

CD-1111 Transcription

WINS radio commentaries. 1988-1989.

ANNOUNCER: WINS news time is 7:57. Now here's a commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum and the American Jewish Committee.

MARC TANENBAUM: November 9th marks the fiftieth anniversary of *Kristallnacht* or Crystal Night. Crystal Night derives its name from the plate glass shattered by the Nazi storm troopers during the first organized pogrom against and Austrian Jews that foreshadow the Nazi Holocaust that was to follow. That night of terror resulted in the killing of 36 Jews, the deportation of 30,000 to concentration camps, and the burning down of 400 synagogues and the destruction of 7,500 homes and businesses, which were littered with smashed glass, in the streets of nearly every German and Austrian city and town. According to historians, *Kristallnacht* signified that Nazi Germany had passed the point of no return on the path to regression to barbarism.

Recently, a group of 85 theologians, including 15 delegates from West Germany's churches, met at a major symposium in Philadelphia on the Nazi Holocaust. They made this moving public declaration. "We remember with shame," they said,

[01:00] "the days when we abandoned the Jews in the fact of

the enemy. And we call upon Christians everywhere to repent for our acts of betrayal of the Jews on *Kristallnacht* and at other times in their painful history, to be alert to anti-Semitism wherever it may arise and to do all within our power to oppose it." During these days of *Kristallnacht* remembrance, we join our Jewish brothers and sisters in saying, "Never again." This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, of the American Jewish Committee.

ANNOUNCER: The preceding was a commentary. The views expressed are not necessarily the views of WINS.

(break in audio)

ANNOUNCER: WINS News time, 7:56. Now, here's a commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: *Kristallnacht* and the Nazi Holocaust, which are commemorated this Tuesday, have been thought for a long time by some people to be a Jewish obsession. Increasingly, many Christians in America and Europe are beginning to deal with the fact that Nazi savagery was also a Christian and broadly human problem. For Nazism was an assault on all moral standards. It brought about the [02:00] collapse of all values, in an advanced country of ancient Christian culture. The ideological mechanism of the Nazis was to

[monsterize?], dehumanize the Jews, the Slavs, and other people, and thereby made possible their mass destruction.

That black legacy of the Nazis continues today, in many parts of the world where religious racial and tribal groups engage in [monsterizing?] and destroying each other. In Saint Patrick's Cathedral today, Cardinal John O'Connor celebrates a mass in remembrance of the victims of *Kristallnacht*. Across the country this week, churches and synagogues are lighting up their sanctuaries in solemn recollection of the Holocaust. Thus what was first thought of as a uniquely Jewish problem, is now beginning to be understood as having a message for the survival of a whole human family. This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

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ANNOUNCER: WINS News time 7:56. Now, here's a commentary by [03:00] Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: The prospect that recent Israeli elections may result in a coalition with Ultra-Orthodox religious parties, has become the cause of concern among most American Jews. The right-wing Orthodox group, some of whom have been reluctant to recognize the existence of a State of Israel before the Messiah comes, are now positioning themselves to impose their theocratic views through the naked use of political leverage. The crucial deal they're demanding is that the Law of Return be amended in a way that will deny the legitimacy of Conservative and Reform Jews as authentic Jews. No other issue can lead to widespread alienation and worse, between American Jews, most of whom are non-Orthodox, and Israel as this action. Clearly the "who is a Jew?" question is reviving the clericalism versus anti-clericalism struggle within Israel itself, threatening the unity of that fragile society.

Yasser Arafat and the Palestine National Council met this weekend and took a tough anti-Israel line. [04:00] If this blind struggle mounted by Jews against Jews continues, these political parties may do more damage to Israel's security than Arafat has ever been able to manage. This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, of the American Jewish Committee.

