present to each other.

35-50 minutes Construct definition of justice

Based on discussions the students have had throughout the lesson, they should begin to create their own definition of justice. Students can do this as individuals, in small groups, or in one large group – try to decide how they will work best, or give them the option. Allow students to be as creative as possible in constructing this definition. Give

them butcher paper and markers, and encourage them to literally “cut and paste” pieces of the justice quotes they just looked at, and perhaps include part of their original definition, to create their own.

50-60 minutes **Conclusion: Present definitions of justice**

After they’ve completed their construction, allow them to present it. Then, collect the definition(s) and keep them to refer back to in the final unit.

Lesson 3: Justice as the Call to Action

Objectives

- SWBAT integrate a Jewish text that gives direction to pursue justice.
- SWBAT begin to identify what informs their pursuit of justice.
- SWBAT begin to decide how they'd like to pursue justice.

Activity 1: Text Studies

Text Study A: Genesis 2

Lead students in a text study that discusses why we should act in the pursuit of justice. JustAction.org has great resources for this in their section, "Call to Action." I recommend using the text study from Genesis 2, found at <http://www.justaction.org/torahstudy/call-to-action-text1.htm>, and can be found in Unit 1 Appendix B.

Text Study B: Genesis 18

Read Genesis 18:19 with the students. Discuss what God meant when God said that Abraham was commanded "to do righteousness and justice" (*tzedek & mishpat*). Read the beginning of chapter 3, Genesis: Abraham and "the Call" in *Judaism and Justice: The Jewish Passion to Repair the World* (found in Unit 1 Resources). This will help guide the discussion about righteousness and mishpat, and how Abraham acted. Then discuss how Abraham pursued justice in the story of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Activity 2: Ways to Act

Discuss different ways that the students can act, and explain that they will study many of these methods throughout the curriculum. JustAction.org has a list of actions and how to get involved on their website at <http://www.justaction.org/actionguide/action/index.htm> and can be found in Unit 1 Appendix C. Go through each of these actions with the students, discussing ways they might get involved.

Unit 1 Resources

How Does my American and Jewish Identity Inform My Sense of Justice?

Lesson 2: What is Justice?

Justice Quote Worksheet (for students)

“Justice:

1 a: the maintenance or administration of what is just especially by the impartial adjustment of conflicting claims or the assignment of merited rewards or punishments b: judge c: the administration of law ; especially : the establishment or determination of rights according to the rules of law or equity2 a: the quality of being just, impartial, or fair b (1): the principle or ideal of just dealing or right action (2): conformity to this principle or ideal : righteousness c: the quality of conforming to law3: conformity to truth, fact, or reason : correctness”

“Justice, Justice, you shall pursue.”

“Judicial power is never exercised for the purpose of giving effect to the will of the judge; always for the purpose of giving effect to the will of the legislature; or in other words, to the will of the law.”

“You shall not render an unfair decision: do not favor the poor or show deference to the rich; judge your kinsman fairly.”

"It became clear to me that in regard to cruelties committed in the name of a free society some are guilty while all are responsible."

“When the Holy One, Blessed Be, created the first person, God took and led Adam around all the trees of the Garden of Eden. And God said to Adam: ‘Look at My works! How beautiful and praiseworthy they are! And everything I made, I created for you. Be careful (though) that you don’t spoil or destroy My world – because if you spoil it, there’s nobody after you to fix it.’”

“Social action by itself cannot guarantee Jewish survival. But Judaism without social justice is an untended garden, an ancient relic, a monument to a dead faith. I came to this work believing that. I still do. And I still believe that Judaism is our only real immortality.”

“The role of women here today and the men who are our allies is to scale the great wall of gender apartheid. Because unless and until we scale that great barrier we will not eliminate the abuses of human rights that have dogged women every single day of their

lives ... And no matter how steep the passage and discouraging the pace, I ask you never to give in and never to give up.”

Source Bank

Bella Abzug

Benjamin Cardozo, Supreme Court Justice

Deuteronomy 16:20

Ecclesiastes Rabbah 7:13

Abraham Joshua Heschel, Rabbi and Social Justice Leader

Leviticus 19:15

Albert Vorspan, former Director of the Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism

Merriam Webster Dictionary

Quotes About Justice (with sources cited)

Justice:

1 a: the maintenance or administration of what is just especially by the impartial adjustment of conflicting claims or the assignment of merited rewards or punishments b: judge c: the administration of law ; especially : the establishment or determination of rights according to the rules of law or equity² a: the quality of being just, impartial, or fair b (1): the principle or ideal of just dealing or right action (2): conformity to this principle or ideal : righteousness c: the quality of conforming to law³: conformity to truth, fact, or reason : correctness⁵

Tzedek, Tzedek, tirdof (Justice, Justice, you shall pursue)⁶

“Judicial power is never exercised for the purpose of giving effect to the will of the judge; always for the purpose of giving effect to the will of the legislature; or in other words, to the will of the law.”⁷

“You shall not render an unfair decision: do not favor the poor or show deference to the rich; judge your kinsman fairly.”⁸

“It became clear to me that in regard to cruelties committed in the name of a free society some are guilty while all are responsible.”⁹

“When the Holy One, Blessed Be, created the first person, God took and led Adam around all the trees of the Garden of Eden. And God said to Adam: ‘Look at My works! How beautiful and praiseworthy they are! And everything I made, I created for you. Be careful (though) that you don’t spoil or destroy My world – because if you spoil it, there’s nobody after you to fix it.’”¹⁰

“Social action by itself cannot guarantee Jewish survival. But Judaism without social justice is an untended garden, an ancient relic, a monument to a dead faith. I came to this work believing that. I still do. And I still believe that Judaism is our only real immortality.”¹¹

“The role of women here today and the men who are our allies is to scale the great wall of gender apartheid. Because unless and until we scale that great barrier we will not

⁵ Merriam Webster Dictionary, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/justice>

⁶ Deuteronomy 16:20

⁷ Cardozo. 22 U.S. (9 Wheat.) 738, 866 (1824). Found in Richard A. Posner, *Cardozo: A Study in Reputation* (Chicago, 1990) p. 22.

⁸ Leviticus 19:15

⁹ From transcript of *The Spiritual Audacity of Abraham Joshua Heschel*.

¹⁰ Ecclesiastes Rabbah 7:13, Quoted, p. 109, *Jewish Dimensions of Social Justice*

¹¹ Vorspan, Albert. "In the Beginning: A Personal Memoir of Social Action and Reform Judaism in America." *CCAR Journal: A Reform Jewish Quarterly* LV (2008): 75-93.

eliminate the abuses of human rights that have dogged women every single day of their lives ... And no matter how steep the passage and discouraging the pace, I ask you never to give in and never to give up.”¹²

¹² Abzug, Bella. “One Tough Broad from the Bronx: An Oral History of Bella Abzug.”
http://www.alternet.org/reproductivejustice/93746/%22one_tough_broad_from_the_bronx%22:_an_oral_history_of_bella_abzug/?page=2

Lesson 3: Justice as the Call to Action

Genesis 18:19

“For I have selected him, so that he may teach his children and those who come after him to keep the way of Adonai, doing what is right and just, so that Adonai may fulfill for Abraham all that has been promised to him.”

Abraham and “The Call”

“The Torah identifies Abraham as the original ancestor of the Jewish people. Simply put, he was the first Jew, and we are his descendants – spiritually, if not genetically – and the heirs to the legacy that he established.

Sometimes it is hard, however, to recognize what of Abraham’s legacy remains present in today’s Judaism. A great deal has changed. For one thing, Abraham’s chief form of religious observances was the offering of animal sacrifices. And his cultural practices – among them slavery and polygamy – were very different from ours. So it is worth asking: How did Abraham shape the Jewish tradition that we inherit today? What is it about Abraham’s legacy that defines both him and us as Jews?

The Torah suggests that Abraham’s selection as the emissary who would bear witness to the one God in the world is related to his willingness “to do what is right and just” (Gen. 18:19). The word for righteousness in the Torah is *tzedakah*. The word for justice is *mishpat*. This is God’s call to Abraham: to live a life of righteousness and justice. If Abraham heeds this divine call, the Jewish people – Abraham’s spiritual offspring – will bring blessing into the world. With Abraham, God begins to build a covenantal relationship with one family, a family that becomes the Jewish nation. If one family can respond to God’s call “to do what is right and just,” perhaps the world can come to live that way as well. Perhaps the Jewish people can become, in the prophet Isaiah’s famous words, “a light of the nations” (Isa. 42:6).¹³

¹³ Sidney, Schwarz. Judaism and Justice: The Jewish Passion to Repair the World. Woodstock: Jewish Lights, 2006, p. 31-32.

Unit 2

Benjamin Cardozo

Supreme Court Justice

Enduring Understandings

- Democratic societies, such as America, which seek to promote values of compassion and equality, can serve as places where Jews can feel safe to live, prosper and contribute.
- Active involvement by Jews in the American public sphere has conveyed the Jewish community's devotion to equal rights for all citizens since the country's inception.
- American Jews can have a distinct impact on American society by integrating their understanding of their Jewish identity and their American identity.
- When a coalesced Jewish American roots his/her local pursuit of justice on the biblical, prophetic, rabbinical and modern teachings of Judaism, he/she can produce a distinct voice and perspective within the larger society.
- The tension between American and Jewish values can encourage a creative struggle for those whose lives are informed by both.

Essential Questions

- How did Benjamin Cardozo's Jewish upbringing and identity influence his practice as a judge in the American Judicial system?
- How was Benjamin Cardozo's sense of justice and equality informed by American ideals?
- How can Benjamin Cardozo serve as a (Jewish) model for involvement in the American public sphere today?
- In what ways was Benjamin Cardozo a coalesced Jewish American?

Goals

- To inform students of the life and achievements of Supreme Court Justice, Benjamin Cardozo.
- To provide students with a background of Jewish contributions to the American public sphere via the story of Benjamin Cardozo.
- To share a variety of examples of Jews who have had an impact on the American Judicial system.

Outline of Lessons

Lesson 1: Who Was Benjamin Cardozo?

*Scripted Lesson

Lesson 2: A Look at Cardozo's Thinking

Lesson 3: Where Else Can I Find Examples of People Like Benjamin Cardozo?

Lesson 4: How Can I Apply What I've Learned About Benjamin Cardozo to Today?

**Memorable Moment

***Authentic Assessment

Background Information on Justice Benjamin Cardozo

Benjamin Nathan Cardozo (1870-1938) was the second Jew to be appointed to the United States Supreme Court Justice in 1932, and served until his death in 1938.

The Cardozo family had a strong legacy in the United States, and contributed greatly to its founding. Benjamin's great-great-grandfather, Aaron Nunez Cardozo arrived here in 1752 after emigrating through London, and his great-grandfather, Isaac Nunez Cardozo, fought in the Revolutionary War. One of his family members was a founding trustee for Columbia University, and another a founding member of the New York Stock Exchange. The Cardozo name was a distinguished one that had played a significant role in the early development of the United States.

Benjamin Nathan Cardozo was born to parents Albert and Rebecca Nathan Cardozo, devout Jews and members of the Spanish-Portuguese Synagogue, Shearith Israel. He had four older siblings: Albert Jr., Ellen (Nell), Grace, and Elizabeth, as well as twin sister, Emily. Albert was a judge and lawyer, and had a great influence on Benjamin's own legal career. However, both Albert and Rebecca died early ages, and Nell became a mother figure for all of the younger Cardozo siblings.

Cardozo became a bar mitzvah in 1883 at Shearith Israel after he studied with its religious leader, Rev. Henry Pereira Mendes. An activist inside and outside of the Jewish community, Mendes imparted Jewish values of moral living unto his students. He dictated the "Three R's of Judaism: Reverence, Righteousness and Responsibility."¹⁴ Though Cardozo became less religious a year or two after he became a bar mitzvah, he always considered himself to be a proud Jew. He remained a member of Shearith Israel, and showed sincere gratitude to Mendes for all that he had taught him. The universal principles of morality imbedded within Mendes' teaching influenced Cardozo throughout his life and career.

Soon after becoming a bar mitzvah, Cardozo began to be tutored by famed author and social activist, Horatio Alger Jr. Alger exposed the stories of poor, impoverished newsboys and was a critic of "cutthroat capitalist competition."¹⁵ Cardozo was certainly impacted by the strong work ethic and attitude toward justice of his tutor.

He began Columbia College at age 15, and graduated near the top of his class at age 19. He immediately went to Columbia Law School, but left after two years. Early in his career, Cardozo was a successful trial lawyer at his father's old firm. He mostly served

¹⁴ H. Pereira Mendes, *Bar Mitzvah for Boyhood, Youth and Manhood* (New York, 1938). Found in Richard Pollenberg, *The World of Benjamin Cardozo: Personal Values and the Judicial Process* (Cambridge, 1997) p. 17.

¹⁵ Richard Pollenberg, *The World of Benjamin Cardozo: Personal Values and the Judicial Process* (Cambridge, 1997) p. 22.

the Jewish business and legal community, and had an excellent reputation among the bar.

In 1913 Cardozo was elected justice for the Supreme Court of New York. Many believe his Jewish background and fresh sense of liberalism were the reasons behind his election, and still most will argue it was due to excellence and integrity. A month later he was appointed as an interim judge to the New York Court of Appeals, the highest court in New York State, and in 1917 he was elected to the seat with ringing endorsement from both political parties. He soon became known as one of the nation's leading common law judges, and was well regarded by all. In 1927 he was elected chief judge to the New York Court of Appeals.

President Hoover appointed Cardozo to the United States Supreme Court in 1932 to fill the seat of Oliver Wendell Holmes. Some could not understand why Hoover, a Republican, would choose a liberal Democrat like Cardozo for the seat. However, most legal minds and public media alike agreed that he was the best candidate for the job.

As a Supreme Court Justice Cardozo was extremely well regarded. A reserved man, he held to his views without offending others. Biographer Richard Posner described him as, "a cautious liberal, a moderate progressive, holding slightly advanced views for his day but not holding them with such passion as might have made him angry with people who disagreed."¹⁶ Some have ranked Cardozo as one of the most respectable Supreme Court Justices of all time.

Though he remained a committed Jew, Cardozo was not religiously observant as an adult. He served on the boards of American Friends of Hebrew University in Palestine and the American Jewish Committee. Though not a fervent Zionist, he did support the Zionist Organization of America. His understanding of justice and morality was certainly made an impact on his Jewish upbringing, and played a role, though sometimes quiet role, in his legal career and organizational membership.

This biography was compiled using the following sources:

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/biography/cardozo.html>

<http://www.courts.state.ny.us/history/Cardozo.htm>

<http://www.ssa.gov/history/cardozo.htm>

Richard Pollenberg, *The World of Benjamin Cardozo: Personal Values and the Judicial Process* (Cambridge, 1997)

Richard A Posner. *Cardozo: A Study in Reputation* (Chicago, IL. 1990), Chapter 1.

¹⁶ Richard A. Posner, *Cardozo: A Study in Reputation* (Chicago, 1990) p. 9.

Lesson 1: Who Was Benjamin Cardozo?

*Scripted Lesson

Objectives

- SWBAT describe important events in Benjamin Cardozo’s life, including his childhood and Jewish upbringing as well as his law and judicial career.
- SWBAT explain basic principles of Cardozo’s beliefs on equality and justice.
- SWBAT determine central aspects and origins of Cardozo’s identity and value system.

Materials (See Unit 2 Resources for writings and pictures)

- Advanced Organizer
- Old looking box or old looking suitcase to store items in
- Family Tree of Cardozo Family
- Picture of baby Benjamin with twin sister, Emily, and mother, Rebecca
- Picture of Benjamin at age 12
- “The Dream,” a poem written by Benjamin after his mother’s death
- Excerpt of instructions to Bar Mitzvah boys from Henry Pereira Mendes, religious leader of Cardozo’s synagogue, Shearith Israel
- Time Magazine Cover of Cardozo
- Picture of Cardozo as an adult
- Writings from Cardozo

Timeline

0-5 minutes	Introduction
5-30 minutes	Inquiry Activity
30-45 minutes	Debrief Inquiry Activity
45-55 minutes	Answer Students’ Questions
55-60 minutes	Wrap Up

Lesson

0-5 minutes Introduction

Present students with an old box or old suitcase labeled “Estate of Benjamin Nathan Cardozo.” In the box will be a number of items (see Materials list and Unit 2 Resources) associated with important moments and events in Cardozo’s life. Have students sort through the items – looking at pictures, reading short pieces of writing and handling memorabilia – using the Advanced Organizer (found in Unit 2 Resources) in order to organize and describe the items.

5-30 minutes Inquiry Activity

Give students the following instructions for searching through the “Estate” and using the Advanced Organizer:

Examine each item found in the “Estate of Benjamin Nathan Cardozo,” and list them in the chart below. Then fill out the chart to the best of your ability, sometimes making educated guesses based on what you see. In the section labeled, “American” Jewish” “Both” “Unidentifiable,” you should decide which aspect of Cardozo’s identity this item

represents. Some items may represent both, and some may be too hard to know, so you can mark it accordingly.

Depending on how many students are in the class, you may want to break them up into a few groups. You can give each group a few items at a time, and then have them rotate around in order to view each of the items.

30-45 minutes Debrief Inquiry Activity

After students have gone through each of the items, bring them all together to debrief what they've just discovered. Invite students to describe the item that they found to be the most interesting, and have them go through the chart answering each of the questions except for the one in the last column. (They can do this individually or in groups if they were divided during the Inquiry.)

45-55 minutes Answer Students' Questions

Finally, once the class has gone through a number of items, invite the students to ask the questions they wrote in the final column, "*What questions would you want to ask Cardozo based on this item?*" Try to answer each question to the best of your ability based on your own knowledge and the information found in the biographical sources listed above. For less fact-based questions, you might invite students to try to answer each other's questions, engaging in a discussion about Cardozo's life.

55-60 minutes Wrap Up

Cardozo took the law very seriously, and applied his American and Jewish morals and ethics to legal decisions he made. Next lesson, we'll take a look at how his philosophy of judgment applies to Jewish and American tradition.

Lesson 2: A Look at Cardozo's Thinking

Objectives

- SWBAT reference a piece of Biblical law that is applicable to modern law.
- SWBAT analyze the meaning behind the law through both religious and secular lenses.
- SWBAT justify Cardozo's use of that piece of law within the confines of both Jewish and American tradition.

Activity

Divide students into small groups, and give each group a copy of "Daf Cardozo" (found in Unit 2 Resources) to study. Each group will look at the Biblical quote located in the center of the page. Then, they will work their way around the page reading the commentary, answering questions, and adding their own commentary when appropriate. Toward the end of the lesson, bring the groups together and debrief as a large group.

Lesson 3: Where Else Are There Examples of People Like Benjamin Cardozo?

Objectives

- SWBAT name some prominent Jewish lawyers and judges that have had an impact on the American public sphere throughout history.
- SWBAT compare and contrast Benjamin Cardozo's sense of Jewish and American identity with another Jewish lawyer and/or judge as well as their sense of justice.
- SWBAT compare and contrast Benjamin Cardozo's impact on the American public sphere with another Jewish lawyer and/or judge.

Activity

Alternative 1: Jig Saw Study of Biographies

Choose three people listed under Biographies of Jewish Lawyers and Judges in the Unit 2 Resources section to study. Divide students into three groups, and give each group the short biography of one of the people. Have each group read the biography, determine the main points of that person's life and career, and decide how the person is similar and different to Benjamin Cardozo.

After students have gone through the biographies, rearrange the groups so that at least one representative from each of the previous groups is in the new group. Students should report to their new group members about the people they studied in the previous group. This way, all of the students get to learn about all three people!

Once students have reported to each other and discussed the similarities and differences among the people and Cardozo, bring the class back together as a large group. Go over the comparisons and contrasts they made between the people and Cardozo, and be sure to highlight aspects of identity and impact on the American public sphere.

Alternative 2: Cyber Study of Biographies

If you have access to computers and the Internet, divide students into *chevruta* or small groups and assign each of them a person listed under Biographies of Jewish Lawyers and Judges in the Unit 2 Resources section to research on the Internet. Provide the suggested website from the list, and encourage them to find other resources on the Internet.

After they've done their research, have them report to each other about the person they researched. Once students have reported to each other, have them discuss the similarities and differences among the people and Cardozo. Go over the comparisons and contrasts they made between the people and Cardozo, and be sure to highlight aspects of identity and impact on the American public sphere.

Lesson 4: How Can I Apply What I've Learned About Benjamin Cardozo to Today?

*Memorable Moment

***Authentic Assessment

Objectives

- SWBAT interview current lawyer(s) and/or judge(s) about their sense of Jewish and American identity and their impact on the American public sphere.
- SWBAT propose an ideal model of morality and justice for a Jewish legal professional.
- SWBAT assess how the models of Jewish and American identity articulated by Cardozo and other Jewish lawyers and judge might fit into their sense of identity.

Activity: Panel of Modern Day Jewish Legal Professionals

Invite a panel of judges and/or lawyers to meet with the students and speak about how their Jewish and American identity impacts their career.* Provide members of the panel with questions that will be posed as well as information about Benjamin Cardozo and what the students have been studying ahead of time.

*Recommendations for the panel:

- Three people would be an ideal number for your panel, but could easily be done with one or two people as well.
- It would be helpful if the panel has a mixture of judges and lawyers.
- Try to be sensitive to gender equality.
- Try to meet the panel in a courtroom to help in creating a memorable moment.
- Try to get any members of your congregation who work in the legal profession, this will really help bring it home to the students, and is a great way to involve other members of your congregation.
- See Modern Jewish Lawyers and Judges in Unit 2 Resources to find resources where you can search for legal professionals in your community.

Possible Variations for Moderating the Panel

Variation 1: Students Prepare Questions and Moderate Together

If there is time to prepare in advance, have the students brainstorm questions that they would want to ask the panel members based on what they've learned about Cardozo and other judges and lawyers. Assign different students to ask specific questions, and have one student serve as the moderator. This is the preferred variation as it will give students leadership roles, and allow them to apply what they have learned from previous lessons while creating questions.

Variation 2: You, the Teacher Act as the Moderator

If there is no time for students to prepare questions in advance, choose this variation. Prepare the questions and send them to the members of the panel in advance. Pose each question to the panel, and give them a specific amount of time to respond to it. After the predetermined questions have been answered, invite the students to ask questions. Here are some suggested questions to pose to the panel:

- *How does Benjamin Cardozo serve as a model for you in your career?*
- *Cardozo had a strong Jewish upbringing. What, if anything, from your childhood has had an impact on your career? (Jewish and secular)*
- *Cardozo had high standards of morality. What is your sense of morality and how does it play out in your practice?*
- *Clearly, “justice” played a strong role in Cardozo’s career. How do you define “justice?”*
- *How, if at all, does Judaism influence your career?*
- *How, if at all, does your sense of Americanism influence your career?*

Debrief Panel and Unit

After meeting with the panel be sure to have a reflection conversation that synthesizes the entire unit with the students. (This could happen immediately after the panel or during the following session.) Here are some suggested questions to guide the conversation:

- *How were members of our panel similar to Cardozo? How were they different?*
- *Were they more similar to any of the other lawyers/judges we studied? How so?*
- *Of all of the people we’ve met and studied, whose story is most compelling to you? How so?*
- *How has Judaism enhanced people’s legal careers? How has it gotten in the way?*
- *Do you agree that it’s important for a person’s Jewish identity to have an impact on the work they do in the legal system? Why/why not?*

Materials in “Estate of Benjamin Nathan Cardozo”

Cardozo Family Tree

		Aaron Nunez Cardozo (emigrated from London in 1752)			
		Isaac Nunez Cardozo (fought in American Revolutionary War)			
		Grandfather Cardozo			
		Judge Albert Cardozo	Rebecca Nathan		
Albert Cardozo Jr.	Ellen “Nell” Cardozo	Grace Cardozo	Elizabeth Cardozo	Benjamin Cardozo	Emily Cardozo

“The Dream,” a poem written by Cardozo in late 1879/early 1880 shortly after his mother passed away

Seizing hold of the pen, for I never knew fear
 The subject said he Sir said I the New Year,
 Begin Sir –
 Each coming year brings new delight
 -- What now is that, twas Aunty said goodnight.
 Aunty I wish you had not said goodnight
 You have aroused me from a worlds delight
 Both spirits and dreams have flown away
 Perhaps to come some other day
 And when they do promise truly then
 You shall heare more from
 Master Ben¹⁷

Excerpts from Henry Pereira Mendes’ instructions to Bar Mitzvah Students

“I will, to the best of my ability, all my life live according to the spirit and word of God. I’ll do my best to set the right example by making my personal life and my home life loving and my business life, when by and by I enter business, honorable.

¹⁷ Hellman, George C. *Benjamin N. Cardozo: American Judge* (New York, 1940), p. 16. Found in Richard Pollenberg, *The World of Benjamin Cardozo: Personal Values and the Judicial Process* (Cambridge, 1997) p. 12-13.

“Therefore you never will be a sneak at school, or a moral coward in business; you will never be ashamed of your religion and try to hide it.

“We consecrate ourselves and our lives when we have the moral courage to speak out for what is right and pure, to speak out against what is wrong and impure.”¹⁸

Writings from Cardozo

“Judicial power is never exercised for the purpose of giving effect to the will of the judge; always for the purpose of giving effect to the will of the legislature; or in other words, to the will of the law.”¹⁹

“The great treasures for jurisprudence” that are “buried in the Holy Land

“Do not heed a popular cry to convict, nor decide a cause either to please the powerful or to favor the poor

“Abhor a false cause and condemn not to death the man once acquitted or the man that is innocent

“Do not oppress a stranger; ye knew a stranger’s life; ye were yourselves strangers in the land of Egypt

“Its sustenance from the roots of morality and custom

“Law, human and divine, has been craving of the Hebrew spirit

“Law is in touch with the Eternities”²⁰

“The judge even when he is free, is not wholly free. He is not to innovate at pleasure. He is not a knight-errant roaming at will in pursuit of his own ideal of beauty or of goodness... He is not to yield to spasmodic sentiment, to vague and unregulated benevolence.”²¹

¹⁸ H. Pereira Mendes, *Bar Mitzvah for Boyhood, Youth and Manhood* (New York, 1938). Found in Richard Pollenberg, *The World of Benjamin Cardozo: Personal Values and the Judicial Process* (Cambridge, 1997) p. 17.

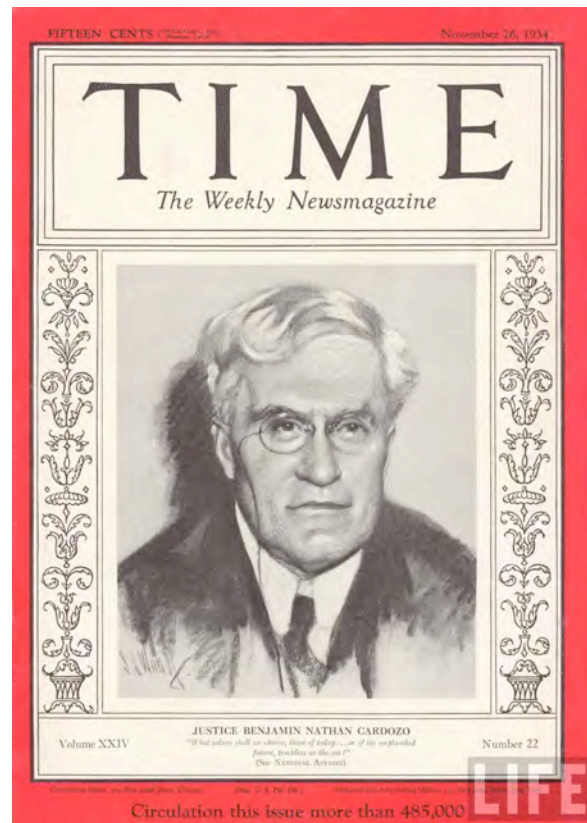
¹⁹ 22 U.S. (9 Wheat.) 738, 866 (1824). Found in Richard A. Posner, *Cardozo: A Study in Reputation* (Chicago, 1990) p. 22.

²⁰ Cardozo, “Reflections upon a School of Jurisprudence at the Hebrew University (1928), Cardozo MSS, Box 13. Found in Richard Pollenberg, *The World of Benjamin Cardozo: Personal Values and the Judicial Process* (Cambridge, 1997) p. 177-178.

²¹ Cardozo, *The Nature of the Judicial Process* (New Haven, 1921), pp. 174-175. Found in Richard Pollenberg, *The World of Benjamin Cardozo: Personal Values and the Judicial Process* (Cambridge, 1997) p. 87.

Images of Cardozo





*See Unit 2 Appendix B for Cardozo's childhood pictures

Lesson 2: Where Else Are There Examples of People Like Benjamin Cardozo?

Biographies of Jewish Lawyers and Judges

Louis Brandeis (Supreme Court Justice)

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/biography/Brandeis.html>

Steven Breyer (Supreme Court Justice)

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/biography/breyer.html>

Alan Dershowitz (Lawyer and Author)

<http://www.alandershowitz.com/biography.php>

Abe Fortas (Supreme Court Justice)

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/biography/fortas.html>

Felix Frankfurter (Supreme Court Justice)

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/biography/frankfurter.html>

Ruth Bader Ginsberg (Supreme Court Justice)

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/biography/Ginsburg.html>

Arthur Goldberg (Supreme Court Justice)

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/biography/AGoldberg.html>

Samuel Leibowitz (Lawyer)

http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/scottsboro/SB_bLieb.html

Louis Marshall (Lawyer and Activist)

<http://www.cjh.org/nhprc/LouisMarshall.html>

Judith Sheindlin (Judge Judy)

http://www.judgejudy.com/profiles_of_justice.php

Lesson 4: How Can I Apply What I've Learned About Benjamin Cardozo to Today?

Modern Jewish Lawyers and Judges

American Jewish Committee, contact the chapter nearest you to get names of members:

<http://www.ajc.org/site/c.ijlTI2PHKoG/b.789097/k.C8E7/Chapters.htm>

The American Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists member search:

<http://www.jewishlawyers.org/search.asp?search=new>

The International Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists member search:

http://www.jlawyers.org/find_lawyer.php

Google "Jewish Law Students Association" for a local chapter of this organization, and contact the local chapter for a list of alumni.

Unit 3

Bella Abzug

Political Activist

Enduring Understandings

- Democratic societies, such as America, which seek to promote values of compassion and equality, can serve as places where Jews can feel safe to live, prosper and contribute.
- Active involvement by Jews in the American public sphere has conveyed the Jewish community's devotion to equal rights for all citizens since the country's inception.
- American Jews can have a distinct impact on American society by integrating their understanding of their Jewish identity and their American identity.
- When a coalesced Jewish American roots his/her local pursuit of justice on the biblical, prophetic, rabbinical and modern teachings of Judaism, he/she can produce a distinct voice and perspective within the larger society.
- The tension between American and Jewish values can encourage a creative struggle for those whose lives are informed by both.

Essential Questions

- How can Bella Abzug serve as a (Jewish) model for involvement in the American public sphere?
- How can I stand up for issues of social justice important to me and make my voice heard?
- How can my Jewish background inform my pursuit for social justice in the American public sphere?

Goals

- To inform students of the life and achievements of social justice activist, Bella Abzug.
- To give students a sense of how Abzug's Jewish and American identity informed her commitment to social justice.
- To provide students with a background of contributions made by Jews to social justice issues in the American public sphere via the story of Bella Abzug.

Outline of Lessons

Lesson 1: Who Was Bella Abzug?

Lesson 2: Where Else Can I Find Examples of People Like Bella Abzug?

*Scripted Lesson

Lesson 3: What Did Bella Abzug Do?

Lesson 4: How Can I Apply What I've Learned About Bella Abzug to Today?

**Memorable Moment

***Authentic Assessment

Background Information on Bella Abzug

Born in the Bronx on July 24, 1920, Bella (Savitzky) Abzug predated women's right to vote by one month. A fighter for justice and peace, equal rights, human dignity, environmental integrity, and sustainable development, Bella Abzug has advanced human goals and political alliances worldwide.

Known by her colleagues as a "passionate perfectionist," Bella's idealism and activism grew out of childhood influences and experiences. From her earliest years, she understood the nature of power and the fact that politics is not an isolated, individualist adventure. She was a natural leader, even as a girl among competitive boys.

In synagogue with her maternal grandfather, Wolf Taklefsky, who was her babysitter and first mentor, Bella's beautiful voice and keen memory delighted her elders with the brilliance of her prayers, and her ability to read Hebrew and *daven* [pray]. Although routinely dispatched to the women's place behind the *mechitzah* [curtain separating women from men in a place of prayer], by the time she was eight, she was an outstanding student in the Talmud Torah school she attended, and a community star.

Her Hebrew schoolteacher, Levi Soshuk, recruited her to a left-wing labor Zionist group, *Hashomer Hatzair* [the young guard]. By the time she was eleven, Bella and her gang of socialist Zionists planned to go to Israel together as a kibbutz community... they raised money for a Jewish homeland with Abzug in the lead. At subway stops, she gave impassioned speeches, and people tended to give generously to the earnest, well-spoken girl.

Hitler came to power the year her father Emanuel died, and Bella emerged as an outspoken thirteen-year-old girl-child willing to break the rules. Prohibited by tradition from saying Kaddish for her father in synagogue, Bella did so anyway. Every morning before school for a year, she attended synagogue and *davened*. The congregants looked askance and never did approve, but nobody ever stopped her. She just did what she needed to do for her father, who had no son-and learned a lesson for life: Be bold, be brazen, be true to your heart. She advised others: "People may not like it, but no one will stop you."

Bella's mother supported her rebellion — all her rebellions. Esther Savitzky appreciated her younger daughter's talents and encouraged her every interest. By the age of thirteen, a leader in the crusade for women's rights, equal space, dignity, and empowerment for girls was in active training.

She was elected class president at Walton High School in 1937 and student government president of Hunter College in 1941. A political science major, Bella was active in the American Student Union and was an early and ardent champion of civil rights and civil liberties. At Hunter, she was at the center of a permanent circle of friends who remained political activists and lifelong champions of causes for women, peace, and justice.

With her brilliant college record and leadership awards, Bella won a scholarship to Columbia University Law School. (Harvard, her first choice, turned her down-its law school did not accept women until 1952.) Her record at Columbia was splendid. She became an editor of the Law Review, and her reputation as tough, combative, diligent, and dedicated grew.

Bella met Martin Abzug while visiting relatives in Miami after her graduation from Hunter. They married on June 4, 1944. He admired her integrity, vision, and combative style, and until his death remained her steadfast supporter. For forty-two years, their marriage, based on love, respect, and a generosity of spirit unrivaled in political circles, enabled Bella's activities.

Immediately after law school, Bella joined a labor law firm that represented union locals. During the 1950s, Bella Abzug was one of very few independent attorneys willing to take "Communist" cases. With Martin's encouragement, she opened her own office, and defended teachers, entertainment, radio, and Hollywood personalities assaulted during the witch-hunt.

She also defended Willie McGee. In an internationally celebrated case, McGee, a black Mississippian, was falsely accused of raping a white woman with whom he had a long-term consensual relationship. Abzug appealed the case before the Supreme Court and achieved two stays of execution when she argued that "Negroes were systematically excluded from jury service." But she did not achieve a change of venue, and after the third trial and conviction, all appeals were denied.

In 1961, Abzug and her friends from Hunter joined others to create Women Strike for Peace. For the next decade, they lobbied for a nuclear test ban treaty, mobilized against Strontium-90 in milk, and protested against the war in Indochina. During the 1960s, Abzug became a prominent national speaker against the poverty, racism, and violence that mocked the promise of democracy in America.

A leading reform Democrat, a successful attorney, a popular grass-roots activist, Abzug was urged to run for Congress, which she agreed to do at the age of fifty in 1970. Representing women, justice, and peace, she cast her first vote for the Equal Rights Amendment.

The first member of Congress to call for Nixon's impeachment, Abzug helped journalists, historians, and citizens to combat the disinformation, misinformation, and generally abusive tactics that marked so much of the Cold War and blocked for so long the path toward human rights.

Above all, Abzug achieved splendid victories for women. She initiated the congressional caucus on women's issues, helped organize the National Women's Political Caucus, and served as chief strategist for the Democratic Women's Committee, which achieved equal representation for women in all elective and appointive posts, including

presidential conventions. She wrote the first law banning discrimination against women in obtaining credit, credit cards, loans, and mortgages, and introduced pioneering bills on comprehensive childcare, Social Security for homemakers, family planning, and abortion rights. In 1975, she introduced an amendment to the Civil Rights Act to include gay and lesbian rights.

Reelected for three terms, Abzug served from 1971 to 1977 and was acknowledged by a U.S. News & World Report survey of House members as the "third most influential" House member. In a 1977 Gallup poll, she was named one of the twenty most influential women of the world.

After Abzug was defeated in a four-way primary race for the Senate in 1976 by less than one percent, President Carter appointed her chair of the National Commission on the Observance of International Women's Year, and later co chair of the National Advisory Commission for Women. She also led the fight against the Zionism Is Racism resolution passed in 1975, which was finally repealed in 1985 in Nairobi. Long active in supporting Israel, especially in Congress and in Israeli-U.S.-Palestine peace efforts, she insisted that Zionism was a liberation movement. Always controversial, her definition of Zionism embraced the international peace movement represented in Israel by Shulamith Aloni and others who promoted the peace process.

Most recently, as co-creator and president of the Women's Environmental and Development Organization (WEDO), a global organization, Abzug galvanized and helped transform the United Nations agenda regarding women and their concerns for human rights, economic justice, population, development, and the environment. WEDO represents the culmination of her lifelong career as public activist and stateswoman.

Bella Abzug's understanding of the need for an international network of women working across this troubled planet for decency, justice, and peace has fortified a global sisterhood never before imagined. With a song in her throat and a very high heart, Abzug is a boundless source of hope for the future. She lives every day to the fullest and blesses every day with the spiritual fervor of her responsibility and commitment to all people-one life, one weave.

This is an edited version of a biography written by Blanche Wiesen Cook for Jewish Virtual Library. For the full biography please see:

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/biography/abzug.html>

Lesson 1: Who Was Bella Abzug?

Objectives

- SWBAT describe important events in Bella Abzug's life, including her childhood and Jewish upbringing as well as her career in social justice and political activism.
- SWBAT draw conclusions about the reasons for Abzug's commitment to social justice based on her upbringing.

Activity

Show the video "Intimate Portrait: Bella Abzug" to your students and discuss it. The video's length is one hour. If your class period is longer than an hour, you can discuss it immediately following the viewing. However if your class is one hour or less you may want to watch only parts of the video or divide this lesson between two class periods. Included in Unit 3 Resources is a "Viewing Sheet," complete with questions that students should be able to answer about Abzug based on the video. I recommend giving this sheet to the students to fill out as they watch the video, and then they can use it as a guide during the discussion.

A copy of the video is available on DVD with the copy of this Curriculum Guide in the Tartak Resource Center at Hebrew Union College, Los Angeles. To obtain a copy please contact the Tartak Resource Center at 213-765-2192 or search for it on their website at <http://www.huc.edu/tartak>.

Lesson 2: Where Else Can I Find Examples of People Like Bella Abzug?

*Scripted Lesson

Objectives

- SWBAT name Jewish women who have paved the way in politics and activism.
- SWBAT compare and contrast the experiences of various Jewish women who were political activists.
- SWBAT construct the ultimate Jewish woman political activist.

Materials

- Three computers with sound & internet
- Butcher paper
- Markers

Timeline

0-10 minutes	Introduction: Bella's political involvement
10-30 minutes	Research Jewish women who were/are political activists
30-45 minutes	Present research to classmates
45-60 minutes	Wrap-up: The Ultimate Jewish Woman Political Activist

Lesson

0-5 minutes Introduction: Jewish Women in Politics

Ask students to think about and share names of Jewish women who they know (famous or not) that are politically involved. They can share what the women are passionate about, and how they think they have been so successful.

5-30 minutes Research Jewish women who were/are political activists

Divide the students into three groups, each of which will be assigned a Jewish woman to research, Joanne Alter, Judi Hirshfield-Bartek, Madalyn Schenk. They will study their assigned woman using the Internet links provided in Unit 3 Resources, and answer the questions on the "Jewish Women Political Activists Questionnaire Sheet" also found in Unit 3 Resources. They should be prepared to give a short 5-minute presentation about the woman they study to the rest of the class.

30-45 minutes Present research to classmates

Based on the information compiled on their Questionnaire Sheet, each group should present on the woman they researched. They should give information about her background and accomplishments, and explain how Judaism influenced her work. They should also be sure to compare/contrast her with Bella, and give their opinion on her and her work. Students should be encouraged to ask each other questions.

45-60 minutes Wrap-up: The Ultimate Jewish Woman Political Activist

After all of the presentations are through, explain to the students that they're going to create the ultimate Jewish woman political activist. Give them butcher paper and markers and tell them to be extremely creative! They should take the best attributes

from each of the four women that they've studied to create this Ultimate Woman. For example, you might prompt them by asking:

- *What would she say?*
- *Where would she be?*
- *Who would she be with?*
- *Which causes would she focus on?*

Students should work on this together as one large group in order to have a rich experience of debating what the most important aspects are!

Lesson 3: What Did Bella Abzug Do?

Objectives

- SWBAT describe the cause of women's rights in garment factories supported by Women's Environment & Development Organization (WEDO), which was founded by Bella Abzug.
- SWBAT compare and contrast issues faced by garment workers today with those faced by workers in the early 20th Century.
- SWBAT decide how they might advocate for women's rights in garment factories today.

Activity

This lesson affords students to learn how an organization that was created by Abzug is functioning today. It also links the issue of women garment workers to an important period in Jewish history, when many Jewish immigrants worked in the garment factories. Finally, labor law was one of the first things that Abzug took on in her career, so this helps bring to life an issue near and dear to her heart.

Have the students look at the "No Schvitz" booklet published by the Progressive Jewish Alliance (PJA) (Found in Unit 3 Appendix B), or other resources provided by the PJA listed in Unit 3 Resources. While the entire booklet is worth reading, I will suggest a few sections that are key to highlight. (Students may want to look through the entire booklet prior to meeting with a representative in Lesson 4, or to help prepare for presentations in Unit 5.)

Sections to highlight:

- "For Every Ten Jews, Eleven Opinions" (p. 4)
- "Sweatshops" (p. 5-6)
- "Triangle Shirtwaist Factory" (p. 8-9)
- "Point/Counterpoint" (p. 23)
- "Be a Mensch: Do Your Part" (p. 25) *This page will be extremely helpful when preparing for meeting with a representative in Lesson 4.

Students should also look at materials put out by WEDO through their Corporate Campaigns. They can compare information about today's conditions with those of the early 20th Century described in "No Schvitz." WEDO's resources will also help prepare them for meeting with a representative to discuss labor law issues. See Unit 3 Resources for links to WEDO's Corporate Campaigns.

Lesson 4: How Can I Apply What I've Learned About Bella Abzug to Today?

**Memorable Moment

***Authentic Assessment

Objectives

- SWBAT demonstrate a working knowledge of workers' rights issues.
- SWBAT argue for legislation in favor of workers' rights.

Activity

This is a multi-part lesson that utilizes what the students learned in Lesson 2 of this Unit. Following up on that lesson about garment workers, provide an opportunity for students prepare for their meeting with a government representative. You should arrange ahead of time for your students to meet with a representative on the local, state or even federal level. Find out which workers' rights issues are most relevant to the branch of government you'll be focusing on, and provide background information for the students to help them prepare their arguments.

For example, if your students meet with your local member of the House of Representatives, you might have them discuss "Decent Working Conditions and Fair Competition Act." This is a bill that ultimately died in committee that sought to prohibit the import or export of goods that were made by sweatshop labor. Information about this bill can be found in Unit 3 Resources. Students could try to persuade their congressperson that this bill should be pursued again.

Another example could be if students meet with a state or local representative to discuss raising minimum wage to a "living wage." Included in Unit 3 Resources is a link to a living wage calculator and information about the living wage campaign.

Unit 3 Resources

Bella Abzug

Political Activist

Lesson 1: Who Was Bella Abzug?

Viewing Sheet

(Suggested answers are in blue)

What sense of justice was Bella raised with?

(Immigrant sense of justice)

Where did her strong sense of religion come from?

(Her grandfather)

What was one of the earliest causes for which Bella fought?

(Zionism, a woman's right to say Kaddish for her father)

What was Bella like as a teenager?

(Tomboy, a leader, popular)

Why did she want to be a lawyer?

(To set things right)

Why did she leave labor law?

(To fight McCarthyism, pursue social justice)

What happened to Bella during the Willie McGee case?

(She spent the night in a bus station, the KKK hunted her, she lost the case, she lost her baby)

How did she impart her views of social justice onto her daughters?

(To live it everyday, everything you do and say must stem from that)

What did Women Strike For Peace protest against?

(Nuclear testing)

Were they successful? How do you know?

(Yes, when JFK signed the bill to ban nuclear testing, he remarked on the impact the women had on his decision)

Why did Bella run for office?

(She was sick of the men who she helped get elected never giving her a chance to lead!)

What was the first thing she did in public office?
(End the Vietnam War)

What was she the first congressperson to do?
(Call for Nixon's impeachment)

Why was she successful in congress?
(She knew how to build coalitions, she continued her activism)

What was an important issue at the 1972 Democratic National Convention?
(Right to choose)

What made Bella stand out among other women?
(Her ability to get angry, that she could operate in a man's world)

What happened after she lost her seat in congress?
(She created the Women's Conference)

Why was economy a "women's issue?"
(Women are an important part of the economy, and in a egalitarian society, they should have equal say unto how it operates.)

What did she accomplish in Women's Environment & Development Organization (WEDO)?
(Helping women worldwide discover their voice and their ability to make a difference)

What are the major issues of WEDO?
(Environment, Women, Social Responsibility)

How do you think Bella's spirit lives on?

Lesson 2: What Did Bella Abzug Do?

Progressive Jewish Alliance Economic Justice Campaigns

Anti-Sweatshop Campaign

<http://www.pjalliance.org/article.aspx?ID=282&CID=1>

Low-Wage Worker Campaigns

<http://www.pjalliance.org/article.aspx?ID=283&CID=1>

Women's Environment & Development Organization Corporate Campaign

Corporate Campaign Main Page

<http://www.wedo.org/category/learn/campaigns/corporateaccountability/corporate-campaigns>.

MisFortune, sub-organization of WEDO

<http://www.misfortune500.org/>

MisFortune 500's corporate accountability page:

<http://www.misfortune500.org/Content/Show.aspx?contentid=9>

Lesson 3: Where Else Can I Find Examples of People Like Bella Abzug?

Internet Links

(all found at Jewish Women's Archive, www.jwa.org)

Joanne Alter

<http://jwa.org/exhibits/wwd/jsp/bio.jsp?personID=pjalter> (biography, photos & quotes)

<http://jwa.org/node/6956> (audio sound bite of quote)

Judi Hirshfield-Bartek

<http://jwa.org/exhibits/wwd/jsp/bio.jsp?personID=pjhirshfield-bartek> (biography, photos & quotes)

<http://jwa.org/node/6958> (audio sound bite of quote)

Madalyn Schenk

<http://jwa.org/exhibits/wwd/jsp/bio.jsp?personID=pmschenk> (biography, photos & quotes)

Jewish Women Political Activists Questionnaire Sheet

Name of woman:

Life background:

Major accomplishments & issues she fought for:

How does Judaism inform her work?

Why are women's issues so important to her?

In what ways is she the same as Bella?

In what ways is she different than Bella?

Do you agree with the causes she fought for and her way of fighting? Why/why not?

Any other important information about her?

Lesson 4: How Can Apply What I've Learned About Bella Abzug to Today?

Federal Workers' Rights Issue:

Information about the Decent Working Conditions and Fair Competition Act

The National Labor Committee

<http://www.nlcnet.org/article.php?id=242>

GovTrack: A Civic Project to track Congress

<http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bill.xpd?bill=s110-367>

Open Congress

<http://www.opencongress.org/bill/110-s367/show>

State Workers' Rights Issue:

Information for a Living Wage

Living Wage Calculator

<http://www.livingwage.geog.psu.edu/>

(Find your state and then your county to see the calculated living wage versus the minimum wage.)

Living Wage Campaign

<http://www.livingwagecampaign.org/>

Other links for Workers' Rights Campaigns:

Educating for Justice: Stop Nike Sweatshops

<http://www.educatingforjustice.org/stopnikesweatshops.htm>

Unit 4

Abraham Joshua Heschel

Rabbi and Religious Social Justice Leader

Enduring Understandings

- Democratic societies, such as America, which seek to promote values of compassion and equality, can serve as places where Jews can feel safe to live, prosper and contribute.
- Active involvement by Jews in the American public sphere has conveyed the Jewish community's devotion to equal rights for all citizens since the country's inception.
- American Jews can have a distinct impact on American society by integrating their understanding of their Jewish identity and their American identity.
- When a coalesced Jewish American roots his/her local pursuit of justice on the biblical, prophetic, rabbinical and modern teachings of Judaism, he/she can produce a distinct voice and perspective within the larger society.
- The tension between American and Jewish values can encourage a creative struggle for those whose lives are informed by both.

Essential Questions

- How can Abraham Joshua Heschel serve as a Jewish model for involvement in the American public sphere?
- How can I integrate Jewish learning into my pursuit for social justice?
- How can people of different faiths join together in fighting social justice causes together?

Goals

- To inform students of the life and achievements of religious social justice leader, Abraham Joshua Heschel.
- To give students a sense of how Jewish tradition and faith in God guided everything that Heschel did.
- To provide students with a background of contributions made by Jewish leaders to social justice issues in the American public sphere via the story of Heschel.
- For students to feel empowered to engage in interfaith social justice opportunities.

Outline of Lessons

Lesson 1: Who Was Abraham Joshua Heschel?

Lesson 2: Where Else Can I Find Examples of People Like Heschel?

Lesson 3: A Look at Heschel's Work

Lesson 4: What We Might Do Together: An Interfaith Service Learning Program

*Scripted Lesson

**Memorable Moment

***Authentic Assessment

Background Information about Abraham Joshua Heschel

“Abraham Joshua Heschel (1907-1972), a descendant of two important Hasidic dynasties, was born in Warsaw. After receiving a thorough Jewish education in Poland, Heschel entered the University of Berlin, where in 1934 he received his doctorate for a study of the biblical prophets... . In 1937 Heschel became Martin Buber’s successor at the Judisches Lehrhaus in Frankfurt and head of adult Jewish education in Germany, but the following year, he and other Polish Jews were deported by the Nazis.

“After stays in Warsaw and London, in 1940 he came to the United States to teach at the Hebrew Union College. In 1945 Heschel became Professor of Ethics and Mysticism at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York and began to publish a series of works, ranging from studies on the piety of East European Jewry and the inward character of Jewish observance, to religious symbolism, Jewish views of humanity, and contemporary moral and political issues. Before his untimely death, Heschel had become highly respected among American religionists of many faiths not only for his writings but also for his active role in the civil rights and peace movements of the 1960s and in the Jewish-Christian dialogue.”²²

“Rabbi Heschel was a devout Jew whose compassion embraced all mankind. “My major concern is the human situation,” he once said... He held that “the main theme of Jewish law is the person rather than an institution,” and that “the highest peak of spiritual living is not necessarily reached in rare moments of ecstasy; the highest peak lies wherever we are and may be ascended in a common deed. Religion is not made for extraordinary occasions.” He epitomized his interpretation of law in this definition: “An act of injustice is condemned, not because the law is broken, but because a person has been hurt.”