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ANNOUNCER:       WINS news time is 7:55. Now here's a commentary  
                  by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM:       There is a quality of Greek tragedy in the latest  
                  developments in the Middle East. Most American Jews have  
                  been deeply disturbed by political efforts of the ultra-  
                  orthodox religious parties in Israel, to delegitimize their  
                  status as Jews. A great deal of time and energy is being  
                  spent by Jewish leaders in persuading Prime Minister Shamir  
                  not to capitulate to the Ultra-Orthodox ultimatums.  
                  Meanwhile, back in Algiers, the PLO proclaims a Palestinian  
                  state and presents Yasser Arafat as born-again peacemaker.  
                  While American Jews are busy trying to preserve their  
                  legitimacy as Jews, Arafat is busily working to win  
                  diplomatic [05:00] recognition from communist and Arab  
                  governments for his state without borders. The irony is he  
                  making a media impression as a moderate and a peace-lover.  
                  But if you read carefully the full text of the Algiers  
                  declaration, you'll see that it is more deceptive rhetoric  
                  than real. By saying he accepts not only UN Resolutions

242, and 338, but the 1947 Partition Plan, the PLO will now claim not only the West Bank and Gaza but also Western Galilee, Be'er Sheva, and Israel's coastland. Israeli and American Jews must deal with their religious problem, but they cannot afford to be diverted from responding forcefully to Arafat's latest bag of tricks. This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, of the American Jewish Committee.

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(break in audio)

ANNOUNCER: Now here's a commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: A remarkable international conference of some 70 Jewish and Christian scholars and religious leaders [06:00] will begin a four-day symposium on the theme, "Jews and Christians in a pluralistic world." Scholars come all over Eastern and Western Europe, the United States, Israel and South America. It is meeting in Vienna and is entirely academic in its purposes, with absolutely no political agenda. From my conversations in Rome last week, as well as here, it is clear that a dramatic turnabout in Jewish-

Christian relations is taking place, certainly on leadership levels.

From papers that are being presented, including my own, it is clear that a revolution of mutual esteem is beginning to take place between the church and synagogue. For the most of the past 1,900 years, the Christian West was dominated by teachings of contempt and demonizing the Jews and Judaism. Since Vatican Council II, step by step, that negative Christian theology is being systematically dismantled. It is being replaced by a concept of a permanent validity of Judaism and a covenantal partnership of [07:00] Christians and Jews in common service to a troubled humanity. Hopefully, this summit meeting of scholars will give further impetus and depth to this humanizing movement. This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, of the American Jewish Committee.

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ANNOUNCER:       WINS news time is 7:56. Now here's a commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: Is Hanukkah just a Jewish form of Christmas? A religion editor of wire service asked me that question recently. His interview caused me to reflect on the extraordinary change that has taken place in the way most American Jews, especially the younger generation, have come to observe Hanukkah, the eight-day festival which began last night. It was not too long ago when the children of Jewish immigrants were desperate to assimilate as 100% Americans. Many felt that their parents' religious practices were foreign, and therefore a barrier to their Americanization. In their drive to become assimilated, [08:00] many Jews of that transition generation adopted the attractive symbols of Christmas. The Christmas trees in their homes and the presents they gave their children had little to do with Christian observance. It was far more an act of identifying with a civil religion of America.

Today there has been a widespread return of thousands of young Jews to their ancient Jewish traditions, while respecting the faith of Christians, who observe Christmas as an authentic holy day, Jews increasingly observe Hanukkah as a genuine Jewish festival in its own terms. Thus, the Maccabean struggle has become an experience of personal as well as national liberation of modern Jews who

rediscover their own Jewish roots and rich heritage. This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, of the American Jewish Committee.

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ANNOUNCER: WINS news time is 7:57. Twenty degrees, mostly clear in New York, going up today to 33 in Midtown. Now here's a commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: The decision of [09:00] the United States government to legitimize the PLO through direct dialogue, is fraught with fateful ambiguity. It is either a crisis that could become an opportunity for peace, or it is an opportunity that could explode into a even greater crisis. There should be no confusion about Jewish attitudes. The majority of American Jews, I believe, trust President Reagan and Secretary Schultz. They are true friends of the Jewish people and of Israel.

The real issue is that practically no one trusts Arafat or the PLO. Arafat spent weeks working on a joint agreement with King Hussein of Jordan and then publicly rejected

their written understanding. Arafat, in a circus of publicity, announces that he accepts America's conditions for a dialogue, specifically recognition of the State of Israel, and rejection of terrorism. At the very same moment, the radical Marxist PLO factions of [Habach?] and [Avatme?] tell the Arab press that they will never give up terrorism or accept Israel.

So who does Arafat really represent? The critical issue as I see it, is how to discover [10:00] true moderate Palestinians who will work unambiguously for peace, and not just engage in propaganda warfare. America and the world have a great stake in being completely realistic, and in not being trapped in verbal deceptions and in massive hype. This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, of the American Jewish Committee.

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ANNOUNCER: WINS news time 7:57. Now here's a commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM:       When I was a child, I lived in Baltimore, Maryland, and my parents owned a small general store in a poor working-class neighborhood. My father and mother were immigrants from Tsarist Russia, and as Orthodox Jews, they took their religion seriously. All of us in that neighborhood, Irish, Italians, blacks and Jews had suffered desperately together through the Depression years. On the last afternoon of December 24th, 1940, I found my mother in the back of our store, taking down groceries from [11:00] half-bare shelves. She was packing them into baskets, and tied red and green ribbons around them. I asked her what she was doing, and she answered she had just found out that several of our Christian neighbors were stone broke, and did not have enough money to buy food for Christmas dinner. "It is Christmas," my mother said, "and it would be terrible if our neighbors would go hungry on their holiday." And this Orthodox Jewish woman and her son went out into the neighborhood, handing out Christmas baskets as if they were Santa Claus. I often think of that lovely moment as I walk the streets of New York at this season, and wonder why this spirit of people caring spontaneously for other people prevails mainly from December to January, and why not from January to December? This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, of the American Jewish Committee.

ANNOUNCER: The preceding was a commentary by the Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum.

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ANNOUNCER: Now here's a commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: For the Jewish community, 1988 [12:00] was not the worst of years, but it was far from the best of years. Some good things happened, among them the immigration of some 17,000 Jews from the Soviet Union, and the passes by Congress of the Genocide Convention. But 1988 was haunted by the "Who is a Jew?" controversy in Israel, and the turmoil over Middle East peace. While Israel's new unity government may have diffused the "Who is a Jew?" issue for the time being, it would be naïve to pretend that it has gone away. Nineteen eighty-nine must see major efforts by rabbis and lay leaders and all Jewish religious groups, to find a procedure for conversion to Judaism that could be adopted by all. The future of the Jewish people depends on it.

The other burning issue over trustworthy peace with the Palestinians will dominate the coming year. In the wake of

the tragic Pan Am explosion, all Americans as well as Jews are fiercely against terrorism, but that anger does not absolve Israel, the Palestinians nor the Arab states from putting aside rhetoric and negativism and pursuing actively realistic peace initiatives. [13:00] If 1989 is to be more peaceful than the last year, it will require nothing less than a sea change in attitudes among many people in many places. This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, of the American Jewish Committee.

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ANNOUNCER: WINS News time, 7:57. Now here's a commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: Did United State Navy pilots act irresponsibly in shooting down the two Libyan mid planes who pursued them? Is the American government presuming to play policeman by focusing world attention on Colonel Gaddafi's chemical warfare plant? If you listen to some of our European allies and other nations, you would think this entire issues is just another Hollywood B-movie. While history teaches us some important lessons about why it is vital to support our

government's realistic policies towards Gaddafi and other terrorists.

In the first centuries of this era, the powerful Roman Empire and China developed extensive networks of communication [14:00] and commerce along the South route, which enriched both European and Oriental cultures. By the third century, some third-rate powers supported acts of continuous piracy against this commerce. Failure by Europe and China to contain the epidemic of these pirates led to a breakdown in their relations for some 1,200 years. Modern Libya and its terrorist allies are such contemporary pirates, seeking to blackmail the international community. Only vigorous responses by the United States and the wiser among our allies can prevent such a repetition in the breakdown of civilized world community. This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, of the American Jewish Committee.

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ANNOUNCER:       Now here's a commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: The life and monumental career of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., whose birthday the nation observes tomorrow, was deeply intertwined with American Jews. During a memorial observance we held for Dr. King in Atlanta some years ago, [15:00] his father, the Reverend Daddy King, declared publicly, "The Jewish people were among the earliest and most trusted friends of Martin King and the movement." He then described how an Atlanta Jewish lawyer and accountant had literally saved the infant Civil Rights movement from political efforts to snuff it out.