“Heschel was in the forefront of every human concern. In the spring of 1965, he marched with Martin Luther King, Jr. at Selma, Alabama; he was a leader in the protests against American policy in Vietnam; he participated in many civil-rights marches and peace rallies. Following the Six-Day War in 1967, he responded to the historic moment with his book *Israel: An Echo of Eternity*. He was the first to urge world Jewry to come to the aid of Soviet Jews. He was a strong ecumenicist, urging Christian-Jewish dialogue. He was frequently invited to the Vatican and was asked to speak on prayer on Italian radio and television. Although he suffered a near fatal heart attack in 1969, he continued his strenuous activities in behalf of human rights.”²³

²² Edited version of biography written by Robert Selzer in his book *Jewish People, Jewish Thought* and adapted for MyJewishLearning.Com. For the biography please see: http://www.myjewishlearning.com/beliefs/Theology/Thinkers_and_Thought/Jewish_Philosophy/Philosophies/Modern/A_J_Heschel.shtml

²³ Edited version of Foreword written by Ruth Marcus Goodhill in her book, *The Wisdom of Heschel*, Los Angeles, 1975, pp. x-xi.

Heschel tried to convey a disciplined inwardness to students who didn't grow up with the same discipline he did. He held a key to survival of Judaism, and he knew that he held the key. He often talked to people about what they didn't want to hear: to the Orthodox he discussed behaviorism; to the Reform, Halakha. He pushed educators to see beyond self-expressionism. He believed teachers must guide students, and is often quoted saying, "What we need is not more text books, but text people."

Heschel emphasized the importance of human action and deed, and believed that through such action would come valuable meaning. He is quoted as saying, "A Jew is asked to take a leap of action rather than a leap of thought. He is asked to do more than he understands in order to understand more than he does." Much of his writing and activism communicates this concept, for he was a "doer" who gained great faith and strength through his actions.

Lesson 1: Who Was Abraham Joshua Heschel?

Objectives

- SWBAT list 2-4 events in Abraham Joshua Heschel's life, including his academic career and social justice activism that reflected his views on justice.
- SWBAT connect Heschel's beliefs to his actions.
- SWBAT compare and contrast ongoing the issues of social justice that Heschel took up with events that occurred throughout his life.

Activity: Create a Layered Timeline of Abraham Joshua Heschel's Life

Take the timeline found in Unit 4 Resources, and place each event on a separate sheet of paper. Give the students a mixed up pile of the events, and direct them to put the events in chronological order. There will be three "layers" to the timeline: (1) **Overarching History**, (2) **Key Events in Heschel's Life**, and (3) **Quotes by Heschel**. These layers are so that students can see the relationship between what was happening in the world and what Heschel was doing and thinking. They are distinguished by the colors indicated above, and students should understand this distinction so that they lay out three timelines side by side. The distinction is also made clear for you, the teacher, as it is laid out in three columns in Unit 4 Resources.

It may be helpful to give students copies of the biography provided earlier, so that they can use it as a guide when creating the timeline. This should be a team project that all students participate in together.

Once the timeline is complete, use it as a basis to discuss major aspects of Heschel's life (i.e. his commitment to social justice, his belief in human actions). Ask the students what they think each of his quotes mean, and if they agree or disagree with his statements. Be sure to have the students ask questions, and to explain things that the students have trouble understanding.

Lesson 2: Where Else Can I Find Examples of People Like Heschel?

Objectives

- SWBAT identify 2-4 tensions Jewish leaders' may have felt in becoming involved in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s.
- SWBAT assess what Jewish concepts and values were embedded in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s.
- SWBAT decide if the model of social activism described by a Jewish religious leader is one that they can ascribe to.

Activity: Jigsaw Read a Rabbi's Testimony of a Civil Rights March

Abraham Joshua Heschel was famous for his activism in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. He spoke out against the atrocities of racism, and spent a lot of time working with other leaders of the movement. He's seen with the white beard on the next to right of this picture during the famous march he and other leaders, including Martin Luther King, Jr. took from Selma to Montgomery. Like Heschel, other rabbis and Jewish leaders also engaged in the fight for African-Americans to achieve equal rights throughout the south. This activity is centered on reading one Rabbi's dynamic tale of his experience of marching in Birmingham. Rabbi Jacob Bloom's reflections are meant to be an example of other like rabbis who were active in this fight.



Rabbi Jacob Bloom's, "Some Personal Reflections on the Rabbis' March to Birmingham," can be found in Unit 3a Resources Appendix A. Divide the students into three groups to read through the three sections of Bloom's reflections: the first group will read the first section, "Why?," the second group, "Birmingham," and the third group will read, "As a Rabbi." As the three groups read through their assigned section, they should answer the questions on their Reading Companion Sheet (*found in Unit 4 Resources). If possible, employ other adults to help lead each of the three groups (this could include other teachers, clergy or parents).

After each of the three groups has read through their section and answered all of their discussion questions, they should "jigsaw" into new smaller groups. These new groups should have at least one member of each of the three original groups. Once in the new groups, students should summarize the section of Bloom's reflections that they read to one another. The point of this exercise is that they will be able to piece together all of Bloom's reflections, and learn about the entire piece without having to individually read it all. There should also be time for students to share the other answers to the discussion questions posed in the Reading Companion Sheet. This will allow all students to engage in a discussion that addresses all of the objectives.

Lesson 3: A Look at Heschel's Work

Objectives

- SWBAT summarize in their own words Heschel's basic beliefs about the responsibility of humanity.
- SWBAT draw 2-4 comparisons between the book of Jonah and modern human issues.
- SWBAT justify the validity of Heschel's call "to go to Nineveh."

Activity: Read Parts of the Book of Jonah Through the Eyes of Heschel

Have the students read excerpts from the Book of Jonah along with excerpts of Heschel's article, "What We Might Do Together," in the Book of Jonah and Heschel Text Study (*provided in Unit 4 Resources). Discussion questions are provided with the excerpts, and students should engage in discussion throughout the reading.

You can implement this activity in one of two ways: together as one large group or divided into small groups or *chevruta* pairs. If you lead a large group reading-discussion, you, the teacher can take the lead in moving the students forward in each section. If students are divided, they assume responsibility among themselves to complete the assignment. If you decide to divide the students, I recommend bringing everyone together toward the end of the lesson to debrief as a large group. That way if some of the small groups or *chevruta* pairs don't complete the assignment, they'll be able to get a general sense of everything included.

Lesson 4: What We Might Do Together: An Interfaith Service Learning Program

*Scripted Lesson

**Memorable Moment

***Authentic Assessment

Objectives

- SWBAT decide how their own deeds could be informed by Heschel's call to action
- SWBAT integrate the concepts of service, learning, and dialogue into a single model.
- SWBAT justify the importance for interreligious work and dialogue.

Materials

- Essays from Series, "What We Might Do Together: A Vision for Ecumenical Religious Education"

Timeline*

0:00-0:20	Introduction of Program & Ice Breakers
0:20-0:50	Small Group Text Study and Dialogue #1
0:50-1:00	Break
1:00-4:00	Service Project (allowing for breaks if/when needed)
4:00-4:10	Break
4:10-4:50	Small Group Text Study and Dialogue #2
4:50-5:20	Large Group Wrap Up and Reflection
5:20-5:30	Break
5:30-6:00	Reflection with Jewish students

*This is the ideal timeline for this lesson and project. It would be best to implement this program during an additional meeting to the regular class schedule on a Sunday afternoon, or perhaps on a Monday of a long weekend (i.e. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day). In order to have an effective program, you should devote at least six hours to the entire lesson and project, and this does not include travel time. However, if this is not possible here are a few suggestions for creating a more flexible schedule:

- Shorten the service project to two or two-and-a-half hours
- Shorten each of the dialogue/reflection periods by ten minutes
- Hold the reflection with Jewish students on a different date, the class meeting immediately following this experience

Planning the Program – The Pre-work

In order to implement this Interfaith Service Learning Program there are two main things you must do ahead of time. (1) You must secure another teenage religious group to join you, and (2) You must find a service project in which the teens can engage. I recommend doing this as far in advance as possible.

Be sure the other faith group has access to the essays from "What We Might Do Together," (found in Unit 4 Resources). Suggest that they study excerpts from at least

one of the essays ahead of time (just as you studied excerpts from Heschel's essay in Lesson 2). Excerpts from all three essays will be used throughout this lesson. Biographies of the three writers are included in Unit 4 Resources.

Lesson

0:00-0:20 Introduction of Program & Ice Breaker

Welcome all of the students from both groups, and give the structure and outline of the program. Explain that in addition to the service they will be providing, they will be studying with one another. They'll mostly study excerpts from three essays that were part of a series in the Religious Education Journal called, "What We Might Do Together: A Vision for Ecumenical Religious Education." (There are a few quotes by Heschel that come from his other writings, including the first one.) Once all logistical matters have been addressed, read the following quote:

"We must insist upon loyalty to the unique and holy treasures of our own tradition and at the same time acknowledge that in this aeon religious diversity may be the providence of God."²⁴

Then say to the students:

The purpose of today is two-fold. Not only are we here to make an impact on the community that we're serving, but we're also here to learn from one another, and to gain stronger appreciation for each other's backgrounds. Before we dive into studying together and working together, I want to invite everyone to introduce yourself to the group. As we go around, and you share your name, please also share one thing that you think is a "unique and holy treasure" to your own tradition.

After students have each shared their name and treasure, break them into smaller groups (of 6-8 people). Each group should have an equal amount of people from each faith group, and should be led by an educator/adult.

0:20-0:50 Small Group Text Study and Dialogue #1

Look at the first two texts provided in the text study sheet, and use the discussion questions to begin dialoguing.

0:50-1:00 Break

1:00-4:00 Service Project (allowing for breaks if/when needed)

Students should engage in a hands-on service project. If possible, they should work within the groups they were put into for the text study and dialogue.

4:00-4:10 Break

²⁴ Found in Chester, Michael. "Heschel and the Christians," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*. 38 no2/3 p. 246-70, Spr/Summ 2001.

4:10-4:50 Small Group Text Study and Dialogue #2

Look at the next two texts provided in the text study sheet found in Unit 3a Resources, and use the discussion questions to begin dialoguing.

4:50-5:20 Large Group Wrap Up and Reflection

Engage the students in a reflection and discussion. Begin with reflection questions, found in Unit 4 Resources, and allow students to engage in a dialogue with each other. Close with the quote provided in Unit 3a Resources, and allow for final thoughts.

5:20-5:30 Break

5:30-6:00 Reflection with Jewish students

Engage the students in a reflection and discussion. Begin with reflection questions, found in Unit 4 Resources, and allow students to engage in a dialogue with each other. Close with the quote provided in Unit 4 Resources, and allow for final thoughts.

Unit 4 Resources

Abraham Joshua Heschel

Rabbi and Religious Social Justice Leader

Lesson 1: Who Was Abraham Joshua Heschel?

List of Events for Layered Timeline Activity

Overarching History	Key Events in Heschel's Life	Quotes By Heschel
Beginning of the 20 th Century	Born on January 11, 1907 in Warsaw	The prophet is a man who feels fiercely. God has thrust a burden upon his soul, and he is bowed and stunned at man's fierce greed. ²⁵
	Grew up in family of Hasidic rabbis	
	Received primary Jewish education in Poland	
	Earned doctorate for a study of biblical prophets	
World War II (1939-1945)	Came to US to teach at Hebrew Union College	"Our people's faith in God at this moment in history did not falter. At this moment in history Isaac was indeed sacrificed, his blood shed. We all died in Auschwitz, yet our faith survived. We knew that to repudiate God would be to continue the Holocaust." ²⁶
	Became Professor of Ethics and Mysticism at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York	
Cold War, Rise of Suburbia in US (1950s)	Wrote <i>The Sabbath</i> , a critically acclaimed work that spoke of the holiness of time	"We must not forget that it is not a thing that lends significance to a moment; it is the moment that lends significance to things." ²⁷
Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s	Marched with Martin Luther King, Jr. from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama	"Friends, at the first conference on religion and race, the main participants were Pharaoh and Moses. And Moses' words were, 'Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, let my people go.' While Pharaoh retorted, 'Who's the Lord that I should heed his voice and let Israel go? I do not know the Lord. I will not let Israel go.' The
	Wrote <i>The Prophets</i> , based on his doctorate dissertation	
	Engaged in interfaith dialogue and met with Pope Paul VI	

²⁵ Heschel. *The Prophets*. Harper & Row, New York, 1962, p. 5.

²⁶ Heschel. *Israel: An Echo of Eternity*. Macmillan, 1969, p. 112.

²⁷ Heschel. *The Sabbath*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 1951, p. 6.

		outcome of that summit meeting has not come to an end. Pharaoh is not ready to capitulate. The Exodus began but is far from having been completed. In fact, it was easier for the children of Israel to cross the Red Sea than for a Negro to cross certain university campuses." ²⁸
Six-Day War in 1967	Wrote <i>Israel: An Echo of Eternity</i> , in which he responded to the historic moment in which Israel was engaged	"The land was not holy at the time of Terah or even at the time of the Patriarchs. It was sanctified by the people when they entered the land under the leadership of Joshua." ²⁹
Vietnam War (late 1960s-early 1970s)	Protested American foreign policy on the war	"It became clear to me that in regard to cruelties committed in the name of a free society some are guilty while all are responsible." ³⁰
	Attended and led many peace rallies	
	Died on December 23, 1972	"I would say to young people a number of things, and I have only one minute. I would say, let them remember that there is a meaning beyond absurdity. Let them be sure that every little deed counts, that every word has power, and that we can do — every one — our share to redeem the world despite of all absurdities and all the frustration and all disappointments. And above all, remember that the meaning of life is to live life as it if were a work of art. You're not a machine. When you are young, start working on this great work of art called your own existence." ³¹

²⁸ Heschel's Keynote Speech to Jewish, Catholic and Protestant leaders, 1963. Found in transcript of *The Spiritual Audacity of Abraham Joshua Heschel*, Speaking of Faith from America Public Media, 5 Jun 2008, <http://speakingoffaith.publicradio.org/programs/heschel/transcript.shtml>.

²⁹ Jewish Virtual Library, <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Quote/heschel.html>.

³⁰ From transcript of *The Spiritual Audacity of Abraham Joshua Heschel*.

³¹ Interview with Carl Stern, NBC, 1972. Found in transcript of *The Spiritual Audacity of Abraham Joshua Heschel*.

Lesson 2: A Look at Heschel's Work

Book of Jonah and Heschel Text Study

1

"The word of Adonai came to Jonah son of Amittai: Arise and go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me." (Jonah 1:1-2)

"The question about Auschwitz to be asked is not: 'Where was God?' but rather: 'Where was man?' The God of Abraham has never promised always to hold back Cain's hand from killing his brother. To equate God and history is idolatry. God is present when man's heart is alive. When the heart turns to stone, when man is absent, God is banished, and history, disengaged is distress.

"Today is the anniversary of the death of President Kennedy. His assassination shook the world. Yet it made no impact on our laws and customs. No lesson was learned, no conclusion was drawn... Mass killing... is becoming a favorite past-time of young boys." (Heschel 134)

Commentator Uriel Simon explains that the description of Nineveh as a "great" city, refers to the magnitude of the city's wickedness. Heschel is also describing a number things of that are "wicked."

- *How are these two messages similar?*
- *What do you think are today's "wicked" things?*

2

"Jonah, however, arose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of Adonai. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish. He paid the fare and went down into it to go with the others to Tarshish, away from the presence of Adonai." (Jonah 1:3)

"Jonah is running to Tarshish, while Nineveh is tottering on the brink. Are we not all guilty of Jonah's failure? We have been running to Tarshish when the call is to go to Nineveh." (Heschel 134)

Heschel is comparing the people's inactions to Jonah's trying to escape God's call.

- *Do you think this is a fair assessment given the "wicked" things he described earlier? Why/why not?*
- *Do you think society today is running to Tarshish?*
- *Do you think we are all as guilty as Jonah?*

3

Once Jonah was on the ship, God created a storm that put the ship in danger. The sailors on the ship were very scared, and did everything they could to overcome the storm. However, Jonah slept through all of this, and when the captain found him he asked him how he could sleep through it all. The men decided to cast lots to find out who was responsible for the evil of the storm, and the lot fell on Jonah. (Jonah 1:4-8)

“They said to him, ‘Tell us, because of whom has this evil come upon us? What is your business? Where have you come from? What is your country, and of what people are you?’ ‘I am a Hebrew,’ he replied. ‘I fear Adonai, the God of Heaven, who made both the sea and the dry land.’ The men feared greatly, and they said to him, ‘What have you done!’ for the men know that he was fleeing from the presence of Adonai – for so he had told them.” (Jonah 1:9-10)

They asked him how they could calm the sea, and he told them to cast him into it. The men did not want to do this, so they tried to row to dry land. However the storm grew greater, and they could not. So they prayed to God that they wouldn’t be guilty of killing Jonah. “And they lifted him and cast him into the sea, and the sea stopped raging.” (Jonah 1:11-15)

“Adonai appointed a great fish to swallow Jonah; and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. Then Jonah prayed to Adonai his God from the belly of the fish. He said: ‘Out of my distress I called to Adonai,
And God answered me;
From the belly of Hell I cried out,
And You heard my voice.
You cast me into the deep,
Into the heart of the sea,
The current engulfed me;
All Your breakers and billows
Swept over me.” (Jonah 2:1-4)

“The new situation in the world has plunged every one of us into unknown regions of responsibility. Unprepared, perplexed, misguided, the world is a spiritual no man’s land. Men all over the world are waiting for a way out of distress, for a new certainty of the meaning of being human. Will help come out of those who seek to keep alive the words of the prophets?” (Heschel 134)

- *How is the “new situation” that Heschel describes like the storm God created and the belly of the fish that Jonah ends up in?*
- *How are the “men waiting for a way out of distress” like Jonah?*
- *What sort of uncertainty do we have today that matches the distress Heschel describes?*

4

“When my life was ebbing away,
I called Adonai to mind;
And my prayer came before You,
Into Your holy temple.
They who cling to empty folly
Will give up their bounty,
But I, with loud thanksgiving,
Will sacrifice to You;
What I have vowed I will perform.

Deliverance is Adonai's!

Adonai commanded the fish, and it spewed Jonah out upon dry land." (Jonah 2:8-10)

"Those who pray tremble when they realize how staggering are the debts of the religions of the West. We have mortgaged our souls and borrowed so much grace, patience and forgiveness. We have promised charity, love, guidance and a way of redemption, and now we are challenged to keep the promise, to honor the pledge. How shall we prevent bankruptcy in the presence of God and man?" (Heschel 135)

Both Jonah and Heschel speak of a realization of the power one experiences in a relationship with God, and the responsibilities that come with that relationship.

- *When did Jonah feel God's presence?*
- *According to Heschel, what can prayer do for a person's faith?*
- *Based on Jonah and Heschel, what responses are necessary to fulfill the human's part in a relationship with God?*

5

"The word of Adonai came to Jonah a second time. 'Arise and go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out to it the message that I tell you.' Jonah arose and went to Nineveh in accordance with the word of Adonai. Jonah began to go into the city, a walk of one day, and he cried: 'Forty days more, and Nineveh shall be overturned!'" (Jonah 3:1-4)

The people of Nineveh repent, and God accepts their repentance and pardons the city. This upsets Jonah because he believes the divine justice was not properly challenged. So Jonah prays to God to take his life. (Jonah 3:5-4:2)

"Now, Adonai, please take my life, for I would rather die than live." (Jonah 4:3)

Then Jonah leaves the city, and finds a place to rest. God makes a plant grow above Jonah to provide shade, and Jonah felt better from this. However, the next day God puts a worm in the plant which destroys it, and when Jonah wakes up he is overheated from the hot sun. Again he says, "I would rather die than live." (Jonah 4:4-8)

"It is necessary to go to Nineveh; it is also vital to learn to stand before God. For many of us the march from Selma to Montgomery was both protest and prayer. Legs are not lips, and walking is not kneeling. And yet our legs uttered songs. Even without words, our march was worship." (Heschel 135)

- *What did going to Nineveh accomplish in the story of Jonah? What did it accomplish for Heschel?*

Jonah was not satisfied with the results of what happened in Nineveh, and so he turned to God and prayed. Likewise, Heschel explains that human actions (going to Nineveh) are only one step, but that standing before God is also necessary.

- *Can you think of an example when human actions are not enough, and prayer and trust in God is also necessary?*

6

"Then Adonai said to Jonah, 'Are you so deeply angry about the plant?' 'Yes,' so deeply that I want to die.' Then Adonai said: 'You cared about the plant, which you did not work for and which you did not grow, which appeared overnight and perished overnight. And should I not care about Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than twelve myriad persons who do not yet know their right hand from their left, and many beasts as well!'" (Jonah 4:9-11)

"There are moments when we all stand together and see our faces in the mirror: the anguish of humanity and its helplessness; the perplexity of the individual and the need of divine guidance; being called to praise and to do what is required." (Heschel 138)

God helps Jonah understand that even in instances where we cannot fully understand another's experience, we must empathize and see the good in them.

- *Do you agree with God? Why/why not?*
- *How does Heschel's statement compare or contrast to God's?*
- *Do you think we have a responsibility to help those, even if we think their ways are evil? Why/why not?*
- *If we do have a responsibility, where does it come from? Is it a "divine" responsibility or just one human beings have to one another?*
- *Do we have a special responsibility because we are Jewish? Why/why not?*

Excerpts are from:

Heschel, Abraham Joshua. "What We Might Do Together," *Journal of Religious Education*, Volume 62 Issue 2 (1967 Mar/Apr) pp. 133-140.

Simon, Uriel. *Jonah, The JPS Bible Commentary*, Philadelphia (1999) pp. 4-47.

Lesson 3: Where Else Can I Find Examples of People Like Abraham Joshua Heschel?

Reading Companion Sheet for “Some Personal Reflections on the Rabbis’ March to Birmingham” by Rabbi Jacob Bloom

Questions for “Why” group:

1. *Summarize the section you just read.*
2. *Compare and contrast the reasons for his feelings of tension between deciding to go or not to go to Birmingham.*
3. *What choice would you have made if you were in his position?*

Questions for the “Birmingham” group:

1. *Summarize the section you just read.*
2. *How did he draw upon his Jewish identity during his experience in Birmingham?*
3. *How did his experience in Birmingham impact his American identity?*
4. *Can you imagine a similar situation that would impact you in such a way that would change your previously held thoughts and ideas?*

Questions for the “As a Rabbi” group

1. *Summarize the section you just read.*
2. *How did his experience change the way his congregants thought about the issue?*
3. *Do you think he saw himself as a model for social activism? Why/why not?*

Lesson 4: What We Might Do Together: An Interfaith Service Learning Program

Links to Biographies of Essay Authors

John C. Bennett

<http://www.nytimes.com/1995/05/02/obituaries/john-c-bennett-a-theologian-of-outspoken-views-dies-at-92.html>

Abraham Joshua Heschel

http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud_0002_0009_0_08873.html

Philip Scharper

<http://archives.nd.edu/findaids/ead/index/PJS001.htm>

Texts for Small Group Text Study & Dialogue #1

“Do we not also have in common a view of the world as God’s creation which is sufficiently positive so that it causes us to renounce escapist doctrines that stress the ingrowing religious life of churches and synagogues at the expense of openness to the world; and responsibility for and involvement in the secular world without losing a perspective from which that world can be judged and a faith in sources of mercy and redemption for its people which the world as such cannot provide?” (Bennett, p. 128)

- *What is your view of the world as God’s creation?*
- *Do you believe you have a responsibility for the secular world?*
- *What do you think that responsibility is?*
- *What does he mean when he says, “without losing a perspective from which that world can be judged?”*
- *How should the world be judged, in your opinion?*
- *What are the sources of mercy and redemption that you think he might be referring to?*

“The cardinal problem is not the survival of religion, but the survival of man. What is required is a continuous effort to overcome hardness of heart, callousness, and above all to inspire the world with the biblical image of man, not to forget that man without God is a torso, to prevent the dehumanization of man.” (Heschel, p. 135)

- *Do you think people today need to overcome a hardness of heart?*
- *What is the biblical image of man?*
- *Is this an image that inspires you?*
- *What do you think Heschel means when he says that God is a torso without man?*
- *Do you agree with that statement?*
- *How can we prevent the dehumanization of man?*

Texts for Small Group Text Study & Dialogue #2

“Alike, the Jew and the Christian believe that, in the last sifting of reality, there is only one history, the record of God’s continual breaking in upon the world of man and speaking of man through event, even as he spoke to Moses through the event of a bush that burned yet was not consumed.

“Neither Jew nor Christian has the right to put man-made limits to God’s capacity to speak through events. We can only strive to hear what God may be saying through events, even in the events of this glorious but torn and tragic century” (Scharper, p. 145-146).

- *Do you agree with his idea of “God’s capacity to speak through events?” Why/why not?*
- *What recent events do you think maybe God has been speaking to us?*
- *What do you think of his idea of man-made limits? In what ways are we limited?*

“What is God saying to us through these events? Is He not trying to say that we must learn from each other and teach our children that, in the world which they will inherit, they must be the conscious heirs of all that is most authentic in what we call, somewhat too glibly, the Judaeo-Christian tradition? We must attempt to become now, and hope that our children will be in the future, the *anavim* – the poor of God – open constantly to the breathing of His Spirit. This much, at least, we can hope to do together, if we make the effort to understand who we are and who the other is: we can attempt to show the emerging world – brown, black, illiterate, impoverished – that we are indeed their brothers, for each of us holds dear the ancient words of Isaiah:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; because he has anointed me;
To bring good news to the poor he has sent me, to proclaim to the captives
release, and sight to the blind;
To set at liberty the oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and
the day of recompense.”

(Scharper, p. 146)

- *What do you think Scharper wants us to learn from each other and teach our children?*
- *What does it mean to be the “poor of God?”*
- *According to Isaiah, what is our role?*

Questions & Texts for Large Group Wrap Up & Reflection

- *What was the most meaningful moment of your experience today?*
- *What did you learn from people in the other faith group?*
- *What did you learn from the service project?*
- *How do you think this experience will impact future choices you make?*
- *What questions do you still have about the other’s religion?*

- *What misconceptions do you still want to clear up about your own religion?*
- *How might you want to engage in dialogue in the future?*

"I suggest that the most significant basis for meeting men of different religious traditions is the level of fear and trembling, of humility, of contrition, where our individual moments of faith are mere waves in the endless ocean of mankind's reaching out for God, where all formulations and articulations appear as understatements, where our souls are swept away by the awareness of the urgency of answering God's commandment, while stripped of pretension and conceit we sense the tragic insufficiency of human faith." (Heschel, p. 138)

- *What does it mean to fear and tremble?*
- *What do you see as your individual moments of faith that Heschel describes in the endless ocean?*
- *What do you feel is most urgent in "answering God's commandment?"*

Questions and Text Study for Reflection with Jewish Students

- *What was the best part of the experience for you?*
- *What was the hardest part of the experience for you?*
- *What was the most memorable part of the experience for you?*
- *What surprised you?*
- *Did you learn something new about yourself? What?*
- *Did you learn something new about others? What?*
- *Did you feel like this was a "Jewish" experience? How so?*
- *Did you feel like this was an "American" experience? How so?*

"A Jew is asked to take a leap of action rather than a leap of thought. He is asked to do more than he understands in order to understand more than he does." (Heschel)

- *What leap of action did you take today?*
- *In "doing", what did you come to understand?*
- *In what ways might you take a leap of action in the future?*

Unit 5

Albert Vorspan

Reform Movement Religious Social Justice Leader

Enduring Understandings

- Democratic societies, such as America, which seek to promote values of compassion and equality, can serve as places where Jews can feel safe to live, prosper and contribute.
- Active involvement by Jews in the American public sphere has conveyed the Jewish community's devotion to equal rights for all citizens since the country's inception.
- American Jews can have a distinct impact on American society by integrating their understanding of their Jewish identity and their American identity.
- When a coalesced Jewish American roots his/her local pursuit of justice on the biblical, prophetic, rabbinical and modern teachings of Judaism, he/she can produce a distinct voice and perspective within the larger society.
- The tension between American and Jewish values can encourage a creative struggle for those whose lives are informed by both.

Essential Questions

- How can Albert Vorspan serve as a Jewish model for involvement in the American public sphere?
- How can I integrate my Jewish understanding of social justice with promoting American values?
- What is "prophetic Judaism," and how does it apply to Reform Judaism?

Goals

- To inform students of the life and achievements of religious social justice leader, Albert Vorspan.
- To give students a sense of how the prophetic tradition of Judaism is important to Reform Judaism.
- To give students a background of contributions made by Jewish leaders to social justice issues in the American public sphere via the story of Vorspan and the RAC.
- For students to feel empowered to engage in social justice opportunities.

Outline of Lessons

Lesson 1: Who Was Albert Vorspan and what is the RAC?

Lesson 2: A Look at Vorspan's Work: Environmental Justice

*Scripted Lesson

***Authentic Assessment

Lesson 3: Who else has been instrumental in Reform Judaism's social justice movement?

Lesson 4: How Can I participate in the RAC today? L'Taken Seminar

**Memorable Moment

Background Information about Albert Vorspan

Albert Vorspan served as the Director of the Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism from 1953-1993. He is now (in 2009) a consultant to the RAC and to the Commission on Social Action. Much of the information below is taken from an autobiographical personal memoir that Vorspan wrote for the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR) Journal in 2008.

“How strange to know that my life is almost co-existent with the history of the modern social action program in Reform Judaism. I do not know if that makes me one of the patriarchs of Israel, a founding father, harkening back to Genesis. Or, more likely, an accidental character, a kind of Zelig, an unwitting witness to great and historic events...

“I was a young veteran of WWII who, like millions of others, married, had kids, took full advantage of the monumental GI Bills providing access to college, after which I entered the job market. My first full-time job (in 1948) was wondrously low-paid and high quality. I was the youngest member of a tiny staff of the coordinating council for Jewish community relations agencies, national and local, known as the National Community Relations Advisory Council (NCRAC) [now known as the Jewish Council on Public Affairs (JCPA)]. It set policy on such large issues as reforming American immigration policy, defending church-state separation, pushing for a democratic post-war Germany, racial justice, and safeguarding Israel. I was enthralled by the work, awed by the brilliance and dedication of my older colleagues, and confident that our work was surely advancing Jewish ideals and justice for all Americans.”³²

His passion for social justice was clear in every issue he took up; from immigration, to civil rights to the environment. As the vice president and director of the Commission on Social Action, Vorspan made sure that every important social justice issue was addressed by the then, Union for American Hebrew Congregations (now, URJ). There wasn't much Vorspan wasn't willing to do to fight for justice. In the 1960s he was jailed for sitting with Blacks at a lunch counter in the South. He had strong partnerships with the NAACP, and marched with Martin Luther King, Jr.

Vorspan's commitment to social justice issues stemmed from his desire to serve the Jewish people. He explains in his interview in Reform Judaism's Magazine, “I remember sitting at my typewriter at the age of 15, writing a speech for Young Judea, and asking myself: what will I do with my life? My answer: I want to serve the Jewish people. Even then, my definition of serving the Jewish people meant both securing a Jewish homeland and asserting a Jewish will for justice.”³³

³² Vorspan, Albert. "In the Beginning: A Personal Memoir of Social Action and Reform Judaism in America." *CCAR Journal: A Reform Jewish Quarterly*, LV (2008): 75-93.

³³ "Mr. Social Action: A Conversation with Albert Vorspan." *Reform Judaism* Fall 1991: 14-18.

Lesson 1: Who Was Albert Vorspan?

Objectives

- SWBAT list events in Albert Vorspan's life, including his career as a social justice activist.
- SWBAT summarize a number of beliefs and convictions held by Vorspan.
- SWBAT decide which of Vorspan's beliefs and/or actions they most relate to and to be able to explain why.

Activity: A Conversation with Albert Vorspan

Use the article "Mr. Social Action: A Conversation with Albert Vorspan," found in Unit 5 Resources Appendix A, as a literal script for this activity. The article, which appeared in *Reform Judaism Magazine* in 1991 is an interview with Vorspan in which he reflects on his life and accomplishments. He touches on a number of issues that were important for him and drove him in his work. With the exception of a few paragraphs (noted below), the article is completely relevant today.

Invite an older congregant to "be" Albert Vorspan (if you have any actors in your congregation, this would be a great way to involve one of them!). Give them the "script," the article, ahead of time to review. It would also be helpful to give them additional biographical information about Vorspan, such as the background information provided in this unit.

You, the teacher, will act as the moderator, and either read or summarize the introduction to the article on page 15. I would suggest having the students act as the "interviewers." You could do this by passing out index cards with the questions written out and numbered. This way the students will ask the scripted questions in the right order. You may want to delete some of the questions based on timing considerations, this is up to you as the teacher. The actor playing Vorspan can read directly from the "script," the article.

I would recommend either cutting two paragraphs or making sure to put them into historical perspective. They are specific to events in 1991 and would require historical uncoverage for the teens.

Cut #1: Page 15. It is part of the answer to the question, *To what extent has Reform Judaism's social action programs fulfilled your hopes and ambitions?*

Be aware of:

But the changing political climate in America has disappointed my hopes. Ronald Reagan set us back to square one, forcing us to refight battles we had won years ago, and George Bush was a fighting general in the Gulf but is AWOL on the domestic crisis. The new world order has to start here.

Cut #2: Page 17. It is part of the answer to the question, *How do you feel about Israel's West Bank policies?*

Be aware of:

There's just one phrase I don't add, for want of courage and conviction: a Palestinian state. I'm not sure that I want it – certainly not a PLO state which would menace Israel's security. I have a revulsion to the PLO and contempt for Arafat. And I also know the Jewish political reality – you can talk about a lot of things, including territorial compromise, an end to occupation and so on, but as soon as you talk about the PLO forget it. It's anathema.

At the end of the “interview,” you should be sure to debrief with the students. It might be fun to have the person playing Vorspan lead this discussion. He should ask:

- *How do you think my experience in the army shaped my commitment to the American public sphere?*
- *What do you think my “best” memory is?*
- *Do you think I should've become a rabbi?*
- *What do my actions in fighting for Black civil rights in the 1960s tell you about what I believed?*
- *What do you think of the fight for same-sex marriages happening in America today?*
- *What was the most important thing you think I did?*
- *If you could've advised me to do one thing different, what would you have said?*

Lesson 2: A Look at Vorspan's Work: Environmental Justice

*Scripted Lesson

***Authentic Assessment

Note to the Teacher: Know the environmental policies of your congregation

Prior to teaching this lesson, it will be beneficial to have a conversation with an administrator or board member who knows whether or not your congregation is environmentally conscious at all. This issue will come up later in the lesson during the Case Study and Plan of Action.

Objectives

- SWBAT recognize Jewish texts that teach us how to care for the environment.
- SWBAT participate in a case study about environmental justice.
- SWBAT decide how they will be conscious of the environment, keeping Jewish tradition in mind.
- SWBAT create a plan for the congregation to be more environmentally conscious.

Materials

- Computer & projector hook up & internet
- *An Inconvenient Truth Trailer*, available on YouTube
- Jewish Sources Text Study Sheet
- *Jewish Dimensions of Social Justice*, "The Environmental Crisis: Judaism, Ecology, and the Environment," pp. 113-120
- (See Unit 5 Resources for additional suggested resources for you)

Timeline

0-5 minutes	Set Induction: <i>An Inconvenient Truth</i>
5-30 minutes	Text Study
30-40 minutes	Case Study: "Paper or Plastic (or Neither)?"
40-55 minutes	Plan of Action
55-60 minutes	Wrap Up

Lesson

0-5 minutes Set Induction: *An Inconvenient Truth*

Show the students the trailer for Al Gore's movie on Global Warming, *An Inconvenient Truth* (YouTube link is found in Unit 5 Resources). Invite students who have seen the movie to comment on it.

After showing the trailer, say to the students: *Many believe our human actions of not caring for the environment are causing this crisis that Al Gore speaks of. Judaism has a lot to say about this, and today we're going to discover what exactly that is.*

5-30 minutes Text Study

Lead an interactive text study using the Jewish Sources Text Study Sheet (found in Unit 3b Resources and part of the excerpt from the chapter on Environmental Crisis, *Jewish*

Dimensions of Social Justice (found in Unit 5 Resources Appendix B). You will go back and forth between the Study Sheet I created and the excerpt itself.

Here is a detailed timeline of how this will work:

(5-10 minutes) Ecclesiastes Rabbah 7:13

Begin by asking students to turn to the person next to them, and study the first piece of text on the Study Sheet in *chevruta*. The questions are listed on the sheet. After 2-3 minutes, bring them back together and ask a few people to share thoughts that were sparked in this study.

(10-15 minutes) Jeremiah 2:7

In a large group, read the first paragraph of the excerpt in *Jewish Dimensions of Social Justice*, beginning with “The prophet Jeremiah...”

Before debriefing what Vorspan and Saperstein are doing with the quote, help the students put it into Biblical context:

Jeremiah was a prophet that spoke the word of God to the people of Israel during the time of the destruction of Jerusalem and the First Temple. He often spoke about how the people were not living up to a moral and ethical standard, explaining that they were turning away from God.

The Jewish Study Bible explains that this quote is doing just that: “God claims to have been abandoned by the people, despite having led them out of Egypt and through the wilderness to the promised land. Biblical tradition maintains that proper moral behavior and ritual observance maintains the purity of the land of Israel, but immorality and apostasy defile it.”³⁴

Then ask the students:

- *What was the original intention of this quote when spoken by Jeremiah?*
- *What did Vorspan and Saperstein mean by it?*
- *How do you understand this quote in today’s context?*

(15-20 minutes) Read part of excerpt

In a large group, read the next three paragraphs from the excerpt (“Long ago in Jewish history... *Kiddushin* 4:12”). Then ask the students:

- *What sort of restrictions did ancient Israel implement in order to help safeguard the environment?*
- *Why do you think Jewish tradition forbids us to live in a city without a green garden?*

(20-25 minutes) Read part of the excerpt in *chevrutot*

³⁴ Jewish Study Bible, p. 924.

Have the students return to their *chevruta* pairs to read the next section. They should skip to page 115, and begin by reading the second paragraph through the third (“Some say the despoiling of our world... obligated to cherish and preserve it”). Then they should return to the top of the page, and answer the questions posed in the first paragraph. (The questions are also found on the Study Sheet under Genesis 1:28 which is highlighted in this section in Unit 5 Resources.)

- *Has God endowed us with dominion over nature?*
 - *What does that mean?*
- *Is competition or cooperation the nature of our relationship to one another?*
- *Are human beings inherently greedy?*
- *What is our responsibility to the generations yet unborn?*
- *What does bal taschit mean?*

If students have extra time, they should to look at some of the sections in the excerpt that are skipped in this text study. It provides good context for the discussion of *bal taschit*.

(25-30 minutes) Debrief *bal taschit*

Bring the students back together in a large group, and ask a few students to share their thoughts about the section they just read. Quickly focus on the last question about *bal taschit*. Then ask:

- *Why is bal taschit such an important concept?*
- *How do you think it impacts your daily actions and choices?*
- *How do you think it influences actions and choices of our community?*

30-40 minutes Case Study: “Paper or Plastic (or Neither)?”

Using the case study presented as “A Real Dilemma: Paper or Plastic (or Neither)?” on pp. 116-117, engage the students in a discussion about the environmental policies of your congregation.

Have the students break up into small groups to read the Real Dilemma and Response. If your congregation has a written policy about environmental issues, pass it out to the students to also read. If it doesn't, be sure to let the students know. Basically, provide any information you uncovered in learning about the environmental policies of your congregation to the studies.

Give the small groups the following questions to answer after looking at the case study and congregational policies:

- *Do you think the congregation in the case study made the right decision to replace Styrofoam?*
- *Do you think there was a better option?*
- *What changes can you make in your life that are similar to this case?*
- *What do you think the biggest challenges would be for you to make such changes?*
- *Looking at your congregation's environmental policies, what practical changes could be made that would be more environmentally friendly?*
- *What do you think the biggest challenges would be in implementing such changes?*

40-55 minutes Plan of Action

Bring the students back together in a large group. Begin by debriefing the last two questions from their case study:

- *Looking at your congregation's environmental policies, what practical changes could be made that would be more environmentally friendly?*
- *What do you think the biggest challenges would be in implementing such changes?*

Explain to them that they have an opportunity to present ideas about making such changes to the board. The students should begin to create this plan of action. Most likely they will run out of time, as 15 minutes is not enough! Before wrapping up the lesson, have students who are very passionate about this issue volunteer to continue working on this plan of action. They'll have more time to work on it during Unit 5, and you'll help them find more resources (i.e. COEJL's website). Then they can present it prior to and as part of the final Social Justice Inspired Shabbat. (Of course, they should be encouraged to work on it during their free time if they so desire!)

55-60 minutes Wrap Up

As a large group, look at one final piece of text:

"The earth is *Adonai's* and the fullness thereof; the settled world, and all that inhabit it."

- Psalms 24:1

Say to the students:

- *According to this quote, from whom are we borrowing the earth?*
- *If the earth is on loan to us, what responsibilities do we have?*
- *Taking into consideration all of today's lesson, what does Judaism have to say about "An Inconvenient Truth?"*

Note about Vorspan's Work: Alternative Options

As described in the annotated bibliography, both of the books by Albert Vorspan and Rabbi David Saperstein, *Tough Choices* and *Jewish Dimensions of Social Justice* discuss various issues and offer an array of case studies. I chose to use their piece on environmental issues because it is not represented elsewhere in this curriculum guide, and is a pressing issue in the 21st century. If you feel as though your students would benefit from studying another issue and case found in one of the books, please feel free to adapt a lesson yourself. Look through the books to find issues that are most relevant to your students and community. Here are some alternative options that I think may be interesting for your students:

Tough Choices: Jewish Perspectives on Social Justice

- Hispanic/Jewish Relations (p. 32-33)
- Prayer at Graduation (p. 67-69)
- Religious Symbols on Public Property (p. 81)

Jewish Dimensions of Social Justice: Tough Moral Choices of Our Time

- Medical Ethics (p. 48-57)
- Ethical Dilemmas in Altering Life (p. 64-67)
- Socially Responsible Consumerism (p. 104-108)
- Freedom of Speech (p. 273-274)

Lesson 3: Who else has been instrumental in Reform Judaism's social justice movement?

Objectives

- SWBAT name leaders who have been instrumental in the Reform movement's social justice movement.
- SWBAT differentiate leaders' from each other based on their ideologies and accomplishments.
- SWBAT create a model Reform social justice organization

Activity

Using excerpts from Vorspan's article, "In the Beginning: A Personal Memoir of Social Action and Reform Judaism in America," (Unit 5 Appendix C), introduce the students to other key leaders in the development of the Reform Movement's social action arm. Vorspan shares stories and biographies of many of these key leaders in his memoir, listed below with page numbers.

- Rabbi Maurice Eisendrath (p. 84-85)
- Jane Evans, former director of National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods (p. 90)
- Rabbi Roland Gittelsohn (p. 87-88)
- Arthur Goldberg, labor lawyer & financier of RAC (bottom of p. 82-83)
- Rabbi Richard Hirsch (p. 88-89)
- Kivie Kaplan, Activist, former president of NAACP (p. 86-87)
- Rabbi Alex Schindler (p. 85-86)

Divide students into enough groups that each will study one of the leaders, and take on their persona in a role-play. Then, engage the students in a mock meeting working to create the RAC. You, the teacher, will act as Vorspan and convene the meeting. You should ask questions such as:

- *What key issues should the RAC take up?*
- *What positions should we take on controversial political issues?*
- *How will we mobilize congregants in Reform congregations?*
- *How will we address issues of the separation of church and state?*

When answering these questions, students should answer as they think the person they're role-playing would act. They should attempt to make decisions about setting policy for the RAC.

Lesson 4: How Can I participate in the RAC today? L'Taken Seminar

**Memorable Moment

Objectives

- SWBAT list the policies of the RAC
- SWBAT explain public policy issues that are addressed by the Seminar
- SWBAT advocate on local, state, and federal government levels

Activity

Attend a L'Taken Weekend Seminar at the RAC. More information about the Seminar can be found on the RAC's website at, <http://rac.org/confprog/ltaken/>. The registration form for 2009-2010 can be found in Unit 5 Appendix D.

Unit 5 Resources

Albert Vorspan

Reform Movement Religious Social Justice Leader

Lesson 2: A Look at Vorspan's Work: Environmental Justice

Suggested Resources

- All of Chapter 5, "The Environmental Crisis" in *Jewish Dimensions of Social Justice*
- Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life, www.coejl.org
 - "Greening Synagogue Resources,"
<http://www.coejl.org/~coejlor/greensyn/gstoc.php>
- "An Inconvenient Truth," movie by Al Gore
 - Its website: <http://www.climatecrisis.net/>

An Inconvenient Truth

Link to Movie Trailer

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0XMn_Ry3z6M

Jewish Sources Text Study Sheet

Ecclesiastes Rabbah 7:13³⁵

"When the Holy One, Blessed Be, created the first person, God took and led Adam around all the trees of the Garden of Eden. And God said to Adam: 'Look at My works! How beautiful and praiseworthy they are! And everything I made, I created for you. Be careful (though) that you don't spoil or destroy My world – because if you spoil it, there's nobody after you to fix it.'"

- *What does God want Adam to understand as he is led around the garden?*
- *What do you think the Rabbis who wrote this wanted us to think about?*
- *How might Al Gore respond to this piece of text?*
- *What do you think of this piece of text?*

Jeremiah 2:7³⁶

³⁵ Quoted, p. 109, *Jewish Dimensions of Social Justice*

“I brought you into a land of fruitful fields to eat the fruit thereof; but when you entered, you defiled My land and made My heritage an abomination.”

- *What was the original intention of this quote when spoken by Jeremiah?*
- *What did Vorspan and Saperstein mean by it?*
- *How do you understand this quote?*

Genesis 1:28³⁷

“Be fruitful and multiply and populate the earth and conquer it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the heavens and over all living things on earth. I have given you all the grass and trees for you and all other living things to eat.”

- *Has God endowed us with dominion over nature?*
 - *What does that mean?*
- *Is competition or cooperation the nature of our relationship to one another?*
- *Are human beings inherently greedy?*
- *What is our responsibility to the generations yet unborn?³⁸*

Questions for “A Real Dilemma: Paper or Plastic (or Neither)?”

- *Do you think the congregation in the case study made the right decision to replace Styrofoam?*
- *Do you think there was a better option?*
- *What changes can you make in your life that are similar to this case?*
- *What do you think the biggest challenges would be for you to make such changes?*
- *Looking at your congregation’s environmental policies, what practical changes could be made that would be more environmentally friendly?*
- *What do you think the biggest challenges would be in implementing such changes?*

Psalms 24:1

“The earth is Adonai’s and the fullness thereof; the settled world, and all that inhabit it.”

- *According to this quote, from whom are we borrowing the earth?*
- *If the earth is on loan to us, what responsibilities do we have?*
- *Taking into consideration all of today’s lesson, what does Judaism have to say about “An Inconvenient Truth?”*

³⁶ Quoted, p. 113, *Jewish Dimensions of Social Justice*

³⁷ Quoted, p. 115, *Jewish Dimensions of Social Justice*

³⁸ Based on questions posed, p. 115, *Jewish Dimensions of Social Justice*

Unit 6

Activists in Our Community

Enduring Understandings

- Democratic societies, such as America, which seek to promote values of compassion and equality, can serve as places where Jews can feel safe to live, prosper and contribute.
- Active involvement by Jews in the American public sphere has conveyed the Jewish community's devotion to equal rights for all citizens since the country's inception.
- American Jews can have a distinct impact on American society by integrating their understanding of their Jewish identity and their American identity.
- When a coalesced Jewish American roots his/her local pursuit of justice on the biblical, prophetic, rabbinical and modern teachings of Judaism, he/she can produce a distinct voice and perspective within the larger society.
- The tension between American and Jewish values can encourage a creative struggle for those whose lives are informed by both.

Essential Questions

- Who are models of social justice in our community?
- How does our Jewish community activists' work explain how their Jewish identity influences their work?
- In what ways can we become involved in social justice work in our community?

Goals

- To familiarize students with the members of their community who are engaged in social justice work.
- To give students a sense of social justice opportunities in their own community.
- For community activists in your Jewish community to engage with teenagers and your educational program.

Outline of Lessons

Lesson 1: Who are the Activists in our Jewish Community?

Lesson 2: Prepping for Interviews

*Scripted Lesson

Lesson 3: Conducting Interviews

**Memorable Moment

Lesson 4: Presentations to Each Other

***Authentic Assessment

Note to the Facilitator: Designing this Unit

As the teacher, you should feel free to be creative as you implement this unit. I will provide an outline of suggested activities and ideas, but since this unit is about *your* community, you must authentically design it! Before diving into the lessons themselves, I want to share some thoughts for how you might put this unit together.

Who Will Students Choose?

Refrain from limiting the people that students can choose to only congregants, and think to your entire Jewish community. This is a choice you should make based on the make-up of your congregation. However, if lots of members are active in a variety of issues, there is certainly value in limiting it to them. This provides an opportunity for the teens to interact with members of your congregation outside of the “normal” educational walls. If there are a limited number of congregants involved with social justice issues, I recommend expanding the options to the greater Jewish community. This will provide students with maximal opportunities to connect with someone who shares their passion.

Think ahead of time of the names of people students might think of, and also think about people they won't. Be proactive and contact people ahead of time about the possibility of being contacted by a student. This way they won't be surprised, and you can be sure to eliminate anyone who might not be interested in being interviewed ahead of time.

Lesson 1: Who are the Activists in our Jewish Community?

Objectives

- SWBAT identify people in the Jewish community who they consider to be social justice activists.
- SWBAT decide who is a model of social justice for an issue they think is important.

Activity – Brainstorm Community Activists in the Jewish Community

In order to get your students' juices flowing and begin the brainstorming session, hang posters around the room with headlines of social justice issues facing your community written at the top. Some suggestions for issues are:

- Civil Rights – Same Sex Marriage
- Education
- Environment
- Health Care
- Immigration
- Poverty
- And more... (Be sure to have them stick to domestic issues!)

Give the students post-it notes and have them walk around, writing names of people they know who are committed to these issues on the post-it notes.

After they have done this “off the top of their head,” allow them to do some research. If you have access to computers, have them surf the internet, pointing them in the direction of websites of your local government, your local Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC), your congregation's social action page, etc. If you do not have access to computers, then bring in newspapers (local Jewish and secular) and other materials that might give students a sense of people involved with these issues. Once they have engaged in ample amount of research, have them return to the posters and add the new names they discovered. (While they are engaging in research, you might add names to the posters of people you know.)

After all of the names are added, invite the students to walk around and decide who they'd like to interview. Suggest that they pick an activist in an area of passion that they share. You might also suggest they pick someone that they don't know – remember one of the goals for this unit is for students to get to know members of their community engaged in social justice work. They may also want to pick a back up name or two, in case the person is unable to meet with them.

Before they leave, help the students locate the contact information for the people they've chosen, and write down who each student is interviewing. Instruct the students to contact their interviewees before returning for Lesson 2, and set up a time for the interview. They should schedule the interview to occur between the time of lessons 2 and 4. Explain that a face-to-face interview is ideal, but if need be, they can talk on the phone.

Lesson 2: Prepping for Interviews

*Scripted Lesson

Objectives

- SWBAT state basic principles for conducting interviews.
- SWBAT participate in mock interviews.
- SWBAT prepare for interviews they will conduct with community members.

Materials

- Clips of TV broadcast interviews
- Basic Principles for Conducting Interviews

Timeline

0-5 minutes	Introduction
5-25 minutes	Basic Principles for Conducting Interviews
25-35 minutes	Brainstorm Interview Questions
35-50 minutes	Practice Interviewing
50-60 minutes	Debrief Interviewing Process/Get Ready to do Interviews!

Timeline

0-5 minutes Introduction

Show clips of TV broadcast interviews (i.e. Barbra Walters, Brian Williams, Diane Sawyer, Jon Stewart, even Ellen!) that are representative of the types of interviews the students will be doing. A list of links for suggested interviews found on YouTube are located in Unit 6 Resources.