I first met Dr. King in February 1963. I had the privilege of inviting him to address his first ecumenical meeting when I served as program chairman of the National Conference on Religion and Race in Chicago. It was at this historic gathering of some 1,700 religious leaders that the decision was made to hold the August march on Washington. As Jews were committed to him and his moral cause, so was Dr. King a trusted supporter of Jewish causes. He vigorously opposed anti-Semitism, aided Soviet Jews and supported Israel's security. Blacks and Jews today would do well to study together Martin Luther King's vision and words of healing and trusted cooperation. This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, of the American Jewish Committee. [16:00]

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ANNOUNCER: WINS news time is 7:57. Now here's a commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: President George Bush's Inaugural Address was a moving appeal for a kinder, gentler America and world society. All Americans I'm sure pray for his strength and moral stamina to lead our nation in realizing his compassionate goals. American Jews in particular have added reasons for believing his words are more than political rhetoric. When President Bush was US Ambassador to the United Nations, I appealed to him to intervene with the Soviet Union, in order to free three hardship cases of Russian Jews. He made immediate representations to Moscow that resulted in the early exit of these so deprived families. Another instance was his little known, but critical role in negotiating the historic departure of some 12,000 black Jews of Ethiopia to Israel. We hope he will now try to rescue the remaining 15,000 Ethiopian Jews [17:00] who seek to be reunited with their families. As Vice President Bush, he was totally committed to combat

international terrorism, and that commitment remains strong, and I believe it will be an important factor in his efforts to promote peace in the Middle East. President Bush has called for a new engagement to build a more generous and caring America. His record thus far with the Jewish people among others is a sign that we can expect him to keep his word. This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, of the American Jewish Committee.

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ANNOUNCER: WINS News time, 7:56. Now here's a commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: The announcement last week by Catholic authorities about the Carmelite Convent is being moved away from the grounds of Auschwitz to a nearby new center, is a constructive move in the right direction. In 1984, 10 Carmelite nuns took over a former Nazi warehouse in Auschwitz, in which Zyklon B gas was stored for use in gas chambers. [18:00] They converted the warehouse into a convent to pray for martyrs and the unconverted. Nowhere in their fund-raising literature did they refer to the Nazi

massacres of more than a million Jews in that death camp. Jews clearly are not opposed to the Carmelite's prayers, and most Jews understand the appropriateness of honoring Polish Catholic victims of Nazism. But Auschwitz was built by the Nazis for the primary purpose of exterminating European Jews. Rather than enact a reconciliation, the convent became a gesture of appropriation. Fortunately, five leading European cardinals of the Vatican and Pope John Paul himself understood the central symbolic meaning of Auschwitz to the Jewish people. They have finally persuaded the Carmelite nuns to move their convent to a new center of prayer and study, but off the blood-stained grounds of Auschwitz. As the pope declared to surviving Polish Jews last year, "Auschwitz is a monument to barbarism and anti-Semitism and it must remain intact as a sign and witness to all mankind." This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, [19:00] of the American Jewish Committee.

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ANNOUNCER:       Now here's a commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM:        There remains something deeply unsettling about the Joel Steinberg/Hedda Nussbaum trial. I am not talking about the legal decision itself. The democratic virtues of the jury system again worked effectively. What troubles me is that the central moral and social issues that this entire tragedy represents seems to get confused with the technical legalisms. Look at the moral magnitude of this human drama. Two apparently intelligent, highly educated people become sucked into a culture of drugs. Whatever role their cocaine fix played, their moral consciences in fact were drugged into oblivion. They became human robots who [unfearingly?] engaged in people battering, and in fatally abusing Lisa, their adopted child. That is one of the starkest and cruelest morality plays of our time. The social human [20:00] issues should not be forgotten with yesterday's headlines. We should be pursuing relentlessly how our social agencies and schools can be helped to intervene in such obvious tragedies. What can all of us do to transform our culture and de-mythologizing the chic-ness of drugs? How can we teach better and demonstrate by personal example the precious value of each human life? The trial is over, but these critical ethical issues must remain before us, if civilized life is to prevail over domestic

barbarism. This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, of the American Jewish Committee.

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ANNOUNCER: Now here's a commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: Two religious lies which have brought much havoc in Western civilization were powerfully repudiated last week. One religious lie is that of apartheid which has resulted in the terrible oppression of black people in South Africa. The other religious lie was that of deicide, the canard that the Jewish people [21:00] [22:00] are collectively responsible for the death of Christ. That absurd teaching became the engine for nearly 2,000 years of anti-Semitism which destroyed millions of Jewish lives. The Vatican Secretariat for Justice and Peace issues in Vatican City a major document on the Church and racism. The declaration rejected apartheid racism in all its forms, as a sin, and urged that it be uprooted. Calling anti-Semitism the most tragic form that racist ideologies assumed in our centuries, were the horrors of the Jewish Holocaust, the

Vatican called for the complete elimination of that ancient prejudice. This latest Vatican instruction could go a long way in countering the racist ideologies of both Apartheid and anti-Semitism. This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, of the American Jewish Committee.

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ANNOUNCER: WINS News time, 7:56. Now here's a commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: Last weekend, we observed Abraham Lincoln's birthday. Tomorrow, [22:00] we mark the birthday of George Washington, the father of our nation. Both were clearly great presidents who gave to all Americans an extraordinary legacy. In Chicago, there is a monument of General Washington clasping the hand of Robert Morris and that of Haym Salomon on his right. Robert Morris was a financier of the American Revolution. Haym Salomon was a Polish-Jewish immigrant who helped save the American Revolution by raising funds to sustain Washington's army. On the bottom of that Chicago monument are these words, written by President Washington in 1790 to the Jewish congregation in

Newport, Rhode Island. "The Government of the United States gives to bigotry no sanction, the persecution no assistance." Abraham Lincoln is readily immortalized for emancipating America from the slavery of black people. Less well known is the fact that Lincoln was equally opposed to anti-Jewish practices in the Union Army. This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, of the American Jewish Committee.

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ANNOUNCER: Now here's a commentary [23:00] by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: The death sentence pronounced for the Indian-British writer Salman Rushdie by Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini is morally disturbing in itself. No less frightening than the incitement to murder is what this turbulent event reveals to the world about the basic authoritarian character of some Muslim extremists and a threat to fundamental democratic values. If Rushdie has unfairly maligned the high religion of Islam in his novel Satanic Verses, then he deserves to be publicly criticized and corrected. The notion however that a work of fiction

justifies an international campaign whose purpose is the killing of the author smacks of medieval fanaticism. Instead of book burning we have had wholesale terrorism that wants to empty book shelves. This tragic episode discloses the core of a fanatic world view which defines mankind as putting in a clash between the children of light and the satanic children of darkness. In that world view, Satan must be destroyed. The present campaign is not only a threat [24:00] to Rushdie's life, but an attack on the Satan of Western civilization. The United States and major western powers understand that if they capitulate to this fanatic explosion, they will be inviting for a greater cataclysm against the West in the near future. This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, of the American Jewish Committee.

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ANNOUNCER: WINS News time 7:56. Now here's a commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: The defeat of Senator John Tower's candidacy as Secretary of Defense was described by one commentator last week as, "an orgy of hypocritical Puritanism." There may

well be hypocrisy at work in that real-life melodrama, but I think something more basic was also happening. Many Americans, I believe, are seeking higher standards of ethical behavior of their public leaders. They are becoming fed up with the cynical cultivation of public images of alleged integrity while living lives of private dissolution. That is not as much Puritanism, as it is a search for authenticity, [25:00] somebody who really deserves your trust. In many ways, it is a return to moral codes of right and wrong, truth telling and basic honesty. I see it also as an effort to reconnect today's America with a cult of public virtue which dominated the American Revolution. Revolutionary thinkers insisted over and again that free government was in large part, a matter of virtue and practical ethics, and they held that mirror up to the conscience of all Americans and not just our politicians. This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, of the American Jewish Committee.