5-20 minutes Basic Principles for Conducting Interviews

Go over the some of the basic principles for conducting interviews found in Unit 4 Resources. If a member of your congregation is a professional journalist, invite him/her to lead this discussion (and help implement the rest of the lesson). He/she may want to alter the principles based on his/her own experience, which is perfectly fine! If you invite someone else to help lead this lesson, be sure to give a copy of the lesson plan to him/her ahead of time and go over the objectives for what you want to achieve.

20-35 minutes Brainstorm Interview Questions

Tell the students: *Now we are going to prepare for our interviews! We're going to start by thinking about the questions we should ask the interviewees, and then we'll practice with each other! Get into groups of 3-4 people, and take five minutes to brainstorm as many questions that you'd like to ask your interviewees as you can think of.*

Possible Questions:

- What is your involvement in the community?
- When did you begin your social justice involvement?
- Why is this particular issue so important to you?
- How, if at all, does the Jewish notion of *tikkun olam* (repairing the world) inform your involvement with social justice issues?

- What advice can you give to me about getting involved?

After five minutes, bring the students back together and have them share the questions they thought of. Create a big list of the questions. Then, using the Basic Principles put the questions in the order the students should ask them. (This could be a great piece for the journalist to lead.)

Students should be sure to copy the list of questions in the right order that the entire class agrees on. You will also want to type them up later and email them to the students in case they lose them!

35-45 minutes Practice Interviewing

Divide the students up into pairs. One member of the pair should spend about 5 minutes interviewing the other, who will in turn answer the questions. Then they should switch. Instruct the students to be aware of how it feels to ask the questions, and listen really carefully to the answers the other gives. If they think they'll listen better by taking notes, then they should! Let them know you'll be debriefing the experience when they're through.

45-60 minutes Debrief Interviewing Experience/Get Ready to do Interviews!

After students have had time to each practice interviewing, bring them back together to debrief the experience. Ask them:

- *How did it feel to ask the questions?*
- *What was it like to listen so carefully?*
- *When you were being interviewed what did you notice about the person interviewing you?*
- *What do you think you need to be aware of when conducting the interviews?*

Once students have had a chance to debrief their experiences, invite them to ask you questions about the actual interviews they will be conducting. They may have logistical questions or perhaps thoughts based on what they learned in this lesson. Either way, this is a perfect time to give students all of the last minute tools they'll need to be successful. (You may also want to explain what is expected for the presentations, which is described in Lesson 4)

Finally, send them off with confidence and excitement. This is a really powerful project in which they're engaging, and they should feel pumped to do it!

Lesson 3: Conducting Interviews

**Memorable Moment

Objectives

- SWBAT interview a member of the community about their commitment to social justice.
- SWBAT articulate the principles the community member holds central to their idea of justice.
- SWBAT describe how the community member's ideals are put into action.
- SWBAT decide if the community member is a model for justice for them, and in what ways.

Activity

While this “Lesson” may not take place in the classroom or during class time, it will be important to offer a space and time for students to do their interviews. I might suggest having a two-week period between Lessons 2 and 4 to give students ample time to complete their interviews and prepare their presentations.

During the interviews, students should ask the questions that they prepared as a class during Lesson 2 as well as any other questions they want to ask. They should invite the interviewee to share photographs and memorabilia with them that will enhance their learning.

Lesson 4: Presentations to Each Other

***Authentic Assessment

Objectives

- SWBAT describe the community member's social justice passion and involvement.
- SWBAT compare and contrast reasons for the various community members' involvement in social justice issues.
- SWBAT interpret how the community member's Jewish identity informs their commitment to social justice issues.

Activity

Here's an opportunity for students to show off what they've learned from their encounters with the activists. Encourage them to be creative in designing their presentations, using technology, clippings from newspapers, pictures, etc. Be sure to set time limits based on the number of students who will be presenting.

When presenting, the students should share three overarching things they learned from their interviewees:

- What it is that the person is passionate about and how they are involved with that particular issue.
- Why the person cares about the issue and pursues justice.
- How Judaism does/does not inform their commitment to social justice.

Students should be encouraged to ask each other questions at the end of each presentation, and engage in some dialogue around the person and issue that is presented.

Unit 6 Resources

Activists in Our Community

Lesson 2: Prepping for Interviews

Ellen interviews Pink:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WAISDoHWq-0>

Diane Sawyer interviews Renee Zellweger

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=irok2btQY1U>

Barbara Walters interviews Barack Obama

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fW2mlkfHmVI>

Brian Williams interviews Tony Blair

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uqWFR_OggSU&feature=PlayList&p=0D70F1844F693069&playnext=1&playnext_from=PL&index=9

Basic Principles for Conducting Interviews

Preparing for the Interview

<http://www.concernedjournalists.org/getting-most-your-interviews>

Arranging your Interview Questions

<http://www.concernedjournalists.org/tuesdays-tool-arranging-your-interview-questions>

Basic guidelines for conducting an interview

<http://www.concernedjournalists.org/ten-tips-better-interview>

Unit 7

What is My Model of Justice, and How Do I Know if it's Jewish?

Enduring Understandings

- Democratic societies, such as America, which seek to promote values of compassion and equality, can serve as places where Jews can feel safe to live, prosper and contribute.
- Active involvement by Jews in the American public sphere has conveyed the Jewish community's devotion to equal rights for all citizens since the country's inception.
- American Jews can have a distinct impact on American society by integrating their understanding of their Jewish identity and their American identity.
- When a coalesced Jewish American roots his/her local pursuit of justice on the biblical, prophetic, rabbinical and modern teachings of Judaism, he/she can produce a distinct voice and perspective within the larger society.
- The tension between American and Jewish values can encourage a creative struggle for those whose lives are informed by both.

Essential Questions

- How do I sort through all of the models of justice from this curriculum to create one that speaks to me?
- What is my own model of justice?
- How do I know what I'm doing is Jewish?

Goals

- To give students the opportunity to define their own sense of justice.
- To give students the opportunity to present their learning and accomplishments to the congregational community.

Outline of Lessons

Lesson 1: What is My Own Model of Justice?

*Scripted Lesson

***Authentic Assessment

Lesson 2: How Do I Know if My Own Model of Justice is Jewish?

***Authentic Assessment

Lesson 3: Preparing for the Social Justice Inspired Shabbat

Lesson 4: Social Justice Inspired Shabbat

**Memorable Moment

***Authentic Assessment

Lesson 1: What is My Own Model of Justice?

Objectives

- SWBAT synthesize the models of justice they've learned throughout the unit.
- SWBAT decide what model of justice works best for them.

Materials

- Poster paper
- Students' definitions of justice from Unit 1
- Butcher paper
- Markers

Timeline

0-20 minutes	Introduction: 4 Corners
20-35 minutes	Reexamine definitions of justice
35-60 minutes	Create Own Model of Justice

Lesson

0-20 minutes Introduction: Four Corners & the Middle

In each of the four corners of the room, place a poster, each labeled with the name of the activists studied in the curriculum; Cardozo, Abzug, Heschel, and Vorspan. Place a poster in the middle of the room labeled "Community Activists." Invite students to write on each of the four corner posters things that describe those activists, including their values, accomplishments, and adjectives describing them. They should also think about community activist they interviewed, and keep in mind things that would describe them, as well.

After students have spent time writing descriptions of the activists, play a variation of the "Four Corners Game." Ask a series of questions (listed below), and tell the students to go to the activist's poster whose answer to the question would most be like their own. After posing each question, invite a few students each time to explain their answer and how it best relates to the activist to whom they are relating.

Questions:

- What ideals and values most inform your sense of justice?
- What issues of social justice are more important to you?
- What ways do you (want to) pursue justice?

20-35 minutes Reexamine definitions of justice

Distribute the definitions of justice that students wrote in Unit 1. Ask them to review them, and decide if they want to make any changes to their definitions. They should write physical "track changes" on the sheet itself.

35-60 minutes Create Own Model of Justice

Give the students a new sheet of butcher paper to create their Model of Justice. In the center they should write their new definition justice. Then, almost in web-like form, write

and/or draw various associations that have to do with that definition coming out of it. They can write/draw anything that inspires their sense of justice: names of people; quotes; places; historical events; activities; values; etc. This is an excellent opportunity for students to show off some of their artistic talents. Provide crayons, markers, maybe even magazines for them to create a piece that best represents them. They should take their time to carefully do this, as they will present it at the next lesson.

Lesson 2: How Do I Know if My Own Model of Justice is Jewish?

Objectives

- SWBAT determine Jewish connections to various statements.
- SWBAT critique the Jewish content of each other's Models of Justice.
- SWBAT justify what makes their Model of Justice Jewish.

Activity

Students should layout their Models of Justice around the room. Give each student a pad of post-it notes and a pen. Have students walk around the room and look at each other's Model of Justice. They should feel free to write questions and feedback comments on the post-it notes and place them on the Models. After students have spent time looking at each other's Models, they should return to their own to look at the feedback.

After the "feedback" part of the activity, have the students present their models to each other. They should present the themes and ideas central to their Model. They should also feel free to respond to the feedback given by their classmates.

Lesson 3: Preparing for the Social Justice Inspired Shabbat

Objectives

- SWBAT decide what lessons of social justice they want to share with the congregation.
- SWBAT articulate their major take-aways from the entire curriculum about justice.
- SWBAT design a Shabbat experience that educates congregants of all ages about the social justice issues they studied.

*This Lesson may last more than one session, as the students should both plan the Shabbat Service and their presentations.

Activity 1: Planning the Shabbat

It would be great if the students, themselves, planned the Social Justice Inspired Shabbat. Think about the leadership roles students can play in planning this program. For example, they might lead the actual service; give *iyunim* (short, creative introductions to prayers or thoughtful additions to the service), share pieces of art, etc. throughout the service, give the *d'var torah* (speech about the week's torah portion), etc. They might also coordinate a Shabbat dinner or *oneg* (social gathering after services), or design creative publicity advertising the Shabbat program. This is a chance for them to practice leadership skills they have perhaps gained in other areas of Jewish learning!

This is also a terrific opportunity for a member of the clergy to engage with the teenagers. He/she can meet with the students to plan the service, and help them integrate themes of social justice into the worship experience.

Activity 2: Preparing their Presentations

Students should prepare an exhibit of everything they've accomplished and learned this year. Their presentations from Unit 6 should be displayed. Each memorable moment from the units should be presented, perhaps through pictures and journal reflections. Students who further pursued campaigns from earlier units should also find a way to present their work. The Social Justice Inspired Shabbat is the time for students to showcase their work and synthesize what they've learned!

Activity 3: Connecting Shabbat to Social Justice

Rabbi Irving "Yitz" Greenberg does a beautiful job connecting Shabbat to the theme of social justice in his book, *The Jewish Way*. In the chapter, "The Dream and How to Live it: Shabbat," he describes Shabbat as the taste of the perfect world that God created, and thus, the world we should be working to recreate. He writes:

"The very first chapter of the Bible records a dream, a vision of the world in its perfect state, an Eden of order and beauty in which life emerges from the divine ground of existence. All life is related and intertwined, and the crown of physical creation is humankind. Every single human being, man and woman, shares the ultimate dignity of having been created in the image of God..."

“Jewish existence without the dream is almost inconceivable. The drawing power of the vision has kept Jews faithful to their mission over several millennia. Expulsion, persecution, and destruction have assaulted but never obliterated the dream. Jews have repeatedly given everything, including their very lives, to keep it alive. And when catastrophe shattered the vision, Jews spent their lives renewing it. The question is: From where can people draw the strength to renew their dream again and again? The answer of Jewish tradition is: Give people just a foretaste of the fulfillment, and they will never give it up. The Shabbat is that taste.”³⁹

Discuss with the students how they can create a Shabbat experiences for themselves and their community that brings this idea to live.

³⁹ Greenberg, Irving. *The Jewish Way: Living the Holidays*. New York: Touchstone, Simon & Schuster, 1988.

Lesson 4: Social Justice Inspired Shabbat Service

**Memorable Moment

***Authentic Assessment

Objectives

- SWBAT educate others about important social justice issues in their own community.
- SWBAT demonstrate to others the value of being involved in the American public sphere.
- SWBAT introduce the community activists they interviewed to the congregation.

Activity: Shabbat Service

This is an opportunity for the students to shine as leaders and present their learning to the congregation. It's a chance to recognize the people in your community doing valuable work in the social justice arena. All of the people who the students chose to interview should be invited to attend the service, as this is a beautiful way to honor them.

There are a variety of ways for students to infuse social action throughout the entire service, and as much as they can, they should be encouraged to do so. Though this is not *the* culminating activity for the unit, it is certainly a synthesis activity that can encompass the entire unit. The focus should, however, remain on your community and the activists on whom the students presented. Find a way for their presentations to be included in the service, whether it's displaying any visuals created, having the students speak about their activist in front of the entire congregation, or perhaps a slide show highlighting memorable moments from throughout the course.

Again, as noted earlier, you may want to have a clergy member work with the students to prepare to lead parts of the service. Integrating the theme of social justice into the service itself will provide for a rich experience for everyone.

Depending on how much time students have to plan for the service, you may want to include a dinner or *oneg* discussion after the service. This would allow congregants to learn from the students' experiences even more deeply, and further present the work they did.

Annotated Bibliography

Heschel, Abraham Joshua. "What We Might Do Together." Religious Education 62:2 (1967): 133-40.

This article is where Heschel's famously quoted line about walking from Selma to Montgomery can be found. Excerpts from it are used in multiple lessons in Unit 4, including the Jonah text study and the interfaith dialogue. Heschel's essay was second in a three-part series entitled, "What We Might Do Together." The other essays are also included in the appendices, and are cited in the interfaith dialogue lesson. This essay gave a great window into Heschel's views of action and interfaith work.

Intimate Portrait: Bella Abzug. Dir. Lee Grant. VHS. Lifetime Home Video, 1999.

Better and more concise than any book, this video tells the story of Abzug's life as an activist, a politician, a wife and mother, and a Jew. It is complete with interviews of people who knew her best, and includes interviews and shots of Abzug herself. This video was very helpful in preparing the entire unit on Abzug, as it gave a strong overview of her life.

Jacobs, Jill. There Shall Be No Needy: Pursuing Social Justice through Jewish Law & Tradition. Woodstock: Jewish Lights, 2009.

This book is a terrific source for background reading for the facilitator. It provides definitions for various "Jewish" terms used in discussing justice, and gives background for traditional and Jewish legal implications for pursuing justice. Jacobs wrote the book with domestic issues in mind, and specifically addresses the issue of Jewish involvement in the American public sphere.

Jewish Virtual Library - Homepage. 2009. The American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise. 6 Apr. 2009 <<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/>>.

This comprehensive website has articles about everything Jewish! It was most helpful in finding biographical information about the Jewish historical figures that appear in the guide.

Judaism-Action-Social Change. 2007. Hillel and Panim. 6 Apr. 2009 <<http://justaction.org/>>.

This site offers resources and lesson plans about Judaism and pursuing justice. I suggest a couple of lesson plans that could be adapted for use in this guide, and many of the text studies are also applicable. It's a terrific site for the facilitator to do background research as well.

"Mr. Social Action: A Conversation with Albert Vorspan." Reform Judaism Fall 1991: 14-18.

In this interview, Albert Vorspan shares stories from his life and his views on various issues. It helps readers get a real sense of who he is and what he stands for. It's an engaging interview, and would interest students when acted out in Unit 5. It also will give you, the facilitator, helpful background when preparing for the unit.

It was a great resource to help get a picture of who Albert Vorspan really was.

Polenberg, Richard. The World of Benjamin Cardozo: Personal Values and the Judicial Process. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1997.

This biography about Benjamin Cardozo is a complete and thorough source. It details his accomplishments, writings, and court decisions. It also shares insights about the limited knowledge of his personal life, and what drove him in his ethics and morals. I found that this was the most comprehensive source on Cardozo's life, and was written in a way that was easy to understand.

Sarna, Jonathan D. American Judaism: A History. New Haven: Yale UP, 2004.

This book is the authority on American Jewish history. It tells the stories of Jewish life in America since the first Jews arrived in 1654. It was extremely helpful in compiling historical information for this guide, including deciding what people and issues should be the focus points. Sarna's book helped frame a lot of eras for me that come out through the lives of the figures in this guide.

Sidney, Schwarz. Judaism and Justice: The Jewish Passion to Repair the World. Woodstock: Jewish Lights, 2006.

This book is a terrific source for background reading for the facilitator. It provides definitions for various "Jewish" terms used in discussing justice, and gives background for traditional and Jewish legal implications for pursuing justice. Though it deals with many global issues, it does focus on some domestic issues. It even has a chapter devoted to looking at the American Jewish community's role in the public sphere.

Tamir, Anat. No Schvitz: Your One-Stop Guide to Fighting Sweatshops, 2nd Edition. Los Angeles: Progressive Jewish Alliance, 2004.

This magazine-like brochure is an educational piece that relates the history of Jewish garment workers from the early 20th Century to issues of sweatshops today. It guides learners through a time line of labor issues, and highlights what can be done to fight violations today. It is an excellent source to use with Unit 4 when discussing Bella Abzug's work for women's rights and workers' rights. I found it extremely useful in understanding today's issues related to workers' rights, and how to apply it to American Jewish history.

Trippett, Krista. The Spiritual Audacity of Abraham Joshua Heschel. 5 June 2008.

Speaking of Faith from American Public Media. 18 Mar. 2009

<<http://speakingoffaith.publicradio.org/programs/heschel/transcript.shtml>>.

This is a transcript of an interview with Arnold Eisen, Chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary, about Abraham Joshua Heschel. Eisen shares unique stories about Heschel, and how he's been inspired by him. Heschel, himself is quoted here as well. This is a great source for you, the facilitator, to gain more insight about Heschel, and may be interesting for your students to hear as well. You can also download the program to listen to the audio, which would be great

for students to hear because there are pieces of recordings of Heschel, himself. I found this resource to be extremely valuable, as I gained great insight into Heschel's life from this.

Vorspan, Albert, and David Saperstein. Jewish Dimensions of Social Justice: Tough Moral Choices of Our Time. New York: UAHCP, 1998.

This is an excellent source for facing various social justice issues in the 21st Century. It places the issues in context of the Jewish tradition utilizing Biblical, Rabbinic, and modern texts. It also explains how the issues have developed as domestic issues in America, as well as gives some background for those issues, which are also global. Issues addressed in the book fall within the following overarching categories: Life-and-Death Issues; Bioethics; Economic Justice; Environmental Crisis; Israel; Peace and International Affairs; Civil Rights and Race Relations; America's Multiracial Society; Civil Liberties; Religious Liberty; Facing Anti-Semitism; Changing Jewish Family; and Creating a Jewish Ethical Will. Clearly this book is a great resource for Unit 5: Albert Vorspan, as he is the author. It gives readers a sense of his understanding of social justice issues, and how to approach such issues. I use one of the sections in the unit on Environmental Crisis for a lesson in Unit 5. The one caveat I will give is that this book is more than ten years old, and was written pre-September 11th. Some issues seem to be out of date (i.e. medical issues have advanced since then; there are more recent examples to address in peace and international affairs). Please be aware of this caveat when using this book, and be sure to supplement it with up to date resources.

Zeldin, Michael. "Integration and Interaction in the Jewish Day School." The Jewish Educational Leader's Handbook. Denver: A.R.E., 1998. 579-90.

Though written for day school education, this article is applicable to anyone educating Jewish students in America. It addresses the points of contact and tension within the Jewish and American cultures, and suggests how we might educate students by way of integration and interaction between the two. It was helpful in formulating my rationale and thinking about how to structure my guide.

Just

Judaism Action Social Change

JCI CURRICULUM: UNIT 1: CHAPTER 1 – CALL TO ACTION LESSON 2: JUSTICE AS A UNIVERSAL AND JEWISH VALUE

LESSON 2: JUSTICE AS A UNIVERSAL AND JEWISH VALUE (45 mins -1 hr)

Time

To shorten:

Cut the opening activity

Or

Include fewer statements

Or

Cut the closing activity

To lengthen

Have the closing activity done in class (as a discussion or as a writing exercise)

Or

Do step 6 of the main activity as a full class discussion

Goals

-

Materials

- 2 sheets of paper, saying “Jew” and “American”
- 1 copy of the “2 Languages” paragraph (see appendix)
- Copies of the list of statements – one per student, with the “2 languages” paragraph on the back (see appendix)

1) Framing exercise (10 mins)

In advance, write the following quote on the board:

“The administration of justice is the firmest pillar of government”

(do not write the author on the board, but it is by George Washington, 1789)

- a) As the students enter the room, ask them to take out a piece of paper and write down who they think might have written this quote.
- b) Take guesses. You will most likely get different Jewish authors/sources. If no one guesses correctly (very likely!), write under the quote: “George Washington, 1789”
- c) Ask the students if this surprises them. Why? What does it say about the relationship between being a Jew and being an American?

Just

Judaism Action Social Change

JCI CURRICULUM: UNIT 1: CHAPTER 1 – CALL TO ACTION LESSON 2: JUSTICE AS A UNIVERSAL AND JEWISH VALUE

2) Main Activity (30 mins)

- a) Place signs on opposite sides of the room saying “Jew” and “American”. Clear a space in the middle of the room so that students can fill the space between the two signs in a continuum.
- b) Give one student the “2 Languages” paragraph. Have them read it out loud.
- c) Read as many of the following statements as you desire. After each one, have the students choose a side – do they do this action as a Jew or as an American? (You can decide if there is a middle ground or only the two polarities). After the students have dispersed themselves, ask a few students to explain their placement.

Statements:

1. I go to school every day.
 2. I help my elderly neighbor take out her trash.
 3. I celebrate the 4th of July.
 4. I obey the speed limit (or will, when I drive!).
 5. I volunteer at a soup kitchen.
 6. I intend to go to college.
 7. I make sure there aren't any pieces of glass or holes in the sidewalk in front of my house.
 8. I go to synagogue.
 9. I never litter.
- d) Ask students to get into pairs / triads. Give each pair a copy of the list of statements. Ask them to identify one value that leads them to act in such a way. For example, I celebrate the 4th of July because of patriotism, or because it is important to my family. Tell them not to worry about using specific terms for the values, they just should get the ideas down.
 - e) While they are working, write the list of statements on the board, with a large space next to each one. Or pre-prepare this list on a poster board before class.
 - f) Regroup: Go through each group's values as a class. Elicit explanations of the values on the board, and write these next to each term.
 - g) Discuss the values. Ask students:
 - Are these values Jewish values or American values?
 - Are any in conflict with Judaism?
 - How do you decide which set of values to follow?

Just

Judaism Action Social Change

JCI CURRICULUM: *UNIT 1: CHAPTER 1 – CALL TO ACTION*
LESSON 2: JUSTICE AS A UNIVERSAL AND JEWISH VALUE

- Can you think of an example when American and Jewish values conflict?

Just

Judaism Action Social Change

JCI CURRICULUM: *UNIT 1: CHAPTER 1 – CALL TO ACTION* LESSON 2: JUSTICE AS A UNIVERSAL AND JEWISH VALUE

1) Conclusion (5-10 mins)

- a) Ask students to turn to the “2 languages” text. With this page open, ask them the following questions:

Journal Questions:

- Do you (or should you) act as a Jew when engaged in social action or as an American?
- What’s the difference?
- Can I be both?

- b) Ask students to think about these questions and write answers in their journals or discuss them in pairs.

- c) If you give homework / grades:

Ask students to answer those questions in an essay.

Just

Judaism Action Social Change

JCI CURRICULUM: *UNIT 1: CHAPTER 1 – CALL TO ACTION*
LESSON 2: JUSTICE AS A UNIVERSAL AND JEWISH VALUE

JEW

Just

Judaism Action Social Change

JCI CURRICULUM: *UNIT 1: CHAPTER 1 – CALL TO ACTION*
LESSON 2: JUSTICE AS A UNIVERSAL AND JEWISH VALUE

AMERICAN

Just

Judaism Action Social Change

JCI CURRICULUM: UNIT 1: CHAPTER 1 – CALL TO ACTION LESSON 2: JUSTICE AS A UNIVERSAL AND JEWISH VALUE

I go to school every day.	
I help my elderly neighbor take out her trash.	
I celebrate the 4 th of July.	
I obey the speed limit (or will, when I drive!).	
I volunteer at a soup kitchen.	
I intend to go to college.	
I make sure there aren't any pieces of glass or holes in the sidewalk in front of my house.	
I go to synagogue.	

Just

Judaism Action Social Change

JCI CURRICULUM: *UNIT 1: CHAPTER 1 – CALL TO ACTION*
LESSON 2: JUSTICE AS A UNIVERSAL AND JEWISH VALUE

“2 Languages” Text

As Jews in America, we have two primary “languages,” two identities, two cultures: Jewish and American. Often these cultures overlap and reinforce each other. Other times they don’t. The question for us is: how do we negotiate this bi-lingualism? Given a world of choice, why should we continue to choose to be Jews? And when? If Jewish and American values either clash or are motivated by different impulses, how shall we choose between them? As Jews, how should we negotiate the tug of particularism with the demand of universalism?

TEXT 1 • To Work and to Tend

This text is drawn from the beginning of the Torah and the introduction to the Garden of Eden.

בראשית פרק ב
...ביום, עשות יהוה אל הים--ארץ ושמים. ה וכל שית השדה, טרם יהיה
בארץ, וכל-עשב השדה, טרם יצמח: כי לא המטיר יהוה אל הים, על-
הארץ, ואדם אין, לעב הד את- האדמה... ויניצר יהוה אל הים את-האדם,
עפר מן-האדמה, ויפח באפיו, נשמת חיים; ויהי האדם, לנפש חיה... טו ויקח
יהוה אל הים, את האדם; וינחהו בגן-עדן, לעבדה ולשמרה.

On the day the Lord God made the earth, there was neither shrub nor plant, for God had not yet watered the earth, and there was no human to work the land ... The Lord God fashioned the human with dust from the earth, and blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and the human became a being full of life... And God put the human in the Garden of Eden to work it and to tend it.

Genesis, Chapter 2



What the Text Means

- ▼ According to this story, what is the stated purpose, the calling, of humanity? That is, what was the human created to do?
- ▼ How was the human made? What is the starting point (genesis) of the first human?
- ▼ What demands or capabilities do you think that the source of animation (God) places upon us or within us?
- ▼ Why would the Torah begin with this story?
- ▼ Do you think this is a "Jewish" story? To whom do you think it is addressed?

What the Text Means to Me

- ▲ How are we like the human in the story?
- ▲ How does this metaphor, that each and every one of us becomes alive by God's breathing into us, affect who we are and what we are to do with our lives? What can this metaphor mean to those who do not believe in God? What can such a metaphor do for both believers and non-believers?
- ▲ How does such an awareness of the Torah's take on the purpose of humanity affect us? Where do we/should we position the work of social activism in our lives in light of this teaching?



Hillel

Action Guide > Action

Once you are engaged in a process of thoughtful preparation, you must decide what kind of action you will take to address the need/social problem that you have identified. In thinking about action, it is important to consider the different modes of activity that could have an impact. We have organized civic action into five modes, represented by the acronym SPACE:

It is important to note that although service-learning can certainly consist of direct service, any of these five modes would be appropriate action in a service learning framework.

In this chapter, we will examine each of these five paths in depth. For each path, we will explain and define the term, list some well-known practitioners and organizations that employ this methodology, and suggest some books and resources for more in-depth study. Each path concludes with profiles of young Jews who have made a positive impact on their world by employing that particular technique.

Before examining each path in depth, we will offer some brief definitions and examples:

Direct service is hands-on. It's what we usually think of first when we talk about volunteering. Visiting someone who is sick or elderly, tutoring a student, cleaning up a beach, and stocking cans at the food pantry are all examples of meeting a need immediately through direct service.

Philanthropy means giving money to support projects or organizations that address a need or a problem. Philanthropy recognizes that most serious social problems in our world cannot be solved by individual direct service alone and that, in many cases, there may already be organizations that are addressing the problem we have identified, but simply

need additional resources to get the job done. Often, raising money for larger scale projects is necessary.

Advocacy uses argument and persuasion to achieve a particular action or change. Often advocacy is directed specifically toward public officials to persuade them to pass a piece of legislation that can directly impact on the social problem you have identified. Advocacy can also educate the general public to effect a change in behavior – to stop smoking or to buy fair-trade coffee, for example. Advocacy efforts can also be directed at businesses and corporations.

Community organizing is a strategy to pursue justice for the less-powerful by developing a strong, democratic organization whose power comes from the numbers and mutual commitment of its members. Community organizers build consensus among those facing a social problem and then helps those citizens leverage their numbers to pressure public officials to take action to resolve the issue at hand.

Social entrepreneurs have many of the same skills as business entrepreneurs, but instead of affecting the financial or technological world, they are focused on addressing social problems. Social ventures are begun by one person or a small group with an idea of how to address a specific need. Some social enterprises are not-for-profit organizations. Others are businesses that incorporate a social mission such as training and employing people who are poor and unskilled or creating and selling a product that preserves the environment.

Exodus 23:2-3

In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an **impartial** jury of the State and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the Assistance of Counsel for his defense. (US Constitution, Amendment VI)

Both the American and Biblical tradition are concerned about the rights of the defendant.

How is the 6th Amendment similar to the laws in Exodus 23:2-3?

How are the two different?

The jury is assumed to be impartial, and no persons may be deliberately and systematically excluded from jury service because of class, race, or gender. The Supreme Court has ruled that due process requires that persons accused of serious crimes are entitled to a trial by jury... Trial by jury is provided for in Article III, section 2 and by the Sixth and Seventh amendments of the US Constitution. (The American Political Dictionary)

Write your own version of a law that addresses the rights of a defendant to a fair and impartial trial:

Daf Cardozo

“Do not heed a popular cry to convict, nor decide a cause either to please the powerful or to favor the poor.” (Exodus 23:2-3) Cardozo’s translation

(ב) לא-תהיה אחר-י-רבים לנעת
ולא-תענה על-רב לנטות אחרי רבים
להטות: (ג) תל לא תהדר בריבו:

“You shall neither side with the mighty to do wrong – you shall not give perverse testimony in a dispute so as to pervert it in favor of the mighty – nor shall you show deference to a poor person in a dispute.” (Exodus 23:2-3) Plaut & Sarna translation

“[Cardozo] did not become the protector of the injured merely because the defendant had ample funds to meet the judgment or had an ability to spread the loss. His scales were those of legal justice, not sentimental justice.” (William Seavey)

You shall not render an unfair decision: do not favor the poor or show deference to the rich; judge your kinsman fairly. (Leviticus 19:15)

“In the interest of impartial justice, no consideration is to be given to the social standing of the litigants.” (Sarna)

Do you think “legal justice” and “impartial justice are the same?”

Why are these important concepts in law?

“The individual may not be singled out from among his fellows, and made the victim of the shafts of malice. Those who are put over him

‘are to govern by promulgated established law, not to be varied in particular cases, but to have one rule for rich and poor, for the favorite at court and the countryman at plough.’” (Cardozo, quoting Locke)

“Judicial power is never exercised for the purpose of giving effect to the will of the judge; always for the purpose of giving effect to the will of the legislature; or in other words, to the will of the law.”¹ (Cardozo)

Do not follow a majority blindly if your conscience demands otherwise. (Rashi)



Rebecca Cardozo with Benjamin and Emily at Long Branch, New Jersey, 1871.
The twins are about fifteen months of age.



Cardozo at the age of twelve.

HISTORY
NOV 24 1972

FEB 2 1996

BELLA!

Ms. Abzug Goes to Washington

BELLA S. ABZUG

Edited by Mel Ziegler

92 A167

Saturday Review Press

NEW YORK

COPY 2

JUN 13 1979



Introduction

I've been described as a tough and noisy woman, a prizefighter, a man-hater, you name it. They call me Battling Bella, Mother Courage and a Jewish mother with more complaints than Portnoy. There are those who say I'm impatient, impetuous, uppity, rude, profane, brash and overbearing. Whether I'm any of these things, or all of them, you can decide for yourself. But whatever I am—and this ought to be made very clear at the outset—I am a very serious woman.

I am not being facetious when I say that the real enemies in this country are the Pentagon and its pals in big business. It's no joke to me that women in this country are terribly oppressed and are made to suffer economic, legal and social discrimination. I am not evoking a wild fantasy when I claim that I'm going to help organize a new political coalition of the women, the minorities and the young people, along with the poor, the elderly, the workers and the unemployed, which is going to turn this country upside down and inside out. We're going to reclaim our cities, create more jobs, better housing, better health care, more child care centers, more help for drug addicts; we're going to start doing something for the millions of people in this country whose needs, because of the callousness of the men who've been running our government, have taken a low priority to the cost of killing people in Indochina.

To some people all this may sound a bit grandiose, but let me tell you something: This is the only thing we *can* do and still survive. I didn't devise the program—it's not my master plan. It's what a half million anguished people—Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians, Chinese, Irish, Poles, Russians, blacks, even WASPs—who live in an area of Manhattan extending from the West Side down and around the Village to the Lower East Side have specifically sent me to Congress to do. These people have had it! They are fed up and dispirited, almost without hope, cynical, oppressed by economic conditions, overwhelmed by the inflexibility of their institutions, demoralized by the war. Either we begin to help them and all the millions of others who are suffering in this country, or we've *all* had it.

All through the campaign and since the election I have had people come up to me and say, time and again, "Bella, you're our only hope . . ." "There's nobody else to turn to, Bella. Only you . . ." "Bella, if you don't, who will?"

I confess—it scares me. To look at these people and the conditions they live in, to talk with them, to feel their desperation, is so frightening to me at times that I become physically ill with the fear that I might fail them.

There are plenty of people, including my husband, Martin, who think I'm nuts. They don't believe I can get anywhere. They worry that I'm taking on too much. They warn that, at best, I'll be misunderstood; at worst, I'll be spurned and cut down. Who knows? Perhaps they're right.

But I don't think so.

These are very special times we live in. The priorities in this country—against the will of the people—are upside down. At this moment, as the 92nd Congress is about to convene, the mood of the country is one place and its government is someplace else. One poll after another shows us that the

people are against the war, that the people are opposed to the President, that the people don't trust the Administration. More clearly than ever in recent history, vast numbers of people in this country share a common goal to change their government and its priorities and policies.

Can it be done? Of course. If the women, who are a majority of the population, and the young people, who are just getting the vote, and the minorities, who more than any other group have been made to pay for this rotten war, can be educated into a new political coalition with working people and small businessmen, it can be done. It will take organization. And it will take leadership. The people are ready and willing. They're just desperate for direction. They're waiting for leaders, a new kind of leader.

They can no longer relate to and they have had enough of the old-style wooden, pontificating politicians who really don't give a damn about them. Instead they want leaders who are people like themselves—real people, as human and emotional and agonized as they are. Like me. I'm one of the same kind of people who elected me. I'm someone they can touch, see, feel and smell. It's very interesting that the man I defeated in the Democratic primary, Leonard Farbstein, who had been in Congress for twelve years, had many of the same views on the issues that I did. His only problem was that—unlike me—he was not part of the constituency. You never knew him or felt him. He was not an activist. "He's like a piece of furniture," somebody said to me in the campaign. "It's time he should be moved."

I am an activist. I'm the kind of person who *does things* at the same time that I'm working to create a feeling that *something can be done*. And I don't intend to disappear in Congress as many of my predecessors have. My role, as I see it, is among the people, and I am going to be *outside* organizing them at the same time that I'm *inside* fighting for them. That is the kind of leadership that I believe will build a new major-

ity in this country, and it was primarily in the hope of being able to exemplify that kind of leadership that I ran for Congress.

I certainly didn't do it for ego. I wasn't looking for a new career. I am a fifty-year-old woman, an established lawyer, a wife, a mother of two daughters and a founder and leader of Women Strike for Peace. Believe me, the last thing I needed at this point in my life was to knock my brains out to get elected to Congress.

But I felt if we are going to get anywhere, Congress has got to begin to reflect in its composition the great diversity of this country. Although women represent 53 percent of the electorate, there are only thirteen of us in Congress (twelve in the House; one in the Senate). The country has 22 million black citizens, and there are only a dozen black Congressmen. There are no artists, intellectuals, scientists, mathematicians, creative writers, architects, Vietnam veterans, musicians, and not even any leaders of the labor movement on Capitol Hill. There are no young people. The average age of a Congressman is 51.9 years, and a Senator, 56. Two-thirds of these people are lawyers, businessmen or bankers. No wonder Congress is such a smug, incestuous, stagnant institution! It reeks of sameness.

Perhaps the best way to change Congress—to make it more representative, to make it more responsive—is to show people exactly what it is. This is the reason I've decided to keep this diary. I want people to share my personal experiences in struggling with the system. Having spent many years as the legislative director of Women Strike for Peace, I'm no innocent to Washington. I've already had a pretty good whiff of what to expect. The inside operation of Congress—the deals, the compromises, the selling out, the co-opting, the unprincipled manipulating, the self-serving career-building—is a story of such monumental decadence that I believe if people find out about it they will demand an end to it.

(6)

I intend, as best I can, to tell it the way I see it. The reason I'm going to be able to do this is that I have no desire to become a privileged member of "the Club," nor do I care to build a career for myself if it's going to be unrelated to the needs of the people who elected me. What that means, frankly, is that I don't give a damn about being reelected unless I'm able to do what I want to do. I want to bring Congress back to the people. If that proves to be impossible to do by working from within, then I'm prepared to go back outside again—to the streets—and do it from there.

—BELLA S. ABZUG
New York, New York

January 15, 1971

(7)

NO SHVITZ

The Whole Megillah

Your One-Stop Guide to Fighting Sweatshops

2nd Edition

For Every
Ten Jews,
Eleven
Opinions

4

Modern-day
Slavery and
Child Labor

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Wet Seal:
On Slippery
Ground

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Cut From
the Same
Cloth

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A project of the Progressive Jewish Alliance

Written by Anat Tamir

Sweatshop

Timeline

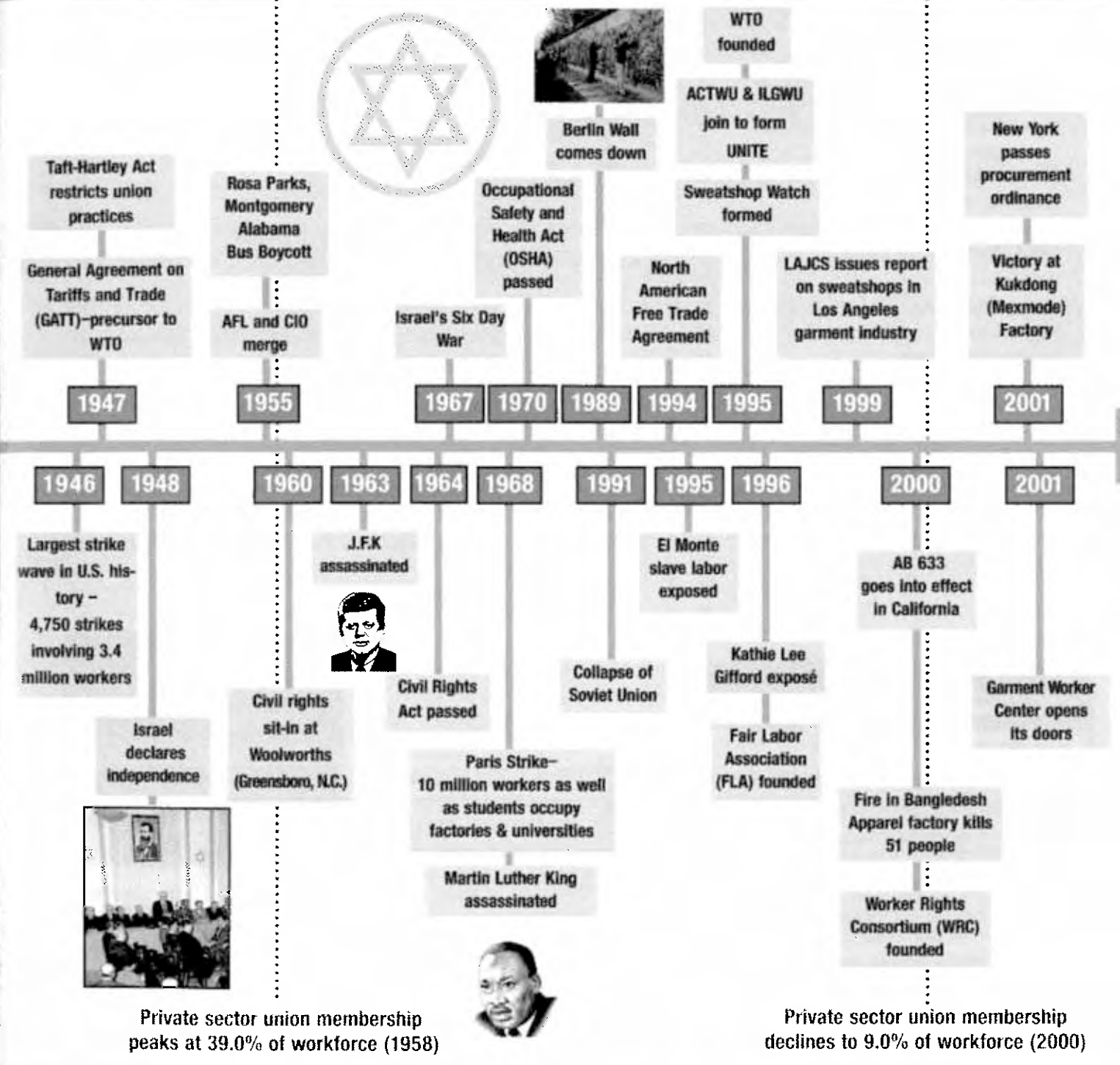
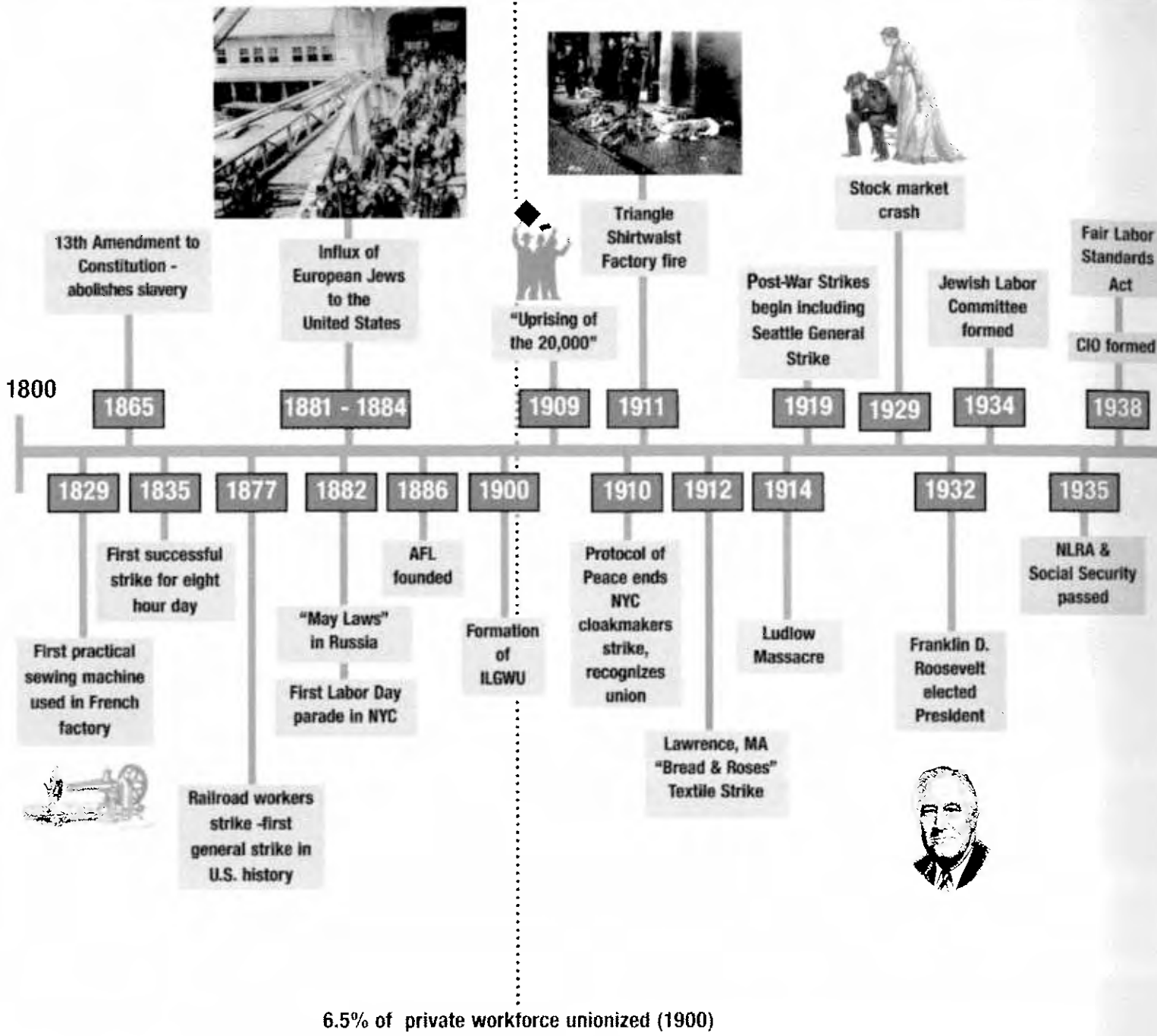
1800 - 1860 1861 - 1880 1881 - 1890 1891 - 1900 1901 - 1910 1911 - 1920 1920 - 1930 1931 - 1940

1941 - 1950 1951 - 1960 1961 - 1965 1966 - 1970 1971 - 1990 1991 - 2000 2001 - present

INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION IN U.S.

EBBING OF SWEATSHOPS

1960s-RE-EMERGENCE OF SWEATSHOPS



War of 1812	Civil War 1861-1865	Women's Suffrage Movement 1850-1910	Roaring 20's	New Deal 1933 - 1938	Civil Rights Movement 1954 - 1965	Reaganism 1981 - 1989
Abolition Movement 1829-1860	Pogroms in Russia 1881-1917	World War I 1914-1917	Prohibition 1920-1932	World War II-Holocaust 1939 - 1945	Vietnam War 1964- 1975	Information Age 1975 -present
					Cold War 1947- 1991	Gulf War 1992

No Shvitz: Your One-Stop Guide to Fighting Sweatshops

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Credits

No Shvitz: Your One-Stop Guide to Fighting Sweatshops
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A note from the Berke Family Foundation

This project is funded by a generous grant from the Berke Family Foundation in honor of Yoine Bercovitch, our patriarch, who was himself a garment worker and proud member of the ILGWU. He taught us that the Jewish values of *tzedaka* and social justice require more than words – they command action.

A Message from PJA

It is a multibillion-dollar industry that takes pride in being cutting-edge and socially conscious yet profits from virtual slave labor. It is a global market that exalts beauty yet ignores the hideous conditions that often make it possible. It is an industry that pays endorsers \$40 million to sell clothes made by people earning 40 cents an hour. It is the global fashion industry, and it is fraught with injustice.

Over 100 years ago, Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe toiled in dark, cramped garment factories along the East Coast of the United States. When working conditions became unbearable, they fought back by forming unions. They helped lay the groundwork for the workers' rights movement that developed during the 20th Century.

Nowadays, Jews are no longer found in the ranks of garment industry workers. With the growth of Jewish-owned retail stores and manufacturing companies, Jews have successfully jumped from one side of the bargaining table to the other. And while the industry is certainly not Jewish-run, its Jewish presence is significant.

The Jewish community has a unique relationship to the *shmateh* business. First, as our history shows, we have been intimately involved in the industry, both as employers and employees. Of even greater consequence, garment industry sweatshops are a direct affront to the Jewish tradition of social justice and its emphasis on workers' rights.

No Shvitz: Your One-Stop Guide to Fighting Sweatshops is a glimpse into the fashion industry, the complex web of production that makes it so profitable, and the labor rights movement that calls it to conscience. As we take you through the decades of sweatshop labor, and the countless advances and setbacks in the fight for economic justice, keep in mind that sweatshops are a human-made problem and that conditions can therefore be changed.

This book is written for students, current and future policy-makers, activists, educators and entrepreneurs, all of whom have the power to effect change by importing values of economic justice into their chosen fields.

**Shmateh: Yiddish for "rag."
The garment industry is referred to as "rag trade" in both colloquial English and Yiddish.**

For Every Ten Jews, Eleven Opinions

Jewish involvement in the *shmateh* business is generations-old. Our ancestors worked in sweatshops, formed unions and helped pioneer groundbreaking initiatives like the Protocol of Peace, which sought to eradicate sweatshop conditions. We were also, and are still today, retailers and manufacturers. Our history can help us understand the various perspectives within the garment industry and to appreciate the complexity of the problem.



Immigrants arriving at Ellis Island

But it isn't easy to raise the issue of sweatshops in the Jewish community.

We've all heard this before: "For every ten Jews, eleven opinions." The Jewish community is known for its myriad of often opposing opinions. This is healthy; it makes for a vibrant community. It also acts as a built-in system of self-evaluation.

In the case of sweatshops, however, the discussion is a bit more heated. In this industry, the "big fish" at the top of the chain – the retailers and manufacturers – try to distance themselves from involvement in sweatshops, hiding behind the many layers of the subcontracting system. They claim to have no control over labor conditions within the factories of independent contractors. This claim ignores lessons of history and runs counter to Jewish notions of justice. It is also deceptive. The companies that dominate the industry set the prices and could undoubtedly exert a positive influence on the working conditions in their subcontractors' factories.

Why is anti-sweatshop activism a Jewish issue?

Jews are certainly not the only group represented in the ranks of retailers and manufacturers. And businesspeople do business as businesspeople, not necessarily as Christians, Jews or Muslims. So where does Judaism fit in the equation? It is simple: The Jewish imperative to work for social justice, the wealth of Jewish teachings on labor justice and our intimate history with sweatshops demand a Jewish response.

“Our quarrel is not with Jews who are different, but with Jews who are indifferent.”

- Rabbi Stephen S. Wise,
social justice and human rights advocate



Olympic Torch Bearer Runs Barefoot

Leslie Kretzu, campaigner for Educating for Justice's Nike Corporate Accountability Campaign, ran barefoot at the Salt Lake 2002 Olympic Torch Relay as a show of solidarity with Nike's overseas factory workers. Nike is the chief producer of athletic equipment for Olympians, and is notorious for allegedly employing sweatshop labor. "It is time," says Kretzu, "that Olympians and the International Olympic Committee pressure multinational sponsors to live up to the Olympic ideal."¹

Sweatshops



Workers in a sweatshop in L.A.

What is a sweatshop?

A sweatshop is a workplace characterized by extensive labor rights violations, such as long hours, low pay, suppression of unionizing efforts, absence of health benefits, hazardous working conditions, and widespread human rights violations, such as sexual harassment, coercive birth control (even abortions), and restricted bathroom breaks.

Where does the word "sweatshop" come from?

Historically, the term "sweating" refers to the system of subcontracting in which the manufacturer consigns production to a series of competing contractors, subcontractors and workers. In this multilayered system of contracts, the middleman is said to "sweat" profit from workers by paying them rock-bottom wages for long working hours under dangerous conditions.

What conditions originally gave rise to sweatshops?

It could be argued that sweatshops are as old as time, since the term refers generally to exploitative working conditions. The



Italian garment workers

advent of garment industry sweatshops, in particular, however, can be traced to specific historical moments. The 19th Century Industrial Revolution introduced such innovations as the steam press iron and sewing machine. New technologies revolutionized the manufacturing process and accelerated production.

The massive influx of Eastern European Jews to the United States in the late 19th Century presented the garment industry with an ideal workforce: young immigrant women who knew little English, had minimal work experience and few alternatives. They dared not demand higher wages or better treatment. Thousands seeking jobs in which the language barrier had little consequence would now operate the new machinery.

What conditions keep sweatshops running today?