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(break in audio)

ANNOUNCER: WINS News time 7:56. Now here's a commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: Purim, the festival of lots, which the Jewish people celebrates this Tuesday, commemorates the triumph of Esther, the Jewish Queen of Ancient Persia, and her uncle Mordecai in defeating a genocidal plot some 2,500 years ago. What makes the central event of Purim so familiar is the propaganda [26:00] that the evil minister Haman presents in the Book of Esther for his attempted massacre of the Jews. He uses all the stereotypes used by bigots and anti-Semites in every age, including our own. He tells the Persian King Ahasuerus that the Jews live by a religion and customs that differ from others. "If it pleases the King," Haman says, "let it be written that they be destroyed." Thus, the inability of a rigid authoritarian mind to live with the difference becomes an argument for destroying difference. Sounds familiar, doesn't it? Remarkably, a Jewish folk-ism that understands humor as the personalities' means of triumphing over suffering has transformed Purim into a uniquely Jewish Mardi Gras with noise makers and gift-giving, especially to the poor. Purim has thereby become an annual joyful reminder that religious difference must be seen as a source of enrichment rather

than as a threat. This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, of the American Jewish Committee.

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ANNOUNCER: [27:00] WINS News time is 7:57. Now here's a commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: Passover and Easter are both springtime festivals, but their similarities and ritual practices are more than an accident of the calendar. The late professor Julian Morgenstern, a great Jewish biblical scholar, wrote that the entire Holy Week observances simply cannot be understood apart from their origins in Judaism. Both the pilgrimage to Jerusalem, with the waving of palm branches was an early religious practice of the country Jews of Palestine. Jesus and his disciples who are mainly Galilean farmers conformed to that Jewish folk ritual of purification before Passover. Also in the early Jewish agricultural calendar, Sunday was a sacred day, measured from sunrise to sunrise. Easter Sunday therefore, was based on the ancient Israelite practice of religious services at

sunrise. Professor Morgenstern also notes that the theme of death and resurrections traces back to Jewish traditions. Before Passover, King David went to the Mount of Olives, [28:00] where he defeated the Angel of Death and then returned to Jerusalem in a joyous procession. Today, Judaism and Christianity are two distinctive, proud and independent religions. Their common origins as well as their differences should enlarge our mutual respect, as members of God's human family. This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, of the American Jewish Committee.

ANNOUNCER: Now, here's a commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

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TANENBAUM: The headline on today's *New York Times* story reads, "Jews Divided by a Convent at Auschwitz." If you read Peter Steinfeld's entire story, you will realize that virtually all responsible Jewish leadership are united on the issue of moving the Carmelite convent to another site, off the grounds of Auschwitz. Where Jewish differences do exist, are in relation to the best methods for bringing about the last stage of the convent's removal. As I told leaders of the World Jewish Congress directly, I am

unalterably opposed to their proposal, calling on Jews throughout the world to try to boycott meetings with Pope John Paul II. I regard that melodramatic [29:00] gesture as absurd, mischievous, and counter-productive. Having been closely involved with European, Catholic and Jewish leaders, and negotiations over the convent's removal, I know for a fact that the pope made several quiet interventions that resulted in the Carmelite nuns giving up their stiff resistance. Similar sensitivity to Jewish feelings about Auschwitz was also shown by Polish and other European Catholic authorities. By what moral logic do we reward good will by threats of boycotts? The task before us now, Catholics and Jews, is to move expeditiously so that Auschwitz remains a sacred place of memory for each of us, and not a field of strife and contention. This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, of the American Jewish Committee.

ANNOUNCER: The preceding was a commentary and the views expressed are not --

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ANNOUNCER: WINS News time 7:55. Now here's a commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: The death of Paul Grossinger last week marked the end of an era, but not the end of a legend. Paul's parents, [Jenny?] and Harry Grossinger began their fabled career [30:00] as impoverished immigrants on Hester Street. For reasons of health and income, they bought a small farm in the Catskill Mountains 75 years ago. They took in boarders and their sumptuous kosher meals became such an attraction that they then bought a small hotel. Selig Grossinger's hotel became both an American and Jewish legend. Strictly traditional Jews were enabled to observe the dietary laws, and a warm hospitable atmosphere of an extended Jewish family. Grossinger's also became a kind of American embassy, receiving presidents, governors, mayors, politicians, media and sport stars. Remarkably it turned into a nursery for major Jewish comedians. Paul Grossinger, a soft-spoken and warm-hearted person was the Pater Familias of that Catskill resort. He was also very generous in his support of hospitals, community colleges and public charities. At 1:00 p.m., funeral services today at the Riverside Chapel, his friends and admirers bid a loving farewell to this good and decent man, and favorable legend he symbolized. This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, [31:00] of the American Jewish Committee.