Throughout the 20th century, numerous policies were enacted to further open up the free market economy and to induce **Third World** dependence on foreign investment. Policies such as these restrict government intervention in business practices, encourage offshore production and facilitate globalization. In the context of the resulting capital mobility, **multinational corporations** (MNCs) produce in multiple locations. When the MNC hears rumblings of unionizing efforts, it may cease production and move to where such "problems" are unknown. As there are no legal repercussions to deter such action, labor and human rights violations go unabated. Equally important to the system's viability is readily available and politically impotent immigrant labor. In the United States, a disenfranchised immigrant class (many of whom are undocumented) fuels the system.

Where do sweatshops exist?

Everywhere. Though sweatshops are widely associated with Third World countries, they also thrive in our own backyard, here in the United States. Los Angeles, now at the center of the American garment industry, has been dubbed the "sweatshop capital of the U.S."

How many sweatshop workers are there in Los Angeles? And in California altogether?

According to *Behind the Label*, a book about the Los Angeles garment industry, in April 1998 the Employment Development Department counted 122,500 people working in the apparel industry in Los Angeles. The authors are careful to note that this figure is an undercount given the city's underground, unregistered economy. And as for California on a whole, the figure most commonly used is 160,000. Of these, perhaps 80-90,000 are factory workers.²

Are sweatshops unique to the garment industry?

No. "Sweatshop" refers to specific labor conditions, and such conditions are not limited to the garment industry. Many corporations in the toy industry, technology sector and agriculture (referred to as "sweatshops in the fields") also use sweatshop labor.

Who is responsible for sweatshop labor?

All parties involved in the production process. This includes **retailers, manufacturers, all contractors and subcontractors**. Some would argue that the consumer is also responsible, though indirectly.

Is the United States federal government doing anything about this?

Yes, but not enough. The Federal Department of Labor (DOL) was created to administer and enforce over 180 laws related to the workplace. However, many of the laws are riddled with loopholes and allow violations to go unchecked.



How is it that, in this great nation, at the dawn of the 21st century, we have 19th century working conditions in the garment industry?

Julie Su, public interest lawyer and labor and immigrant rights advocate



Workers in L.A. sewing factory

What about state & local governments?

Much like codes of conduct signed by universities to ensure that their licensed apparel is not made in sweatshops, cities can do the same by passing anti-sweatshop procurement ordinances. Laws like these, already passed (though not necessarily enforced) in New York City, Cleveland and San Francisco to name a few, attempt to ensure that tax dollars are not used to buy uniforms for firefighters, police officers and other city employees that are made in sweatshops. (For more, see Cities Against Sweatshops at <http://www.uniteunion.org/sweatshops/cities/cities.html>.)

In October 2002, the Los Angeles City Council voted unanimously in favor of a motion regarding the procurement of city apparel. The motion essentially called for the creation of a working group to assess the purchasing policies of the City of Los Angeles and the working conditions at the factories where its apparel is produced. (For more on this anti-sweatshop victory, visit Progressive Jewish Alliance at www.pjalliance.org.)

March 25, 1911 marks a pivotal moment in labor history.
It is a day etched in our collective memory.

injustice. Also known as the "uprising of the 20,000," the 1909 walkout was the largest documented strike to have occurred up until that time in American history. It also inspired sizeable walkouts in various other garment industry sectors.

Strength in Numbers

After months of mounting public support for the strikers, the factory owners decided it was time to negotiate. Weeks later, management agreed to reduce the workweek, raise wages, improve sanitary conditions in the factory, provide workers with equipment (rather than make them bring their own) and establish a joint grievance committee through which complaints would be settled. Of even greater significance was the establishment of a labor union in the factory, as well as a newfound respect for female strikers.

Tragedy

Sadly, however, not enough was done to improve working conditions at the factory. Less than two years later, someone on the eighth floor of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory building carelessly dropped a cigarette into a pile of material and the building went up in flames. The factory's steel doors remained locked (reportedly to keep union organizers out as well as to prevent workers from stealing clothes), thereby sealing the fate of the hundreds trapped inside. Some workers burned or suffocated on the spot. Others linked arms and leaped to their death. Those who survived with critical burns and broken limbs were considered lucky.



Bodies line the sidewalk outside the burned factory.



Inside the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory

The blaze killed 146 workers; 500 more were injured. Sprinkler systems could have prevented the tragedy, but the factory owners weren't willing to incur this expense. Many lives could have also been spared if the factory owners had thought to unlock the doors before they themselves escaped unscathed.

Fast Forward: Injustice Prevails

Almost 100 years after the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire, garment workers are still dying under similar conditions.

In August 2001, a fire alarm sounded at an eight-story factory building in Bangladesh. The workers were locked inside. Twenty-three were crushed to death as people tried desperately to escape. It turned out to be a false alarm.

In June 2002, a factory fire in India claimed 42 lives. At the time of the accident the only door at the entrance of the factory was locked.⁶

ACTION FIGURE

Clara Lemlich

Clara Lemlich, a 19-year-old immigrant worker, made her indelible mark on the labor movement in 1909 when she rose to speak at the Cooper Union meeting of the shirtwaist workers. She described the humiliation of factory labor and appealed for united action against all shirtwaist manufacturers. Her emotional plea brought the crowd to its feet and inspired thousands of shirtwaist workers to join the walkout. Thus began the "uprising of the 20,000."

"The girls to [the bosses] are part of the machines they are running."

Clara Lemlich, Jewish immigrant and sweatshop worker

The MFA Is Going Away – What Is It, and Why Does It Matter?

What is the MFA?

The Multifiber Arrangement (MFA) sets limits on how many garments of a given type (women's cotton blouses, men's wool pants) can be imported from each country each year. These limits, called quotas, are very detailed. In fact, the complete list of quotas for all countries and products is nearly 200 pages long.

Why set quotas?

The MFA, which has been in force for nearly thirty years, was originally enacted to protect the U.S. textile and apparel industries from losing jobs. The logic was simple: if (say) Hong Kong is prevented from exporting more than a given amount of a particular item to the U.S. each year, then maybe some production would remain in the U.S. This logic proved to be flawed: savvy manufacturers and retailers simply looked to other low-wage countries once Hong Kong's quotas were filled. The result: today, as many as 130 countries are engaged in apparel and textile production for export. In many countries, despite the fact that factory conditions are often horrifying, apparel and textile exports play a key role in providing jobs and foreign exchange. In Bangladesh, for example, apparel exports account for nearly four-fifths of all merchandise exports; in El Salvador, close to three-quarters.

Challenging the 'status quota'

The World Trade Organization has changed all this. On January 1, 2005, under the WTO's Agreement on Textiles and Clothing (ATC), the MFA will be fully phased out. Thereafter, while a few restrictions may remain, for all practical purposes the quota system will be eliminated. U.S. retailers and manufacturers will be free to source their low-cost products from wherever they please.

Global impact: the winners

According to a growing body of research, large retailers and manufacturers such as the Gap, JC Penney, Liz Claiborne, and Wal-Mart that once sourced from 50 or more countries will now source from only 10 or 15. And among these, China, along with a few other countries, will become the black hole of the

global apparel industry, sucking production out of everywhere else. China has it all: low-cost but highly productive labor; an authoritarian government that outlaws strikes, work stoppages, and even independent unions; and a well-organized industry that can provide "full package production:" place an order in Hong Kong or Shanghai, and fully-assembled finished garments, ready for the rack, will be delivered to your store.

And the losers?

Pretty much every other country. In the global apparel industry, truly free trade may prove disastrous for the large number of countries that owe their industries in large part to quota restrictions on China and other exporters. Africa, which is only beginning to export apparel to the U.S. and Europe in any significant quantities, will be hard hit, as will most of South Asia, especially Nepal, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka. Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean, are not completely immune either, despite favorable trade agreements and geographical proximity to the U.S. market.

What about U.S. textile workers?

According to UNITE, as many as 500,000 U.S. textile workers will have lost their job over the years at the hands of the MFA phase-out. Sweatshop Watch estimates that in California alone nearly 50,000 apparel workers will have been affected.

The phase-out in brief

The potential impact of the phase-out on the global economy is summarized in the Sweatshop Watch working paper on the subject: "While many studies exist on the quota phase-out, there is no consensus on the real impact, except that most economists predict that China will gain a larger share of production, the U.S. will lose more textile and apparel jobs and the apparel industries of the smaller developing countries may be decimated."⁷

For more, visit Sweatshop Watch at:

<http://www.sweatshopwatch.org/global/analysis.html>

"You must be the change you wish to see in the world."

– Mahatma Gandhi, Indian political and spiritual leader

Modern-day Slavery and Child Labor

Welcome to the underground world of trafficking, where modern-day slavery is alive and the business of the human flesh trade is thriving. Trafficking involves the recruitment and transportation of people by force, fraud or deception for the purpose of exploiting them economically.

According to the United Nations, at least 4 million people are trafficked around the world each year, mostly from Southeast Asia, Eastern Europe and Latin America. According to the CIA, some 50,000 women and children are trafficked to the United States each year. Many of them become slave laborers. Many are sold into prostitution.

El Monte: A Slave Labor Compound

In 1995, state and federal government agents found 71 Thai workers enslaved in El Monte, California, just outside Los Angeles. For up to seven years, they worked 18-hour days in an apartment complex surrounded by barbed wire and armed guards. They slept crammed into rat-infested rooms and were forbidden to make any unmonitored phone calls. They were forced to buy food from their captors who overcharged them. They were making clothes for brand-name manufacturers and retailers such as Mervyn's, Miller's Outpost, Montgomery Ward and manufacturers including well-known labels B.U.M., Clio and others. It was also discovered that 22 Latino workers labored at a downtown Los Angeles "front" factory of the El Monte operation.

Where are they now?

Following the 1995 bust of the slave labor compound, the El Monte operators were sent to federal prison. Seven of the captors from Thailand pleaded guilty to charges of indentured servitude, harboring and smuggling immigrants, and conspiracy. As part of their plea, the operators acknowledged running their El Monte garment factory from 1989 to 1995 with a captive workforce. Two others are considered to be fugitives and are believed to be in Thailand.

The workers filed a federal lawsuit against not only their captors, but also named a dozen of the manufacturers and retailers whose garments they had sewn. They won over \$4 million which was split between 102 workers. Julie Su, the lawyer who represented them in the landmark case, reports that the workers have been reabsorbed into the workforce, most remaining in the garment industry, now earning minimum wage plus overtime. Many are now activists themselves. One of the workers opened a garment factory, employing ten former fellow laborers. Another is a full-time nurse. A couple who met in El Monte got married and opened a restaurant. In November 2002, all 71 Thai workers were granted U.S. residency.

Catalyst for Reform

This incident, much like the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire, stripped the veneer of the fashion industry to expose the appalling labor conditions behind many labels. It was a shocking awakening for the American public. It was also "a catalyst for reform," says Su. "The strength of the workers mobilized other non-English speaking immigrant groups. It brought communities together, it emboldened the otherwise disenfranchised Thai and Asian American communities, it showed that this is what can be accomplished when you stand together."⁸

CAST

Founded in response to the El Monte atrocity, the Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking (CAST) is a U.S.-based organization serving and advocating on behalf of trafficked people. www.trafficked-women.org.

Kids Fight for Kids

At age 12, Craig Kielburger of Toronto, Canada, came across an article about a Pakistani boy who was sold into bondage as a carpet weaver, escaped from captivity and was then murdered for speaking out against child labor. Craig decided to carry the torch of the murdered child and formed Kids Can Free the Children (KCFTC). KCFTC is now an international children's organization with hundreds of thousands of young participants around the world working on various social justice initiatives. To learn more about their work, go to www.free-the-children.org.

U.S. Saipan, Littered with Sweatshops

By now you know that "Made in the USA" is not necessarily favorable information about your clothing. But this is not only because of the existence of sweatshops in the United States proper. Thousands of Asian immigrants pay exorbitant recruitment fees to work in garment factories on the Pacific Island of Saipan, part of the U.S. commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. As a territory, Saipan is subject to all U.S. laws. However, in 1989, the first Bush Administration loosened immigration and minimum wage laws to encourage economic development.

A typical scenario is as follows: workers are lured onto Saipan and pay "recruitment fees" to work in garment factories in hopes of a better life. Upon arrival, their passports and return tickets are confiscated. To defray their debts, they work endlessly in conditions of virtual slavery. The clothing they sew is shipped tariff-free to the U.S. for sale by major **retailers and manufacturers**.

Saipan Sweatshop Lawsuit: Five-Year Campaign Ends in Victory

In January 1999, garment workers and anti-sweatshop groups filed a \$1 billion lawsuit against retailers and Saipan garment factories alleging violations of U.S. labor laws and international human rights standards.

Three years later, a judge on Saipan ruled that thousands of former and current Saipan garment workers could sue the retailers, manufacturers and contracted factories as a class, recognizing that all garment workers on the island constitute a single aggrieved group.

By September 2002, all the companies agreed to a settlement, with only one exception: Levi Strauss & Co., which held that it already monitors manufacturing operations to prevent sweatshop conditions. Among the retailers were Calvin Klein Inc., Gap Inc., J. Crew Group Inc., Polo Ralph Lauren and Sears Roebuck & Company.

The five-year battle ended in January 2004 with a \$20 million settlement, giving each of the 30,000 workers eligibility to collect up to \$4,000 in back wages, almost an entire year's earnings. In addition, significant changes were made to the island's garment industry culture: an independent monitoring system was instituted; recruitment fees are limited to basic expenses; factory owners are prohibited from confiscating passports; workers are protected from retaliation, and must be paid the minimum wage and time and a half for overtime.⁹

American Samoa

In April 2002, a court in American Samoa (a U.S. territory in the South Pacific) ordered Daewoosa, a garment company notorious for its labor and human rights abuses, to pay \$3.5 million to 270 workers from China and Vietnam.

The factory's principal owner was charged with holding workers in involuntary servitude. The court also found that Daewoosa and several recruiting companies illegally charged the immigrants up to \$8,000 to obtain their jobs. Charges were brought against Daewoosa owner Kil Soo Lee after an FBI investigation revealed squalid labor and living conditions. On top of exorbitant recruitment fees, workers were charged \$200 per month to live in rat-infested company barracks, often 36 people to a room. Paychecks were issued at the will of the factory owner, and hourly wages were below Samoa's minimum of \$2.60.¹⁰ When workers complained about conditions, Lee allegedly withheld food for days and locked them out of the compound.¹¹ Lee has since declared bankruptcy and closed shop.

ACTION FIGURE

Julie Su



In 1995, a government raid on an apartment complex in El Monte, California found 71 Thai immigrants working under conditions of virtual slavery sewing garments for well-known manufacturers and retailers.

At the time that El Monte made headlines, attorney Julie Su, daughter of Chinese immigrants, was working at the Asian Pacific American Legal Center (APALC) in Los Angeles. Less than one year out of law school, 26-year-old Su took on the El Monte case, along with (among others) the Thai Community Development Center, Korean Immigrant Workers Advocates, ACLU of Southern California, and the law firm of Bird, Marella, Boxer & Wolpert. The legal team, led by Su, would eventually collect \$4 million for the laborers.

Julie Su explains that the fight to eradicate sweatshops crosses cultural, ethnic and generational lines. In a November 2002 conversation with the Progressive Jewish Alliance (PJA), she said that working for labor rights with PJA is "an honor for (her) personally, a benefit to APALC, and productive for the ideals our two communities share."

Her commitment to stamping out sweatshops is matched by her pursuit of broader civil rights ideals. Both of these personal missions are rooted in what she calls a "basic commitment to economic justice and racial, class and gender equity."¹² As she puts it: "poverty and exploitation are not uncontrollable facts of life. We can do much better."¹³

To many in the economic justice world, Su is a living legend. Her work earned her a MacArthur Foundation "Genius" Grant in 2001, a Changing Images in America American Spirit Award (1997), and a YWCA Achievement Award for Public Service (1998). She is currently Litigation Director of APALC (www.apalc.org).

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

- Margaret Mead, anthropologist

Famous Brands in the Spotlight

No Longer Underpaid at Kate Spade?

In 1999, a *New York Times* article exposed yet another case of sweatshop labor on U.S. soil. This time, the spotlight was on Kate Spade. Since it burst onto the scene in 1993, the Kate Spade bag has been a fashion staple for affluent women and girls. At \$150-\$500 a bag, Kate Spade merchandise flies off the shelves at high-end stores. Yet those making the bags were underpaid.

According to a September 22, 1999 *New York Times* article, workers at one of the company's main contractors, a factory in New York that produced only Kate Spade bags, complained of harsh working conditions and suppression of organizing efforts. Spade responded by claiming to have no control over the factory's "personnel decisions and labor relations."¹⁴ However, the workers replied that this claim was false; they asserted that, as the manufacturer, Kate Spade controls the purse strings and had the power to demand improved conditions.

Have conditions improved?

Apparently so. According to UNITE, this particular shop is now unionized. This shows that consumer pressure and anti-sweatshop campaigns, combined with a company's willingness to demand change, can make a real difference.

Forever 21

Forever 21, a popular young women's clothing line, has over 100 stores around the country and grossed a reported \$400 million in 2001 alone.

Forever 21 contracts for the production of much of its clothing in Los Angeles. Nineteen Los Angeles workers allege that they sewed, trimmed and pressed clothing bearing Forever 21 labels in sweatshop conditions. They say that they were not paid minimum wage or overtime, and that the factories where they work were infested with rats and cockroaches, were poorly ventilated and had blocked fire exits. After several abortive attempts at resolving their grievances through negotiation, in 2001, the workers, along with anti-sweatshop advocates, launched a boycott against Forever 21.

The Garment Worker Center, Sweatshop Watch and the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles helped the workers strategize for their campaign. They decided to demand their unpaid wages by targeting both Forever 21 and its subcontractors. They also decided to step up the pressure by filing a lawsuit against Forever 21.



Protesting Forever 21

Forever 21 responded by filing a defamation Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation (the infamous "SLAPP" suit) – brought by a large institution to silence its critics. The SLAPP was filed against the nineteen workers as well as the GWC, Sweatshop Watch, CHIRLA, and three staff members working on the case. The suit against the workers was withdrawn by the company soon after, and in 2004, a state appellate court dismissed the claims against CHIRLA and one of the staffers on grounds of their First Amendment rights to free speech.

Keep up to speed with the twists and turns of the ongoing Forever 21 campaign. Check in with Sweatshop Watch, www.sweatshopwatch.org and take action!



Wet Seal: On Slippery Ground

In December 2002, the California labor commissioner ruled in favor of four garment workers consistently underpaid by Wet Seal contractor D.T. Sewing and manufacturer Rad Clothing. The workers, represented by Bet Tzedek Legal Services (a non-profit that provides pro bono legal services) claimed they were paid no more than \$4 per hour, significantly below the state minimum wage of \$6.75. Their combined claims amounted to \$240,000.

In January 2004, Wet Seal Inc., parent company of Arden B., Zutopia and Contempo Casuals, announced that it has agreed to pay the workers \$90,000, carefully noting that it was not admitting to any legal wrongdoing, but that "it's the right thing to do." D.T. Sewing and Rad Clothing have since closed shop without paying their share.¹⁵

This victory is largely attributable to the effectiveness of California state law AB 633, which helps garment workers file claims against direct employers (i.e. the sub/contractor) as well as private label retailers. Not surprisingly, while labor rights advocates celebrate the win, garment industry constituents worry that it may set a dangerous precedent.

“The shops are unsanitary- that's the word that is generally used, but there ought to be a worse one used.”

— Clara Lemlich, Jewish immigrant and sweatshop worker



ACTION FIGURE

Rose Freedman

Rose Freedman was the last survivor of the 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire. She died in 2000 at the age of 107. She was fluent in six languages, and was learning a seventh. Born in Vienna, Austria, in 1893, Freedman later immigrated to the United States where, at age 16, she found a job at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory. Like her fellow workers, she labored under harsh conditions.

When a fire broke out in the factory on March 25, 1911, the company executives showed little concern for their employees. Rather than unlocking the doors so that their workers could escape, they fled the building while flames consumed 146 lives.

Rose escaped by counter-intuitively going up to the roof, figuring (correctly) that the management must have survived by doing exactly that. She went on to graduate from college, worked until 79, and was a tireless champion of the labor movement.

Unions & Boycotts

"Unions- the folks that brought you the weekend."

-Source unknown



Yiddish child labor

The Union Dilemma: A Catch 22

The right to organize is the worker's most effective weapon against exploitative conditions. It is also one of the basic labor rights established by the International Labor Organization.¹⁶ Sadly, however, the so-called "global race to the bottom" has turned the weapon of unionizing into a double-edged sword; if workers organize they are likely to lose their jobs (as corporations pursue factories where unions are forbidden and cheap labor is therefore guaranteed). But if workers do not organize, their rights will most likely continue to be violated.

Union Facts

Largest union: AFL-CIO (representing over 13 million workers) www.aflcio.org.

ILGWU: In 1995, ILGWU merged with Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers' Union to form the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE).

Kukdong (Mexmode): A Union Victory

In January 2001, more than 800 workers at the Kukdong International Factory in Atlixco, Mexico went on strike. They were protesting the illegal dismissal of workers who were fired for complaining about labor and human rights abuses and for demanding an independent union. The strike lasted three days before police broke it up (at the behest of Kukdong management). What usually happens under such circumstances is as follows: the workers involved in organizing efforts are fired and

blacklisted, other workers are bullied into silence, a new crop of workers comes in, and factory owners successfully get away with subjugating workers. But the Kukdong story is different.

Kukdong makes apparel for Nike and Reebok under licensing agreements with a number of U.S. universities who have adopted sweat-free purchasing policies. Universities affiliated with the Worker Rights Consortium (WRC) must sign on to a code of conduct, which, in the case of the WRC, requires licensee companies to disclose the names and addresses of all factories engaged in production. Nike's contractor, Kukdong, appeared on the list of factories. A student researcher happened to be in the area when the Kukdong workers went on strike. Recognizing the factory name, he relayed the information to activists in the U.S., who responded by taking up arms. United Students Against Sweatshops, WRC, the International Labor Rights Fund and Verité (a nonprofit code monitoring organization), along with local Mexican labor rights groups mounted a massive campaign against Nike. After receiving 6,000 letters from around the world and negative media attention, Nike capitulated and pushed Kukdong to rehire the workers and allow for an independent union.

What the Workers Won

In September 2001, the workers achieved an unprecedented victory. Kukdong allowed for the establishment of an independent union. Maquila Solidarity Network – a network of groups in Mexico, Central America, and Asia organizing to improve working conditions in **maquiladoras** (www.maquilasolidarity.com) – reported in April 2002 that the contract signed by management and the independent union introduced a substantial wage increase, greater benefits and an attendance bonus. In addition, Nike continues to source out to the factory despite the wage increase.

The victory at Kukdong (now Mexmode) demonstrates the power a major retailer like Nike has over its contractors. It also demonstrates the power of a well-orchestrated campaign.

Watershed or A Drop in the Ocean?

Both. The Kukdong feat helped improve the lives of hundreds. But Kukdong is only one of over 3,500 maquiladoras where abuses persist.

For more on this episode in labor history, visit: www.maquilasolidarity.org/campaigns/nike/kukdong.htm

The Boycott Dilemma: To Buy or not to Buy?

If unionizing is the worker's dilemma, boycotting is that of the consumer. On the one hand, buying merchandise produced in sweatshops is aiding and abetting an injustice. And on the other, workers may lose their jobs if consumers boycott a company. It is thus critically important that workers themselves support, if not take part in, a boycott campaign.

Are Boycotts Effective?

According to Co-op America's Boycott Organizer's Guide, a nationwide survey found that business leaders consider boycotts to be more effective than other approaches such as class action suits, letter writing campaigns, and lobbying.¹⁷ For businesses, the bottom line is consumer spending. And because well-organized boycotts directly threaten sales, company leaders take them seriously. An effective boycott is therefore one that brings broad public attention to the cause. It does not aim to cripple the company, but rather, to improve its business practices and raise its social consciousness.

Word Origins

How did the word "**boycott**" get its present meaning? The name—and its meaning—comes from the first victim of the practice. In 1880, Lord Erne, an absentee landlord in Ireland, employed as his agent Charles C. Boycott. At that time, an Irish politician calling for land reform, sought to introduce a new policy that cold-shouldered any landlord who would not lower the rent. Boycott asked such unreasonable rent from his tenants that they refused to pay anything at all. A group advocating for land reform adopted the practice and the term "boycott" was coined to describe this strategy.¹⁸

Burma

Burma (Myanmar) is a country in Southeast Asia ruled by a repressive military regime, or junta. According to the CIA's *World Factbook 2002*, the junta restricts freedom of speech, press, assembly and association. It rules through terror, forced labor, arbitrary detention, torture, rape, murder and ethnic cleansing. All human and political rights are denied.¹⁹ Though its long-standing record of severe human rights abuses is well documented, Burma's apparel exports have skyrocketed in recent years. Countries at the receiving end, such as the United States, turn a blind eye to the brutal exploitation within Burmese borders.

Full foreign ownership of companies operating in Burma is illegal. All factories must therefore operate in joint ventures with military holding companies. In effect, money from garment exports contributes directly to the junta and its repressive rule.



Protest outside The Children's Place store in New York City

Dollars and Dictators

The U.S. government has been accused of effectively propping up Burma's military dictatorship. A December 2000 *New York Times* article reported that in October 2000 alone the Army and Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES) imported \$138,290 in clothing made in Myanmar.^{20,21} As of December 2000, the AAFES has stopped doing business with Burma in response to criticism that it ran counter to the Clinton Administration's efforts to discourage doing business with the dictatorship.²²

Free Burma Campaign: A Boycott Victory?

The Burma boycott has met considerable success. As of October 2002, 32 companies said they stopped doing business with Burma. Among them are Williams Sonoma, Federated Department Stores (Bloomingdales and Macy's), The Spiegel Group, Costco Wholesale, Kenneth Cole and Adidas. Disturbingly, however other apparel companies continue to do business with Burmese factories. The campaign continues...

Wages on U.S. territory

Federal Minimum Wage: \$5.15

CA minimum wage: \$6.75

Highest state minimum wage:

Washington: \$6.90

Lowest minimum wage

Lowest State: Kansas: \$2.65

American Samoa: \$2.68

(www.dol.gov/esa/minwage/america.htm)



PICA label



Photo: George Eastman House

Little Spinner in Mill, Augusta, Georgia 1909

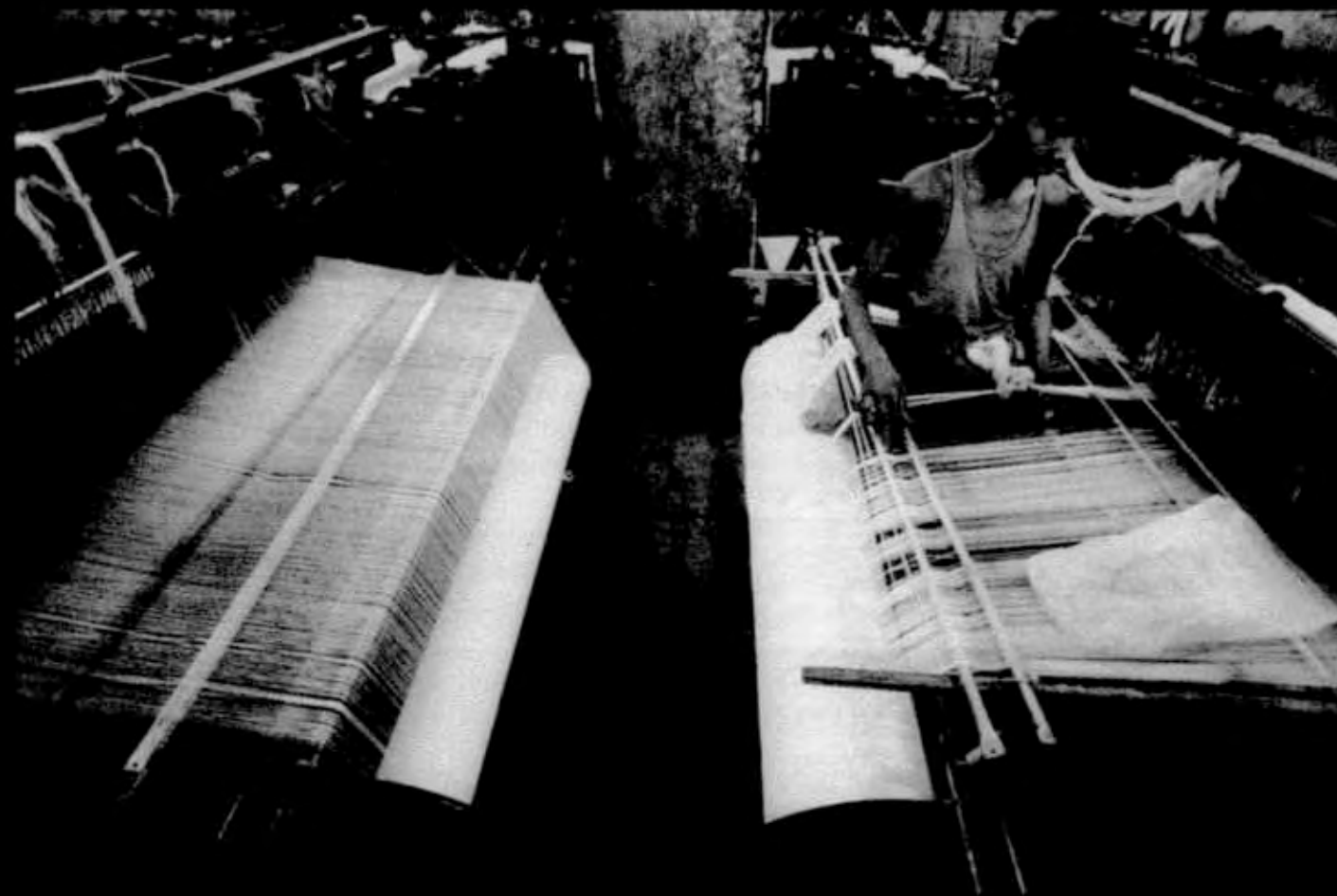


Photo © Ken Light

Child Loom Worker, Bhiwandi, India 1999

Legislation

Protocol of Peace (1910)

Inspired by the triumphant "Uprising of the 20,000," New York City cloakmakers decided it was time for collective action against management. 60,000 of them joined a historic strike that became known as "The Great Revolt." Their unyielding determination in the face of hunger and exhaustion paid off after weeks of arduous revolt. Thanks to the dedication of legendary progressive lawyer, labor rights activist, and future U.S. Supreme Court Justice Louis D. Brandeis, an agreement was hammered out, and the Protocol of Peace was born. The Protocol required employers to recognize the union and the union shop. It established the Joint Board of Sanitary Control to monitor health conditions in shops. It also set up a grievance procedure, giving workers and management a mechanism to resolve disputes through impartial arbitration.^{23, 24}

The National Labor Relations Act (1935)

Also known as "the Wagner Act" (after its author, a Senator of New York), the NLRA cemented the dual principles of a worker's rights to organize and the employer's obligation to agree to collective bargaining. Its passage was followed by the creation of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), the government agency assigned with enforcing NLRA provisions. The legislation holds such an important role in labor history, that it has been dubbed "the constitution of American labor."²⁵

The Fair Labor Standards Act (1938)

The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) of 1938 was passed after the Great Depression, when many employers took advantage of the difficult times to exploit workers. The FLSA established basic principles in American labor law that apply to this day: a federal minimum wage, the 40-hour workweek, requirements for overtime, and prohibition of child labor. Since 1938, the act has been modified repeatedly, though its basics remain.

California Assembly Bill 633 (1999)

Signed in 1999, AB 633 went into effect in January 2000. Authored by a group of labor advocates, garment industry leaders and retailers, the landmark bill was designed to combat sweatshop abuses in California's garment industry. Perhaps its most promising provision was establishment of a system of joint liability that holds **contractors** as well as garment **manufacturers** and private label **retailers** legally responsible for labor abuses.

Other AB 633 provisions include: a wage guarantee, whereby manufacturers and retailers must ensure that contractors pay minimum wage and overtime; establishment of successor

employer liability so that garment factories cannot shut down and reopen under a different name to avoid paying the wages of former employees; an expedited administrative process for garment workers to recover unpaid wages and overtime and; an increase in registration fees for companies engaged in garment manufacturing (the money would go toward enforcement).

Four Years Later...

Workers and workers rights advocates had high hopes that AB 633 might reform the garment industry's systematic abuses. And while only sweeping changes could produce an industry overhaul, AB 633 has nonetheless come to be seen as an effective legal device for helping individual garment workers collect unpaid wages. A number of organizations representing California workers utilize the bill to help individuals collect wages retroactively. They include: The Asian Pacific American Legal Center, Bet Tzedek Legal Services, Garment Worker Center, and Sweatshop Watch.

California Senate Bill 578 (2003)

Signed into law in October 2003 by CA Governor Davis, SB 578 recognizes "a public interest in avoiding subsidies to bidders and contractors whose workplaces represent sweatshop conditions" and "the rights of its citizens to information and choice with regards to the expenditure of its tax dollars." This landmark bill establishes a statewide "sweat-free" procurement policy mandating that all apparel, garments and equipment procured by the state must have no trace of sweatshop labor.²⁶

California Senate Bill 179 (2003)

Introduced in February 2003 as an antidote to substandard working conditions in industries where services are typically contracted out, SB 179 establishes a safeguard against employers who outsource and claim no knowledge of (nor responsibility for) the working conditions of their subcontracted employees. The bill states that it is illegal for a person to knowingly enter into a contract that does not provide sufficient funds for compliance with all applicable state and federal laws. It goes on to name construction, farm labor, garment, janitorial and security guard services as industries typically marked by an underground economy. The bill is expected to bolster responsible contractors whose viability is otherwise threatened by cheaper, and oftentimes illicit, labor.

Los Angeles' "Sweat-Free" Schools (2004)

In March 2004, the Los Angeles Unified School District Board unanimously passed a "No Sweat" Procurement Policy. Noting the effects of sweatshop labor on Los Angeles communities, the policy states: "conditions of sweatshop labor impact many

ACTION FIGURE

Rose Schneiderman



Born in Poland in 1882, Rose Schneiderman immigrated to New York's Lower East Side at the age of eight. After four years of formal schooling, she began working at a cap factory to support her widowed mother and younger siblings. Though not a Triangle Shirtwaist Factory employee herself, Schneiderman was familiar with the life of a sweatshop worker. Addressing the mourners shortly after the March 1911 tragedy, she declared:

This is not the first time girls have been burned alive in the city... The life of men and women is so cheap and property so sacred. There are so many of us for one job, it matters little if 146 of us are burned to death.

...Every time the workers come out in the only way they know to protest against conditions which are unbearable the strong hand of the law is allowed to press down heavily upon us...The strong hand of the law beats us back, when we rise, into the conditions that make life unbearable."²⁸

Schneiderman was an organizer for the ILGWU -- one of first garment workers unions, and a predominantly Jewish and Yiddish-speaking organization -- president of the National Women's Trade Union League, and a leader of New York's Women's Suffrage Party. In 1937, she was appointed Secretary of the New York State Department of Labor. She died at age 90 after years of labor rights activism.

thousands of families...including many parents of children attending Los Angeles public schools." It also goes on to point out the irony of children using goods made by children: "garments such as uniforms, athletic apparel, and sports equipment such as soccer balls utilized in our public schools are often manufactured in sweatshop conditions, including child labor."²⁷

Whereas similar bills are limited to the garment industry, this measure prohibits the District from purchasing *any* goods made under sweatshop conditions. It is considered to be the most far-reaching and comprehensive of its kind. PJA, a leading member in the coalition that helped pass the policy, is proud to have been part of this initiative.

Fast Track

Also known as "Trade Promotion Authority," Fast Track allows the president to sign trade legislation with minimal input from Congress. Congress can vote legislation up or down, but cannot amend it. Under the new legislation (H.R. 3005), signed by President Bush in August 2002, the president can make trade deals through 2007.

Some labor and environmental organizations worry that President Bush will attempt to use Fast Track to pass the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), a trade agreement that would extend the geographical scope of **NAFTA** to the entire Western Hemisphere (except Cuba), with the objective of integrating the economies into a single free market zone.

On a Fast Track in the Wrong Direction

Some reasons for Fast Track opposition are that the measure flies in the face of the democratic process and that liberalized trade could jeopardize manufacturing jobs in the U.S. and exacerbate the sweatshop crisis in other nations.

Fast Track and Democracy: Putting trade legislation on the fast track risks undermining the checks and balances of governance. Fast Track forces trade legislation to speed through Congress; it transfers constitutionally mandated powers of Congress to the Executive Branch; it grants the president authority to single-handedly sign trade deals; it does away with congressional deliberation and public participation in significant trade legislation. In short, Fast Track is undemocratic.

Fast Track and Workers' Rights: Fast Track does not require trade legislation to contain enforceable labor and environment protections. Moreover, by curtailing debate over trade agreements, it further concentrates power in the hands of a select few -- the president and his corporate allies. Sadly, the corporate agenda often conflicts with environmental and economic justice programs. Therefore, Fast Track could prove detrimental to workers' rights.

More on Fast Track

Public Citizen on Fast Track

<http://www.citizen.org/trade/fasttrack/index.cfm>

Global Exchange on Fast Track

<http://www.globalexchange.org/fasttrack/>



Point/Counterpoint



Employers of sweatshop labor argue that...	And workers' rights advocates respond
Sweatshop labor is the only way to meet consumer demand for cheap products.	Numerous polls suggest that consumers are willing to pay more for garments made under humane conditions. For example, a 1999 survey of 1,826 randomly selected adults found that 76% of the respondents would pay \$5 more for garments certified not made in sweatshops than cheaper non-certified garments. ³²
Raising wages will hurt workers. Increasing labor costs raises the cost of production, which increases the retail prices, which in turn reduces the amount of items sold, and leads to layoffs.	There is evidence to suggest that if a company raises hourly wages by enough to make a difference in the life of a worker (we're talking dimes here), the increase would neither have a significant effect on retail prices nor on company profits. ³³ After all, the direct labor amounts to less than 6% of the retail price of a garment – and that is for clothing made in the U.S. For clothing made elsewhere, it is a fraction of that amount. ³⁴
If wages are increased in the United States, we will have two choices: 1. go out of business, or 2. move production elsewhere, in which case U.S. workers will lose their jobs. Other companies use Third World labor. The cheap labor keeps their prices competitive. We must keep up with the industry.	Again, people are willing to spend more on products made under just and lawful conditions. The competitive nature of the industry does not legitimize worker exploitation.
Sweatshops provide much-needed jobs that otherwise would not exist.	While MNCs have contributed vastly to Third World job markets, this does not justify the severe injustices and human rights violations suffered by workers sewing their garments.
Third World countries need foreign investment.	Indeed. Poverty, corrupt regimes, economic policies and the effects of colonialism on Third World countries have induced dependence on foreign money. However, underdeveloped nations need foreign investment that focuses on raising them from poverty and onto level playing field in the global economy. Just imagine a world with billions more potential consumers if undereveloped nations would become equal trading partners.

Cut From the Same Cloth



American Apparel factory

The fashion industry is home to thousands of apparel firms. Those at the top of the "fashion food chain" make profits grossly disproportionate to the wages earned by the workers making the clothes.³⁵ Socially conscious manufacturers are few and far between; most of the industry is cut from the same cloth.

But American Apparel is different.

"Sweatshop-free T-shirts"

With \$80 million in sales in 2003, \$150 million expected in 2004, and retail stores sprouting up in trendy urban spots all over the world, American Apparel's self-described "capitalist-socialist" hybrid philosophy is proving to be a viable business model. Since opening shop in 1997, the company has received international press attention, its T-shirts have become a fixture in the bourgeois bohemian's wardrobe, and CEO Dov Charney is on his way to pop icon stature.

Shaking Up the Industry

Charney is the visionary behind the wildly successful operation. His mission: "To create a company that changes the world. To create a company that leverages art, design, and technology to advance the business success, rather than exploiting cheap labor...To take on the establishment, and become the new establishment. To advance capitalism to another level by treating people positively and ensuring that everyone touched by the business process has the most positive experience possible."³⁶

Charney on Being Jewish

When asked how (and if at all) Judaism fits into the equation, Charney is quick to say that he doesn't believe in God and that he hated Hebrew school. Still, he brings up (with considerable passion) the Jewish concept of charity, preaching that the highest level of charity is to help people help themselves. As an entrepreneur, Charney explains, he identifies with the Jews as merchants and peddlers, and as a people who historically were not allowed to own land, and therefore had to fall back on their business ingenuity.³⁷

Social Justice with Style

American Apparel manufactures high-end T-shirts, pants, zip hoodies and underwear. The factory (which can be toured virtually at www.americanapparel.net) is well-lit, air-conditioned and clean. The over 1400 employees reportedly earn an average of \$12.50 per hour. Benefits include after-hours government-funded ESL classes, on-site massage therapy and access to health care (which employees can purchase for \$8 a person per week).

UNITE v. AA

The recurring charge against American Apparel by some in the labor movement is that it is not a unionized shop. While conditions in the factory are commendable – indeed exceptional in the industry – critics say that without a formal contract employee rights are subject to the whims of the employer. According to UNITE, which in the summer of 2003 launched a campaign to unionize AA's workforce, several American Apparel workers approached the union with concerns about some of the working arrangements, including no paid vacation or sick days and a difficult production pace.³⁸ According to AA management and some workers, UNITE's efforts were uninvited; the workers are content.³⁹ UNITE alleges that AA management responded to the campaign by using anti-union maneuvers to quell it. And, in turn, UNITE filed a complaint against the company with the NLRB (National Labor Relations Board) claiming violations of federal labor law. The claim was later settled out of court, and, according to American Apparel, the factory currently has a waiting list of 2,000 eager workers.

"You shall not abuse a needy and destitute laborer, whether fellow countryman or a stranger in one of communities of your land."

— Deuteronomy 24:14

Be a Mensch: Do Your Part

Here are some ideas for taking action.

"For every letter you send to a company, the company assumes 500 other people feel the same."

- Charles Kernaghan, Director of the National Labor Committee, on the power of the individual consumer

Write Letters



The bottom line for companies is profit. And because unhappy consumers may ultimately threaten sales, companies listen to their consumers and often take their concerns seriously.

Choose a company and research its business practices using the resources provided on pages 27 and 28. If the company has taken steps to improve conditions in a **contractor's** factory, acknowledge the effort as an important step forward, and encourage similar action in all its subcontracted shops. Make clear that it is the responsibility of both the contractor and the **manufacturer** and/or **retailer** to safeguard labor rights in factories.

Sample Letter

I have been a loyal customer for years. To me, your company represents cutting-edge style and fashion consciousness. But your business practices concern me. I am aware of your efforts to improve the working conditions in some factories producing your apparel. I am writing to ask you to do more. The people making clothing under your label are suffering. You have the power -- and the responsibility -- to ensure that the people upon whom your business depends are earning decent wages, are able to feed and clothe their families, and provide their children with healthcare and education.

I am aware that the nature of the fashion industry pushes you to seek competitive wages. But please consider that while a wage increase in a Third World country may slightly raise the price of a garment, it could also substantially improve the lives of the workers. I would be willing to pay that price, and so would my friends.

Even though the garment workers come under the direct supervision of the factory owners, the final word is ultimately yours. It is fair to assume, therefore, that a contractor will abide by your rules. Just as you send inspectors for quality control, do your utmost to ensure that labor conditions are just and humane.

Please use your power to improve the lives of those who make your clothing. Please put people before profit.

Intern/Volunteer

Need to boost a lackluster resume? Give your time to the organizations listed in these pages, and help fight the good fight.

Launch a Legislative Campaign

Public institutions have the potential to influence significant change in the sweatshop crisis: governments spend enormous sums on municipal uniforms and academic institutions spend millions of dollars on licensed apparel annually. Much of these goods are made in sweatshops, and purchased with tax money.

Make sure your city and school do not spend public funds on sweatshop-made products. Start a campaign to establish a procurement policy that guarantees that all apparel, supplies and equipment are produced in factories where basic labor rights are upheld.

Begin with Tom Hayden's "Ending Public Subsidies of Sweatshop Abuses: A Guide to 'Sweatfree' Procurement Laws." Hayden, a former California State Senator, and co-author of AB 633, is fluent in the art of policy-making and grass-roots activism, and provides an excellent blueprint for launching a "no-sweat" procurement campaign.

www.abolishsweatshops.org/haydenguide.pdf

For university and college students

United Students Against Sweatshops www.usasnet.org

Worker Rights Consortium www.workersrights.org

Fair Labor Association www.fairlabor.org

For high school students

UNITE! High School Students Against Sweatshops

www.uniteunion.org/sweatshops/hsas/hsas.html

National Labor Committee's Student Committee Against Labor Exploitation

www.nlcnet.org/scale/

"After all is said and done,
more is said than done"

- Anonymous

Artists on Sweatshops



Portrait of a Textile Worker

Terese Agnew's "Portrait of a Textile Worker" is a visual of the labor behind the labels we wear. The 8 by 9-foot quilt, a towering image of a Bangladeshi garment laborer made entirely of clothing labels, is, in the artist's words "about the act of physically putting disconnected things, including the subject matter - back together. When we shop our thoughts are totally disconnected from the tangible reality of the conditions under which clothing products were made."⁴⁰

Send the artist your clothing tags, and you will be added to the list of project contributors. To participate, visit www.tardart.com.

Musicians Against Sweatshops

In a celebrity-fixated society, a public figure's endorsement of a campaign brings attention and a measure of legitimacy to the cause. Enter Musicians Against Sweatshops, a musician and fan-driven initiative whose mission is to drive sweatshops out of music merchandising. Its work is based on the syllogism: The fashion industry listens to youth. Youth listens to the music. If musicians make companies that use sweatshops unfashionable, youth will stop patronizing them. Those companies will then change their practices and stop using sweatshop labor. MASS members include Billy Bragg, Chumbawumba, and The Pretenders. www.nosweatshop.org

Shirtwaist: Textiles, Tragedy and Theater

A "musical ghost story" about the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire of 1911 that killed 146 garment workers. Presented by The Lower East Side Tenement Museum (www.tenement.org) and Flying Fig Theater (www.flyingfig.org).

"Shirt" by Robert Pinsky

The back, the yoke, the yardage. Lapped seams,
The nearly invisible stitches along the collar
Turned in a sweatshop by Koreans or Malaysians

Gossiping over tea and noodles on their break
Or talking money or politics while one fitted
This armpiece with its overseam to the band

Of cuff I button at my wrist. The presser, the cutter,
The wringer, the mangle. The needle, the union,
The treadle, the bobbin. The code. The infamous blaze

At the Triangle Factory in nineteen-eleven.
One hundred and forty-six died in the flames
On the ninth floor, no hydrants, no fire escapes--

The witness in a building across the street
Who watched how a young man helped a girl to step
Up to the windowsill, then held her out

Away from the masonry wall and let her drop.
And then another. As if he were helping them up
To enter a streetcar, and not eternity.

A third before he dropped her put her arms
Around his neck and kissed him. Then he held
Her into space, and dropped her. Almost at once

He stepped up to the sill himself, his jacket flared
And fluttered up from his shirt as he came down,
Air filling up the legs of his gray trousers--

Like Hart Crane's Bedlamite, "shrill shirt ballooning."
Wonderful how the pattern matches perfectly
Across the placket and over the twin bar-tacked

Corners of both pockets, like a strict rhyme
Or a major chord. Prints, plaids, checks,
Houndstooth, Tattersall, Madras. The clan tartans

Invented by mill-owners inspired by the hoax of Ossian,
To control their savage Scottish workers, tamed
By a fabricated heraldry: MacGregor,

Bailey, MacMartin. The kilt, devised for workers
to wear among the dusty clattering looms.
Weavers, carders, spinners. The loader,

The docker, the navy. The planter, the picker, the sorter
Sweating at her machine in a litter of cotton
As slaves in calico headrags sweated in fields:

George Herbert, your descendant is a Black
Lady in South Carolina, her name is Irma
And she inspected my shirt. Its color and fit

And feel and its clean smell have satisfied
both her and me. We have culled its cost and quality
Down to the buttons of simulated bone,

The buttonholes, the sizing, the facing, the characters
Printed in black on neckband and tail. The shape,
The label, the labor, the color, the shade. The shirt.

Economic Justice-Related Books

Behind the Label: Inequality in the Los Angeles Apparel Industry. Edna Bonacich and Richard P. Appelbaum. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000

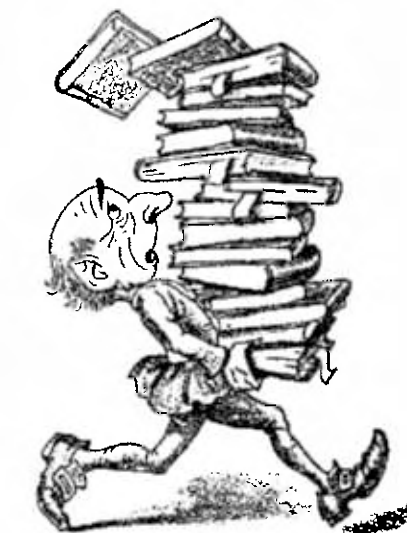
China's Workers Under Assault: The Exploitation of Labor in a Global Economy. Anita Chan. Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2001

Forces of Labor: Workers' Movements and Globalization Since 1870. Beverly J. Silver. NY: Cambridge University Press, 2003

Free Trade and Uneven Development: The North American Apparel Industry After NAFTA. Gary Gereffi, David Spener, and Jennifer Bair. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2002

Globalization and Its Discontents. Joseph E. Stiglitz. New York: W.W. Norton, 2002

Global Village or Global Pillage: Economic Reconstruction from the Bottom Up. Jeremy Brecher and Tim Costello. Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 1998.



Nickel and Dimed. Barbara Ehrenreich. New York, NY: Henry Holt and Company, 2001.

No Logo: Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies. Naomi Klein. New York, NY: Picador USA, 2000

No Sweat: Fashion, Free Trade and the Rights of Garment Workers. Andrew Ross (ed.). NY: Verso, 1997

Out of the Sweatshop. Leon Stein. NY: Quadrangle/The New York Times Book Co. Inc., 1977

Still Waiting for Nike to Do it. Tim Conner. San Francisco, CA: Global Exchange, 2001

Women Behind the Labels: Worker Testimonies from Central America. Chicago, Ill: Stitch and the Maquila Solidarity Network, 2000

Students Against Sweatshops: The Making of a Movement. Liza Featherstone. NY: Verso, 2002

Voices of the Poor: Can Anyone Hear Us? Deepa Narayan. New York: Oxford University Press for the World Bank, 2000

"Always read stuff that will make you look good if you die in the middle of it."

— P.J. O'Rourke, journalist

Organizations

The fashion industry is a fast-paced market. Keep up to speed by checking in frequently with the following websites.

A World Connected

www.aworldconnected.org

Copious writings on globalization, free trade and poverty with a sometimes-subtle-sometimes-not conservative twist. In their own words: "A WorldConnected recognizes that although participants in the globalization debate are typically divided into anti-globalization and pro-globalization camps, globalization is far too complex to simply choose sides." A worthwhile visit.

Behind the Label

www.behindthelabel.org

Global anti-sweatshop campaign news, video footage from around the world, articles and ideas for taking action.

Business for Social Responsibility

www.bsr.org

BSR is a global nonprofit organization that helps its member companies achieve commercial success in ways that respect ethical values, people, communities and the environment.

Campaign for Labor Rights

www.campaignforlaborrights.org

CLR collaborates with workers struggling to gain the right to organize, the right to earn a living wage in a clean, safe work environment, and the right to bargain collectively with factory management.

Clean Clothes Campaign

www.cleanclothes.org

CCC runs various campaigns, including those for a living wage and "Clean Clothes" communities, and is currently investigating legal strategies to compel companies to respect labor rights when operating abroad.

Co-op America

www.coopamerica.org

Features include Green Pages Online, Boycott Action News, and a guide to investing responsibly.

CorpWatch.org

www.corpwatch.org

Provides news, analysis, research tools and action alerts to respond to corporate activity around the globe. Includes a guide to doing your own on-line research on corporations.

Jews for Racial and Economic Justice

www.jrej.org

JREJ was formed in response to the increasing level of racial and ethnic tension, violence, and economic disparities in New York City. Its economic justice activism ranges from protests of sweatshop labor in Haiti to, more locally, appeals for better working conditions at NYC delis.

National Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice

www.nicwj.org

A network of faith communities that draws upon religious values to educate and mobilize for worker justice.

National Labor Committee

www.nlc.net.org

NLC was put on the map when it exposed ties between Kathie Lee Gifford's clothing line and sweatshop labor, and has been known for its strategy of high profile targeting since. NLC actively involves the public in actions aimed at ending labor abuses, improving living conditions for workers and their families and promoting the concept of a living wage and true independent monitoring.

The "No More Sweatshops!" Campaign for the Abolition of Sweatshops and Child Labor

www.abolishsweatshops.org

A broad coalition whose agenda is primarily legislative, and whose website reads: "we believe that the worldwide struggle for worker and human rights is the next great civil rights movement of our time." PJA is a proud member of this coalition.

Peace Through Interamerican Community Action

www.pica.ws

This Maine-based grassroots organization initiated the Bangor Clean Clothes Campaign, the United States' first community-based anti-sweatshop campaign. Excellent instructions on replicating the campaign in your community.

Progressive Jewish Alliance

www.pjalliance.org

PJA is a Los Angeles-based organization working to combat the social and economic injustices afflicting our society. Ongoing projects include: The "No Shvitz" Anti-Sweatshop Campaign, Death Penalty Speakers Bureau, a restorative justice mediation initiative and several tracks of Muslim-Jewish dialogue.

Responsible Shopper

www.responsibleshopper.org

Want to know what your favorite company has been cheered and jeered for? Responsible Shopper – an excellent resource on corporate behavior, and other interesting facts – lists company profiles based on workplace, disclosure and environment policies, and lets you check how companies fare against each other.

Sweatshop Watch

www.sweatshopwatch.org

Extensive background papers and information on current goings-on in the garment industry. Don't miss the new "No Sweatshops Information and Action Kit." SW is co-founder of the **Garment Worker Center** (www.garmentworkercenter.org), which provides educational workshops for workers, assistance in filing claims, and help in developing workplace leadership.

UNITE! Stop Sweatshops Campaign

www.uniteunion.org/sweatshops

What cities, college and high school students are doing to make their clothing sweat-free. Website also features ways to take action on "Hot Political Issues."

Worker Rights Consortium

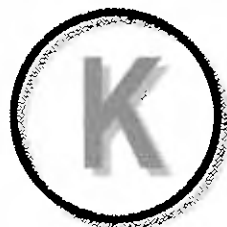
www.workersrights.org

Created by college and university administrations, students and labor rights experts, the WRC assists in the enforcement of manufacturing codes of conduct adopted by academic institutions. Website provides information on getting your campus affiliated.

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

— Martin Luther King Jr., American civil rights leader

The Kosher Consumer



There is an old Jewish adage that says "99% kosher is 100% non-kosher." When it comes to the garment business, this is an almost impossible standard and the consumer is left settling for kosher-style. The industry's multilayered, multinational production line makes it difficult to ascertain that each part of a garment's anatomy was made under fair labor conditions. Even if a garment were assembled in an upstanding factory, the cotton may have been spun and the buttons made in sweatshops. Nevertheless, there is a handful of companies that are more socially responsible than others. Following are resources for the kosher consumer.

American Apparel™ aa

American Apparel
www.americanapparel.net



American Union Jeans
www.americanunionjeans.com

ETHICAL
THREADS

Ethical Threads
www.ethicalthreads.co.uk

Fair Trade Federation
www.fairtradefederation.com



GLOBAL EXCHANGE

Global Exchange Fair Trade Shop
http://store.globalexchange.org/

GreenMarketplace.com
www.greenmarketplace.com



Justice Clothing Company
www.justiceclothing.com

NO SWEAT No Sweat Apparel
www.nosweatapparel.com



Organic Consumers Association
www.organicconsumers.org

NCJ Secondhand clothing
and thrift stores

National Council of Jewish Women



Ten Thousand Villages
www.tenthousandvillages.com

UNITE!
www.uniteunion.org

UNITE

Did you know?

In 2000, the CEO of Walt Disney Co. raked in over \$60 million in total compensation (including exercised stock options). Broken down, his earnings were \$488 per minute. Put in perspective, a worker making the federal hourly minimum wage of \$5.15 would have to work 5,695 years to equal the 2000 earnings. According to *No Sweat*, a worker sewing Disney garments in Haiti for the local hourly wage of approximately 30 cents barely makes in a year what the CEO made in a minute during 2000. For more information, visit the Executive PayWatch Database at www.waficio.org.

Films & Documentaries

Bangladesh: An Appeal for Solidarity

Documentation of conditions in the garment industry in Bangladesh; 2001 (National Labor Committee)

The Big One

Footage of film-maker Michael Moore's interview with Nike CEO Phil Knight, the very exchange that prompted Nike's Director of PR to ask Moore: "What would it take for you to remove two scenes from the film?"

Behind the Labels:

Garment Workers on U.S. Saipan

Lured by false promises and driven by desperation, thousands of Chinese and Filipina women pay huge fees to work in garment factories. Narrated by Susan Sarandon.

Bread and Roses

Depicts the struggle of office cleaners to gain dignity and respect at work. Based on the true story of the Los Angeles janitors who beat the odds to win better lives through the Justice for Janitors campaign.

Global Village or Global Pillage

Based on the book written by Jeremy Brecher and Tim Costello, which looks at the global race to the bottom, and what can be done about it. World Economy Project, 1737 21st Street NW, Washington DC 20009, 202-265-3263.

Hear Our Voices: The Poor on Poverty

An award-winning documentary, featuring workers around the world telling their own stories. A companion film to Deepa Narayan's book, "Can Anyone Hear Us?" The World Bank, 1818 H St. NW, Washington, DC 20433.

Mickey Mouse Goes to Haiti: Walt Disney and the Science of Exploitation

A little dated (1994), yet effectively tells the story of workers in Haiti who work for pennies to make pricey items that bear the Disney label. Scenes of workers' lives poignantly accompanied by the familiar tune, "heigh ho, heigh ho, off to work we go."

Occupation

First-hand account of the story of the 2001 living wage campaign at Harvard and the student sit-in that lasted three weeks. Narrated by Ben Affleck.

Roger and Me

A wickedly funny documentary film chronicling the efforts of film-maker Michael Moore to ask Roger Smith, CEO of General Motors, why GM is abandoning the company's hometown as it slashes tens of thousands of jobs and closes down its factories. Moore is a hilarious modern-day Don Quixote as he encounters stony-faced security guards, corporate bureaucrats and local officials in his attempts to have a conversation with the man in charge of one of the biggest corporations in the country.

Sweating for a T-Shirt

Tracing UCLA logoed apparel to its factory origins in Honduras. Global Exchange.

Zoned for Slavery: The Child Behind the Label

Tells the story of workers in Free Trade zones in Central America, who make clothing for the Gap and other major labels. NLC. 1995.



"There seems to be no money that is so iniquitous or that is more dishonorable to us as a nation than that insatiable greed which drags the children into the mills and factories and grinds their young bones into dollars. To me it seems that the child of the nineteenth century should be something more than a machine."

— Samuel Gompers, Jewish labor leader and first president of AFL-CIO

The Sweatshop Lexicon

Boycott (boi'kɔt')

To abstain from or act together in abstaining from using, buying, or dealing with as an expression of protest or disfavor or as a means of coercion.⁴¹

• Simply translated, this is marketplace democracy in action - consumers voting with their dollars for social and economic change. Boycotts are a tool for holding corporations accountable for actions against workers, consumers, communities, minorities, animals and the environment.⁴²

Code of Conduct (kɔd ɔv kɔn-dɔkt')

A code typically adopted by manufacturers, which seeks to ensure that items are made under lawful conditions.

• The codes advocated by anti-sweatshop activists are typically stronger than those offered by manufacturers, for example calling for the payment of a living (as opposed to minimum) wage, or public disclosure of the names and addresses of all factories under contract to the manufacturer.

• While retailers may adopt codes of conduct, claiming that they ask their suppliers to sign them and to provide them only with "kosher" products, they generally do not have enforcement mechanisms. Rather than a genuine commitment to labor rights, the code is generally adopted for purposes of formality, and is used primarily to sidestep responsibility.

Compliance Agreement (kɔm-pli'ɔns ɔ-grɛ'mɔnt)

An agreement between the manufacturer and Department of Labor that requires manufacturers to educate workers about their rights, allow for regular monitoring, only contract to those who comply with the agreement, and report back regularly to the Department about factory conditions.

Contractor/Subcontractor (kɔn'trɔk'tɔr/sɔb-kɔn'trɔk'tɔr)

A person or business that contracts to provide the service, materials, etc. necessary to fulfill another's contract. In the apparel industry, the term is typically used to refer to the thousands of factories that contract with manufacturers and retailers to make their garments.

• The contracting system benefits manufacturers. It externalizes risks (i.e. transfers the risks of a volatile apparel industry, such as unemployment, to workers and contractors); it lowers labor costs (several contractors vie for the work by under-bidding one another); its complex layers of subcontracting enable manufacturers to deflect moral and legal responsibility; and it curbs unionization because the manufacturer can (and will) easily cease production in shops with 'labor disturbances'.

Department of Labor (dɪ-pɑrt'mɔnt ɔv lɑ'bɔr)

A department of the federal branch of government responsible for the administration and enforcement of over 180 federal statutes. These legislative mandates and the regulations produced to implement them cover a wide variety of workplace activities for nearly 10 million employers and well over 100 million workers, including protecting workers' wages, health and safety, employment and pension rights; promoting equal employment opportunity; administering job training, unemployment insurance and workers' compensation programs; strengthening free collective bargaining and collecting, analyzing and publishing labor and economic statistics.⁴³

• The DOL has monitoring guidelines offered to employers on a voluntary basis. But if the sweatshop is to be eliminated, such guidelines must be universally enforced rather than distributed to the handful of concerned companies.

Free Enterprise (frɪ'ɛn'tɔr-prɪz')

The freedom of private businesses to operate competitively for profit with minimal government regulation.⁴⁴

General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)

(jɛn'ɔr-əl ɔ-grɛ'mɔnt ɔn tɑr'ɪfs ɔnd trɛd)

Enacted in 1947 to liberalize world trade by ruling against protectionism and restrictions on imports. GATT developed through a series of rounds of international trade talks, culminating in the Uruguay Round (1986-94) which agreed to the creation of the World Trade Organization.

Independent Monitoring System

(ɪn'dɪ-pɛn'dɔnt mɔn'ɪ-tɔrɪŋ sɪs'tɔm)

A system by which factory monitors are selected by an independent body (rather than by the corporation itself) optimally with strong representation by unions and human rights organizations. An independent monitoring system has a built-in confidentiality mechanism; workers can speak honestly about factory conditions and report when their rights are being violated without fearing further suppression by factory managers.

International Labor Organization (ILO)

(ɪn'tɔr-nɛʃ-ə-nəl lɑ'bɔr ɔr'ge-nɪ-zɛʃ-ən)

Founded in 1919 - and the only surviving major creation of the Treaty of Versailles which brought the League of Nations into being - the ILO is the United Nations' specialized agency which seeks the promotion of social justice and internationally recognized human and labor rights. All member countries have an obligation to uphold basic labor rights, namely: freedom of association, the right to organize, collective bargaining, abolition of forced labor, and equality of opportunity and treatment.

Jobber (jɔb'ɔr)

An apparel firm that relies entirely on independent contractors to sew their garments. This is a term commonly used in New York City. In California, jobbers typically refer to themselves as manufacturers.

Labor Union (lɑ'bɔr jʊn'jɔn)

An organization of workers formed to promote collective bargaining with employers over wages, hours, fringe benefits, job security and working conditions.⁴⁵

• According to the International Labor Organization, as well as Articles 20 and 23 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), freedom of association and collective bargaining are fundamental human rights at work. They are "a precondition for all the other [rights] in that they provide for the necessary implements to strive freely for the improvement of individual and collective conditions of work." The organized strength of workers is their most effective weapon.⁴⁶

Laissez-faire Economy (lɛs'zɛ'fɛr')

A system that opposes regulation or interference by the government in economic affairs beyond the minimum necessary to allow the free enterprise system to operate according to its own laws.⁴⁷

• In the case of the garment industry, the lack of checks on corporate power gives way to rampant labor abuses and neglect of human rights. Moreover, the weakness of laws protecting workers' rights and the absence of international labor standards have generated the "downward spiral" of workers forced to compete with each other on the basis of evermore miserable working conditions.

Manufacturer (mæn'yɔ-fɔk'ʃɔr-ɔr)

In some cases, manufacturers design the clothing under their label, purchase the materials, arrange for production, and wholesale the finished goods to the retailer. In New York City, manufacturers who outsource all of their production to independently owned contract shops are called "jobbers."

• At one time, manufacturers employed workers directly. This function, however, is increasingly being contracted out to independently owned factories around the world.

Maquiladora/Maquila (mɑ-kɛ'lɑ-dɔ'rɑ)

Maquiladoras are foreign-owned export-processing assembly plants in Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean, used by U.S. firms to manufacture goods, free of taxes, for re-export to the U.S. and other countries. Typically, materials and components are imported from the U.S., to be assembled in the maquiladora into final products. Maquiladoras were initially located in Mexico along the U.S. border, but they are increasingly found throughout the entire region. Labor rights abuses are commonplace in maquiladoras, and environmental regulations are lax. The workforce is comprised mainly of girls and young women. Most of the workers are unaware of the protections they are entitled to under their country's labor laws.

• Thanks to NAFTA, the number of maquiladoras in Mexico has skyrocketed in recent years. It is not coincidental that maquiladora workers are severely exploited.

Multinational Corporation (MNC)

(mɔltɪ'nɛʃ-ə-nəl kɔr'pɔ-rɛʃ-ən)

A corporation with operations in two or more countries, and therefore, under several jurisdictions. Many, if not most, MNC manufacturing operations take place in Third World countries.

“When a man tells you that he got rich through hard work, ask him whose.”

—Don Marquis, journalist

• The result of operating under different governments is unfettered mobility. The MNC may leave whenever it deems local laws "burdensome," ceasing production through local subcontractors and relocating to a country where labor is cheaper and labor or environmental laws more lax. This, coupled with the industry's cutthroat competitiveness, gives way to a ruthless pursuit of bare-bones wages far below the level that would be required to support the workers, in what anti-sweatshop activists have called the "global race to the bottom."

Neoliberalism (nē-ō-līb-ō-r-ō-lī-z-ō-m)

An economic philosophy, which, along with its associated policies, calls for the freedom of business to operate with minimal interference on the part of governments, international organizations, or labor unions. Basic tenets of neoliberalism include the rule of the market (allow businesses to operate as freely as possible), economic deregulation, privatization of government-owned industries (for example, banks, highways, schools, utilities, postal service), reducing spending on social welfare, global free trade, and replacing notions of the public good with a belief in individual responsibility.

• Neoliberalism is the ideology used by businesses to justify unfettered globalization. It is termed "neo" liberal because it calls for a return to the free-market philosophy that prevailed prior to the enhanced role of government that gained legitimacy during the Great Depression of the 1930s, culminating (in the U.S.) with the "War on Poverty" and other "Great Society" programs of the 1960s.

North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)

(north ə-mĕr'ī-kən frĕ trād ə-grĕ'mənt)

Introduced in 1994, NAFTA calls for the elimination of tariffs on industrial products traded between Mexico, Canada and the United States by 2004. Guided by principles of free trade, it is understood to be among the most important trade agreement affecting textiles and apparel.

• Wages earned by Mexican garment workers are one-tenth the wages earned by their counterparts in Los Angeles. In addition to low wages, Mexico's allure also rests in the country's inactive labor laws, sparse union organizing, negligible industry scrutiny, and lax environmental regulations, all of which culminate in unfettered labor abuses.

Retailer (rĕ-tā'ōr)

A firm that sells apparel and other goods (for example, department stores). Retailers sit at the top of the apparel commodity chain. The apparel they sell is typically purchased wholesale from apparel manufacturers, but in recent years is increasingly acquired by the retailers themselves through what is called "private label production." This is an arrangement under which the retailer contracts with a manufacturer – or directly to independently owned factories – to make apparel, which the retailer then markets under its own label.

Sweatshop (swĕt'shɔp')

A shop in which employees are subject to labor abuses, including long work hours, low wages and brutal suppression of labor organization. Also widespread is sexual harassment, coercive birth control, limited ventilation and restricted bathroom breaks.

“It is not a question of enforcement of law nor of inadequacy of law. We have the wrong kind of laws and the wrong kind of enforcement.”

– Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, referring to garment industry

“The labor of a human being is not a commodity or article of commerce.”

–The Clayton Anti-Trust Act, VI, 1914

• Historically, "sweating" refers to the system of subcontracting in which competing manufacturers consign work to competing contractors. Sweating is endemic to the garment industry because of its division of labor, separating the craft processes of design, marketing and cutting from the labor-intensive sewing and finishing.

Third World (thūrd wūrd)

Also known as "The Global South," the term refers collectively to developing or underdeveloped nations, where the average income is much lower than in industrial nations, (or "The Global North") where the economy relies on a few export products and where rapid population growth threatens food supply. Most underdeveloped nations are in Africa, Asia and Latin America.⁴⁸

Transparent Reporting (trāns-pār'ənt rĭ-pōrt' ŭng)

If the methodology of a monitoring process is made public, including full disclosure of the names and addresses of all factories and their working conditions, it is "transparent." With the data-gathering technique fully disclosed, the public is given insight into the limitations of a monitoring system, and can therefore assess its accuracy and reliability in identifying labor abuses.

Statistics

According to the 1999 report of the Los Angeles Jewish Commission on Sweatshops, 61% of Los Angeles apparel factories have wage and hour violations. According to the 2000 Garment Enforcement Report issued by the Employment Standards Administration Wage and Hour Division of the U.S. Department of Labor, 57.6% of the total 184 manufacturing sites investigated in Los Angeles were found to be in violation of the Fair Labor Standards Act.

Did you know?

As of June 2002, the Nike has 736 contract factories in 51 countries around the world.⁴⁹

• Transparent reporting and independent monitoring are often used by labor rights advocates as a litmus test of a company's commitment to ethical business practices.

World Trade Organization (WTO)

(world trād ōr'gə-nī-zā'shən)

Founded in 1995 as successor to GATT, WTO is the only international organization dealing with the global rules of trade between nations. Current membership (as of January 2004) numbers 146 countries.

Its main function is to ensure that trade flows "smoothly, predictably and freely".⁵⁰ It does this by administering trade agreements, acting as a forum for trade negotiations, settling trade disputes, reviewing national trade policies, assisting developing countries in trade policy issues, and cooperating with other international organizations.

• As the nemesis of social and labor rights and anti-globalization movements, the WTO is the focus of extensive criticism. Its critics say that rather than using liberalization to benefit all trading entities as it claims to do, the WTO uses liberal economic policies to maximize benefits of wealthy nations at the expense of the poor. To many, the WTO exemplifies time and again that the rich get richer, and the poor get poorer.

“Justice, justice shall you pursue that you may live.”

– Deuteronomy 16:20

Photo Credits

Timeline

Immigrants Arriving at Ellis Island

Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division (reproduction number, LC-USZ62-95433)

Bodies Lining Sidewalk after Shirtwaist Fire

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Ben Gurion Declaring the State of Israel

Photo available in the public domain

Berlin Wall

Photo taken by David Mundstock, "The Intrepid Berkeley Explorer."
www.geocities.com/TheTropics/Cove/1923/

Pg. 4 Immigrants Arriving at Ellis Island

See credits under Timeline.

Pg. 5 Workers in a Sweatshop in L.A.

Courtesy of Richard Appelbaum

Pg. 5 Italian Garment Workers

Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division (reproduction number, LC-USW3-013570-D)

Pg. 6 Workers in L.A. Sewing Factory

Courtesy of Richard Appelbaum

Pg. 7 Awaiting Examination, Ellis Island

Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division (reproduction number, LC-B201-5202-13)

Pg. 8 Police checking burned bodies, Firefighters at the Shirtwaist Factory building, The Shirtwaist Building

Photos are property of Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, NY
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Pg. 9 Inside the Shirtwaist Factory

Photos are property of Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, NY
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Pg. 9 Bodies Lining Sidewalk after Shirtwaist Fire

Asch Building. Photos are property of Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, NY
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Thanks to the New Deal Network <http://newdeal.feri.org> for their help.

Special thanks to former PJA Intern Abby Fleishman for her invaluable assistance on this project

Pg. 12 Julie Su

Photo courtesy of Julie Su

Pg. 13 Protest of Forever 21

Photo courtesy of Garment Workers Center

Pg. 14 Protest of Forever 21

Photo courtesy of Garment Workers Center

Pg. 14 Rose Freedman

Photo courtesy of Arlene March

Pg. 15 Yiddish Child Labor

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Pg. 16 PICA Label

Image composite created by Jill Fiore of JGroup as used by the Bangor Clean Clothes Campaign.
Courtesy of Peace Through Interamerican Community Action (PICA)

Pg. 16 Free Burma Campaign

Photo courtesy of the Free Burma Coalition (Successful Campaign)

Pg. 17 Little Spinner in Mill, Augusta, GA, 1909

Taken by Lewis W. Hine. From "Let Children be Children Crusade Against Child Labor" collection. George Eastman House

Pg. 18 Child Loom Worker, Bhiwandi, India 1999

Photo copyright Ken Light

Pg. 20 Rose Schneiderman

Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division (reproduction number, LC-USZ62-112772)

Pg. 21 Students Demonstrating Against Kohl's

Photo courtesy of Students Organizing for Labor and Economic Equality and United Students Against Sweatshops

Pg. 22 Rose Pesotta

Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division (reproduction number, LC-USZ62-102554)

Pg. 24 America Apparel Factory

Photo courtesy of American Apparel

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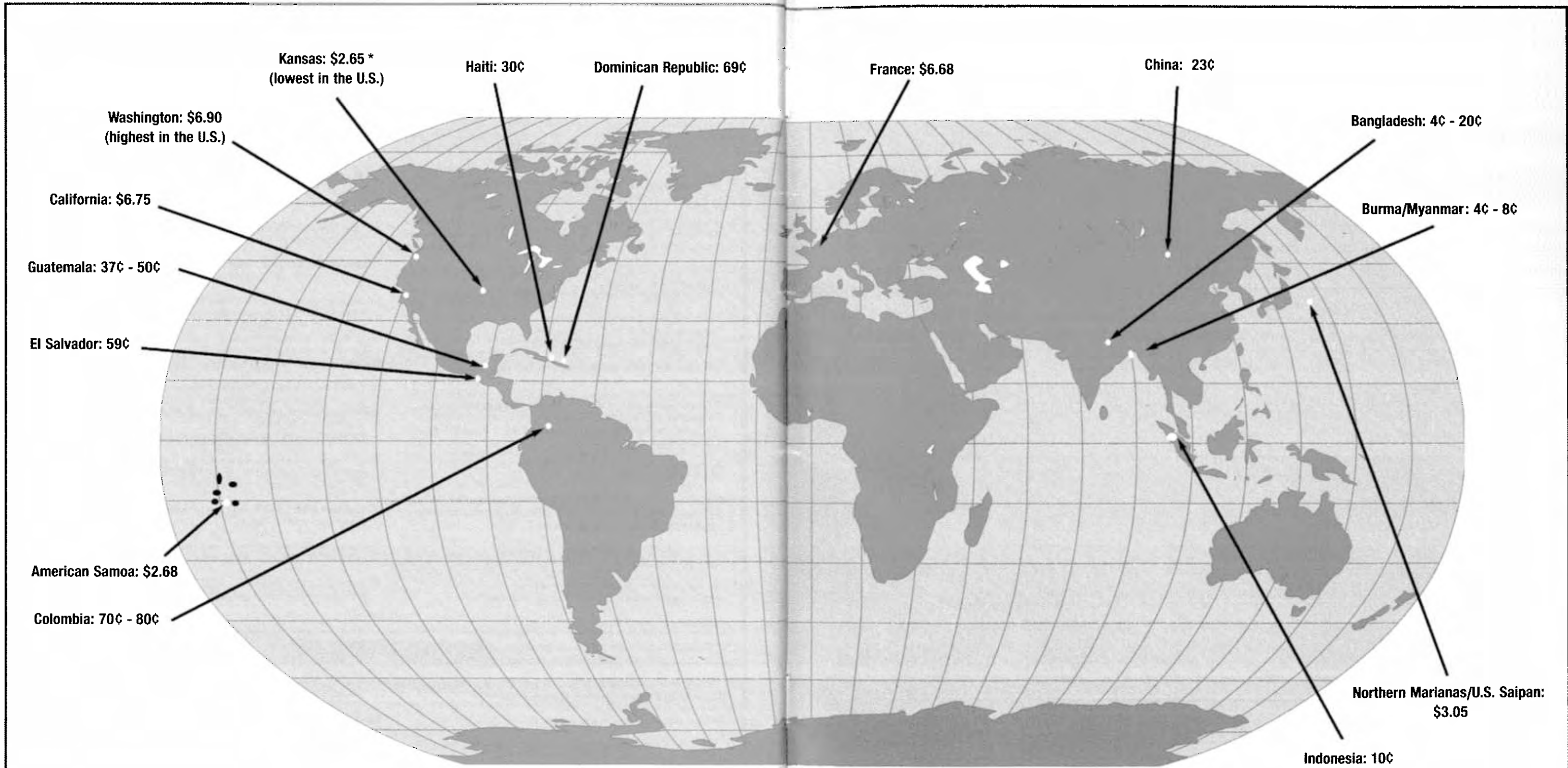
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Wages Around the World

Approximate minimum wages per hour around the world as of 2002



United States Federal Minimum Wage: \$5.15

*Certain small businesses in Kansas are exempt from the federal minimum wage.

Anyone who wonders whether agitational literature can be short, wry, historically informed, graphically innovative, morally urgent, hip, and make you want to change the world should check out No Shvitz, the Progressive Jewish Alliance's guide to sweatshops and how to fight them...No Shvitz offers readers a panoply of ways in which they can help stamp out sweatshops right now. It's an easy read that can change your life, and your world, for the better.

This book takes a deeply disturbing and complex issue and makes it understandable. The use of graphics, illustrations photos and time lines educates you better than a million words. It is brilliant. Thank God this issue is starting to get on the radar, so thank you, No Shvitz.

I will be promoting this every and any way I can.

**Informative, funny, well-designed, and useful.
Congratulations on a great job.**

Today's immigrant sweatshop workers may speak another language than Yiddish, but their needs are the same as Jewish immigrants...a century ago. No Shvitz is a practical guide to justice rooted in the best traditions of the Jewish community.

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THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE
AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

SOME PERSONAL REFLECTIONS ON THE
RABBIS' MARCH TO BIRMINGHAM
by Rabbi Jacob Bloom

(Conference on the Moral Implications of the Rabbinate; Herbert H. Lehman
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I was one of the nineteen men who went to Birmingham last spring. In this paper I shall try to share with you the effect that act had on me as an individual rabbi and on the congregation I serve. I think that act had an effect on my own ethical position and made real in my life much that was only theoretical. It also had an effect on the climate in my congregation.

Why?

Why did I go? I am not by nature a hero or a martyr. And it was easy not to go. All I had to do was not volunteer, and there were a million reasons not to. I was very scared. I wasn't convinced that going was the best or wisest thing to do. It wasn't an impelling ethical urge. It wasn't the impassioned oratory. I had no history of standing up for Negro rights. I had never before publicly committed myself that way. And I didn't like to stick my neck out. But something in me made it impossible to say no. What was it that made me unable to go back to Fairfield, not having gone?

When other northern clergymen had gone South, I was one of those who privately and publicly questioned the wisdom of their act. I remember thinking such thoughts as: They didn't understand the southern situation. They couldn't solve the problem. They were going in and coming right back, and the local people were going to pick up the pieces. Was it just a publicity stunt? And what about the situation in the North anyway? What were they doing in their home town? On the other hand, I think I envied the fact that if they had convictions on this issue, they stood by them. Then, a week before our own convention, Rabbi Richard Israel of Yale, who had been in an Albany, Georgia jail, asked me if he could put me on the list of available people if the Southern Christian Leadership Conference needed people for Birmingham. He must have sensed my ambivalence, for he told me that I didn't have to commit myself on the spot. I could decide when and if I was called. Then events transpired at the convention and I decided to go. My motives were mixed. The feelings I just indicated played a restraining part. But there were

other factors that moved me. Years of study and some of preaching, made me feel that I should put up or shut up. I had often said that, "There comes a time when a man must take a stand," and here was a chance to take a clear-cut stand myself. This was an opportunity to make an open commitment on a great issue, to get off the fence we all so diplomatically sit on propped up by many "ifs" and "buts," and take sides. History was being made; why shouldn't I be involved. There was some ego-satisfaction in knowing that this would be a matter of public interest. This might be a chance to do something significant. And then there was the desire to see what the fuss was all about, to savor the experience as an experience. In sum, I don't think I went down because of an overwhelming ethical call. My ethical study, my religious training and straining made my going possible, but it was just a part of the act of going. I went for a variety of reasons and for no one's sake but my own. But there I was on the plane headed for Birmingham, mixed motives and all.

I suspect that most of those who went shared my ambivalence on the racial issue. To a large extent, we had the same backgrounds. I thought about those feelings on the way down. I was raised in a northern, lily-white, Jewish middle class home. I was taught that all men are brothers, that America is the land of the free, and that meant all colors and creeds. But the only Negroes I knew were the maid who came to our house on Friday, and the men who washed my father's car. These were to some extent real, the others were abstractions. I could not conceive of the Negro as a brother, certainly not these Negroes. The verbal commitment of the environment was for racial equality, but on the hidden agenda the Negro remained a schvartzer. And there was in my life little occasion to test the verbal commitment. Like the environment, I was ambivalent. The Negro was equal of course but... Is he ready for equality? And what about the high crime rate? Will the value of my property go down if a Negro moves in? Would you want your daughter to marry a Negro? I shared the image and stereotypes of the Negro common in the liberal white community. I did not experience the Negro as a living brother. At best, he was an abstraction, not a living human being.

At one point in the trip our group ambivalence (at least one carload's) came to the surface. We were an hour away from the convention when we wondered what we were doing anyway? And if Everett Gendler couldn't tell us exactly why we were going, we would really let him have it. At this point laughter broke the inner tension we all felt. Something had driven us all. Something made us want to act, to do something significant. Everett, of course, couldn't tell us, for the problem was ours. We were ambivalent and we would have to resolve our feelings in Birmingham. After two days there, we knew why we had come and why we could go again.

Birmingham :

The two days in Birmingham were the most significant religious experience of my life. The act of going was to have an effect on my inner ethical and emotional structure almost like that of a conversion. In one area of my life, an ethical position became real. Much that happened in me cannot be communicated because I can't verbalize it. Some that happened to me can, and may help make clear what contributed to the change. During the days in Birmingham, the Negro became real, his problem became real, and religion generally and Judaism specifically assumed a great contemporary role.

I had been in Birmingham for half an hour when I experienced an infinitesimal part of what it means to be a Negro in America today. As a Jew, it had not happened to me. I was kept out of a place of public accommodation. And not because it was full.

When we arrived in Birmingham at 3:30 A.M. we were taken to the A.O. Gaston Motel (a Negro motel) for lodging. There was room there for fifteen men and we were told that four of us would be taken elsewhere for that night. Coming from a Yankee heritage, the four Connecticut men volunteered. We were taken by our Negro hosts to a brand new "Holiday Inn," whose parking lot was one-quarter full. Rabbi Harry Zwelling walked in and asked the clerk if he had room for four men. The clerk noted who had brought us and asked if we had reservations. When

we told him that we didn't, he informed us that he was all filled up and could not put us up. This happened a second time. We then decided that we really needed a night's sleep. We parked at some distance from the Hotel Bankhead, and sent Rabbi Stanley Kessler in to see if we could get rooms. He returned saying that all was arranged and we got ready to go in. Then the clerk came running out the front door. He had either been called by one of the other motels that had turned us down, or somehow had heard that we were brought by Negroes. "I'm terribly sorry, but I've made a mistake. The rooms have been reserved for a late flight that's coming in in a little while. I won't be able to have you tonight." He was polite as he said it, but we still didn't have a place to sleep. Our hosts then told us that there was no point to looking any further because "Every place in Birmingham knows you're looking for a place to sleep. You'd do just as well to come back to our motel and we'll see what we can do." It was only a taste, but it made quite a difference to me.

I don't think I'll ever get over what happened when we entered a Negro church that first sweltering evening. A rally was taking place there and all nineteen of us filed in with our kippot on. Everyone stood up as "our rabbis" came in, applauding, shouting, reaching out to touch us, calling out, "God bless you," "Thank you for coming," asking for our autographs, and as we reached the pulpit the emotion swelled to a tremendous crescendo. There wasn't a dry eye among us when the packed church improvised a new first verse to the freedom song, "We Shall Overcome," which began, "The rabbis are with us." We spoke to the rally. We heard others speak. We found ourselves participants in a religious movement, a movement in which our own experience meant a great deal. We knew what freedom meant; we knew what it was to stand alone; we knew what it meant to be an outsider, to be alienated, and that night this knowledge was real. We affirmed our coming as Jews by wearing kippot and the fact that the blood descendants of the children of the Exodus were there meant a great deal. We heard others say that non-violence was the way, that one must understand the man

behind the hose, we heard hope not anger, and we heard that one must witness with the body when any other avenue is closed. Much became real that night. Religion became a vital force. And especially did the lessons of my own tradition come alive. Responsibility, conquering one's impulses, loving one's neighbor, the "Seder" lesson, caring for one's fellow, all became alive. Through religion the tragedy of the American Negro could be translated into an opportunity. And Judaism had something to say to them and to me. My history was theirs, for now they were marching to freedom and somehow they would negotiate a miraculous passage through a sea of hate and indifference, to a new future.

During those days the Negro became real, he became an individual. In part this resulted from the fact that we were living within a Negro community. We met all kinds of people: a bright youngster whose life ambition was to be a secretary because her sense of reality told her that a Negro could hope for nothing higher; a Negro dentist telling us about the problems of voter registration; a college student involved in the demonstrations who remembered seeing a neighbor lynched outside her window; a youngster asking us, "Are all Jews rabbis?"; a Negro out of work, living in the most segregated community of the South, telling us that he stayed in Birmingham because it was "home." Human contacts played a part, but the clincher was that for the first time I was led by Negroes. They were in charge, they gave the orders and leadership. These weren't maids and car washers who had formed my subconscious image of the Negro. These included Martin Luther King who explained to us that what segregation did was to change an I-Thou relationship into an I-It relationship. These included a young College of the City of New York graduate who sensitively and brilliantly explained the situation to us that first morning during minyan as we say around the table in talis and tephillin. These included a young minister, himself not far out of his teens, leading a meeting of teen-agers with a kipah in his head. These included a young man from Detroit who in a tense situation patiently explored with us what might be the most dignified and effective way to demonstrate. These included a

weekend minister who led a group of his people through a barricade of police fire hoses. These men brought about a change in me. They radically and for all time altered my image of the Negro. Negroes were no longer an abstraction. They were no longer a sociological problem. They were real.

I only really knew that this had happened after I got back. I was watching a baseball game on TV and for the first time Al Jackson, a Negro pitcher, was a person, not a Negro; a pitcher, not an oddity. I had become a bit more color-blind. I saw a Negro family walking their child and they looked different to me than before Birmingham. I walked into a store in Harlem to buy some recording tape and the clerk was just a clerk to me. Suddenly missing from my voice was the self-pleased condescending tone, the feeling of being so nice to treat a Negro as an equal, the oversolicitousness that often creeps into the behavior of liberal whites when dealing with Negroes. The clerk was just a clerk.

The act of going to Birmingham changed me. To some extent I empathized with the Negro; my religious commitment was really relevant and the Negro was my brother.

As a Rabbi:

Because I am a rabbi, when I went, my congregation went with me -- some willingly, some not willingly, but everyone went. People ask, "What about the North?" I am convinced that the effect at home was as significant as the effect down South. Some of my congregants were proud. Some wished they could have gone. A few volunteered for next time. One said, "Rabbi, you not only pray for our country, you're doing something about it." I can't say that wasn't nice to hear. Some were glad it was Jews who went. Some thought it was brave. Many hedged. They wondered if it was wise, would it really help, and after all, what about the North? Some thought it would have been wiser not to go. But -- it made many face up to their feelings about Negroes. My going had forced the issue on them. "Rabbi, I like Negroes but..." was a reaction I heard many times in the

weeks that followed. What followed the "but" was always different, but at least the issue was raised. Sometimes it had to do with a man who had hired a Negro TV repair man, whom no one had allowed into their home even though he was an expert repair man. What should his employer do? Sometimes it had to do with housing or intelligence or crime and once it was our synagogue maintenance man whose children had been beaten up and robbed by four Negro thugs. Whatever it was, the fact of my going had forced the issue on many people. It had to be discussed. What came out of the discussion varied, but a problem which could all too easily be ignored in a white suburban community had to be recognized. As one congregant put it when I asked him what effect my trip had on the congregation, "It woke everyone up to the problem."

As a unit the congregation itself woke up to the problem for the first time. It asked the head of the local intergroup council to speak about the problem that might be coming in our own community. In arranging the program, the chairman told me, "Rabbi, we know where you stand." Knowing where the rabbi stands makes a difference in a congregation, and it is strange that a thousand sermons couldn't get that across where one act could. The teen-agers responded with a typical "What can we do to help?", a reaction typical of the wealth of untapped energy that our young people represent.

In the general community my going made a difference. The battle is in the North as well as the South and in any battle an evaluation must be made of who is on which side. The question of the folk song "Which Side Are You On?" is being asked by white and black alike. By going, I publicly committed myself to one side. As a result, the forces for open housing, intergroup cooperation, etc. have felt free to count me on that side and to call on me for help. And by implication I have no doubt committed my congregation.

The fact that I went as part of a delegation meant a great deal within and without my congregation. Many of my congregants felt this was a responsible act because it was done by a national group. These included many who felt that the previous actions had been little more than publicity stunts. A Negro porter

approached one of my congregants and told him how glad he was that the Jews had now publicly taken sides in this issue by sending their rabbis down to Birmingham. He was glad that the Jews had done this, for they understood what it meant to be persecuted as a minority.

If my trip had had no other effect than that shown in the following incident I think it would have been worth it. One of my congregants is a contractor who employs day labor. He is a devoted, hard-working congregant who in four years has missed one Friday evening service. He has heard me speak about a multitude of topics including Little Rock, Arkansas and Jackson, Mississippi. About a week after I came back from Birmingham and had spoken about the trip in the synagogue he came to me and said, "You know, Rabbi, this is kind of hard to admit. . . this week, as a result of what you did, I employed some Negroes on the job, and you know something, for the first time in my life I didn't see them as monkeys."

And one of the significant effects of this incident in the congregation's life is the change in its rabbi. Like it or not, the rabbi is a symbol of what ought to be important, not necessarily what is important. When he succeeds in resolving his own ambivalence on an issue of crucial importance, the "ought" implicit in his communal existence becomes that much clearer. The act of going to Birmingham is not an insignificant one. It can be disagreed with, but not discounted. Our people are told that they ought to do many things. One ought to do something about civil rights. One ought to live more Jewishly. One ought to realize that the two are the same. The fact that these "oughts" came from his Jewish background, and made their rabbi go, was not lost on the congregation. As a result of this experience the "ought" became a little more imperative.

In describing Moses' role in bringing the Jews out of Egypt, the Reverend Ralph Abernathy, at a rally in one of the churches, told of Moses' call to go lead his people to freedom. Homiletically he described Moses' encounter with

a bush that would not be consumed, and he told how Moses avoided looking at the bush. God finally forced Moses to look at the bush, and Moses looked at it until the fire of that bush burned within him. With that fire within, Moses took the first steps towards redeeming his people. I think that many of us felt that way about our "Birmingham" experience. Something about those days transformed our fellows' burning desire for freedom and equality into a flame burning inside us.

V. What We Might Do Together: A Vision for Ecumenical Religious Education

I

WHAT WE SHOULD DO TOGETHER

John C. Bennett

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IN A RECENT conversation with two of my ablest students I found that they had made what was for them a surprising discovery. They had discovered that persons who start with very different theological presuppositions can agree on a major social issue. I was surprised that they were surprised because common action on ethical problems has proved to be possible so often not only among Protestant churchmen who differ theologically but also among Protestants and Catholics and Jews who can be expected to have more basic theological differences. It is also our daily experience that we who belong to one of these communities of faith can cooperate with men of moral sensitivity who have no traditional religious commitment.

However we should not draw either one of two possible conclusions from this common experience. *First*, we should not assume that there are *no religious convictions* that may be present in churches and synagogues which hinder cooperation in matters of ethical concern. Let me put the matter in this way: I can name various theological positions held by some Protestants which prevent me from cooperating with them on the issues on which I can work closely with many Catholics and Jews. I am sure that Catholics and Jews here present can make an equivalent statement. Reinhold Niebuhr used to shock new students at Union Seminary by saying that he found himself most often in politics allied with Catholics and Jews against Protestants. The reason for this was the tendency for many Protes-

tants to represent a spiritual individualism which carried over into their thinking about economic institutions and hence into their thinking about political choices. This individualism has roots in theological convictions. Also there is a type of Protestantism which is so conservative in its interpretation of divine providence that it tends to advise an acceptance of the *status quo* as ordained by God. God is seen more as the sanction for order than the inspirer of movements which seek a transforming social justice.

I realize that there are many non-theological factors which support the opinions to which I refer; such factors as limitations in social experience, the pressure of economic interest and, growing out of both of these, the fear of change, but in the church theological ideas have some force of their own and they give sanction to these fears. The fear of revolution can be dressed up theologically in many ways as both Protestants and Catholics know and this may make psychologically impossible sympathetic attention to the plight of people whose need for change cries to heaven. Theology does make a difference especially at the point where religious people weigh the claims of radical social change. But this is not a theological difference which separates Catholics and Protestants and Jews as such from each other. I have often felt that the Jewish experience of being a minority has enabled Jews to escape some of the temptations to give theological sanction to the *status quo* to which Protestants and Catholics have often succumbed.

The *second* error to which I desire to call attention is the error of *under-emphasizing the positive role* in our common work of some theological convictions. It goes without saying that Catholics and Protestants and Jews, however each group may differ within itself, do differ from each other on theological issues which they regard as essential. But I should stress an overlapping area of conviction, however differently they may move into that area. I have in mind what I take to be some common Biblical elements in our understanding of God and man and the world. Do we not have in common a faith in God who is both Holy and dynamic, who works within his creation but who allows freedom for his creatures to resist him, who seeks to save the people whom he has created from the lostness that follows disobedience, who seeks to bring communities into existence, communities of faithfulness and love and more inclusive political communities informed by justice? This justice was demanded by the prophets of Israel which can also be seen in the context of the kind of solidarity of God with men of whom Jesus spoke when he said: "Inasmuch as ye did it not to the least of these my brethren, ye did it not unto me."

Do we not also have in common a view of the world as God's creation which is sufficiently positive so that it causes us to renounce escapist doctrines that stress the ingrowing religious life of churches and synagogues at the expense of openness to the world; and responsibility for and involvement in the secular world without losing a perspective from which that world can be judged and a faith in sources of mercy and redemption for its people which the world as such cannot provide?

I have put all of these things in my own way as a Protestant and not a Catholic or a Jew but my words have been intended not so much to call attention to my own formulation but to refer to a body of common convictions which are possible because we share elements of the same revelation. I know that every sentence that I have ut-

tered will have different nuances of meaning in a Catholic or a Jewish context. And yet I wonder if when we compare these words which point to common convictions with some of the views that often divide us from members of our own communities, we may not have fresh understanding of their importance.

I

SO, MY FIRST WORD about the things that we may do together is that we should give greater attention to the ways in which we may *make a common witness on the theological level* in these days of fantastic theological confusion. I do not mean at all that we should develop a common-denominator package of religious propositions which we join in promoting. Not that at all. Rather I mean that we should become aware of the area of overlap when each of us gives his own witness and seek to get a hearing for it. We should in our own institutions make sure that this is heard from representatives of each of the other religious communities. This is being done in many places now and it is being done here this evening. I believe that much of the current theological confusion arises from the widespread caricatures of the Biblical understanding of God, caricatures that do not allow for God's patience and respect for the freedom and dignity of men and falsely suggest that God competes with the claims of humanity for attention to its need for justice and peace. Wonder and gratitude which become worship should not be seen as an extra duty to God that can supplant our duty to our neighbors but as sources of motivation, sources of strength as we move into the world of neighbors and characteristics of that humane living which is our goal.

As I say these things I must warn at once against allowing traditional and pious words to create a barrier between us and the honest searching and noble commitments of those who reject all such words because they have heard them used far too often to excuse escape from intellectual or social issues or to

sanctify various combinations of injustice and obscurantism. Full recognition of these difficulties should not cause us to neglect what we believe to be true in misunderstood traditions.

II

THE COOPERATION of churches and synagogues in recent years on *the issue of civil rights* is a proof that common social action is possible. The willingness of representatives of our three traditions to take together what often at the time seemed to be risks and to join in action that tried the patience or affronted the prejudices of many supporters in our constituencies show what is possible. Today the concrete issues are often more ambiguous, and the unity that made the March on Washington so memorable has been partly dissipated. Each of our communities has proved that it has its own form of backlash. The problems of our northern ghettos do not lend themselves to solution by laws for which we can crusade. Moreover the civil rights issues are seen to be part of far larger problems of urban poverty and in many places of urban demoralization. Today often wise statesmanship is more important than crusading. But let not such a statement inhibit us when times and places occur where crusades and demonstrations and, more rarely, civil disobedience are still in order.

White Christians and Jews will need to be careful in their responses to the frustrations of their Negro fellow citizens for whom little has changed during these recent years of civil rights crusades. Why those who have been using white power since the beginning of the republic should be so astonished to find some who are still its victims speaking of "black power" is difficult for me to understand. I do recognize that in the midst of the present vicious circles the talk of black power has been tactically a political mistake and that those who speak of "coalition power" are correct. There are many white allies that are essential if any battles are to be won and such white allies must not allow themselves to

be scared off by this phrase. Certainly in the sphere of religious education imaginative understanding can be encouraged and careful distinctions made and we can help to prepare our constituencies for the courage and the commitment and the wisdom that will be needed in the midst of innumerable local and regional situations in which we shall have to act and take sides on political choices when we would prefer to wait until there is a clearer choice. This will be our life and it will be much more difficult and less satisfying than single issue crusades. I hope that what many of us learned during those crusades concerning our religious responsibility for social structures, for political action, for justice in terms of real equal opportunity of people, of children in our schools, will not be lost.

III

THE CIVIL RIGHTS issues lead to a radical approach to the broader *problem of poverty*. In the short run it is essential to counteract any tendencies that may stem from the recent election to undercut what is being done to overcome poverty in our cities. In the long run it will be necessary to prepare the people of churches and synagogues for more far-reaching changes. It is significant that the President's commission on Technology, Automation and Economic Progress, while it was free from extreme and alarmist predictions, did break the pattern of individualistic social thinking very radically in its recommendation that "economic security be guaranteed by a floor under family income" and that "this floor should include both improvements in wage-related benefits and a broader system of income maintenance for those families unable to provide for themselves." (*Technology and the American Economy*, p. 110). This recommendation is close to one adopted in February 1966 by the General Board of the National Council of Churches that "our burgeoning productivity makes possible, and our Judaeo-Christian ethic makes mandatory, the development of economic policies and structures under which all people, re-

ardless of employment status, are assured an adequate livelihood."

Both statements presuppose the idea that such income maintenance must be recognized as a basic right, such as the right of all children to educational opportunity. Changes in what seems right or possible are taking place in circles that are highly responsible and some of them would have shocked most of us only two decades ago. These changes go against "the Protestant ethic" which put so much stress on the economic virtues of the individual, upon his discipline as one who worked and saved and invested in order to work more and save more and invest more. Actually there has been a great difference for some time between this stereotype of "the Protestant ethic" and the ethical teachings of the Protestant churches which have strongly criticized this one-sided individualism and have come very close to the economic ethics of the encyclicals of Pope Pius XI and Pope John XXIII and of the Constitution on the Church and the Modern World of the Second Vatican Council. The converging of Roman Catholic economic ethics and the economic ethics of the World Council of Churches and the National Council of Churches, of most Protestant denominations and of most Protestant theologians forms the background of much that we can do together. The Jews have not lacked the economic virtues but they have been less dominated by an individualistic ideology than the Protestants and their social witness has helped very often to show us the way.

I can almost hear someone quoting the words of St. Paul: "If any one will not work, let him not eat." (II Thessalonians 3:10) But we should not turn Paul's condemnation of an especially obnoxious group of parasites in the first century into a universal law applicable in all centuries to all economies, at all levels of productivity. Moreover there are other verses in the New Testament including the words from the passage in Matthew 25 to which I have already referred: "for I was hungry and you gave me food."

We all know that new structures and new ways of dealing with the distribution of the means of livelihood will create their own problems. I do not look forward to a society in which work for economic reward will cease to be a discipline for most of us. But it is important that we be able to face the problems of the immediate future without sacrificing tens of millions of people to the individualistic ideology with which Protestants feel at home. There must be willingness to think new thoughts and try new ways that will require the reinterpretation of much that has been believed to be religious truth.

IV

ONE OF THE GREAT episodes in recent years in the experience of the Protestant and Orthodox churches was the Conference on Church and Society that met in Geneva in July 1966. I have been greatly influenced by it and I mention it here because it dramatized for those of us who were there another phase of what we can do together for the sake of social justice. The conference was an occasion on which the Christians of Asia, Africa and Latin America made themselves felt by the Christians from Europe and North America.

As a result there came to be two major emphases at the conference. One was the responsibility of the older and richer nations to find ways of *sharing their abundance with the developing nations*, helping them to help themselves to raise their standards of living. The other emphasis was quite different: the stress upon the revolutionary impulses and movements especially in Asia and Latin America. Often these revolutionary movements in Latin America have Roman Catholic support. Younger Protestants there seem to have more in common with younger Catholics than either group has with the older and more conservative representatives of its own confession. I suggest to you that here is one area in which North American Catholics and Protestants can work together. Together they may help to change American attitudes and policies, atti-

tudes and policies which are controlled by fear of any leftist revolutions in any country in this hemisphere, and that have the effect of strengthening the conservative oligarchies in some Latin countries.

More broadly, out of Geneva and out of Roman Catholic circles inspired by Pope John's *Mater et Magistra* and *Pacem in Terris* there should come a common commitment to *international economic and social justice*. I am glad to observe that on the highest levels there are already the beginnings of institutional cooperation. But the people who are in our churches need to realize in their minds and hearts the depth of the moral and spiritual problem created for us by the gap between rich and poor nations that grows wider all the time. All of our religious communities have a responsibility. At Geneva it was often suggested that the United States and the Soviet Union were much alike not only because of their great power but also because both are dominantly white and relatively prosperous in a world in which most people still are hungry. To narrow this gap between the rich and the poor on a world scale will be very difficult. The too rapid growth of population is an important part of the problem and differing positions on birth control remains one obstacle to cooperation. *Religious education* can be the education of conscience and of imagination in the face of the massive facts of poverty and hunger in the world. Our religious communities should enlist in this cause, always emphasizing at the same time what we can do to narrow the gap between rich and poor nations and our openness to the social experiments, even the revolutionary experiments of other nations.

V

I AM SURE that on the minds of all of us is the question of how far we can *work together for peace*. The Pope as an active peacemaker has kindled hopes and set an example. Also the statement of the Vatican Council on modern war should stimulate fresh thinking and new resolves in this

country. The Catholic Church has had in its tradition in a more explicit form than Protestantism the concept of the just war as the basis for limiting the use of violence. This concept covers both the occasions of war and the means of war. Now that nuclear weapons create the possibility of war without limits, of mutual annihilation and the annihilation of nations that never chose to fight, it is incumbent on us to deal with the religious and moral issues raised by this situation in religious education.

On a world scale I see a convergence of Catholic and Protestant thinking on this subject. Almost identical positions were taken by the Vatican Council in its constitution on the Church and the Modern World and the conference at Geneva. Neither was able to say much that threw light on the immediate problem of deterrence; neither called for immediate nuclear disarmament beginning with unilateral disarmament if necessary; neither was able to go as far as nuclear pacifism. But both stated that the prevention of total war has a moral priority. After giving some account of the meaning of the effects of a nuclear war the Council made the following statement:

With these truths in mind, this most holy Synod makes its own condemnation of total war already pronounced by recent Popes and issues the following declaration:

Any acts of war aimed indiscriminately at the destruction of entire cities or of extensive areas along with their populations is a crime against God and man himself. It merits unequivocal and unhesitating condemnation.

Let me put beside that declaration the statement that was adopted by the Geneva Conference:

This new and terrible situation forces Christians to re-examine their previous thinking concerning war and the function of the state in relation to it. In Amsterdam in 1948, the First Assembly of the World Council of Churches declared, "War is contrary to the will of God," and at the same time distinguished three possible attitudes toward the participation of Christians in the evil of war. Today the situation has changed. Christians still differ as to whether military means can

be legitimately used to achieve objectives which are necessary to justice. But nuclear war goes beyond all bounds. Mutual nuclear annihilation can never establish justice because it destroys all that justice seeks to defend or to achieve. We now say to all governments and peoples that nuclear war is against God's will and the greatest of evils. Therefore we affirm that it is the first duty of governments and their officials to prevent nuclear war.

THESE STATEMENTS about the moral priority of preventing nuclear war need to be seen today against the background of the changes in what is at stake in the conflicts associated with the cold war. When it was natural to expect that a victory for Communism anywhere meant an addition to a monolithic Communist movement that threatened the so-called free world from both east and west and when such an extension of Communism meant that one more nation would be condemned to permanent Stalinist slavery, many often questioned if we should say that the prevention of nuclear war was the greatest duty of states. The issue of what was imagined to be permanent slavery versus freedom was so fateful an issue that many thought it better to allow the choice between nuclear war and any serious risk of Communism anywhere to be kept at least a matter of even balance. Today the change in the meaning of Communism, its obvious fragmentation as a world-wide movement, and the changes which come over Communist countries within a few decades making them more humane, should go far to defuse the cold war and to prepare our government and our people to focus more on the limitation of force than has been true in the past. It will take time to absorb the full meaning of what has happened. So far, except for the strong pacifist testimony in churches and synagogues, there has been a tendency to hold back and to postpone a serious dealing with this issue. The cold war has so conditioned the responses of Americans that it is difficult to begin the fresh thinking that is now required. We are putting behind us the spirit of the holy war but a great deal of rigidity remains. The time has

come to drop our absolutistic anti-Communism. There may be less agreement in this area than in regard to civil rights and world poverty but at least there should be continuous enquiry and a concerted effort to move into new territory.

VI

ON THE WAR in Vietnam there are so many voices in our religious communities that it is difficult to speak with confidence. I have referred to the Pope's leadership here. He is strongly supported in this country by very able and devout and articulate Catholic laymen, by laymen rather more than by the clergy. Indeed the ferment among lay Roman Catholics is a great inspiration to many of us in the Protestant churches. Mr. Scharper speaks for them tonight. I am also greatly encouraged by the many statements on this issue by representative Jewish organizations and by Jewish rabbis of whom Rabbi Heschel is one of the most eloquent. The World Council of Churches and the National Council of Churches have called repeatedly for de-escalation of the war and for a negotiated settlement rather than military victory.

The Geneva Conference said almost unanimously:

The massive and growing American presence in Vietnam and the long continued bombing of villages in the South and of targets a few miles from cities in the North cannot be justified.

Recently the co-chairman of the Inter-religious Conference on Peace issued a statement calling for a halt to the bombing of North Vietnam as a first step toward carrying out the peace formula of U Thant. Those who signed this were Rabbi Eisen-drath, Bishop Wright: the Roman Catholic Bishop of Pittsburgh, Archbishop Iakovos of the Orthodox Church, Bishop Lord: a Methodist, Bishop Crittenden: an Episcopalian, and Dr. Dana Greely: President of the Unitarian-Universalist Association. When during a war, have churches and synagogues shown as much independence of the state as in this war? In so far as they have

done this they have been true to their calling to witness to the God who has no favorites among the nations and who judges especially those that are most powerful and most inclined to self-righteousness and who loves those on both sides of this tragic conflict.

MANY BARRIERS are down. The conflicts of conviction which separate us are better understood and the many disorders that we all inherit from the past can be dealt with in a more therapeutic manner than before.

Conflicts on Church and State issues, for example, will not be deepened by the fear of Catholic power felt so strongly as recently as 1960. Many people regard that year as the year of America's coming of age as a pluralistic society with the election of a President who was a Catholic. We are beginning to learn to work together, each guided by his own tradition but with many overlapping convictions, with mutual respect and with a promise of beneficent results for our common life.

II

WHAT WE MIGHT DO TOGETHER

Abraham Joshua Heschel

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A FAMOUS four-volume work on the history of atheism in the West, published sixty years ago, begins with the statement: "God has died. The time has come to write His history." Today, no historian would regard such a project as urgent; our major anxiety today seems to be diametrically opposed. Man may be dying and there will be no one to write his history. This is the problem that shatters all complacency, "Is man obsolete?" A generation ago people maintained: technological civilization contradicts religion. Today, we are wondering does technological civilization contradict man? The striking feature of our age is not the presence of anxiety, but the inadequacy of anxiety, the insufficient awareness of what is at stake in the human situation. It is as if the nightmare of our fears surpassed our capacity for fear.

Men all over the world see the writing on the wall, but are too illiterate to understand what it says. We all have that sense of dread for what may be in store for us, it is a fear of absolute evil, a fear of total destruction. It is more than an emotion. An apocalyptic monster has descended upon

the world, and there is nowhere to go, nowhere to hide. What is the nature of that monster? Is it a demon the power of which is ultimate; in the presence of which there is only despair?

THIS IS A TIME in which it is considered unreasonable to believe in the presence of the Divine, but quite reasonable to believe in the presence of the demonic. And yet, as a Jew, I recoil from the belief in the demonic. Over and against the belief in the ultimate power of the demon stands the admonition of Moses: "Know, therefore, this day and believe in your heart, that the Lord is God in heaven above, on the earth beneath; there is no one else." There are no demonic forces.

The great act of redemption brought about by Moses and the Prophets of Israel, was the elimination of the demons, the gods, and demigods from the consciousness of man; the demons which populated the world of ancient man are dead in the Bible. And yet, even Moses knew that man is endowed with the power to make a god; he has an uncanny ability to create or to revive

done this they have been true to their calling to witness to the God who has no favorites among the nations and who judges especially those that are most powerful and most inclined to self-righteousness and who loves those on both sides of this tragic conflict.

MANY BARRIERS are down. The conflicts of conviction which separate us are better understood and the many disorders that we all inherit from the past can be dealt with in a more therapeutic manner than before.

Conflicts on Church and State issues, for example, will not be deepened by the fear of Catholic power felt so strongly as recently as 1960. Many people regard that year as the year of America's coming of age as a pluralistic society with the election of a President who was a Catholic. We are beginning to learn to work together, each guided by his own tradition but with many overlapping convictions, with mutual respect and with a promise of beneficent results for our common life.

II

WHAT WE MIGHT DO TOGETHER

Abraham Joshua Heschel

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A FAMOUS four-volume work on the history of atheism in the West, published sixty years ago, begins with the statement: "God has died. The time has come to write His history." Today, no historian would regard such a project as urgent; our major anxiety today seems to be diametrically opposed. Man may be dying and there will be no one to write his history. This is the problem that shatters all complacency, "Is man obsolete?" A generation ago people maintained: technological civilization contradicts religion. Today, we are wondering does technological civilization contradict man? The striking feature of our age is not the presence of anxiety, but the inadequacy of anxiety, the insufficient awareness of what is at stake in the human situation. It is as if the nightmare of our fears surpassed our capacity for fear.

Men all over the world see the writing on the wall, but are too illiterate to understand what it says. We all have that sense of dread for what may be in store for us, it is a fear of absolute evil, a fear of total destruction. It is more than an emotion. An apocalyptic monster has descended upon

the world, and there is nowhere to go, nowhere to hide. What is the nature of that monster? Is it a demon the power of which is ultimate; in the presence of which there is only despair?

THIS IS A TIME in which it is considered unreasonable to believe in the presence of the Divine, but quite reasonable to believe in the presence of the demonic. And yet, as a Jew, I recoil from the belief in the demonic. Over and against the belief in the ultimate power of the demon stands the admonition of Moses: "Know, therefore, this day and believe in your heart, that the Lord is God in heaven above, on the earth beneath; there is no one else." There are no demonic forces.

The great act of redemption brought about by Moses and the Prophets of Israel, was the elimination of the demons, the gods, and demigods from the consciousness of man; the demons which populated the world of ancient man are dead in the Bible. And yet, even Moses knew that man is endowed with the power to make a god; he has an uncanny ability to create or to revive

a demon. Indeed, man's worship of power has resurrected the demon of power.

Jonah Still Running to Tarshish

IT IS NOT a coincidence that the three of us who participate in this evening's panel discussion also serve as co-chairmen of the National Committee of Clergy and Laymen concerned about Vietnam.

The meeting place of this evening's discussion should be not the Palmer House in Chicago but somewhere in the jungles of Vietnam. An ecumenical nightmare — Christians, Jews, Buddhists, dying together, killing one another. So soon after Auschwitz, so soon after Hitler.

The question about Auschwitz to be asked is not: "Where was God?" but rather: "Where was man?" The God of Abraham has never promised always to hold back Cain's hand from killing his brother. To equate God and history is idolatry. God is present when man's heart is alive. When the heart turns stone, when man is absent, God is banished, and history, disengaged, is distress.

WHAT SHOULD have been humanity's answer to the Nazi atrocities? Repentance, a revival of the conscience, a sense of unceasing, burning shame, a persistent effort to be worthy of the name human, to prevent the justification of a death of man theology, to control the urge to cruelty.

Is it not a desecration of our commitment to act as if that agony never happened, to go on with religion as usual at a time when nuclear disaster is being made a serious possibility?

We should have learned at least one lesson: *Don't hate!*

Today is the anniversary of the death of President Kennedy. His assassination shook the world. Yet it made no impact on our laws and customs. No lesson was learned, no conclusion was drawn. Guns are still available c.o.d. Mass killing in Chicago, in Houston, in Arizona, and elsewhere, is becoming a favorite past-time of young boys.

The Pentagons of the world are Temples.

Within their hallowed walls the great decisions come about: How many shall live, how many shall die.

The envoys of peace weep bitterly.
The highways lie waste . . .
Covenants are broken,
Witnesses are despised,
There is no regard for man. — (Isaiah 33:8)

Jonah is running to Tarshish, while Nineveh is tottering on the brink. Are we not all guilty of Jonah's failure? We have been running to Tarshish when the call is to go to Ninevah.

"What is the use of running, when you are on the wrong road?" What are the traps and spiritual pitfalls that account for the outrage of the war in Vietnam? What is the use of social security when you have a surplus of nuclear weapons?

Religion cannot be the same after Auschwitz and Hiroshima. Its teachings must be pondered not only in the halls of learning but also in the presence of inmates in extermination camps, and in the sight of the mushroom of a nuclear explosion.

The new situation in the world has plunged every one of us into unknown regions of responsibility. Unprepared, perplexed, misguided, the world is a spiritual no man's land. Men all over the world are waiting for a way out of distress, for a new certainty of the meaning of being human. Will help come out of those who seek to keep alive the words of the prophets?

This is, indeed, a grave hour for those who are committed to honor the name of God.

Principles and Standards

THE ULTIMATE standards of living, according to Jewish teaching, are *Kiddush Ha-Shem* and *Hillul Ha-Shem*. The one means that everything within one's power should be done to glorify the name of God before the world, the other that everything should be avoided to reflect dishonor upon the religion and thereby desecrate the name of God.

According to the ancient rabbis, the Lord

said to Israel: "I have brought you out of Egypt upon the condition that you sacrifice your very lives should the honor of My name require it." (Sifra, ed. Weiss, 99d).

"All sins may be atoned for by repentance, by means of the Day of Atonement, or through the chastening power of affliction, but acts which cause the desecration of the name of God will not be forgiven. 'Surely this iniquity will not be forgiven you till you die, says the Lord of hosts'" (Isaiah 23:14).

In the light of these principles, e.g. a slight act of injustice is regarded as a grave offense when committed by a person whose religious leadership is acknowledged and of whose conduct an example is expected.

God had trust in us and gave us His word, some of His wisdom and some of His power. But we have distorted His word, His wisdom, and abused His gift of power.

Those who pray tremble when they realize how staggering are the debts of the religions of the West. We have mortgaged our souls and borrowed so much grace, patience and forgiveness. We have promised charity, love, guidance and a way of redemption, and now we are challenged to keep the promise, to honor the pledge. How shall we prevent bankruptcy in the presence of God and man?

God has moved out of the fortress of pedestrian certainties and is dwelling in perplexities. He has abandoned our complacencies and has entered our spiritual agony, upsetting dogmas, discrediting articulations. Beyond all doctrines and greater than human faith stands God, God's question of man, God's waiting for man, for every man, God in search of man. Deeper than all our understanding is our bold certainty that God is with us in distress, hiding in the scandal of our ambiguities. And now God may send those whom we have expected least "to do His deed — strange is His deed; to carry out his work — alien is His work." (Isaiah 28:21)

What is the use of running to Tarshish when the call is to go to Ninevah?

We must learn how to labor in the affairs of the world with fear and trembling. While involved in public affairs, we must not cease to cultivate the secrets of religious privacy.

ABRAHAM who despised the spirit of Sodom and Gomorrah as much as Washington despises the ideology of Red China was nevertheless horrified by the Lord's design to rain napalm, brimstone and fire upon the sinful cities. But why? Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah would be a spectacular manifestation of God's power in the world! So why did Abraham oppose an action which would have been a great triumph for "religion"? It is said in that story: "Abraham is still standing before the Lord" (18:22). To this very day Abraham is still pleading, still standing before the Lord "in fear and trembling."

It is necessary to go to Ninevah; it is also vital to learn how to stand before God. For many of us the march from Selma to Montgomery was both protest and prayer. Legs are not lips, and walking is not kneeling. And yet our legs uttered songs. Even without words, our march was worship.

Unlike Jonah, Jeremiah did not go into the desert of loneliness. He remained a solitary dissenter in the midst of his people. Defied by his contemporaries, bewildered by the ways of the Lord, he would rather be defeated with God than victorious without him.

The cardinal problem is not the survival of religion, but the survival of man. What is required is a continuous effort to overcome hardness of heart, callousness, and above all to inspire the world with the biblical image of man, not to forget that man without God is a torso, to prevent the dehumanization of man. For the opposite of human is not the animal. *The opposite of the human is the demonic.*

Contradictions and Perplexities

CONTEMPORARY MAN is a being afflicted with contradictions and perplexities, living in anguish in an affluent society. His anxiety makes a mockery of his boasts. Passing

through several revolutions simultaneously, his thinking is behind the times. High standards of living, vulgar standards of thinking, too feeble to stop the process of the spiritual liquidation of man. Man is becoming obsolete, computers are taking over.

The issue we face is not secularization but total *mechanization, militarization*. *The issue is not empty pews, but empty hearts.*

If the ultimate goal is power, then modern man has come of age. However, if the ultimate goal is meaning of existence, then man has already descended into a new infancy.

At times it is as if our normal consciousness were a state of partly suspended animation. Our perceptivity limited, our categories onesided.

Things that matter most are of no relevance to many of us. Pedestrian categories will not lead us to the summit; to attain understanding for realness of God we have to rise to a higher level of thinking and experience.

THIS IS AN AGE in which even our common sense is tainted with commercialism and expediency. To recover sensitivity to the divine, we must develop in uncommon sense, rebel against seemingly relevant, against conventional validity; to unthink many thoughts, to abandon many habits, to sacrifice many pretensions.

The temple in Jerusalem has been destroyed. All that is left is a wailing wall. A stone wall stands between God and man. Is there a way of piercing the wall?

Is there a way of surmounting the wall?

What is the substance, of which that wall is made? Is it, as the prophets maintain, man's heart of stone? Or is it, as Isaiah also claims, the hiding of God? The darkening of his presence?

Perhaps this is the chief vocation of man: to scale the wall, to sense what is revealed wherever he is concealed, to realize that even a wall cannot separate man from God, that the darkness is but a challenge and a passageway.

We have pulled down the shutters and

locked the doors. No light should enter, no echo should disturb our complacency. Man is the master, all else is a void. Religion came to be understood in commercial terms. We will pay our dues, and He will offer protection.

God has not complied with our expectations. So we sulk, and call it quits. Who is to blame? Is God simply wicked — has He failed to keep the deal?

The hour calls for a breakthrough through the splendid platitudes that dominate our thinking, for efforts to counteract the systematic deflation of man, for a commitment to recall the dimension of depth within which the central issues of human existence can be seen in a way compatible with the dangerous grandeur of the human condition.

Theology out of Context

CHARACTERISTIC of our own religious situation is an awareness that theology is out of context, irrelevant to the emergencies engulfing us, pitifully incongruous with the energies technology has released, and unrelated to our anguish.

The word heaven is a problem, and so is the living, loving God, and so is the humanity in man a grave problem. There are two ways of dealing with a problem: one is an effort to solve it, the other is an effort to dissolve it, to kill it . . .

Let us not make a virtue of spiritual obtuseness. Why canonize deficiencies? Why glorify failure?

The crisis is wider, the anguish is deeper. What is at stake is not only articles of the creeds, paragraphs of the law; what is at stake is the humanity of man, the nearness of God.

What do we claim? *That religious commitment is not just an ingredient of the social order, an adjunct or reinforcement of existence, but rather the heart and core of being human.*

We have been preoccupied with issues, some marginal, some obsolete, evading urgent problems, offering answers to questions no longer asked, adjusting to demands of

intellectual comfort, cherishing solutions that disregard emergencies.

We suffer from the fact that our understanding of religion today has been reduced to ritual, doctrine, institution, symbol, theology, detached from the *pretheological* situation, the presymbolic depth of existence. To redirect the trend, we must lay bare what is involved in religious existence; we must recover the situations which both precede and correspond to the theological formulations; we must recall the questions which religious doctrines are trying to answer, the antecedents of religious commitment, the presuppositions of faith. What are the prerequisites, conditions, qualifications for being sensitive to God? Are we always ready to talk about Him?

There are levels of thinking where God is irrelevant, categories that stifle all intimations of the holy.

We are inclined to quantify quality as we are to canonize prejudice. Just as the primitive man sought to personalize the impersonal, the contemporary man seeks to depersonalize the personal, to think in average ways, yet every thought pertaining to God can only be conceived in uncommon ways.

God is *not a word but a name. It can only be uttered in astonishment.* Astonishment is the result of openness to the true mystery, of sensing the ineffable. It is through openness to the mystery that we are present to the presence of God, open to the ineffable Name.

THE URGENT PROBLEM is not only the truth of religion, but *man's capacity to sense the truth of religion, the authenticity of religious concern.* Religious truth does not shine in a vacuum. It is certainly not comprehensible when the antecedents of religious insight and commitment are wasted away; when the mind is dazzled by ideologies which either obscure or misrepresent man's ultimate questions; when life is lived in a way which tends to abuse and to squander the gold mines, the challenging resources of human existence. The primary issue of theology is *pretheological*; it is the

total situation of man and his attitudes toward life and the world.

What is necessary is a recall to those ultimate sources of the spirit's life which commonplace thinking never touches. Theology must begin in *depth-theology*. Knowing must be preceded by listening to the call: "Do not come closer. Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you stand is holy ground."

No one attains faith without first achieving the prerequisites of faith. First we praise, then we believe. We begin with a sense of wonder and arrive at radical amazement. The first response is reverence and awe, openness to the mystery that surrounds, and we are led to be overwhelmed by the glory.

God is not a concept produced by deliberation. God is an outcry wrung from heart and mind; God is never an explanation, it is always a challenge. It can only be uttered in astonishment.

Religious existence is a pilgrimage rather than an arrival. Its teaching — a challenge rather than an intellectual establishment, an encyclopedia of ready-made answers.

Perhaps the grave error in theology is the *claim to finality*, to absolute truth, as if all of God's wisdom were revealed to us completely and once and for all, as if God had nothing more to say.

God is a problem alive when the mind is in communion with the conscience, when realizing that in depth we are receivers rather than manipulators. The word God is an assault, a thunder in the soul, not a notion to play with. Prayer is the premise, moments of devotion are prerequisites of reflection. A word about God must not be born out of wedlock of heart and mind. It must not be uttered unless it has the stamp of one's own soul.

Detachment of doctrine from devotion, detachment of reason from reverence, of scrutiny from the sense of the ineffable reduces God as a challenge to a logical hypothesis, theoretically important, but not overwhelmingly urgent. God is only relevant when overwhelmingly urgent.

It is a fatal mistake to think that believing in God is gained with ease or sustained without strain.

Faith is steadfastness in spite of failure. It is defiance and persistence in the face of frustration.

The most fruitful level for interreligious discussion is not that of dogmatic theology but that of *depth-theology*.

*No Religion is an Island**

THERE ARE FOUR dimensions of religious existence, four necessary components of man's relationships to God: (a) *the teaching*, the essentials of which are summarized in the form of a creed, which serve as guiding principles in our thinking about matters temporal or eternal, the dimension of the doctrine; (b) *faith*, inwardness, the direction of one's heart, the intimacy of religion, the dimension of privacy; (c) *the law*, or the sacred act to be carried out in the sanctuary in society or at home, the dimension of the deed; (d) *the context* in which creed, faith and ritual come to pass, such as the community or the covenant, history, tradition, the dimension of transcendence.

In the dimension of the deed there are obviously vast areas for cooperation among men of different commitments in terms of intellectual communication, of sharing concern and knowledge in applied religion, particularly as they relate to social action.

In the dimension of faith, the encounter proceeds in terms of personal witness and example, sharing insights, confessing inadequacy. On the level of doctrine we seek to convey the content of what we believe in, on the level of faith we experience in one another the presence of a person radiant with reflections of a greater presence.

I suggest that the most significant basis for meeting of men of different religious traditions is the level of fear and trembling, of humility and contrition, where our individual moments of faith are mere waves in

the endless ocean of mankind's reaching out for God, where all formulations and articulations appear as understatement, where our souls are swept away by the awareness of the urgency of answering God's commandment, while stripped of pretension and conceit we sense the tragic insufficiency of human faith.

What divides us? What unites us? We disagree in law and creed, in commitments which lie at the very heart of our religious existence. We say "No" to one another in some doctrines essential and sacred to us. What unites us? Our being accountable to God, our being objects of God's concern, precious in His eyes. Our conceptions of what ails us may be different; but the anxiety is the same. The language, the imagination, the concretization of our hopes are different, but the embarrassment is the same, and so is the sigh, the sorrow, and the necessity to obey.

We may disagree about the ways of achieving fear and trembling, but the fear and trembling are the same. The demands are different, but the conscience is the same, and so is arrogance, iniquity. The proclamations are different, the callousness is the same, and so is the challenge we face in many moments of spiritual agony.

Above all, while dogmas and forms of worship are divergent, God is the same. What unites us? A commitment to the Hebrew Bible as Holy Scripture. Faith in the Creator, the God of Abraham, commitment to many of His commandments, to justice and mercy, a sense of contrition, sensitivity to the sanctity of life and to the involvement of God in history, the conviction that without the holy the good will be defeated, prayer that history may not end before the end of days, and so much more.

There are moments when we all stand together and see our faces in the mirror: the anguish of humanity and its helplessness; the perplexity of the individual and the need of divine guidance; being called to praise and to do what is required.

*This section was previously published by Dr. Heschel in *Union Seminary Quarterly Review*, XXI, No. 2 Part 1 (January, 1966) pp. 121-122.

To What Religious Ends?

MANY OF OUR PEOPLE still think in terms of an age in which Judaism *wrapped* itself in spiritual *isolation*. In our days, however, for the majority of our people *involvement* has replaced *isolation*.

The emancipation has brought us *to the very heart* of the total society. It has not only given us *rights*, but also imposed *obligations*. It has expanded the scope of our responsibility and concern. Whether we like it or not, the words we utter and the actions in which we are engaged affect the life of the total community.

We *affirm* the principle of separation of church and state, we *reject* the separation of religion and the human situation. We abhor the equation of state and society, of power and conscience, and perceive society in the image of human beings comprising it. The human individual is beset with needs and is called upon to serve ends.

To what religious ends must my fellowmen be guided?

The world we live in has become a single neighborhood, and the role of religious commitment, of reverence and compassion, in the thinking of our fellowmen is becoming a domestic issue. What goes on in the Christian world affects us deeply. Unless we learn how to help one another, we may only hurt each other.

Our society is in crisis not because we intensely disagree but because we feebly agree. "The clash of doctrines is not a disaster, it is an opportunity" (Alfred Whitehead).

The survival of mankind is in balance. One wave of hatred, callousness, or contempt may bring in its wake the destruction of all mankind. Vicious deeds are but an aftermath of what is conceived in the hearts and minds of man. It is from the inner life of man and from the articulation of evil thoughts that evil actions take their rise. It is therefore of extreme importance that the sinfulness of thoughts of suspicion and hatred and particularly the sinfulness of any contemptuous utterance, however flippantly it is meant, be made clear to all

mankind. This applies in particular to thoughts and utterances about individuals or groups of other religions, races and nations. Speech has power and few men realize that words do not fade. What starts out as a sound ends in a deed.

In an age in which the spiritual premises of our existence are both questioned and even militantly removed, the urgent problem is not the competition among some religions but the condition of all religions, the condition of man, crassness, chaos, darkness, despair.

What We Can Do Together

THERE IS MUCH we can do together in matters of supreme concern and relevance to both Judaism and Christianity.

The world is too small for anything but mutual care and deep respect; the world is too great for anything but responsibility for one another.

A full awareness and appreciation of our fellowmen's spiritual commitments becomes a moral obligation for all of us.

A Jew who hears what he prays cannot be indifferent to whether God's way is known in the world, to whether the gentiles know how to praise. In our liturgy we proclaim every day:

Give thanks to the Lord,
Call upon Him,
Make known His deeds among the peoples!
— (Psalms 105:1)

In the Omer liturgy it is customary to recite Psalm 67:

May God be gracious to us and bless us and make His face to shine upon us, that Thy way may be known upon earth, Thy saving power among all nations.
Let the peoples praise Thee, O God;
let all the peoples praise Thee!

What is our task as Jews in relation to Gentiles? I rely upon the words of an inspired Hassidic sage in expounding Deuteronomy 28:9f. "The Lord shall establish you as His holy people . . . if you keep the commandments . . . and walk in His ways. And all the peoples of the earth

shall see that the Lord's name is proclaimed upon you, and they will acquire reverence through you."

The real bond between people of different creeds is the awe and fear of God they have in common. It is easy to speak about the different dogmas we are committed to; it is hard to communicate the fear and reverence. It is easy to communicate the learning we have inherited, it is hard to communicate the praise, contrition and the sense of the ineffable. But souls which are in accord with what is precious in the eyes of God, souls to whom God's love for them is more precious than their own lives, will always meet in the presence of Him whose glory fills the hearts and transcends the minds.

What, then, is the purpose of interreligious cooperation?

It is neither to flatter nor to refute one another, but to help one another; to share insight and learning, to cooperate in academic ventures on the highest scholarly level, and what is even more important to search in the wilderness for well-springs of devotion, for treasures of stillness, for the power of love and care for man. What is urgently needed are ways of helping one another in the terrible predicament of here and now by the courage to believe that the word of the Lord endures for ever as well as here and now; to work for peace in Vietnam, for racial justice in our own land, to purify the minds from contempt, suspicion and hatred; to cooperate in trying to bring about a resurrection of sensitivity, a revival of conscience; to keep alive the divine sparks in our souls, to nurture openness to the spirit of the Psalms, reverence for the words of the prophets, and faithfulness to the Living God.

There ought to be standards and rules for interreligious dialogue. An example of such a rule for Catholics and Protestants would be not to discuss the supremacy of the bishop of Rome or Papacy; an example of such a rule for Christians and Jews would be not to discuss Christology.

The God of Abraham, the Creator of

heaven and earth, deemed it wise to conceal His presence in the world in which we live. He did not make it easy for us to have faith in Him, to remain faithful to Him.

This is our tragedy; the insecurity of faith, the unbearable burden of our commitment. The facts that deny the divine are mighty, indeed; the arguments of agnosticism are eloquent, the events that defy Him are spectacular. Our Faith is too often tinged with arrogance, self-righteousness. It is even capable of becoming demonic . . . Even the creeds we proclaim are in danger of becoming idolatry. Our faith is fragile, never immune to error, distortion or deception.

There are no final proofs for the existence of God, Father and Creator of all. There are only witnesses. Supreme among them are the prophets of Israel.

Humanity is an unfinished task, and so is religion. The law, the creed, the teaching and the wisdom are here, yet without the outburst of prophetic demands coming upon us again and again, religion may become fossilized.

Here is the experience of a child of seven who was reading in school the chapter which tells of the sacrifice of Isaac. "Isaac was on the way to Mount Moriah with his father; then he lay on the altar, bound, waiting to be sacrificed." My heart began to beat even faster; it actually sobbed with pity for Isaac. Behold, Abraham now lifted the knife. And now my heart froze within me with fright. Suddenly, the voice of the angel was heard: "Abraham, lay not thine hand upon the lad, for now I know that thou fearest God." And here I broke out in tears and wept aloud. "Why are you crying?" asked the Rabbi. "You know that Isaac was not killed." And I said to him, still weeping, "But, Rabbi, supposing the angel had come a second too late?"

The Rabbi comforted me and calmed me by telling me that "an angel cannot come late."

An angel cannot be late, but man, made of flesh and blood, may be late.

III

WHAT WE MIGHT DO TOGETHER

Philip Scharper

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THE VERY SUBJECT of our discussion this evening invites us to leap forward in thought and to attempt to construct a vision of what might be in ecumenical religious education. But the religious tradition of each of us is realistic, and reminds us that the dimensions of the city that might be are the dimensions of the city that is; one builds upward upon foundations, not outward upon fiction or fantasies.

The vision, then, of what we might do together must be woven from the strands of the present and the past: What have we done or failed to do together? what are we doing or failing to do together now?

One instance of what we are doing, not with each other but to each other, can be gathered from a recent Gallup poll which showed that ill-feeling toward Catholics by Jews had doubled from 15% to 30% since 1952. In this same period, it is true, there has been, according to the same poll, a decline in the number of Catholics harboring ill-feeling against Protestants, in the number of Protestants harboring prejudice against Catholics, and in the number of Catholics nurturing animosity or suspicion against Jews.

One explanation for the regrettable statistics of increased ill-feeling towards Catholics on the part of Jews has been suggested by Philip E. Hoffman of the American Jewish Committee, who was quoted in *The New York Times* as saying that "Christians and Jews are educated in two different universes of understanding of their respective histories and they are conditioned to an insensitivity about each other in contemporary life."

If we are to ask, then, what we might do together in the future an obvious, almost

banal answer might be that we begin in the present to repair what we have done to each other in the past. We might consider then how to repair the past, and thus strengthen the foundation for the building of the future. *First*, what we do within the framework of inter-Christian ecumenism; *second*, within the framework of Christian-Jewish ecumenism and then, *lastly*, we might hope legitimately to lift our eyes to a horizon farther than that of the world of Jewish-Christian relationship and consider what we might do together, Jew and Christian, in a dialogue with the world.

I. INTER-CHRISTIAN ECUMENISM

IN OUR EFFORTS to understand one another, to come closer to one another, we Christians have made much in the last decade of the term "dialogue." It might not be tangential to recall, at this point, that our theologians did not really coin this word in the sense which we have given it in our inter-faith conversations. Theologians rarely invent a word; they too often embalm a word to which they did not give life and then quickly gather to join in the fruits of its redemptive resurrection, which took place either while they slept, like the Apostles, or fished the old familiar waters.

Before we Christians, either theologians or the theologized-at, permit the term "dialogue" to become trite through our usage of it, we should at least recall what those who coined the word — contemporary philosophers and psychologists — meant by it. As a consequence, we might perhaps understand the word more deeply and hence use it more effectively.

DIALOGUE MEANS, at minimum, the per-

fect willingness of each partner in the dialogue really to listen to the other. Listening seems so simple, until we try it in terms of dialogue. Really to listen to another means hearing his voice as well as his words, for the tone of his voice so often either belies or belabors the words. The voice lays bare the soul, even when the speaker hopes it will not or is perhaps unaware that it does.

This obviously means that when *we* speak we make every effort to be sure *that our voice really means what our words say*. Otherwise, we are not engaged in dialogue, the authentic interchange of two persons striving, at least, to be authentic.

When we bring to the surface of our minds this radical meaning of dialogue, we are in a position to ask precisely what we Christians have been talking about in our ecumenical conversations and to ask the further, more probing question of whether our voices have also meant what our words seemed to say.

While not attempting in the least to minimize the gains already realized by formal ecumenical dialogues between and among the major Christian communities, might one not also ask if, while our words proclaim the quest for Christian unity, our voices — alternately frightened or querulous — have not proclaimed even more loudly our ecclesial pre-occupations.

HAVE WE NOT, for example, spent much of our ecumenical tabletalk with the question of the validity of each other's baptism and, with enormous stretching of soul and bending of mind, attempted to accept the baptismal rite of other churches? Have we, however, spent nearly so much of our precious talking time with the question of each other's understanding of the Eucharist, the sign, symbol and agent of unity? Have we been willing to display so much effort of mind, so much stretching of the soul, to reconcile the other's eucharistic ritual and understanding with our own?

I realize fully that, to the theologically sophisticated, the very question may suggest the impertinence or ignorance of the ques-

tioner. But I must also say, in the complete candor which alone is worthy of those who profess fealty to the God who is Truth, that to the men in their pews the pre-occupations of theologians and preachers seem ecclesial rather than ecumenical. Certainly, discussions of Communion under one or two species, effected with leavened or unleavened bread, the roiling question of bishops or no-bishops must strike the person in the pew and the sympathetic eavesdropper at the church door as sometimes lacking a sense of ecumenical urgency.

The world needs Christ, we Christians affirm, in order to heal the world's wounds, in order to repair the tragic discords and reconcile the ancient enmities which have smashed to shards what should be the unity in love of the family of man. The world does, indeed, lie wounded by the wayside of its sojourning, yet the assorted Good Samaritans stand above it, arguing whether the oil should be poured in before the wine, the wine before the oil, or whether the stricken man should be administered a compound of both.

I must again apologize for what must seem to be either my impertinence or my ignorance of the thick-rooted theological realities which have produced the separate trees that are found, either green or gnarled, in the garden of Christianity. But I must also ask if the churches, in the quest for unity, are not living by *chronos*, the time measured by clocks and calendars, and living perhaps unaware of *kairos*, the time of the Lord.

If we look continually at the cosmic clock, the *chronos*, we may well be bemused into thinking that Christian unity can await what we call, in a quaint phrase, "God's good time." But does either sacred or secular history show us a point at which "God's good time" was not *now*, that each day is the acceptable day of the Lord if we, with our fearsome freedom, choose to make it so? Have we really the *will* for unity? If we have, what are the tangible signs of that will? Are we really groaning and in travail to end the anguish of our separation

in order that we might more quickly, more effectively and more grace-fully move to repair the shattered unity of the human family?

ONE THING, then, which we Christians might do together in the framework of our formal and informal ecumenical education is to ask ourselves and each other whether or not we sincerely feel that we have, not the velleity, but an effective will toward the recovery of our lost unity. In such a dialogue we must, in the candor born of what we call charity, listen not only to the words and voices of the other but we must also, with exquisite attention, listen to our own words and our own voice.

In such a dialogue we might all be led at least to raise the question of whether or not we Christians might have succeeded in accomplishing what we accuse non-Christians of attempting, namely, minimizing or denying the full meaning of the Incarnation.

For the Incarnation, in our collective Christian theology, is the most corrosive element ever known to man. It is the Incarnation which dissolves any distinction between the concerns of the street and the concern of the sanctuary; it is the Incarnation which crumbles to dust the man-made walls between slave and free, between male and female, between barbarian and Greek, between rich and poor. How is it, then, that the walls of division between the Christian communities seem so impervious to the corrosive action of the Incarnation?

The question may be raised only to be dismissed, but I, for one, would suspect that if this question is not at least raised then most of the answers given in our ecumenical discussions may prove to be illusory, evasive or irrelevant. For unless we Christians ask ourselves the questions which others are asking us, we may well have shown ourselves not to have known the time of our visitation. For the question being asked of us is the question asked, but never answered, a century ago by Ralph Waldo Emerson: "Within Stoicism, all were stoics, but in Christianity, where are the Christians?" Old, unanswered questions,

like old unhouseled ghosts, rise again to haunt a younger generation. Emerson's question is being asked today in terms less gentle, and in tones less genteel, than his: "Can one find Christ in the Christian churches — the compassionate Christ — or do the churches seem, rather, the empty tomb from which the risen Christ has fled?"

II. JEWISH-CHRISTIAN ECUMENISM

IN DEALING WITH the ecumenical dialogue between the Jew and the Christian I shall not attempt, for obvious reasons, to speak of what the Jew might say to us Christians or what he might learn from us in the authentic exposure of the inmost self which is the heart of dialogue. I fear, however, that having avoided this presumption on the one hand, I shall fall into a similar presumption on the other as I attempt to speak, in general terms, of what seem to me to be rather common Christian failings in their effort ecumenically to speak to the Jewish community.

I must confess, first of all, that in my own reading and discussion of ecumenical questions, we Christians seem, almost without exception, to have collectively but little understanding of the Jewish people into which Christ Our Lord was born. It will not do, to allay this feeling, to refer, in the Catholic context, to either the statement on the Jews in the declaration of Vatican II nor to the paragraphs on the Jews in Pope Paul's encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam*. Nor will it do, so far as I can see, to refer to the statements which have issued, with all good will, from other major Christian communities.

In these Christian statements there seems to be a muted but nonetheless significant theme: the suggestion that, in the religious history of Western man, the Jew is to be found as an obdurate fact, who has either, with characteristic perverseness, refused to die to corroborate our theology of the Jew, or who perdures, indeed, but only to serve as a reminder to us of God's graciousness in inviting us into the household of the Christian faith.

Nor is it enough to explain, as some sophisticated Christians are now explaining, the indebtedness of Christianity to the Old Testament, the need for the contemporary Christian to attempt to recover Hebraic thought-patterns in order to understand his own spiritual heritage, or to trace the evolution of Christian liturgy from Jewish ritual forms. This type of Christian approach to Judaism is but to repeat, in more sophisticated modes, the general inadequacy of the Christian approach to Judaism, namely, the assumption that the Jewish people have no valid history after the destruction of Jerusalem. It is to assume that the only theological relationship of Christianity to Judaism must be to the Judaism as the Christian understands it — a Judaism locked in the past — as though all of the spiritual energy of post-biblical Judaism had become like a river diverted, to sink its energy and beauty in the sand.

BUT IT IS WITH a living Judaism that the Christian is summoned to have dialogue today, and the contemporary Christian must recognize that he is to speak and listen to the contemporary Jew, who is no more exclusively a product of the Old Testament than is the Christian himself.

For the Jew, whether the Christian knows or cares, has a post-biblical history as long, obviously, as that of the Christian. There have been developments within Judaism since the diaspora and these developments demand of the Christian that he approach the Jew not only in sociological or historical terms but that he also look upon the Jew as a theological problem.

The nature of this theological problem can perhaps be crudely stated in halting phrases such as this: What is the theological reason for the continuing existence of Judaism, the old Israel? What are we to make, here and now, of Paul's statement that "the calls and promises of God to the people of Israel are irrevocable?" We Christians must take more seriously than we have the fact that the Old Israel, as well as the New, is the community of love shaped on the anvil of a divine calling, the

work of the Spirit of God. As a consequence, we must attempt, at any rate, to realize what the Jew has been and done through the two thousand years of concomitant Christian history; more importantly, we must strive to discern the design of Providence in the fact that after these two thousand years of a common history, the Old Israel and the New find themselves in a situation of co-existence, confrontation and now dialogue, despite the persecution, forced conversions and garroting with a silken thread which we Christians have historically visited upon the Jew, despite our proclamation that ours is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

But we must see this theological question as a living one, drawing its life from the stubborn soil of present reality. We cannot treat the theological question of the Jew as though it were an exotic one, hanging like a jungle orchid rootless in the heavy air. Part of the context in which the Christian must place the problem is the historical experience of the Jew in our century. And part of that experience is the creation and existence of the State of Israel.

AM I COMPLETELY WRONG in thinking that for most Christians the State of Israel seems to be but a political reality, one which does not lure the Christian mind, as a consequence, into theological speculation as to its origin, continuance, or ultimate purpose? I cannot, of course, speak for other Christians, nor even justify theologically my own response to what I have seen in Israel. But I do think it worthy of remark that, as a Christian, I was reminded again and again in Israel of the ancient prophecy of Ezechiel when he saw the valley filled with dry bones restored to life at God's command:

Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel . . . and you shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall you know that I the Lord have spoken it and performed it.

I find it hard to comprehend how any Christian could fail to find in the fact and the fortune of the State of Israel a fulfill-

ment of the ancient prophecy. But twenty years ago, six million Jews lay dead in Europe and the spared but scattered remnant seemed, to the eyes of human vision, helpless and, perhaps, doomed. Certainly, no Christian nation of the West was inviting *these* tempest-tossed to its shores, nor lifting the torch of hope above its golden door. Yet in that time the State of Israel was born and the impossible took place. The dry bones stirred and were clothed once more with flesh; the people were summoned from their graves and were brought into their own land. Was it indeed that the Lord had spoken and performed it?

We Christians may not believe so, but we must, at least, try to understand why so many Jews both within and without Israel look upon this State as God's reply to a people's faith. We might also at least strive to see, in the newly gathered Israel, an analogy to the Church as a sign raised up among the nations to proclaim that God is faithful to His promises and that the calls of God to the people of Israel are "irrevocable."

And what, briefly, are we Christians to make, theologically, of the yet more staggering experience of the Jew within our own lifetime — the fact that more than six million of their number met death for no other crime than that they traced their origin to Jerusalem and Sinai and the Land to which Abraham was called — all features which claim prominent place in our own topography of the Spirit? It would be difficult, I submit, for the Christian to find even in his own churches of silence, the experience of a religious community more reminiscent of Isaiah's depiction of The Suffering Servant; a people acquainted with grief and sorrow, dumb before their executioners and led like lambs to the slaughter.

Even if we discount all this and yet retain some vestige of belief in redemptive suffering, can we quite discount the possibility that hundreds of thousands of Jewish children may somehow have died for us, even as we traditionally honor those Jewish children of an earlier time whose death, vio-

lent and unsought, was yet seen as martyrdom by the eyes of Christian faith? May it be that by their stripes we are healed, or at least have had the hope of healing proffered to us?

Ezekiel and Isaiah are, I suspect, very much on the mind and in the heart of the modern Jew as he approaches the contemporary dialogue with the Christian; we cannot, as a consequence, do him the dishonor of looking upon him, as he talks and listens to us, as less than a theological problem. We must, even minimally, try to understand why, for him, these places and moments of the twentieth century have not merely a social or political but a sacred significance.

III. THE ECUMENISM OF JEW AND CHRISTIAN WITH THE WORLD

ALIKE, the Jew and Christian must recognize their "pre-ecumenical" solidarity with the rest of mankind — with those who have a different faith or no faith in the accepted ecclesiastical understanding of that term. Before we are either Jew or Christian, we are human beings and members of the family of God the Father, shaped by His creating hand, called into being by His breath. Wherever we turn in either the Old or the New Testament, we are forced to confront, not an anthropology but a religious understanding of man's origin and destiny. Since a divine origin and destiny are common to every man, his links to every other man are beyond his forging or his power to break.

Regardless of whether those who do not share this Judaeo-Christian view of man recognize themselves as sons of God, we recognize them as such, and can only speak of and to them as our brother, whose dignity we have neither designed nor given, and with whose destiny we are not allowed to tamper.

Alike, the Jew and the Christian believe that, in the last sifting of reality, there is only one history, the record of God's continual breaking in upon the world of man and speaking to man through event, even

as he spoke to Moses through the event of a bush that burned yet was not consumed.

Neither Jew nor Christian has the right to put man-made limits to God's capacity to speak through events. We can only strive to hear what God may be saying through events, even in the events of this glorious but torn and tragic century.

WHAT, FOR EXAMPLE, is God trying to say to us — Jew and Christian — through this event: that we comprise, in the white Western community, less than one-third of the world's peoples and yet consume more than sixty percent of the world's goods, and control more than seventy percent of the world's resources? What do we make of this event: that the world has shrunken to the dimensions of a village, and that in this village we live in the houses set upon the hill, moated from our fellow-villagers by green and spacious lawns, scandalously conspicuous in our expenditure on luxuries and our waste of necessities? What do we make of this event: that the number of villagers who are non-white, non-Jewish, non-Christian, is increasing rapidly to the point where, by the year 2000, we will be an even smaller minority than we are at the moment, for that will be a world wherein the population of China alone may number one billion seven hundred million people — four hundred million more than the present population of Europe, North and South America, the Soviet Union and Africa combined?

What is God saying to us through these events? Is He not trying to say that we must learn from each other and teach our children that, in the world which they will inherit, they must be the conscious heirs of all that is most authentic in what we call, somewhat too glibly, the Judaeo-Christian tradition? We must attempt to become now, and hope that our children will be in the future, the *anawim* — the poor of God — open constantly to the breathing of His

Spirit. This much, at least, we can hope to do together, if we make the effort to understand who we are and who the other is: we can attempt to show the emerging world — brown, black, illiterate, impoverished — that we are indeed their brothers, for each of us holds dear the ancient words of Isaiah:

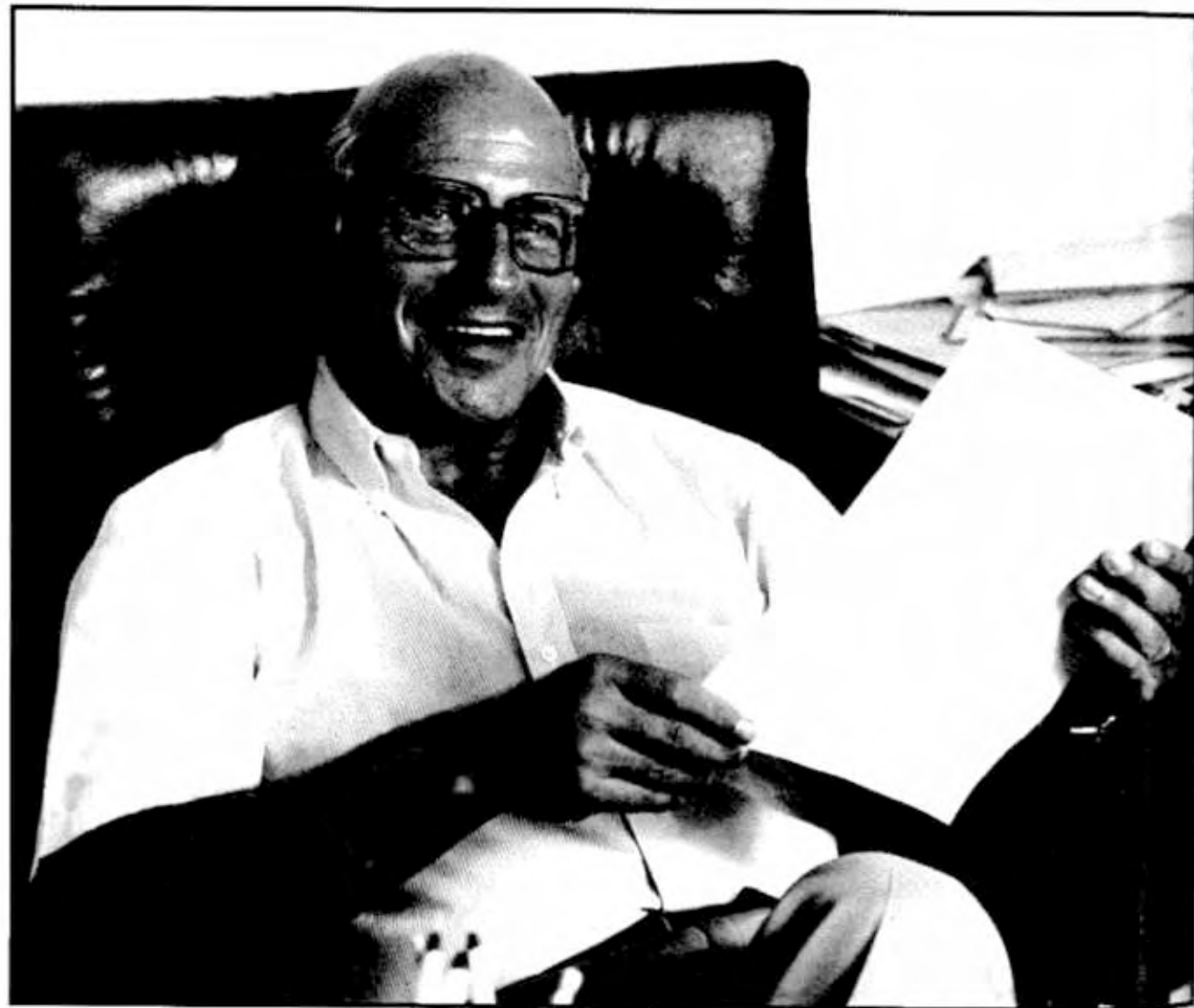
The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; because
he has anointed me;
To bring good news to the poor he has sent
me, to proclaim to the captives release, and
sight to the blind;
To set at liberty the oppressed, to proclaim
the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day
of recompense.

TO SUGGEST that we, who are so divided in creed, might yet be united in deed is, of course, to suggest a complete reversal of so many of our long-held and deeply cherished attitudes and convictions. But this is *kairos*, the acceptable time of the Lord, and even *chronos* tells us that there is little time left. Why can we not speak with one voice against the palpable injustices within our own society, and move with one heart toward the healing of the wounds of mankind — our family and God's — throughout the world? It may well be that Church and Synagogue must strip itself of many of its own possessions, and relinquish something of its smug righteousness in order to show in our actions the compassion of the God in whom our brother does not believe.

Visionary? Perhaps. But our very being here through these days would have seemed visionary less than a decade ago. Impossible? Not to the *anawim*, the little ones of God who were yet great: an Abraham, a Moses, a Mary of Nazareth who knew that the surest sign of God's power was man's native incapacity to accomplish God's design. For the *anawim* of our age must come to know what the *anawim* have always known — that *only he who can see the invisible can accomplish the impossible*.

MR. SOCIAL ACTION

A Conversation with Albert Vorspan



he tenacity of Jewish liberalism is a topic of constant debate within the Jewish community. In each election year, the politics of American Jewry is assessed: polls are conducted, analyses offered, trends detected.

Reform Judaism, however, has remained liberal clearly and consistently for at least half a century. Social action combining prophetic fire and hardnosed politicking has been and continues to be a prime concern of Reform Jews. And synonymous with Reform-style social action is the name Albert Vorspan.

Vorspan, UAHC senior vice president and director of the Commission on Social Action, has sustained a 38-year career, growing with the movement from a wunderkind to an eminence grise, surviving as a non-rabbi among rabbis, and "presuming," in his own words, "to apply the prophetic ideals of Judaism to the wrenching moral challenges of our time." This presumption led him into direct action in the South during the civil rights movement, pioneering opposition to the Vietnam War, and outspoken stands on civil liberties issues. It led to his instrumental role in the founding of the Religious Action Center of the UAHC and a supportive role in the opening of a similar center in Jerusalem. And it has earned him honors, among them the Allard Lowenstein Memorial Award of the American Jewish Congress in 1984; the "Shirley and Al Vorspan Forest and Park for Social Justice" in Jerusalem awarded by the Jewish National Fund; and the UAHC's own Maurice N. Eisendrath Bearer of Light Award.

"Behold the turtle," Vorspan quotes from Benjamin Franklin. "It makes progress only when it sticks out its neck." A stiff-necked and charismatic activist, Vorspan espouses views that are often unpopular within the context of American politics. As a result, his leadership, integrity, and stamina have helped the Reform movement avoid the pitfalls of many American liberals: complacency and timidity.

Albert Vorspan will retire in June of 1992 and will be saluted this November at the UAHC Biennial in Baltimore. He was interviewed by Lawrence Bush.

To what extent has Reform Judaism's social action program fulfilled your hopes and ambitions?

The Religious Action Center has truly become the center for Jewish moral energy in Washington, exceeding my dreams. David Saperstein in Saperstein (director of the Center) is a programmatic genius, and we get a bigger bang for our buck than anybody imagined was possible. But the changing political climate in America has disappointed my hopes. Ronald Reagan set us back to square one, forcing us to refight battles we had won years ago, and George Bush was a fighting general in the Gulf but is AWOL on the domestic crisis. The new world order has to start here.

When I first joined the UAHC, the Jewish community was a major player on almost every issue of social policy, from immigration to separation of church and state, setting up coalitions, drawing together diverse ethnic and religious groups to address public issues. Nowadays we seem to achieve such clout only with respect to Israel and Soviet Jewry. The UAHC remains involved in a lot of social action issues like gun control and universal medical care, but we often find we are fighting the battle alone, criticized for taking on struggles not parochially Jewish.

You often express a sense of patriotism, even while criticizing particular social policies.

I grew up in the time of the Second World War—the good war. I not only enlisted, I chose the Marine Corps, though after one year I transferred to the navy and ended up as a gunnery officer on a destroyer escort in the Pacific. I was at Saipan, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa, where my ship was hit by a kamikaze plane. I had no reservations about the rightness of the war or about the value of defending America.

One of the reasons why Jewish young people are increasingly drawn to Jewish history, Jewish traditions, Jewish worship is that America is no longer what it was for me as a youngster: a clear embodiment of values, a shaper of principles. That America probably cannot be again, although it appeared so for a moment during the

just war in the Gulf. The general culture is shallow and bland and contradictory. Our national heroes are athletes, movie stars, and generals. Judaism stresses other values.

Did you go through a period of alienation from your Jewish identity?

No, I was always comfortable being Jewish, even precocious in my Jewish identification. My older brother, Max, who became a Conservative rabbi, was a Zionist activist and helped make me acutely conscious of what was happening to Jews in the 1930s. Partly under his influence and obsessed with the menace of Hitler to my people, I helped organize a Zionist youth organization in St. Paul, MN called the Young Judean Trailblazers.

It's doubtful that Zionism today could inspire young people the way it moved us. It transformed our lives, invested them with purpose. I remember sitting at my typewriter at the age of 15, writing a speech for Young Judea, and asking myself: what will I do with my life? My answer: I want to serve the Jewish people. Even then, my definition of serving the Jewish people meant both securing a Jewish homeland and asserting a Jewish will for justice.

Do you think the sense of American patriotism that inspired you could turn on young activists in a similar way?

My own sense of faith in America and the American people was seriously shaken by the McCarthy era, the Vietnam war, and the politics of the Me Decade.

We began the Commission in '53. People at the time went to Rabbi Maurice Eisendrath, then UAHC president, and said, "This is a dangerous time to start a social action commission. McCarthyism shadows the country." Eisendrath replied, "This is precisely the time to start a Jewish social action program. When the country is troubled, when you're going to catch hell from despots—that's the time for Jewish values."

Eisendrath was truly prophetic. The moral issues of civil rights and the Vietnam War, he argued, tran-



Clockwise: Standing at site of the "Shirley and Al Vorspan Forest and Park for Social Justice" in Jerusalem; with Shirley and children at NFTY conclave; midshipman, U.S. Navy, 1943; receiving honorary degree from HUC-JIR President Rabbi Alfred Gottschalk (r.) and Rabbi Eugene Borowitz; Black-Jewish dialogue with Ossie Davis, actor.

scended institutional considerations. If taking a stand that is true to Jewish ideals costs us some conflict, even division, we'll have to pay that price. It was scary; nobody else thought that way.

President Johnson hinted he would cut off aid to Israel if the Jewish community opposed his policies in Vietnam. How did the Jewish establishment react?

One or two Jewish organizations responded to that blackmail by wholeheartedly peddling the war for Johnson and later for Nixon. Most other Jewish organizations simply avoided the issue. Some Israelis leaned on us. The UAHC was at its bravest during Vietnam. The Religious Action Center, which served as an emergency medical center for

Jewish protesters who were beaten and tear-gassed, had its files stolen, probably by the FBI. But we never backed down.

Why didn't you become a rabbi?

I never had very clear theological convictions. My greatest interest was the Jewish compulsion to civil rights and social justice. My vision of Jewish survival and Jewish vitality had to do with equal rights, social compassion, and coalitions of decency.

You've known many Black civil rights leaders. Which of them most impressed you?

When Bayard Rustin died, I said to myself, "That's the end of an era." Not just an era in Black life, but in Black-Jewish relations. Bayard was excori-

ated and despised in sections of the Black community, partly because he was gay, but also because he was regarded as beholden to the Jews. Bayard genuinely identified with Jewish issues, Jewish needs, Israel especially.

Our Kivie Kaplan was the mirror image—a Jew whose Jewishness impelled him to relate to Black issues, becoming the national president of the NAACP and the donor of the Religious Action Center in Washington. It is fitting that the landmark civil rights laws were drafted in the boardroom of the Kivie Kaplan Religious Action Center.

Martin Luther King, Jr. was the smartest of all, a theological and political radical. Had he lived, he'd be broken-hearted about what's happened to the Black community. There was, in his time, an extraordinary spirit of

non-violence, of dedication, of sacrifice within the Black community. King was the paradigm. The 1963 March on Washington was a true Yom Kippur for America, a true atonement that's since been diluted if not dishonored. We can talk about what's been done to the Black community, shoved to the back burner of the nation's agenda, but we can also talk about what Blacks have failed to do: the weakness of leadership, of goals, of vision; the disintegration of family life, the flight of middle-class Blacks from responsibility for their community, the reluctance to take on their own extremists.

To what extent can affirmative action address the problems of Black impoverishment?

Affirmative action doesn't mean a thing to hardcore poor minority families. Jews, other ethnics, and middle class Blacks were the beneficiaries of the civil rights movement; it passed the underclass by. Still, we should support strong affirmative action for its demonstrable benefits and because it is a program that Black leadership sees as their symbol of hope in America. The tough line against affirmative action is now clearly a minority position within the Jewish community. The high public visibility by some Jewish agencies on this issue made the Jewish community appear as the chief opponent of affirmative action in this country—a terrible blunder, almost tragic, particularly since the Reagan Administration didn't need Jewish help in savaging all affirmative action programs for minorities and women.

You were jailed and subjected to cattle prods for sitting with Blacks at lunch counters in the South.

The most religious experiences I ever had were in Black churches in St. Augustine and Birmingham, AL. Inside we sang, while outside we were taunted by mobs, abetted by redneck state troopers who were supposed to protect us. I remember holding hands with two little Black girls who were scared to death; I remember going up to that podium to "testify." The religious feeling in that church was electric. And it resonated with idioms that were filled with Jewish feeling, Jewish history. Jewish experience. We

belonged together. Nothing since has had the same emotional content or moral clarity. What was there to debate, to weigh? Your dilemma was only between fear and courage, not between right and wrong.

The closest I have felt to those experiences came a few years ago, when David Saperstein, Mary Travers, my wife Shirley and I sat in the homes of refuseniks in the Soviet Union. The same quality of sacrifice, the same quality of commitment.

How do you check the pulse of your own membership, the grassroots of the movement? How do you avoid running out in front of the Reform movement on political issues?

If you look at Jewish voting behavior in America, the UAHC most closely reflects the mainstream of American Jewish thinking. If you look at our resolutions on abortion, nuclear arms, gun control, Israel, prayer, civil rights, Soviet Jewry, ERA, gays—the only organization that speaks with accuracy for Jewish public opinion is the UAHC. But of course sometimes we have been out front. That's the definition of leadership. Reform Judaism doesn't have a monopoly on social justice, but of all the denominations, we are the only movement truly serious about social justice.

How do you feel about Israel's West Bank policies?

We've come a long way from Golda Meir's view that there is no Palestinian people or Menachem Begin's calling them scorpions. It's no longer taboo for an American Jewish organization to speak of accommodation with the Palestinian people, admitting that there is a Palestinian culture, a Palestinian diaspora, a Palestinian Zionism; that the idea of transfer is an abomination; that the occupation is a cancer gnawing at Israel's moral and Jewish core.

There's just one phrase I don't add, for want of courage and conviction: a Palestinian state. I'm not sure that I want it—certainly not a PLO state which would menace Israel's security. I have a revulsion to the PLO and contempt for Arafat. And I also know the Jewish political reality—you can talk about a lot of things, including territorial compromise, an end to occupation and so on, but as soon as you talk

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about the PLO, forget it. It's anathema. But, in general, American Jews have an obligation to speak out on issues of pluralism, religious liberty, human rights, and world peace, even in the Middle East.

How have you been affected by the gay and women's rights movements?

Both have become gut issues for me, although neither came naturally. I was not a feminist before there was a feminist movement or empathic about gay rights before there was a gay movement. In the Marine Corps, I often got into arguments with gay-bashers who battered homosexuals for kicks. I thought it was horrible, but I had no political sense about it.

People have had to teach me, lead me, even admonish me about language and stereotypes. I still have my hangups on these issues. But if I have to make a choice between the modern view or traditional Jewish law, I would choose the modern. For me, that is the very definition of Reform Judaism. I get angry when the veneration of *halachah* leads to invidious distinctions among people. For me, *halachah*

should have a respectful vote in our thinking but not a veto.

How did the Depression shape your early years?

We were a vulnerable, lower middle class family in St. Paul. My dad was a traveling salesman just scraping by. Once we lost our home. The four boys delivering newspapers sustained our family and put us through college.

But there was a lot of hope, too. My idol was Roosevelt. Even in the worst times, we believed he was going to pull us through. My two other heroes were Theodor Herzl and Abraham Lincoln. And my religion, until I was 13, was baseball. After that, it was Zionism, Judaism, and social justice.

How much has Judaism itself—traditional and creatively interpreted—been a vital part of your social action commitments? How have you felt about the deepening spiritual renewal that's going on in the Reform movement?

The Jewish historical experience is probably most potent for me. The

sense of Jewish peoplehood, of identification with a history that has a message and a purpose—that's probably as profound for me as understanding Jewish theology.

I'm hopeful about the religious and spiritual deepening going on within the Reform movement. We've had periods in which the social action thrust of the UAHC seemed to eclipse all else, and I haven't been altogether happy about that. I think it's dangerous to have your political perspective disconnected from a larger focus, a context—in our case, a living faith. Social action must flow from Judaism, not from the ACLU. That way the politics take root and become part of a community life and a wisdom that goes beyond fashionable rhetoric. Rabbi Alexander Schindler has led the Union into a deeper sense of itself—which I think our young people and others have been demanding. We must not become an outpost for Jewish minimalism, a mile wide and an inch deep. With Schindler as president, social action is becoming not a substitute for, but an expression of Jewish faith. That's the way it should be.

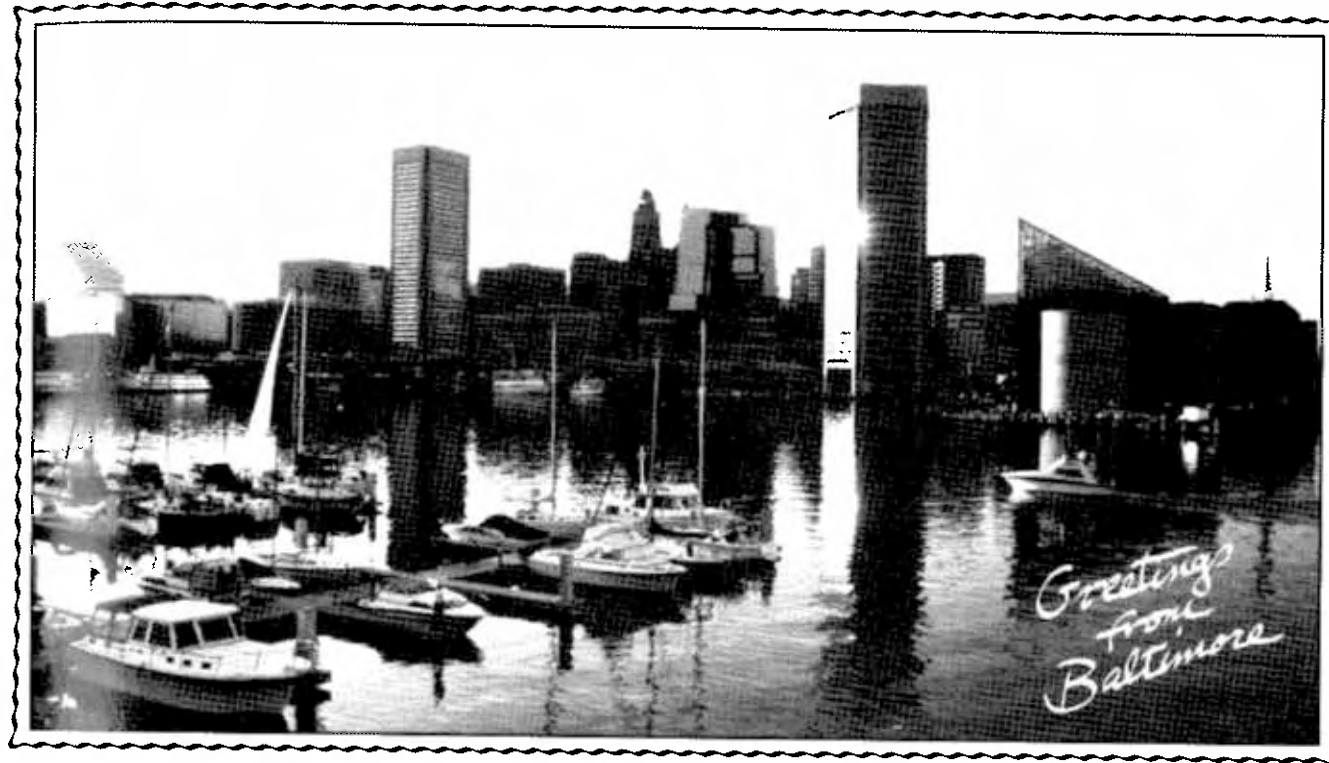
The UAHC just published your new book of Jewish humor, *Start Worrying: Details to Follow*. Why does a serious guy doing serious work also do humor?

It's the Jewish vocation—laugh in order not to cry. I think it's part of our survival kit. It's also kept me sane for 40 years. Every time I see or hear something that tickles me, I make a note, fold it into my wallet, ruin the wallet, and when it is fat enough, publish.

You retire in several months. Have you any plans for continuing the good fight?


Shirley and I have big plans for our retirement. Somebody once said that the trouble with a plan is that it degenerates into work. Anyway, my plans include writing books, lecturing, climbing mountains, sharpening our Hebrew, learning golf, playing tennis, joining Elder Hostel programs all over the world, enjoying our grandchildren, avoiding meetings, becoming fitness mavens, and growing garlic. Even in my anecdote, I'll always stay involved in issues of social justice, here, in Israel, everywhere. □


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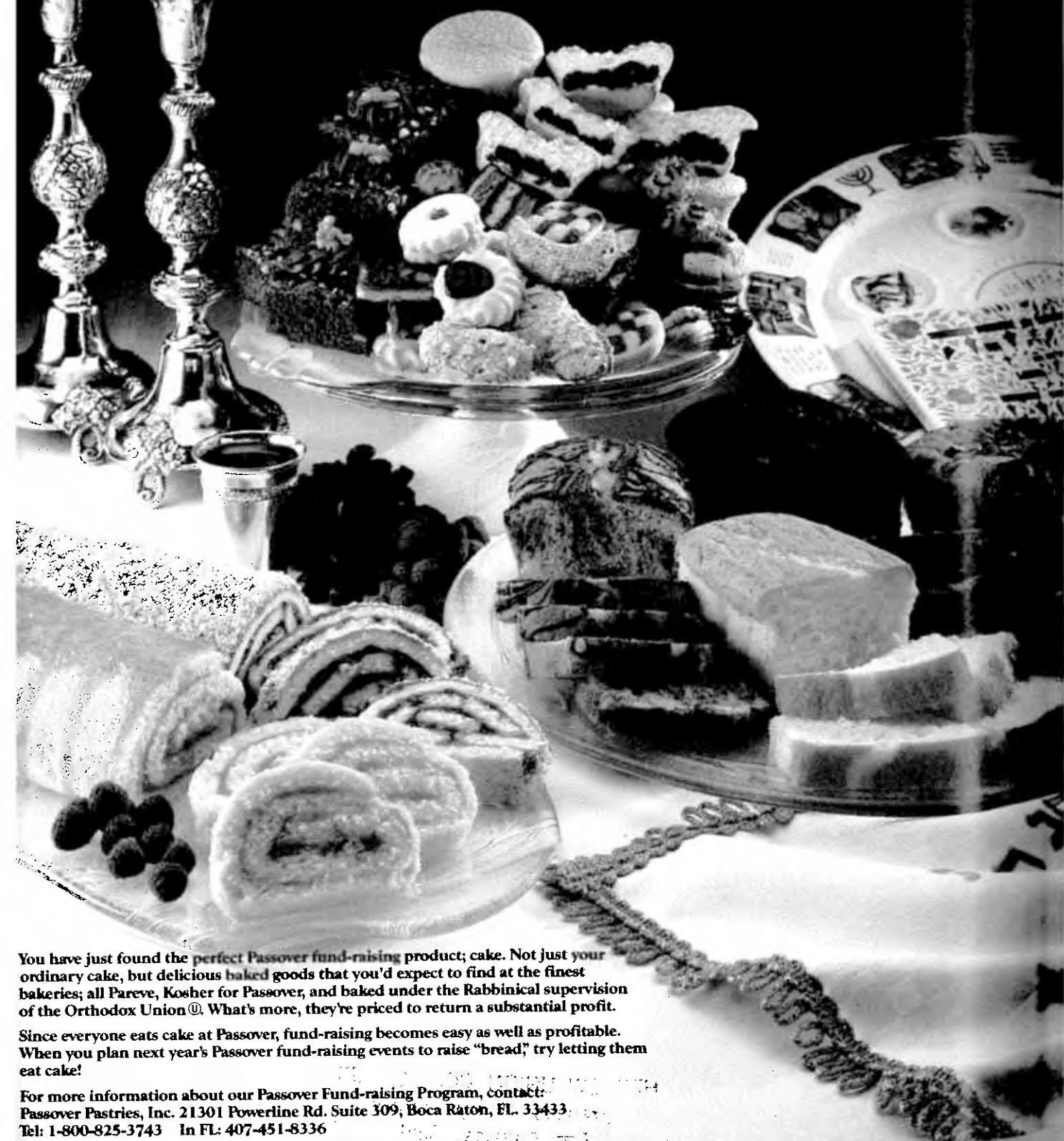


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COVER

A new survey shows that 210,000 Jews have severed their ties with Judaism. Photo by Gary Rekstad.



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Statement of Purpose

Reform Judaism is the official voice of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, linking the institutions and affiliates of Reform Judaism with every Reform Jew. **RJ** covers developments within our Movement while interpreting world events and Jewish tradition from a Reform perspective. Shared by 290,000 member households from 850 congregations, **RJ** strives to convey the creativity, diversity, and dynamism of Reform Judaism. Members of UAHC congregations receive **RJ** as a benefit of membership.

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Jewish Dimensions of Social Justice

**Tough Moral Choices
of Our Time**

Albert Vorspan and
David Saperstein

Response

Increasingly, investment committees have been supporting the UAHC's and CCAR's investing proposal. Most feel that although investments are not charity, depositing funds in a credit union, community bank, or other community development financial institution is entirely appropriate, consistent with Jewish traditions of responsible investing, and, potentially, a very valuable method for advancing a more equitable society.

It might be an interesting exercise to work out the actual difference in return between an investment of, say, \$50,000 at 9 percent and 6 percent—not unusual rates of return for the stock market and a credit union, respectively. Consider, also, the aggregate effect of more than 870 congregations, as well as a variety of Reform movement entities such as the UAHC itself, investing in community development.

... 5 ...

The Environmental Crisis

The earth is *Adonai's* and the fullness thereof; the settled world, and all that inhabit it.

(Psalms 24:1)

Rabbi Judah said in the name of Rav: Everything that the Holy One, Blessed Be, created in God's world—God did not create a single thing in vain.

(*Shabbat* 77b)

These two compelling moral concepts remind us that the earth has been lent to us as a “trust” by God on the condition that we care for it, respect and protect it, and ensure that future generations will benefit from its bounty. As a Kashmiri proverb notes, “We have not inherited the world from our ancestors...we have borrowed it from our children.”

The traditional Jewish view of our stewardship of the earth is conveyed in the following *midrash* on the story of creation:

When the Holy One, Blessed Be, created the first person, God took and led Adam around all the trees of the Garden of Eden. And God said to Adam: “Look at My works! How beautiful and praiseworthy they are! And everything I made, I created for you. Be careful [though] that you don't spoil or destroy My world—because if you spoil it, there's nobody after you to fix it.

(*Ecclesiastes Rabbah* 7:13)

All the evidence indicates that we are doing exactly what the tradition warned us not to do. As a result of the breakthroughs of the twentieth century, we are the first generation with the power to spoil and destroy God's world beyond repair.

ENVIRONMENTAL TRENDS: GOOD NEWS, BAD NEWS

When was the environmental movement born? Some say it was in the time of the Bible, which contains such novel ideas as the sabbatical year, crop rotation, and the first prohibitions against pollution and waste. Others see its origin in the works and writings of great activists-naturalists over the last century (John Muir, Marjory Stoneman Douglas, and Aldo Leopold). Most famously, Rachel Carson's 1962 *Silent Spring* helped to create what could truly be called a movement. Since then, even as environmental degradation continues all around us, great strides have been made toward ending and even reversing some of the damage.

In approaching environmental issues, a balance must be struck between the personal and the political. On the one hand, how can we ask the government to cleanup its act if we still harm the environment by our daily choices at work, school, and home? But on the other hand, why organize a "river cleanup" day if the paper mill upstream is discharging deadly dioxin? To avoid getting discouraged, we should always remember the power of just one individual. As Rabbi Tarfon said nearly two thousand years ago: "It is not upon you to complete the task—but neither are you free to desist from it." (*Avot* 2:21) Though none of us will single-handedly stitch up the hole in the ozone layer or end species extinction, we all have a Jewish obligation to do our part.

Environmental progress made over the last twenty years provides hope that we can, indeed, make a difference:

1. Threatened ecosystems are being restored. Florida's Everglades, a rich preserve hosting numerous endangered species, was polluted and strangled by urban growth, sugar plantations, and misguided flood management. Now the Army Corps of Engineers is undertaking the largest environmental restoration project ever, returning canals to their original river courses, paid for by a new tax on the local sugar industry that had long polluted the Everglades.
2. Some endangered species are bouncing back. The Endangered Species Act of 1973 has done such a good job helping the bald eagle and other species to recover that some have been "down-

listed" to "threatened." Reintroduction of wolves, sea lions, and other animals into their former native habitat has been fairly successful.

3. Our cities are generally cleaner. Cleveland's Cuyahoga River, which once was so polluted it caught on fire, now sports a popular new neighborhood on its banks. Pittsburgh's air, once dark in midday from coal smoke, now meets Environmental Protection Agency standards.
4. Industry is slowly "greening" itself. The Valdez Principles, which voluntarily commit companies to an open and progressive environmental policy, were signed by Sun Oil and other major corporations in the aftermath of the *Valdez* tragedy. The 3M chemical company saved \$420 million a year by using fewer toxic chemicals and reusing as much waste as possible. Fast-food companies are using thinner straws, lighter plastics, and more recycled packaging materials.
5. Slowly, society is learning to think regionally. The San Diego area began a countywide protection program for endangered species and ecosystems. A nationwide effort is underway to create "wildlife corridors," allowing animals to migrate between parks, refuges, forests, and other safe havens.
6. People are making a difference. In the mid-1980s, one private citizen—Weston Birdsall of Osage, Iowa—inspired his town of 3,600 to make a concerted commitment to conservation. Through simple energy-saving mechanisms (like insulation and plugging leaky windows) and energy-conscious capital improvements, the town cut its natural gas consumption by 45 percent, saving an estimated \$1.2 million.
7. Awareness is growing. From the first Earth Day in 1970, environmentalism has grown by leaps and bounds. Environmental organizations have influence; ecology is a respected science from elementary school to academia; environmental issues are politically "hot"; and religious people and institutions have made protecting God's

Despite these remarkable advances, however, many trends point in the other direction. Quite literally, ours is the first generation that can imagine its “progress” leading our own species toward extinction. As Albert Einstein commented, “The unleashed power of the atom has changed everything, save our modes of thinking—and thus we drift toward unparalleled disaster.”

How bad is bad? Consider:

1. A hole in the ozone layer over Antarctica has now grown larger than the United States; recently, another hole has opened in the Northern Hemisphere. Ozone protects us from ultraviolet rays that cause skin cancer in human beings and damage to plant and animal life.
2. Scientists estimate that every day we drive some one hundred species of living organisms to extinction. The current rate is significantly faster than at any other time in the last 65 million years.
3. Less than one-third of the forests that once covered the world remain intact. The contiguous forty-eight states contain less than 5 percent of their original, biologically rich “old growth” forests; of that, less than 30 percent is protected in national wilderness areas and parks. Rain forests across the world’s tropics are being destroyed at the rate of two football fields every second—an area the size of New Mexico annually.
4. Coral reefs, among the world’s most diverse ecosystems, are dying from a variety of factors: boat anchors, shrimp harvesting, sewage, tropical fish collectors, logging, agriculture, pollution, tourism, dynamite, and more.
5. Americans go through 2.5 million plastic bottles every hour—only a tiny percentage of which are now recycled—and we throw away enough glass bottles and jars to fill the 1,350-foot twin towers of

6. Forty percent of the nation’s surveyed waterways are still too polluted for fishing and swimming. Nearly 2,200 health advisories were issued in 1996 warning against consumption of fish, and beaches were closed or warnings were issued more than 2,500 times because of contaminated waters (EPA).
7. The world’s population, which is a great contributor to the global ecological crisis, increases by some 90 million—an additional Mexico—every year. By the turn of the century, we will pass the 6 billion mark.
8. If the earth’s temperature continues to rise at the current rate, every person on earth will be affected by the negative impacts of climate change. Rising sea levels from continued ocean heating and the melting of glaciers will lead to a sea-level rise of approximately half a meter by the year 2100, completely flooding over 10,000 square miles in the southeastern United States and whole Pacific island nations.

JUDAISM, ECOLOGY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The prophet Jeremiah, using God’s words, could have been speaking to us when he warned his contemporaries: “And I brought you into a land of fruitful fields to eat the fruit thereof; but when you entered, you defiled My land and made My heritage an abomination.” (2:7) Everyone who reads—or even looks around—can see how badly we, in our time, have defiled the land and ravaged God’s earth.

Long ago in Jewish history, ecological ideals were translated into specific environmental regulations. Tanneries, which produced odor pollution, were sharply restricted in their proximity to residential centers. The location of threshing floors, which produced significant dust pollution, was likewise restricted, as were businesses that caused noise pollution. Communities were obliged to keep public streams and water supplies clean and roads in good repair.

Even wartime military camps were obliged to follow waste disposal procedures. Soldiers had to carry shovels and dispose of their human waste outside the camp so “the camp will be holy.” (Deuteronomy 21:15) From this, our species earned “how much more so” should care

apply to our residential communities in times of peace.

The Levitical cities had to have a *migrash* (a pasture or green area) around them. Maimonides extended this requirement to all cities. The Jerusalem Talmud instructs: "It is forbidden to live in a city that does not have a green garden." (*Kiddushin* 4:12)

Concern for the perpetuation of animal species, represented by the story of Noah, is reflected in laws in the Torah (e.g., one should not kill a cow and its calf [Leviticus 22:28] or a bird and its young [Deuteronomy 22:6]). According to the medieval commentator Nachmanides, one who kills mother and children on the same day or takes them while they are free to fly away is considered as if that one destroyed the species (commentary on Deuteronomy 22:6).

This protection extends to less charismatic species as well. *Exodus Rabbah* 10:1 teaches that "even things you see as superfluous in this world—like flies, fleas, and mosquitoes—they are still part of the greater scheme of the creation of the world." In the classical Jewish view, everything has its place: Each stage of creation is "good." Moreover, the completed, interconnected whole is "very good." (Genesis 1:31) Indeed, our tradition recognizes that everything is connected: as the nineteenth-century Rabbi S. R. Hirsch wrote, "One glorious chain of love, of giving and receiving, unites all living beings."

Halachah also forbids cruelty to animals. Although an individual human life always comes before that of an animal, "animal rights" are very much a part of our tradition. Another environmental set of Jewish laws concerns Shabbat and the sabbatical year, the one day and one year in seven when both people and the land rest. Having a time not to produce or consume but simply to be is a needed corrective to our society's constant "growth" and acquisition.

The concept of *hamafkir nazakav hayav* (one who leaves a dangerous article in a public place is responsible for any damages that may result) could well apply to those who dispose of toxic waste in a manner that endangers the environment and human health. Similarly, the basic concept of liability for damages caused by the negligent control of an inherently dangerous condition (e.g., a pit or a fire) establishes the principle that one who owns something environmentally hazardous, for example a nuclear power plant or an oil tanker, bears responsibility for its elimination. If there is no alternative to engaging in hazardous activity, then all reasonable steps must be taken to mitigate the result-

Ecology poses profound religious, theological, and moral questions: Has God endowed us with dominion over nature? Is competition or cooperation the nature of our relationship to one another? Are human beings inherently greedy? What is our responsibility to the generations yet unborn?

Some say the despoiling of our world is rooted in the Hebrew Bible. They cite Genesis 1:28: "Be fruitful and multiply and populate the earth and conquer it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the heavens and over all living things on earth. I have given you all the grass and trees for you and all other living things to eat."

Jewish tradition, say its defenders, makes it clear that our "dominion" over nature does not include a license to slaughter indiscriminately or to abuse the environment. *Bal tashchit* ("do not destroy") is the basis of the talmudic and post-talmudic laws that prohibit willful destruction of natural resources or any kind of vandalism, even if the act is committed by the property owners themselves. One must not needlessly destroy or waste anything that may be useful to others. (See the discussion of *bal tashchit* in chapter 7, "Peace and International Affairs.") "The earth is *Adonai's* and the fullness thereof" (Psalms 24:1) implies that we are the stewards of nature, obligated to cherish and preserve it.

This view is eloquently expressed in the following passages from rabbinic literature:

Of everything God created, nothing was created in vain, not even the things you may think unnecessary, such as spiders, frogs, or snakes.

(*Genesis Rabbah* 10:7 and *Shabbat* 77b)

Human beings were not created until the sixth day so that if their pride should govern them, it could be said to them, "Even the tiniest flea preceded you in creation."

(*Sanhedrin* 38a)

Why did God appear to Moses in the lowly bush? To teach us that nothing in creation is without God's holy Presence, not even the commonest bush....

(*Exodus Rabbah* 2:5)

Or, as the authoritative nineteenth-century Orthodox scholar Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, a strong proponent of the social justice essence of Judaism, wrote of *bal tashchit*:

Yea, "Do not destroy anything" is the first and most general call of God.... If you should regard the beings beneath you as objects without rights, not perceiving God who created them, and therefore desire that they feel the might of your presumptuous mood, instead of using them only as the means of wise human activity—then God's call proclaims to you, "Do not destroy anything! Be a *mentsh*! Only if you use the things around you for wise human purposes, sanctified by the word of My teaching, only then are you a *mentsh* and have the right over them that I have given you as a human. However, if you destroy, if you ruin, at that moment you are not human but an animal and have no right to do the things around you. I lent them to you for wise use only; never forget that I lent them to you."

A Real Dilemma: Paper or Plastic (or Neither)?

Some time ago, a local NFTY (North American Federation of Temple Youth) group went to their temple board to ask them to ban Styrofoam in the synagogue. They pointed out that besides being wasteful, Styrofoam contained ozone-damaging chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs). Some board members felt that such an action would inconvenience the congregation, be "faddist," or have no significant impact. Others claimed that substitute materials, such as plastic or paper, could be destructive in other ways.

Response

Most board members took the debate about Styrofoam seriously; they launched a synagogue-wide environmental audit. Not only was Styrofoam banned, but the temple replaced all incandescent

lights with compact fluorescent bulbs, and fully insulated the building. These actions proved to be both cost- and energy-efficient.

Though this is a success story, it also points to a difficulty: Styrofoam was replaced with other disposable products they thought were less problematic. In fact, the lifetime environmental impact of disposable Styrofoam, paper, and plastic goods are all comparably bad. Only reusable dishes, cups, and kitchenware are preferable, and even then it depends on the amount and temperature of the water one uses to wash them!

From this, we learn the importance of two things: knowing the issues well before making a decision and putting our energies into debates that truly matter. For instance, the other "paper vs. plastic" issue of shopping bags is quite clear—it takes little thought or energy to carry and use the same bags over and over again, thus saving many raw materials.

Below is a more detailed look at the question of where best to channel our energies.

CRISES IN CREATION—OUR BACKYARD

The human impact on the earth is already massive, and it is increasing. Just as it is important to learn about Jewish perspectives on the environmental crisis, so must we understand something of the political, social, economic, and scientific aspects of these issues. And while it may be tempting to point our fingers overseas to highlight the worst problems, many of them actually begin here in North America. Below is a brief question-and-answer section that wrestles with some of our real domestic environmental challenges, like hazardous waste and toxins, air and water pollution, transportation, and overconsumption:

1. *Are some waste products more dangerous than others? Dangerous enough to jeopardize our health?*

Hazardous wastes are by-products of industries—some get reused or recycled, some get expensively treated or placed in special landfills, some are illegally dumped, and some are legally spewed into our air and water. There are two basic ways to lower the

amount of hazardous waste that is generated: lower our consumption levels of environmentally damaging goods or spend more money on research, prevention, treatment, and enforcement.

Pesticides are potentially hazardous products that are widely accepted for use on our crops. While certain pesticides are relatively safe and extremely effective, others kill birds and even people along with insects. Frighteningly, only a small percentage of the pesticides used on the food we eat have been thoroughly tested for their effects on human and environmental health. This is an even greater concern for farmworkers than for others, though we can all benefit from reducing use of such pesticides through steps like organic farming. (Organic methods include integrated pest management, which relies on insects' natural predators instead of toxic chemicals.)

One particular toxin, dioxin, is perhaps the most dangerous chemical we now face in our everyday lives. Dioxin enters the environment mostly through industry, from the chlorine used to bleach office paper and from incinerators. Besides being a carcinogen, dioxin affects our nervous, immune, and reproductive systems. And worst of all, recent EPA studies show that most children, women, and men in America have already approached the "safe" limit for dioxin exposure. Since it collects in fatty tissue, it stays in our own bodies and is passed on to future generations through mothers' milk. But alternatives do exist—besides advocating for a stronger and better-enforced Clean Water Act, our buying unbleached paper will help show the industry that saving the environment is good for business.

2. *Is it safe to drink our water and breathe our air?*

Water and air pollution—often thought of as entirely separate issues—are in fact closely related. Thus we breathe dioxins as well as drink them. Likewise, the smog we inhale in cities, along with background air pollutants called particulates, eventually drop onto land, where they are washed into rivers or groundwater, or directly into the sea. For this reason, we now speak of "acid deposition" rather than "acid rain," since airborne acidic pollutants fall as dust, rain, or snow before contaminating both American

More than half the population of the United States drinks groundwater, 40 percent of which comes from untreated, contaminated wells. Industrial wastes, erosion from logging, leakage from landfills, chemical wastes from mining and petroleum production, and pesticides and herbicides from agriculture are steadily accumulating in both ground and surface water. Such pollution has made freshwater fish and crustaceans among the most threatened types of animals in America, many of which have become extinct.

Air and water pollution threaten the lives of millions. Smog can quite literally be lethal—in the Los Angeles area alone, there are thousands of deaths a year caused or exacerbated by air pollution, and Mexico City is worse still. Air quality in America is contaminated by many pollutants, most notably the poisons that pour out of our automobile exhausts.

3. *Should we reexamine our love affair with the automobile?*

Though it provides an invaluable quick and easy way to get from place to place, the private automobile constitutes a major threat to the environment. Carbon dioxide in exhaust contributes to local smog as well as global warming; roads and highways destroy forests, wetlands, watersheds, and other natural systems; rubber and oil from cars wind up in the water supply. Cars and trucks emit the greatest part of carbon dioxide, hydrocarbon, and nitrogen oxide air pollution, resulting in as many as half of all cancer deaths linked to toxic emissions. Nearly all alternatives to the automobile—from better urban planning to trains to buses to bikes to feet—are more energy-efficient and emit less pollution than the private automobile.

Since over 40 percent of the oil that we use goes into our cars, fuel efficiency reduces our dependence on foreign oil even as it reduces global warming and helps the environment. The current Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards, passed in 1975, have gone a long way toward this end. These standards require that new cars average 27.5 miles per gallon. Raising the CAFE standards by another 40 percent, as many members of Congress have suggested, would save our country 2.5 million barrels of oil daily, along with hundreds of millions of tons of

carbon dioxide. Each gallon of gasoline burned produces some thirty pounds of CO₂.

Critics say that such a CAFE standard increase would mean smaller and more dangerous cars. (Lighter and stronger newly developed materials used in building cars and swifter, more efficient engines make more efficient and safer cars possible.) While this is debatable, the overall public health implications of automobile use are rarely considered—many more people are killed by automobile-related pollution than by accidents in substandard cars. The “price at the pump” never reflects the real social cost of the automobile.

4. *Do we consume too much?*

The United States enjoys the highest standard of living in the world—and likewise has the highest per capita resource and energy use. While we might think that overpopulation in the developing world is the greatest environmental threat, the average American has an ecological impact equal to that of ten or even twenty people in Africa or Asia. Moreover, environmental problems in the Third World are the product of the industries, mining, and production of First World nations such as the U.S., Canada, England, Russia, Germany, France, and Japan.

With consumption comes disposal. The average American generates nearly a ton of trash annually, less than 11 percent of which gets recycled. Landfills, which often leach harmful runoff into our groundwater, are filling up, and incineration is costly and toxic. The most environmentally sound and cost-efficient way to alleviate the crisis is to reduce the amount of waste we generate in the first place. Waste education is far better than recycling, which is necessary but not always very effective. The challenge for both individuals and industries is to follow the famous 3 Rs in their proper order—reduce as much as possible, reuse as much as possible, and only then recycle the remainder.

CRISES IN CREATION—ACROSS THE GLOBE

The environments of particular regions work, grow, and maintain their health in connection with one another. Our country is not an island. American companies sell DDT they produce to Mexico (use in the United States is banned), whose farmers spray the chemical in fields that produce crops exported to the United States and elsewhere. The water and sewage drainage in turn affects U.S. border cities. Canada's Maritime Provinces are plagued by acidic pollutants from large U.S. cities, while eight Great Lakes states stand to suffer if Ontario Premier Mike Harris fulfills his 1996 pledge to downscale environmental regulations. The overdepletion of the fishing areas of Newfoundland destroyed the fish populations and profoundly affected Canadian and United States fisherman.

Nor is this interconnectedness limited to our continent. The news of the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear meltdown in Ukraine broke after Sweden reported high radioactivity; that radiation then spread around the world. In 1994, Spain and Canada nearly came to blows over fishing rights for the shrinking fish populations in the North Atlantic Ocean. The clear-cutting of the Amazon rain forest affects weather and rainfall in Africa. Japan's thirst for wood is devastating the rich rain forests of Indonesia and Malaysia. And even amphibians in the most remote swamps and fish in the deepest open seas are showing alarmingly high levels of human-made toxins.

A few critical international environmental issues—climate change, the ozone layer, overpopulation, and biodiversity—follow:

1. *Does global warming threaten our children's future?*

Climate scientists from around the world agree that when humans burn gasoline, coal, and oil, carbon dioxide is released into the atmosphere, which traps heat near the earth's surface, much as glass windows trap heat inside a greenhouse. In fact, the burning of fossil fuels has increased the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere by more than 30 percent—to levels unsurpassed in the past 160,000 years. Industrial and air-conditioner chemicals and methane—caused in part by cattle, mining, gas leaks, and rice paddies—are also significant contributors to climate change.

Evidence shows that these “greenhouse gases” have con-

tributed to an increase in the planet's surface temperature by 1 degree Fahrenheit over the last 100 years. Without action to reduce the release of greenhouse gases, scientists predict that the earth's average temperature will rise between 2 and 6.5 degrees Fahrenheit by the year 2100.

If global temperatures rise significantly, sea levels will rise from the melting of polar ice caps, and fully one-half of the world's population could be affected. As sea levels begin to rise, poor residents of coastal areas and villagers in floodplains will be vulnerable to flooding and disease. Increased flooding, storms, and drought will also have devastating effects on agriculture and will contribute to famine in mostly impoverished areas.

Global warming also threatens human health and species extinction. Infectious diseases, such as malaria, are already spreading to new areas because mosquitoes and other disease vectors are increasing their range as temperatures rise across the world. Heat stress and air pollution will also increase human casualties, like the heat wave in 1995 that killed hundreds of people in Chicago. Plant and animal species will suffer due to the disruption of migration and ecosystems. Warming of the Antarctic is already disturbing the health of the ecosystem—threatening fish, birds, seals, and whales.

Only by attacking the root of the problem—radically cutting the use of fossil fuels, especially in high-consumption countries like the United States—can global warming be stopped. In late 1997, an international climate change treaty was negotiated in Kyoto, Japan. This historic accord calls on the United States to reduce carbon emissions by 7 percent below 1990 levels by the year 2012. (See chapter 7, "Peace and International Affairs," for more details.) The nations of the world are finally cooperating in reducing emissions of greenhouse gases and are slowly beginning to make the difficult commitments.

2. *How serious is the problem of ozone depletion? Can it really cause cancer?*

Many miles into the upper atmosphere, ozone screens much of the sun's hazardous ultraviolet radiation from reaching the earth. This layer of protective ozone is now being destroyed by the

dissolve 100,000 ozone molecules before it falls back to earth. Ozone is thinning everywhere, and actual holes in the ozone layer have been detected above Antarctica, Greenland, and the Arctic region.

If this depletion goes unchecked, the Environmental Protection Agency predicts the development of millions of skin cancer cases in the coming decades. Increases in ultraviolet radiation will compromise the immune systems of humans and many other animals. It could also cause the loss of billions of dollars worth of crops. Moreover, by affecting the surface-dwelling plankton that comprise the base of the oceans' food chain, its effects could be truly catastrophic.

CFCs are most commonly found in refrigerants, solvents, computer chip cleaners, and packing materials. They have been phased out of aerosol sprays and Styrofoam, and replacements are being tested in most industries, but many of these alternatives (like HCFCs and benzene) are still quite problematic. Hope comes from the Montreal Protocol, a 1987 international agreement to stop ozone depletion, though timetables for phase-outs vary. Scientific, political, and economic commitments are needed to turn this crisis around.

3. *Will the exploding populations of the world overwhelm our resources?*

Every day, the world population increases by some 250,000. That's a new Boston every two days, a new Israel every three weeks, a new India every decade. The bulk of this population growth is occurring in poorer countries, already ravaged by mass hunger and severe housing shortages. Consider this: The population of the earth doubled between the year 1 c.e. and 1200. Today, the population of the world will double in fifty years—and that reflects a recent slowdown in the rate because of three decades of intense population control efforts. Overpopulation causes huge social problems as well as environmental ones, since people will do what it takes to feed and shelter their families. And as developing nations try to attain a higher standard of living, more resources are being consumed by more people. Though no one knows the earth's maximum "carrying capacity," current trends are clearly not sustainable.

Economic development and the education and empowerment of women are two common responses to the challenge of controlling the population problem, since population growth falls with these developments. Yet economic growth often involves high environmental impact in addition to inequitable distribution. Additionally, family-planning programs in developing nations have met varying degrees of success, since they often run counter to traditional cultural and religious practices.

In any event, we must take quick and decisive action to lower the world's birthrate. In so doing, Americans face a tough choice: will we voluntarily allow our own standard of living to fall, or at least to not rise, in order to help out developing nations? And American Jews, with the mandate of "be fruitful and multiply" and memories of the Holocaust fresh in our minds, face a still tougher choice: are we somehow exempt, or should "zero population growth" become the norm in our community as well? (See chapter 13, "The Changing Jewish Family.")

4. *Why can't we see the forest for the trees? Are we destroying whole species of life?*

All across the world, God's unique creations are being wiped away forever. Though scientists believe that there is always a natural "background" extinction rate of perhaps 1 to 10 species a year, current annual estimates of extinctions are as high as 50,000. The human impact on earth is nowhere as striking, or as irreversible, as in the area of biodiversity.

Species diversity is important for countless reasons. More than anything, each species has an inherent right to exist; we *Homo sapiens*, after all, are but one among tens of millions of species. And theologically, how should God feel, watching us destroy what God called "good"? Yet we can also defend biodiversity from a purely human perspective.

The global gene pool may yet harbor cures for cancer, AIDS, and other diseases, since numerous medicines and other valuable goods have already come out of the rain forests and other reservoirs of biodiversity. Such places also help regulate the global climate and recharge our atmospheric oxygen. Furthermore, wild places and wild things have a spiritual and aesthetic value that we

cannot calculate—and who are we to rob our children of these? Finally, species are often symbiotic with one another, so that if one goes, another goes; certain "keystone" species play critical roles in an ecosystem, much of which collapses following their absence.

The greatest tragedy—and our greatest hope—lies in the ease with which this situation could be reversed. Most of the millions of species in danger of extinction lie in what biologist E. O. Wilson has called "biodiversity hot spots," or fairly small and protectable areas holding numerous species. To protect these areas will take a worldwide commitment of money, cooperation with local and indigenous peoples, and lifestyle changes—for instance, just small reductions in the West's consumption of paper and meat would do wonders for the earth's rain forests.

A Real Dilemma: The Redwood Rabbis and the Redwood Forests

One of the last remaining unprotected ancient redwood forests is found in Northern California. Known as the Headwaters Forest ecosystem, it contains nearly 60,000 acres of trees, streams, and several endangered birds and fishes. Maxxam Corp., headed by a Jew who is a member of a Reform congregation, owned this land and began to log the area. Although he was in technical compliance with the law, protesters tried to prevent logging through civil disobedience, since many experts warned that even the legal logging would destroy many of these irreplaceable redwoods and would endanger species that dwell there, as well as the ecosystem they inhabit. Should Jews view the Headwaters as a Jewish issue, one in which we must speak out against the laws? Even if we do, do Jews have a special responsibility to try to influence the owner to refrain from destroying such a precious and valued piece of nature because he is Jewish?

Response

During the High Holidays of 1996, days before the Headwaters area was to be logged, two rabbis and one student rabbi from Northern California took out a full-page advertisement in the

owner's hometown Jewish newspaper. The advertisement asked the owner to make a full *teshuvah* and protect the entire Headwaters region by creating a national park. Many other Jews and rabbis, including some who support protecting the Headwaters Forest, objected to the personalization of the issue and to the politicization of the High Holidays. The question remains: should the religious identity of the owner influence our response?

In California, a number of rabbis, mostly Reform, began to act more vigorously. The "Redwood Rabbis" protested logging in the Headwaters, spoke at rallies and press conferences, and organized a major Tu B'Shvat seder in 1997, where they engaged in civil disobedience—planting redwood seedlings on Maxxam property. Rabbis across America began to speak out, national media reported on the Redwood Rabbis' activities, and the Jewish community was widely seen as playing a leading role in efforts to preserve the redwoods. As of this writing, the outcome of the specific issue is unclear.

THE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE MOVEMENT

While environmental problems affect us all, their immediate impact is far greater on the underprivileged. "Environmental justice" addresses the disproportionate environmental risks placed upon impoverished and minority communities. As its name implies, this growing movement-within-a-movement holds that environmental protection and social justice are inseparable—without one, the other cannot sustain itself. Consider these facts:

1. Black children in urban areas are at risk of lead poisoning at a rate four times that of white children. The lead comes from paint chips and from soil and dust contaminated by leaded fuel residues.
2. Nearly a third of a million U.S. farmworkers suffer from pesticide-related illnesses. Most of these cases are among ill-treated migrant

3. Three out of five waste incinerators in the United States are located in poor or minority neighborhoods.
4. Industrial countries, with a fraction of the world's population, are responsible for more than 90 percent of the 360 million metric tons of hazardous waste produced globally each year.
5. In Brazil during the 1980s, more than 1,000 people were murdered over land-use issues; there were fewer than ten convictions. Nine environmental activists in Nigeria's Ogoni region, which has been poisoned by oil development, were executed by the military regime in 1995.

At the global level, is it fair for the industrialized world to demand that developing countries protect the environment while condemning the vast majority of the world's population to poverty and hunger? After all, Western nations achieved their power and wealth at the expense of both the environment and minority peoples. If we have to choose in developing nations to promote development or protect the environment, what should we choose and who shall make the choice? Justice ultimately demands that the people of those nations help shape those choices and that the changes should further both goals: ensuring that developing nations lift their peoples to a higher standard of living and protecting the earth by pursuing environmentally safe energy and industrialization processes. This may entail making tough choices about our own standard of living as well.

A Real Dilemma: West Dallas Community in Peril

Thirty years ago, residents in a neighborhood in the West Dallas area began noticing a variety of health problems. These started out as rashes, bleeding gums, and headaches, but soon there were unusual numbers of incidents of cancer, birth defects, learning disabilities, even limbs that required amputation. Led by the New Waverly Baptist Church and Rev. R. T. Conley, neighbors found out that a nearby lead-smelting plant was causing the health crisis. Initial efforts to regulate or shut down the smelter met with no response from either local officials or Texas state envi-

ronmental agencies. Better-off residents began moving away, but that was not economically feasible for many poor families—predominantly African-American and Latino—in the area. What should the remaining residents have done?

Response

Reverend Conley organized educational meetings in the area, to raise both knowledge and concern. From this base, he helped church members build a coalition, the West Dallas Coalition for a Better Environment, with nearby homeowners and citizens associations. He also worked with national “environmental justice” and religious groups. The local coalition organized letter-writing and phone campaigns, protests, and public meetings. With the help of national groups, particularly the National Religious Partnership for the Environment (NRPE), national attention began to be focused on the plight of West Dallas. Facilitated by the NRPE, with help from the Religious Action Center, Reverend Conley and others from the WDCBE flew to Washington and met with then Housing and Urban Development Secretary Henry Cisneros. Secretary Cisneros and staff from the Environmental Protection Agency agreed to bring short-term clinic facilities to the area, to close the lead-smelting plant, to ensure financial settlements for people affected by the toxins, and to begin a major cleanup. While the cleanup is still underway, with the establishment of the clinic and the shutdown of the smelter, life is beginning to improve in West Dallas.

ISRAEL: A FRAGILE ENVIRONMENT

Though a small country, Israel contains such remarkably diverse types of ecosystems as coastal, wetland, desert, tropical, and mountain. Massive reforestation involving some 190 million trees, initiated and managed by the Jewish National Fund (JNF), has created green groves where land once lay barren.

As Israel has reclaimed deserts and swamps, often with problematic environmental consequences, its population has grown from 600,000 in 1948 to more than 5.5 million today. On the negative side, this

massive infusion of immigrants has created such major environmental concerns as air and water quality (especially in Haifa Bay), toxic and solid waste disposal, and ecosystem and species preservation. This last concern arises most pointedly with the plans to build roads through what little wilderness remains on the coastal plain.

Despite these problems, one environmental concern eclipses all others: water. Israel currently uses 105 percent of its natural water capacity. Most of this comes from three major sources, and the extra 5 percent is from desalinization. Yet each of the three main sources is in peril. The coastal aquifer lies beneath Tel Aviv and the surrounding plain; it is becoming polluted by industrial wastes and infused with saltwater because of overpumping. The Yam Kinneret (the Sea of Galilee) and the Jordan River system are threatened by population growth and by the Jordan’s headwaters lying in Syria, which has threatened to cut off the supply. And rights to the mountain aquifer, lying below Jerusalem and the West Bank, are among the most contentious items in Israeli-Palestinian negotiations.

The regional importance of water, and of the environment in general, cannot be overstated. The scarcity of water is among the factors that led Palestinians, Jordanians, and others to the peace table. It is widely assumed that water is replacing oil as the major resource affecting the politics and economics of the Middle East. The first Israeli diplomatic visit to an Arab country (besides Egypt) was for a regional environmental summit on water. And now there is even a fledgling regional grassroots environmental organization with members from Jordan, Israel, and Egypt.

In addition to the importance of water as an issue in the Middle East itself, global energy policy also affects the politics of the Middle East, since dependence on Arab oil provided the lever with which the Arab nations maneuvered numerous countries in Europe, Asia, and Africa into an anti-Israel posture at times over the past several decades.

A Real Dilemma: Alaskan Wilderness vs. Dependence on Arab Oil

A recent contentious environmental debate has centered on the opening of the vast Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) for oil and gas development. Proponents argue that to minimize

its dependence on foreign oil, including Arab oil, the United States must develop all of its resources; this region could offer a six-month supply. Opponents argue that this would devastate the nation's largest remaining wilderness area—home to 150,000 caribou and the Inuit people who live with and from them—much as oil development has done to other Alaskan regions.

This issue, with its Middle Eastern political implications, was clearly of concern to the Jewish community when it first came before Congress in 1992. Some Jewish leaders enlisted the assistance of the former director of the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC)—the key pro-Israel lobby in Washington D.C.—to lobby for the opening of the wilderness area. At the same time, environmental groups pressed the Jewish community to publicly oppose the opening.

Which side, if either, should the Jewish community have taken?

Response

While no Jewish organizations formally endorsed opening the ANWR, the UAHC was the only national Jewish organization to oppose the opening of the wilderness area. It believed that the modest gains in energy independence were not worth the huge environmental risks involved. It also thought that opening the ANWR would set a bad precedent for America and for the rest of the world and delay our developing a more comprehensive energy plan in which conservation and renewable energy sources would be major components.

This difficult issue, in which the UAHC joined with environmental groups against other Jewish organizations, will remain on the political landscape, for oil companies will continue their efforts to access Alaskan oil in the future.

ENERGY

Of all environmental issues, energy is among the most complex. The major choice before us is not whether but *when* we will replace the dependent use of fossil fuels with clean, renewable energy sources.

There is a finite amount of fossil fuels on earth and we will run out within the next two centuries. Such a transition was a stated national priority following the oil embargo imposed in 1973 by Arab nations to protest United States support for Israel, but the political will has floundered in the decades since. Therefore gas, coal, and oil are an even larger component of our energy picture now than they were in 1975. Part of the issue is clearly political: the government now heavily subsidizes fossil fuel extraction and nuclear power, while funding for solar and other renewable energy research is minimal. As a society, we also need to take further steps in the conservation of energy—comprising less than 5 percent of the world's population, we use 27 percent of the energy consumed. But part of the issue reflects our personal behavior: How much do we bike or use mass transit? Do we use compact fluorescent bulbs, or even solar energy, in our homes? What kind of car do we drive?

As for nuclear power, it seems that the early environmental voices were correct. In America, the tide turned after the 1979 scare at Pennsylvania's Three Mile Island nuclear power plant. The world was and remains shocked by the scope of the 1986 Chernobyl explosion in Ukraine, which released massive amounts of radioactivity, killing thousands of people and making millions of acres uninhabitable indefinitely. Only Japan and France forged ahead with their ambitious nuclear power campaigns, and even these are in doubt following a 1991 accident in Japan that required the use of the emergency cooling system to prevent a meltdown.

A Real Dilemma: A Rabbi Tries to Stop a Nuclear Power Plant

Until the last decade, nuclear power was a popular alternative to foreign oil but environmentally problematic. A massive demonstration was once organized to oppose the construction of the Seabrook, New Hampshire, nuclear power plant, and Rabbi Arthur Starr of Manchester was asked to join other clergy in the protest as part of the interfaith contingent.

Should he accept? Whom would he represent? A Jewish voice? Himself? His congregation? Should he publicly oppose a project that promised to give the region an economic boost, provide for

Response

Rabbi Starr decided to attend the protest as part of the interfaith delegation. He participated as an individual, not formally representing his synagogue. Though he did not address the crowd of 20,000 who attended, he became a visible and active community voice against the Seabrook power plant. His leadership inspired others in the Jewish community to join the campaign.

Today, this is no longer such a dilemma. With wastes impossible to dispose of, escalating construction and operating costs, and dangerous operations, no new nuclear power plants have been planned since the early 1980s.

Finally, aside from the health and environmental threats of nuclear power plants themselves, radioactive wastes remain an intractable problem. Some remain toxic well beyond their half-lives of 250,000 years and more, while a nuclear power plant gives us electricity for a brief 40 years. Cleanup costs for defense installations alone, a legacy of the nuclear arms race, run well upward of \$200 billion. And there is no safe repository for these wastes: the proposed locations are in the southwest, but it is not clear whether this is based on scientific site selection or on the low political clout of the largely poor Hispanic and Native American population in the areas proposed for such disposal.

A RELIGIOUS RESPONSE TO THE ECOLOGICAL CRISIS

Out of interfaith environmental work, there emerged in 1992 the aforementioned National Religious Partnership for the Environment, which joins together Catholics, Evangelicals, Jews, and Protestants in the name of protecting God's creation. The NRPE was formed to transform the environmental debate by bringing basic religious values into the scientific and political arenas. President Bill Clinton and Vice President Al Gore were instrumental in legitimizing these efforts by drawing on the environmental vision within mainstream religious thought.

The potential of an undertaking such as the NRPE is enormous, for

congregations—than any other public institution in American life; far more numerous than libraries, hospitals, schools, and firehouses combined. Think of what impact it could have if every one of them—starting with yours—engaged in a serious effort to conserve energy; to recycle goods and purchase recycled goods; to help clean up the neighborhoods and plant trees; to speak out on environmental policy for the 140 million congregants. What a transformation of the environmental issue we would see! Each of us can start in our own synagogue.

Each year, the four faith groups can educate approximately 120,000 congregations and other religious organizations about how environmental issues affect our communities, families, and, potentially, future generations. Through the Partnership, the religious community has also been vocal on federal environmental legislation. In 1995, the National Council of Churches of Christ, the Evangelical Environmental Network, and the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life came together and protested Congress's attempts to gut the Endangered Species Act. This joint effort marked a turning point in the fight to preserve endangered species legislation. Standing together, the religious community was successful in convincing our senators that the preservation of God's creation is a fundamental moral precept.

The Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL) is the Jewish umbrella organization in this undertaking. COEJL works to bring environmental values back into mainstream Jewish life and help environmentalists who are Jewish to see the connections with Jewish tradition, texts, and ritual. COEJL's educational materials, emphasizing the environmental significance of Jewish holidays (in particular, Tu B'Shvat environmental seders) and encouraging Torah study sessions that focus on environmental ethics, are used throughout the nation. The Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, a coordinating agency of COEJL, is the locus of their legislative advocacy efforts.

WHICH REAL DILEMMAS TO DEAL WITH?

With all the pressing environmental issues out there and the awareness that radical changes are necessary, how should an individual, synagogue, or other group decide which to work on? Time and relevance are key considerations. The best issues hit close to home, such as know-

fighting a proposed hazardous waste site in the area. The amount of time necessary for the project can also guide which one to choose. A riverbank cleanup raises awareness, connects people to a natural place, and takes only a few hours. However, influencing the vote of your representative to Congress on endangered species legislation can make a much larger impact. When deciding on which challenges to address by yourself or in a group, gauge the interests, time, and assets of participants and select accordingly. Always consider possible coalitions and the issues of environmental justice. Which population is most affected by this issue? Who should be working with us?

NEEDED: A RADICAL CHANGE

The need for huge changes in our environmental awareness and actions should be clear. Yet as of this writing, the American political scene was heading in precisely the wrong direction. Recent Congresses have waged an assault on the environment unparalleled in the thirty years since significant environmental legislation was first passed. Beginning in 1995, Congress reflected a new, antifederal, "me-first" sentiment, even though polls show that the vast majority of Americans believe in government regulation to safeguard the environment.

The attack on these essential laws concerned with endangered species, the Superfund, and clean air and water will likely continue in years to come. The extent to which these efforts will be thwarted depends on the environmental commitments of people of faith, including the Jewish community. Grassroots efforts and bipartisan cooperation are vital, as growing numbers of Republican members of Congress join Democrats in saying that protecting and preserving the environment is too important to be subject to partisan political competition. Most important, because the religious community transcends partisan politics, it can be indispensable in mobilizing the grassroots efforts and bipartisan cooperation that is so vital to success in pro-environmental advocacy. As David Saperstein said in testifying before Congress on behalf of those faith groups and denominations that are part of NRPE: "The Endangered Species Act has served as an ark, protecting and nurturing the remnants of God's creation until they, like the bald eagle, can soar on their own once again. If this ark needs repairs, then by all means

The disasters at Bhopal, India (where thousands were killed by a poison gas leak from a chemical plant), at Chernobyl, and elsewhere are ominous storm warnings. They compel us to reexamine our divinities. We have made an idol of technology, believing it can solve all human problems. In doing so, we have forsaken God's call to serve and protect creation. And we must stop worshipping at the altar of consumption. Now, in order to survive, we must at last take seriously our role as *shomrei adamah*, guardians of creation.

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A Reform Jewish Quarterly

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of the federal pie, we are not living up to the ideal of Israel's Declaration of Independence nor to the commandment "love the stranger within your gates."

A third issue is the disdain with which advocates of social justice are regarded. It is an attitude that denies Israel a cadre of leaders who are not rabbis or former generals. Hagai Elad did a master's degree in astrophysics at Harvard and returned to Israel. The first job he took was director of the Open House in Jerusalem, the organization behind the Gay Pride parade in the Capital. He was asked again and again why he was wasting his talents? The most complimentary comment was "you're just a 'friar,'" which in Hebrew translates to "sucker." Although he fought tremendous opposition and faced personal danger, he was not seen as a hero, a title reserved for the military and economic champions of Israel.

What in your judgment is the Reform Movement's greatest failing when it comes to Israel?

Anat Hoffman: Our own long time lack of conviction that what we do is *l'shem shamayim*. That is, when people do good things, they are actually doing God's work, and that the visible link to the synagogue or the community is totally unnecessary. The important thing is the deed, not any religious trappings.

Another is, if you believe in what you are doing, you have to be prepared to go all the way. I think we lack this total belief, this *mesirut nefesh*, that would enable us to bear the consequences of speaking our minds. I have the feeling that American Jews have convinced themselves that they really don't have a right to criticize what happens in Israel. They hold that those who live in Israel are the super Jews, and we cannot tell them how to lead their lives. They are left with, "wherever Israel stands, I stand." I have a right to speak truth to power in the U.S., but not in Israel.

Eric Yoffie, at the URJ Biennial convention November 14, 1997, issued a call to reverse that attitude. "Israel is far too important to be left to the Israelis," he said. When terrible things happen in Israel, American Jews have a duty to speak out about it.

In the Beginning: A Personal Memoir of Social Action and Reform Judaism in America

Albert Vorspan

How strange to know that my life is almost co-existent with the history of the modern social action program in Reform Judaism. I do not know if that makes me one of the patriarchs of Israel, a founding father, harkening back to Genesis. Or, more likely, an accidental character, a kind of Zelig, an unwitting witness to great and historic events. At the insistence of my fans (my wife and one of our four children), I, at the age of 83, am now composing a memoir of my life. In reflecting upon my experiences, I have isolated a few unforgettable moments from the pioneering days of Reform Jewish social action. You can view these as the rambling anecdotes of an AK (Ancient Knight) or as authoritative history written by a survivor, with none left to contradict.

GENESIS: Reform Judaism and Social Action

Somebody said that success has many fathers, but failure is an orphan. The social justice program of American Reform Judaism is clearly a source of pride to the Reform Movement and a significant player in the liberal coalitions of decency that have enriched America for decades. It seems solipsistic to claim paternity—there have been no paternity tests—but I was definitely one of the founding fathers and clearly the one with the greatest longevity. So, how did it get started?

I was a young veteran of WW II who, like millions of others, married, had kids, took full advantage of the monumental GI Bills providing access to college, after which I entered the job market. My first full-time job (in 1948) was wondrously low-paid and high-quality. I was the youngest member of a tiny staff of the coordinating

council for Jewish community relations agencies, national and local, known as the National Community Relations Advisory Council (NCRAC). It set policy on such large issues as reforming American immigration policy, defending church-state separation, pushing for a democratic post-war Germany, racial justice, and safeguarding Israel. I was enthralled by the work, awed by the brilliance and dedication of my older colleagues, and confident that our work was surely advancing Jewish ideals and justice for all Americans.

Working Title—Book in Progress

In retrospect, it was a superb introduction to the Jewish community and to the world of social action in postwar America. WW II had just ended. The memory of the Holocaust was fresh, making, in a strange way, any vestige of anti-Semitism universally taboo, while somehow elevating the Jewish people who survived the Holocaust to moral exemplars. Israel then, in contrast to today, was the darling of the world and politicians of all stripes in virtually all lands hastened to wrap themselves in the Israeli flag as often and as publicly as possible. Yet, our little agency in those years devoted very little priority to Israel, to anti-Semitism, or to any so-called Jewish issues. In the buoyant spirit of postwar America, Jews felt enough confidence in themselves and in America to focus their energies—as reflected in the annual NCRAC Program Plan priorities—on the idealistic and universalistic task of forging a new and just America for all Americans. The goals we set for ourselves were heady indeed: to break down the walls of racial discrimination and segregation; to drastically reform American immigration policy by eliminating the national origins quota system; to safeguard church-state separation; and to strive for economic justice for all Americans.

What was so very remarkable in retrospect was the extraordinary idealism that animated us. The message was implicitly that what was good for Americans was good for the Jews and vice versa. But there was also an almost brash self-confidence that we American Jews could rouse the conscience of America in grand coalitions of social justice and that we could achieve results. More remarkably, we often succeeded. I remember sitting in our conference room and listening in awe to black leaders from the NAACP—including the very young Constance Motley (later Judge), Roy Wilkins, who was then the executive director of the NAACP, and my colleague on the NCRAC staff, Arnold Aronson (who also happened to be Roy

Wilkins' best friend). They were analyzing the legal status of separate but equal educational facilities and declaring boldly that it was time to stop the vain pursuit of "separate but equal" and to go to court to challenge racially segregated schools themselves. It was time to go for broke! History was being made in that very room and it later transformed America and the status of American Jews. This never could have happened without the African American (then, "Black")-Jewish partnership that was evident in those excited voices in our conference room and throughout the civil rights era.

Another anomaly is that the unity of the Jewish community of those days is now ancient history. On issues of church-state separation, Orthodox Jewry is now closer to the Christian right and the Catholic church than to Reform Jews. Public funding for day schools is now quite popular among traditional Jews and it has created some odd coalitions amongst the Right. Jewish voters are still largely liberal and Democratic, but there are deep and impassioned divisions on gender equality, church-state separation, civil liberties issues, and often on Israel and Middle East policy. As Orthodoxy has moved strongly to the right, eclipsing modern Orthodoxy, the divisions in the Jewish community have become deep and intractable.

GENESIS: Reform Jewish Social Justice—September, 1953

One of the organizations that comprised the alphabet soup of the NCRAC (now reincarnated as the Jewish Council on Public Affairs) was the UAHC—the Union of American Hebrew Congregations—presently known as the Union for Reform Judaism. Its representative was the late Rabbi Jay Kaufman. One day in 1953, still new at the NCRAC, I asked him the number of congregations and members in the UAHC:

"About 600 temples and almost a million members."

"Wow!" I exclaimed, "You have the potential to be the strongest force for social justice in the Jewish community, if you could find a way to harness the power of those congregations."

"Of course," Jay replied. "Would you be willing to think through some ideas on how to do that? I am very intrigued."

I drew up a short memo, maybe four pages, and mailed it to the rabbi at his 838 Fifth Avenue office. Two days later, he called and asked me to meet him for lunch. He had reviewed the memo with his boss, Rabbi Maurice Eisendrath, and with Rabbi Eugene

Lipman, the young director of Synagogue Activities, and said that they wanted me to join their staff and implement the ideas to develop a serious social action program. Money was no object; I would make a whopping \$5,700 a year, a full \$200 more than the NCRAC was paying! I told Jay I had to think about it and talk with my wife. "Good," he said. "You have three hours. Go across the street to Central Park and call Shirley." I should never have allowed myself to be pressured, but I did and they did, and so I stayed with the Union for fifty years and counting.

Of course, there was a proud social action history in the Reform Movement long before I arrived on the scene. Many rabbis had challenged their congregants and communities on economic social justice issues, including the eight-hour workday, the rights of labor, racial justice, fair immigration policy, and so forth. Indeed, the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR), the rabbinic organization of Reform rabbis, had for decades prided itself on the work of the Committee on Justice and Peace, which spoke out forcefully on the great issues of social conscience in America. It was unafraid of controversy and was often derogatorily referred to as the feisty tail that wagged the head of the rabbinic body.

Individual rabbis were among the most commanding voices for social justice in the land. Rabbi Stephen Wise had a powerful impact on New York politics, interfaith relations, and conferred frequently with President Franklin Delano Roosevelt on issues of economic justice and the tragedy unfolding in Hitler's Europe. Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver was the recognized voice of American Zionism.

But what about the congregations? The laity? Did they simply allow the rabbi to be their surrogates in the field of social justice? These questions have been asked frequently in the councils of all national Jewish religious institutions. One of the most heated and stirring of such debates took place at the Biennial Assembly of the UAHC in February, 1929, in San Francisco. It was touched off by a prominent layman from Portland, Oregon, Roscoe Nelson, who said:

The truth is that this Union has never conceded that any subject is more vitally Jewish than that of social justice...our privilege and our duty in this behalf is not discharged by the most gracious of permits to the Central Conference of American Rabbis to adopt a program of social justice. It would be a strange voice in Israel that suggested that gropings for social justice must be vicariously

conducted through a hierarchy of rabbis or a house of bishops. I have grossly misinterpreted the history, philosophy, and tradition of our people, if passivity and impersonality in connection with the most profound interests of humanity suffices for spiritual identification with the sources of Jewish inspiration.

In a real sense, Mr. Nelson's remarks and the discussions that followed can be called the beginning of the synagogue social action movement in twentieth-century America. He insisted that rabbis have no monopoly on social justice, that the laymen must discharge their responsibility. It took many years before the call was heeded. Resolutions were passed, speeches were made, debates provided clarification and heat, but there was still no organized social action movement in the synagogue. After a strong call for action by Rabbi Maurice Eisendrath at the 1946 Biennial Assembly of the UAHC, a Joint Commission on Social Action was finally organized in 1949. Its charter was approved both by the UAHC and the CCAR. The Commission met three times, sponsored an institute on Judaism and Public Health, drafted ambitious plans, and then became quiescent for more than three years.

In 1953, the Joint Commission on Social Action was reorganized and undertook a simple-sounding task: the organization of social action or community affairs committees in every Reform temple in America. By early 1955, a virtual groundswell of opinion had developed in Reform temples and so had some opposition. In the debate, a Board member warned Rabbi Eisendrath that America was then living under the fearful shadow of McCarthyism and it would place the Union at risk of being attacked and smeared by the Wisconsin demagogue. Rabbi Eisendrath cited Isaiah and Amos and said:

The prophets didn't appear in periods of calm but of challenge and danger. It is precisely for a time like this that we need the prophetic voice of social justice.

The issue came to a climax at the Forty-third Biennial Assembly in Los Angeles in February, 1955. Rabbi Eisendrath led off the controversy in his presidential address:

A guide for Reform Judaism do we desire? Indeed we do. But not for ritual and rites alone, but for righteous conduct and decent behavior between man and man; not merely for the forms of services but for the service of God in the affairs of man; not merely

a minimum code for liturgical worship but a minimal code of moral conduct incumbent upon anyone who calls himself a Reform Jew presuming to be the heir of Hebrew prophet and sage. Even the prophet prefaced his command "to walk humbly" with the demand "to do justly and to love mercy." The resemblance between the noble name we bear and our bearing toward our neighbor must be more than coincidental. It must be fundamental. It must translate our preachment into practice, our dogmas and doctrines into deed, our creed into conduct, our prayers into programs of moral righteousness and social justice, our invoking of God's name—too frequently in vain—into the establishment of His Kingdom on earth.

Rabbi Eisendrath called for nationwide support of the program of the Commission on Social Action, which had enlarged its scope to include the National Federation of Temple Brotherhoods, National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods, and National Federation of Temple Youth. He appealed to every synagogue to develop a social justice program that would realistically apply the ideals of Judaism to solving the problems of contemporary society.

After a spirited, frequently moving, debate, the Assembly overwhelmingly approved the program of the Commission on Social Action. This approval, coupled with positive action on a number of specific topics of major concern, touched off a ferment of activity in temples throughout the country.

On one of my first days at the Union, I ran into Rabbi Bernard Bamberger, elderly scholar and a founding writer of the historic Liberal Torah Commentary. He challenged me.

"Oh, you're Vorspan, the social action guy, right? What are you going to do to make it more than talk in this movement?"

"Well, my hope is to get a real social action committee started in every one of our temples," I replied.

"Good," he said. "Then get out of this building and get out on the road. Visit every temple. Sit down with every rabbi. That's the key. Find a nucleus of people who care. Without that, your program is dead on arrival, another piece of paper streaming out of this building and ending up in the circular file of every temple!"

My immediate boss was Rabbi Eugene J. Lipman. Gene had already created the structure of a joint Commission on Social Action, had them adopt a charter, and urged congregations to follow through. But Gene had a hundred other responsibilities for synagogue activities at a time of unprecedented growth of synagogues

in suburbia. And, while his heart was in social action, he needed somebody (me) to live with the program, to serve the temples on the scene, and to capitalize on the momentum already building. We accelerated that momentum with our pioneering book entitled *Justice and Judaism*, used in hundreds of congregations.

For both of us, the inspiration for building a strong social justice program was our boss, Rabbi Eisendrath. He was truly a prophetic figure. For him, the fundamental meaning of Judaism—and especially Reform Judaism—was *tikkun olam*. For Rabbi Eisendrath social justice was not an option, a luxury, a nice mitzvah, a program; it was a Jewish moral imperative, the very soul and purpose of the Jewish faith. He and I became inseparable. I drafted many of his speeches, his public statements, articles, and books because our world views were almost identical. Once he mused about sending me to Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati to become a rabbi. I demurred. "Oh, never mind," he said, "Rabbis will actually respect you more if you are not a rabbi." I think he was right, although I have been mistakenly introduced as rabbi so many times, that I often explain I was once given an intravenous "*smichah*" early in my career.

When I started, there was a bare-bones national commission, at least on paper. There was no such thing as a social action committee in a congregation. Dozens of congregations in the South feared the whole idea as a dangerous, if disguised, threat to the "Southern way of life," i.e., segregation. Today virtually every congregation has a social action committee, including those in the deep South, in the very communities where racial conflicts made history. The national Commission on Social Action is a deeply respected arm of the entire movement and the Religious Action Center in Washington is now the crown jewel of the Reform Jewish contribution to American life.

So who were the founding fathers? There were few mothers then, but today the movement is fiercely egalitarian and the demand for equal treatment for women is at the very core of our congregations and the social action agenda of our movement. First and foremost, Eisendrath was willing to risk the entire Union for the cause of justice, especially civil rights. Without his bold and brave leadership, there would have been no way to overcome the hostilities and inertia that dogged the movement. And Rabbi Gene Lipman was invaluable. These two men enabled me to do with my life what I most wanted: to serve the Jewish people and to help build a better,

more just, and more peaceful world. How many people get to devote their entire lives to the values about which they care most passionately? Not many!

The glory of Reform Judaism is that it took the ethical imperatives of the Jewish tradition and returned them from the periphery to the heart of the faith. It made the prophetic message, social justice, a core value of liberal Judaism. In short, Reform Judaism placed its focus on a Jewish way of life and stripped away much of the minutiae of ancient ceremonies, rituals, and superstitions. The belief in *tikkun olam* was always cherished as a lofty goal. But only in America were Jews as a group free to convert these cherished ideals from dreams and rhetoric to the actual work of our hands.

The Religious Action Center

For Reform Jews, social action is the vehicle to carry this social justice tradition from sermon to deed, from preachment to practice. And the Religious Action Center in Washington, DC is the movement's primary base of operation. The Center was inaugurated in 1963, after a deeply controversial debate that raged throughout the country for two years. Once approved overwhelmingly by delegates to the General Assembly in Washington, DC, the Center became a pivotal player in the great civil rights struggle that engulfed the country in that year. One of its principal tenants was the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, the key coalition spearheading the drive for civil rights laws. Indeed, the landmark voting rights law and the comprehensive public accommodation laws were drafted on the conference room tables of the Center. Black and Jewish lawyers drafted the bills and Jewish and black organizations joined in mammoth and effective campaigns to push these hotly contested measures through the Congress. History was written in the Religious Action Center and, in subsequent years, other great moral struggles—Soviet Jewry, the war in Vietnam, economic justice, assaults on the Constitution from the Christian Rights, church-state struggles, the search for arms control in a nuclear age—were confronted in those halls where Americans across the lines of faith and race stirred the conscience of the country and petitioned the government to respond.

How did the Religious Action Center come about? It was the brainchild of the Commission on Social Action. More specifically, it was the idea of one distinguished member of the commission, a

labor lawyer named Arthur Goldberg, who first suggested it. Goldberg was a member of a young and growing Temple Sinai in Washington, DC, in post-WWII America. Their young rabbi, Balfour Brickner, was involved in overseeing the building of the new synagogue. One day he received an agitated phone call from Goldberg, who was already a strong voice in the labor movement and who, a few years later, would become President Kennedy's Secretary of Labor. He asked the young rabbi to meet him immediately at the site. Pointing to the fixtures in the bathroom, Goldberg barked: "Do you see the name on the plumbing?" Brickner read it: KOHLER. "Don't you know what Kohler is?" Goldberg demanded. Brickner flushed, embarrassed and said no. "Kohler is the most notorious anti-labor firm in America," fumed Goldberg, "and there is no way that our temple is going to use Kohler fixtures in this new building!"

Brickner managed to rid the new structure of "treyste" plumbing and Goldberg calmed down. Then he suggested that the Reform movement should be better informed on all issues of social justice in America. What we should have, Goldberg continued, is a Washington arm of the Commission on Social Action so this movement will be knowledgeable and can weigh in where it counts, where policy is made, in the nation's capital. Brickner urged Goldberg to present that proposal to Maurice Eisendrath, UAHHC president, and, if he approved, to the Commission on Social Action and to the Board of the Union. Eisendrath was enthusiastic. So were the Commission and the Board. One of the first members to respond was Kivie Kaplan of Boston—later to become the national president of the NAACP—who declared the idea to be exciting and that, if the Union would approve it, he would contribute \$100,000 to buy the building to house such a center in DC.

Even with the generous Kaplan financial offer, the idea of a Washington office was not yet a done deal. When Eisendrath presented it to the 1959 General Assembly in Miami Beach, there was a fierce and stormy debate. Eisendrath agreed to postpone any decision until the next general assembly—1961 in Washington—to allow a full debate and discussion in every congregation. It was a two-year all-out verbal war.

An historic and deeply stirring debate ensued at the Washington Biennial. Equal time was given to each side. The "anti" speakers expressed their grave fears that the movement would become mired in politics, that the autonomy of the individual and of the congregations would be jeopardized by persons who would presume to

speak for all Reform Jews, and that such a monstrosity would split the movement. Supporters of the idea argued that Judaism was built on concepts of social justice, that those beliefs mean nothing unless put into practice where it counts, and that great care would be taken to protect minority views and to act and speak only where authorized by the responsible bodies of the Reform Movement. In the end, the Center was endorsed overwhelmingly. But the feared split did take place, briefly. Two very large synagogues withdrew from the Union (but returned a few months later) and with the passage of time, became themselves warm supporters of the Center and sponsors of productive social action programs.

The Religious Action Center was formally dedicated at a special ceremony in the Rose Garden at the White House, at which an historic Torah from Isaac Mayer Wise's temple in Cincinnati was presented to President John F. Kennedy. Arthur Goldberg, then Secretary of Labor, joshed the president for not wearing a *kippah* while holding a Torah. "Arthur," the president smiled, "I am a Reform Jew."

In retrospect, the social action program had a stunning cast of characters. For me, the central role was played by Rabbi Maurice Eisendrath. One reason I stayed at the Union for my entire career was Maurice Eisendrath. Eisendrath had his faults: he loved publicity and resented Nelson Glueck, president of HUC, getting a larger share of attention. For Eisendrath, prophetic Judaism was not just a nice slogan for sermonizing purposes. It was the essence of his faith, the purpose of his life. If he took himself seriously, maybe even too seriously, it was because he took Judaism so seriously. He truly believed that liberal Judaism had both the mandate and the power to transform the world. There is a story that a leading Orthodox scholar (who, no doubt, had a hard time even accepting Eisendrath as a rabbi) confided to a colleague after a meeting at which Eisendrath cogently outlined the urgent moral challenges of race, war, class, and sex that must be dealt with by Jewish conscience: "The man is a better Jew than any of us."

Eisendrath risked more for social justice than did any other Jewish leader of his generation. He would not trim his or the Union's commitment to civil rights, peace, or social justice even when heavy-hitting contributors or angry congregational leaders threatened to withdraw their financial support or even their membership in the UAHC family. He seemed to relish a fight, savor controversy. Eisendrath was also a builder. He was a co-founder with Nahum Gold-

man and Philip Klutznick of the Presidents' Conference of Major Jewish Organizations in support of Israel. A major irony is that he was never elected to be Chairman of the President's Conference, but his successor, Alexander Schindler, was. He was a co-founder of the World Conference of Religion and Peace. He was undoubtedly the true father of the Religious Action Center in Washington, DC.

Maurice Eisendrath's vision shaped the UAHC. He woke it up, disturbed it, shook it, and brought it (sometimes screaming and kicking) into the twentieth century, making it a powerful vehicle for Jewish religious identity and a significant player in the fight for social justice.

Eisendrath entrusted the actual work of the new commission to Rabbi Eugene Lipman and me. Lipman had been an army chaplain in Europe during the war. As the war neared its end, he became obsessed with the task of tending to the Jews in the displaced persons camps: comforting them, helping to meet their needs, bucking the bureaucracy that hemmed them in. Finally, this young rabbi, almost AWOL from the army, joined the underground Haganah (the pre-State structure of Israel) in order to help guide Jewish refugees on clandestine expeditions through the mountains to the sea, where they boarded illegal and often less than seaworthy vessels and set sail for Palestine, hoping to evade the British blockade that hounded the escapees. When he came to the Union, he was a champion for any Holocaust survivor, including some who were nudniks and not a few who were connivers. One was a lonely visitor named Raphael Lemkin, who invented the Genocide Convention. But Gene gave a hand to any Jewish survivor as a sacred calling, a moral imperative.

Alex Schindler succeeded Eisendrath in 1973 and he grew to be a giant of Reform Jewry, a powerful supporter of social justice and an innovator in major new challenges. Alex Schindler epitomized what Tom Brokaw identified as "America's Greatest Generation." He was a ski-trooper in WWII and fought in some of the roughest battles on the European front, earning a Purple Heart and several battle citations. Why was our generation called the greatest? Because the challenges were the greatest, challenges so awesome that we had no choice but to suck it up and respond to the need, to overcome a Depression, to conquer Hitler and Nazism, to rebuild the nations we defeated, to exorcise the dybbuk of racial segregation in America, and to break open the doors to an open, plural America.

We Americans like to be honored—and even congratulate ourselves—for those historic accomplishments. But, if that generation of Americans was great, what about Jewish persons? Refugees, especially those like Alex Schindler, not only accomplished those heroic acts, but first had to escape the hell of Hitler's Europe, coming to this country as marginal immigrants (Alex and his family were chicken farmers). Not only did he accomplish these amazing things, but at the same time, he helped to bind up the wounds of the Holocaust, nurtured the survivors, helped ensure the miracle of the State of Israel re-emerging out of the ashes into history, and found the energy to shape a vital American Judaism in every community in this land, especially this powerful, modern, liberal Judaism.

Alex Schindler became the architect of much that we cherish as modern Reform Jews: outreach, gender equality, equal justice, day schools, inclusiveness, intensified pursuit of social justice, and a love for *Klal Yisrael*. It was Alex's pride not merely that he became a leader of a proud and burgeoning movement, but that he became the acknowledged, respected, and admired leader of the entire American Jewish community, embracing every stream.

Kivie Kaplan was neither very prepossessing to look at—pudgy, almost fat—nor to talk with. His education had stopped at the eighth grade of a Boston public school. But Kivie was one of the most unforgettable individuals I ever met. He was an early appointment to the Commission, recommended by Rabbi Roland Gittlesohn, then rabbi of Temple Israel of Boston. Kivie's story is simple. He went into the tannery business and became a millionaire by the time he was thirty. In fact, he lived like a millionaire—big house on Beacon Street, car with uniformed chauffeur, and so forth. One day, driving in Miami Beach in the 1940s, he saw a sign proclaiming: "No Niggers, No Kikes, No Dogs." He got out of his car and had a kind of epiphany. He resolved to start a new life, a life dedicated to combating the bigotry represented by that sign. He had his driver take him to the nearest office of the NAACP. He learned that this organization, crucial for the gathering crisis on civil rights, was in dire financial straits. Kivie devised a fund-raising program involving life-memberships and a variety of techniques mostly borrowed from Jewish fund-raising, and he enlisted black celebrities such as Jackie Robinson, Ossie Davis, and Harry Belafonte, Jr.

Kivie personally approached every friend, every relative, every taxi driver, every bellboy he encountered, and every rabbi and

social action devotee pushing life-membership. He saved the NAACP from bankruptcy and ended up as its national president, re-elected even at a time of mounting calls for black power and exclusively black leadership of civil rights groups.

When the idea of a Religious Action Center was first floated, Kivie said: "If you have the courage to approve it, I will give \$100,000 to establish it." It was an early instance of the later "If you build it, they will come." With Kivie's gift, we bought a beautiful old embassy at 2027 Massachusetts Avenue, now situated on the street called Kivie Kaplan Way. Kivie imposed only one condition to his gift: the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights (the nation's primary coalition for civil rights legislation) had to be given offices in our building, whether it was in a position to pay rent or not. It was to become a valued and proud tenant for many years. Indeed, the landmark civil rights laws in America were drafted on the tables of the conference room in the Emily and Kivie Kaplan Religious Action Center. Distinguished Black and Jewish lawyers and civil rights strategists worked tirelessly in that building to change the history of the nation for the better.

Kivie Kaplan died in 1973, rushing from one meeting to another. Thousands of people had been touched by his simple goodness. He had handed out "KEEP SMILING" cards in Russia, Israel, and even to menacing sheriffs in Philadelphia, Mississippi only days after the murder of three civil rights workers in that town. Kivie used to say, "When you die, they will pause a minute, bang the gavel, and you are forgotten." On that, Kivie Kaplan was wrong. In this movement, he will be remembered as a blessing for generations to come.

Rabbi Roland Gittlesohn, a founding member of the Commission, was perhaps its most eloquent champion. His powerful voice was raised in every major debate within Reform Judaism from 1950 to 1990. In the climactic debate to create the Religious Action Center, Gittlesohn was the heavy hitter. Likewise, in San Francisco in 1965, when debate raged about the war in Vietnam, he was the towering presence, rousing the war opponents and driving supporters into a frenzy. (A judge from Louisiana actually unfurled an umbrella during Gittlesohn's statement and shouted "Appeasement! Munich! Chamberlain!")

Roland Gittlesohn's career as a warrior for social justice actually began in WWII. He joined the Marines, serving as chaplain in the

Pacific, where he participated in a number of major battles. He was admired for ministering to his marines on the front lines and not only in religious services. Because of his reputation for personal bravery, especially in the bloody battle at Iwo Jima, Gittlesohn was asked by the marines to conduct the official religious service commemorating the conquest of Iwo Jima and paying tribute to the many dead and wounded on the island. The invitation, however, was cancelled by his superior officers in the chaplaincy who said, bluntly, that the graves of Christian marines cannot be consecrated by a rabbi.

Instead of officiating at the official service, he conducted a small, informal service elsewhere on the island. In his address, he placed the episode of prejudice and discrimination against the real meaning of the war and the kind of world to which the American soldiers gave their lives. It was, to many observers, the classic and moving statement of what the war was all about. Overnight, the episode at Iwo Jima became a sensation. Gittlesohn's words were reprinted everywhere and became part of the American heritage. (By happenstance, I heard about the Gittlesohn sermon while serving on my destroyer escort in the waters off Iwo Jima. I did not then know the rabbi.) Upon his discharge, Gittlesohn was appointed by President Truman to the first civil rights commission in American history.

Roland Gittlesohn was also a leader in the rabbinate, serving as president of the CCAR between 1969 and 1971. He was an early and passionate pioneer of Reform Zionism, helping to establish ARZA (the Association of Reform Zionists of America). For him, Zionism and social justice were essential and complementary threads of living and modern American Judaism.

Rabbi Richard Hirsch was serving as director of the Chicago Federation of Reform Synagogues when he was invited by Rabbi Eisendrath to become the first director of the Religious Action Center in Washington. Working intimately with black leadership, he was instrumental in forging the partnerships that pushed the stone of civil rights up the mountain of congressional resistance. The landmark civil rights laws were written in the Center's conference room. Such distinguished political figures as Senator Hubert Humphrey (later vice president) welcomed the Center and made it a significant presence in American political life.

The Reform movement played a key role in the March on Washington in 1963, the largest civil rights demonstration in American

history. Working alongside black leaders such as Bayard Rustin, Roy Wilkins, and Clarence Mitchell, Will Maslow of the American Jewish Congress, and Richard Hirsch of the RAC, we helped the march to succeed beyond anyone's wildest hopes...mostly because of the masterpiece "I Have a Dream" by Martin Luther King, Jr. But Jewish participation was huge, even though only the American Jewish Congress and the UAHC endorsed it officially. One of the most important speeches of the day was a brief address by Rabbi Joachim Prinz, a refugee from Berlin, who said:

When I was the rabbi of the Jewish community in Berlin and under the Hitler regime, I learned many things. The most important thing that I learned under those tragic circumstances was that bigotry and hatred are not the most urgent problem. The most urgent, the most disgraceful, the most shameful and the most tragic problem is silence.

During the Vietnam war, the UAHC opposed the war and the Center became a Jewish address and gathering place for religious and communal groups against the war. During the largest demonstration the Washington police used tear gas on the demonstrators and the Center became a virtual first aid station and refuge for (Jewish and other) opponents of the war.

Years later, Jack Anderson, a reputable national columnist reported that the Religious Action Center (RAC) building had been burglarized by the FBI during the Vietnam war and its files ransacked. We were not surprised.

In 1973 Rabbi Hirsch left the RAC to become the director of the World Union for Progressive Judaism, sponsoring the move of the world body of Reform Judaism from New York City to Jerusalem. Hirsch was responsible for building the headquarters of the World Union in Jerusalem, as well as its Youth Hostel in Jerusalem. He helped to strengthen the thrust of social justice in liberal congregations throughout Israel. He is a prominent citizen of Israel and author of a book entitled *From the Hill to the Mount*, which describes his work at the RAC and later in Jerusalem.

The Religious Action Center has matured into the centerpiece of the Reform Jewish movement under the leadership of Rabbi David Saperstein, who has directed the Center since 1973 and is widely acknowledged as the dean of Jewish professionals in the nation's capital. David Saperstein and Associate Director, Mark Pelavin,

have made the Center the heart of Jewish Political action, the headquarters for coalitions across racial and religious lines, a training ground for rabbinic students of all streams of Judaism, and the principal address for social justice concerns in Washington.

Many women helped bring about the Religious Action Center—a few as members of the Commission on Social Action, several as speakers during the debate. But one extraordinary woman, Jane Evans, was an indispensable part of the inner circle for planning, strategy, and public relations. As executive director of the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods (NFTS), representing the sisterhoods of some 700 member congregations, she brought real clout to the table, empowering a crucial constituency that correctly saw the Center as a potential engine for expanding women's rights, including the right to serve as rabbis in the movement. But Jane was not merely an apparatchik, running an organization; she was a force of nature in her own right.

Jane Evans was associated with the Union for seventy years. She was head of the Sisterhood for decades (having started her career at the age of 21). One of Jane's first assignments was to represent the Reform Movement in San Francisco at the creation of the United Nations. Brilliant, creative, a passionate pacifist and lover of peace, she served by appointment of Secretary of State Edward Stettinius on the committee to draft the preamble to the Charter. In her life—she lived to be 96—she was an aviator, a farmer, a medical student, a serious inventor (a special type of fan), a college instructor in international relations, and a founder of the Jewish Braille Institute.

One of the most powerful attractions of Reform Judaism, to me, is that it is based on gender equality. Synagogues where men and women were separated by a *mechitzah* always made me cringe. If I was one of the pushers for gender equality, I was always being pushed by a greater force: Jane Evans. Long before a commission was formed (with NFTS as one of the major constituent agencies), the women had spoken out in resolutions demanding support for an Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution and, within the movement, larger representation by women in the leadership of the congregations and the movement. Specifically, NFTS was first to move the entire movement to support abortion rights and as well as the right of women to have equal access to the rabbinate. NFTS is now known as WRJ (Women for Reform Judaism), but the commitment is unchanged.

The Commission and the Union became, and remain, strong advocates of women's rights for full participation. We helped usher in the revolution of women's rights in America and Reform Judaism. In a sense, this is the most transforming revolution within Reform Judaism, because it empowered the long-marginalized 50% of Jews for active participation and leadership.

Gay Rights

While gender equality came naturally for me, I certainly was not predisposed to gay rights. That was a sympathy that had to be acquired, requiring that I overcome the baggage of my youth. The struggle for equal justice led the Reform Jewish Movement inevitably, but not easily, to a commitment to gay rights and gender equality. In my case, I was profoundly influenced by dear friends, Rabbi Erv Herman (who passed away just a few weeks ago) and his wife, Aggie, who lost their son, Jeff, to AIDS. The Hermans became tireless champions, passionate advocates and significant financial contributors within the broader Reform Movement and in American life.

The Reform Jewish movement is light years ahead of any other religious group in America in openness to gay rights, both within the movement and in America as a whole. We support the rights of gays to the rabbinate and the cantorate. We essentially support gay marriage. We use whatever influence we have to raise money to combat AIDS and to sensitize public opinion on this disease that has devastated the gay community and millions of others in all lands. We support the admission of gay congregations into the Union, provided that membership is not limited to homosexuals, but accessible to all Jews. Further, we have greatly sensitized mainstream congregations to be open and welcoming. It is commonplace for gays to serve in leadership positions in the Union and in the Conference. We have, as a movement, transcended the lingering fears that overpowered so many of us years ago and, like Erv and Aggie, we have embraced Jewish men and women, our sons and daughters, who have felt themselves in exile from Jewish life. We have sought to welcome and nurture them, rather than pretending that they are not here or to convert them to our concept of normality. We have a long way to go but we have come a long way.

Rabbis and Synagogues

More than a half-century has passed and much about Reform Social Action has changed in congregations, at the HUC and in local communities. Other social action professionals will fill out the contours of newer changes in this issue of the magazine. But I would submit that one thing has not changed: the crucial role of the rabbi in synagogue social action. The issues are different today; the relationships with other religious groups have changed drastically. The media, the computer technology, all have changed. What has not changed is the crucial role of the rabbi in social action. Dr. Bamberger was right in 1953: the rabbi is the key to opening the doors of the congregation to the larger Jewish and general community in shaping social justice. The Reform rabbi now, as when I first entered this field, is far ahead of the clergy of other faiths in the pursuit of social justice. Reform Jews are keenly concerned about social justice, and Reform rabbis as a group are uniquely committed to such issues as gender equality, gay rights, church-state separation, a two-state solution for Israel and the Palestinians, economic justice, health care for all, a ban on the use of torture and other infringements on American civil liberties, an end to the open-ended catastrophe of the Iraq war, and a deep commitment to combat global warming and preserve the integrity of the environment.

Here is the biggest change of all: when I became a Jewish social activist there were dozens of avenues by which to perpetuate Jewish life and identity: Zionism, the fight against anti-Semitism, civic defense, Jewish food, Jewish culture, Jewish humor, Jewish labor, Jewish art, and philanthropy. They are still around, but clearly, none of these can ensure Jewish survival. Only a living Judaism, expressed in a vital synagogue, has a chance at building a foundation for our children and our children's children to stand on. Only an ancient faith, co-existent with all of human history, speaking to the issues of our generation, can keep this people alive.

The Union, together with the Central Conference of American Rabbis and the Hebrew Union College, continues to evolve. Since his installation as president of the Union in 1996, Rabbi Eric Yoffie has led the Reform Movement in exciting directions. Deeply involved in issues of social justice and community concern, he is a prominent spokesperson for sensible gun control and works toward strengthening interfaith relations. Rabbi Yoffie has labored tirelessly also on behalf of the Jewish state and the rights of Reform Jews

in Israel, and meets frequently with Israel's elected officials to present the concerns of the Reform Movement and North American Jewry. He has been a powerful champion of inter-religious affairs and bold outreach to the American muslim community.

Social action by itself cannot guarantee Jewish survival. But Judaism without social justice is an untended garden, an ancient relic, a monument to a dead faith. I came to this work believing that. I still do. And I still believe that Judaism is our only real immortality.

Bernard and Audre Rapoport

L'Taken Social Justice Seminars 2009-2010

A program of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism

The *L'Taken* Seminar is an intensive four-day teen *kallah* in Washington, DC, focused on Jewish values and social justice.

L'taken olam b'malchut Shaddai

To repair the world under the realm of the Eternal

Every year, nearly 2,000 high school-aged students participate in this exciting event. Each weekend brings together students from around the country to explore public policy and social activism through a Jewish lens. This unique Washington opportunity lets students hear from experts from both inside and outside of the Jewish community. Every L'Taken Seminar covers several different issue areas in a variety of interactive formats. Each seminar includes an opportunity to tour the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum and a Havdallah service at one of the Memorials. Students also sample the vibrancy of Georgetown and other exciting areas of Washington.

High school students from across the country participate in:

Torah - Jewish Learning

Learning Jewish social justice values, the legislative process, and the political and the social reality we need to transform.

Avodah - Prayer

Connecting holiness and justice through creative worship services.

Gemilut Chasadim - Action

Visiting Capitol Hill and lobbying Senators' and Representatives' offices on the issues students have studied throughout the weekend.

What are the dates?

There will be six L'Taken seminars during the 2009-2010 academic year:

Dec. 11-14, 2009

Jan. 8-11, 2010

Jan. 22-25, 2010

Jan. 29-Feb. 1, 2010

Feb. 19-22, 2010

Mar. 5-8, 2010

The cost for the program is based on accommodations, as indicated below:

4 to a room (2 shared double beds) \$354

3 to a room (2 beds & cot, if available) \$395

2 to a room (2 beds) \$464

1 to a room \$649

Students and chaperones must room separately.

There is an extra charge to reserve a cot

This cost includes:

Three nights stay in the hotel

All program materials and speakers' fees

Saturday, Sunday, and Monday breakfast

Saturday and Sunday lunch

Friday night dinner

*Other meals and local transportation are NOT included. For groups without buses, local transportation can be arranged at an approximate cost of **\$50 per person** for the weekend.*

Programming for the weekend begins at 6:00 pm on Friday with Shabbat dinner and concludes on Monday at 3:00 pm on Capitol Hill. Participants are required to attend the entire program.

The weekend is filled with an overabundance of activities. Successfully engaging hundreds of teenagers and keeping them to a tight schedule requires that we all work together. Please make sure that all of the chaperones who are coming with your group know how much we depend on them to help ensure the weekend runs smoothly. **We require one adult chaperone for every nine students.**

If you need special arrangements for your group, such as a sign language interpreter or handicapped-accessible transportation, please let us know immediately.

Cancellation Policy:

To allow as many congregations as possible to participate in the seminars, we must require a \$40 nonrefundable deposit per participant (both students and chaperones) to reserve space for your group. "Nonrefundable" means that if you reserve for 20 and only 17 attend, only \$680 of your \$800 deposit will be applied to your final bill.

To provide ample opportunity for groups that are on the waiting list to sign up, we must have an exact count and full payment for your group eight weeks prior to the conference. After that point, there will be an additional \$45 penalty for each cancelled spot (making a total of \$85/person). Additional participants will be added only if there is space available. *Cancellations made less than 72 hours in advance will be charged the full fee.* All refunds and readjustments will be made after the conference.

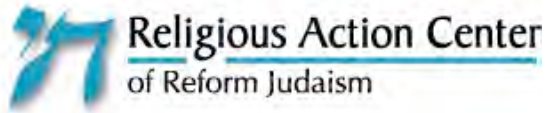
Reservations will be accepted only from congregations who are in good standing with the URJ and who do not have an outstanding balance with the Religious Action Center.

Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism

The Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism (RAC) has been the hub of Jewish social justice and legislative activity in the Washington, DC, area for more than 40 years. It has educated and mobilized the American Jewish community on legislative and social concerns as an advocate in the Congress of the United States on issues ranging from Israel and human rights to a woman's right to choose and civil rights, to international peace and religious liberty. The RAC is the Washington office of the Union for Reform Judaism and the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR), encompassing 1.5 million Reform Jews and 1,800 Reform rabbis in more than 900 congregations throughout North America. To learn more about the RAC, visit our website at www.rac.org.

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Barbara Kuhn Fund





Bernard and Audre Rapoport

L'Taken Teen Social Justice Seminars 2009-2010

A program of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism

Registration Form

Contact Name: _____

Congregation: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

E-mail: _____

Date requested:

1st Choice _____

2nd Choice _____

Reservations are taken only in writing, on a first-come, first-served basis, after [April 6, 2009](#).

A \$40 nonrefundable deposit per participant (both students and chaperones) is necessary to hold space for your group. Please make checks payable to the Religious Action Center.

Enclosed is \$ _____ to reserve _____ spaces for my group.

To insure that your registration is processed properly, please mail this form and your check to:

**L'Taken Seminars – Registration 2009-10
Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism
2027 Massachusetts Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20036**

Questions? Please contact Katie Dochen or Cara Fisher.

Phone 202.387.2800

Fax 202.667.9070

E-mail: KDochen@rac.org or CFisher@rac.org