ANNOUNCER: WINS News time is 7:56. Now a commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: This coming Wednesday evening, the Jewish people throughout the world begin the observance of Passover, the festival of freedom. The oldest and most influential of Jewish festivals, Passover commemorates the liberation of the Israelites from bondage to Pharaoh in Egypt. The exodus from Egypt was both an event of physical and spiritual liberation that literally changed the moral course of history. In Ancient Egypt, life was characterized by cruel human slavery and total obedience to Pharaoh. Pharaoh was worshipped as a God, and regarded as the source of all law, but never its servant. When Moses and the Israelites rejected the spiritual values of Ancient Egypt, they won a victory for the dignity of every human life and for the rule of law. Thus Passover celebrates redemption from slavery, not only as a past event, but as a present day experience. At the colorful Passover Seder this year, uppermost on Jewish minds [32:00] will be concern for advancing the Middle East peace process, the security of Israel, constant caring for vulnerable Jewish communities, as well as for the hungry and homeless the world over. Beyond all else there will be the hopeful refrain for a better, humane world, symbolized by the prayer, "Next Year

in Jerusalem." This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, of the American Jewish Committee.

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(break in audio)

ANNOUNCER: WINS News time 7:56. Now here's a commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: One of the most magnetic moments of the Passover Seder takes place early in that Jewish family service. The head of the household points to the *matzos* on the Seder plate, with its symbolic fruit, signifying both slavery and redemption, and chants this prayer in Aramaic. "This is the bread of poverty that our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt. Let all who are hungry come and eat with us." That Passover message has inspired a number of Jewish groups to provide [33:00] life-saving relief to both Jews and non-Jews throughout the world who are today enslaved by poverty and hunger. The American Jewish World Services, a relief and development organization, dedicated to alleviating starvation and underdevelopment in Asia, Africa and Latin America. AJWS assists people in need, regardless of race or religion. Based on the Jewish values of *tzedakah* and

*chesed*, social justice and compassion, AJWS helps needy people become self-sufficient. As Larry Phillips, its chairman, puts it, "We provide not a fish, but a fishing net to the hungry." At this Passover period of redemption, AJWS has launched a fresh appeal for those in need. If you would like to help, please call area code (617) 267-6656. This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, of the American Jewish Committee.

ANNOUNCER: The preceding was a commentary and the views expressed are not necessarily the views of WINS.

(break in audio)

ANNOUNCER: WINS News time 7:56. Now here's a commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum [34:00] of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: Once, a Christian friend bluntly asked me, "Why do the Jews observe every year Holocaust Remembrance Day? Can't the Jews ever forget and forgive?" However troubling such comments can be, I believe that the general society should understand that *Yom HaShoah* holds profound meaning for Jews but also for mankind. The Nazis singled out only the Jewish people for total extermination through the Holocaust, but thinking Christians need to acknowledge

their own stake in coming to terms with the Nazi's barbarism. The Holocaust represented a total breakdown of the moral universe of Germany and other European countries of ancient Christian civilization. This systematic murder machine was organized not by crazies and psychos, but by some of the most celebrated PhDs, industrialists and scientists of those countries. It was a supreme act of dehumanizing Jews and others in our century. Today, the world witnesses fanatic regimes with chemical, biological and nuclear capacity. They also dehumanize [35:00] their enemies as Hitler did the Jews. The *Yom HaShoah* commemoration today at Felt Forum should help all of us better understand the meaning of the Holocaust for the future of mankind, as for the Jewish people. This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, of the American Jewish Committee.

ANNOUNCER: The preceding was a commentary and the views expressed are not necessarily the views of WINS.

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ANNOUNCER: Here's a commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: On the surface, it appeared to be a moral contradiction. Last Thursday, the Pentagon sponsored a

National Day of Prayer. The anomaly I first thought was that the Pentagon of the military branches have one primary mission, the defense of national security. Military training prepares people to kill, in order to protect our nation, but prayer at its steepest level affirms the precious value of life, the pursuit of peace and social justice. I was the keynote speaker at that Pentagon observance, and I sensed again something special in this experience. The generals and the soldiers, airmen and sailors I met are no Prussian Junkers, [36:00] nor mercenaries given to obsessive killing or imperial domination. This is the military of American democracy. Its legitimacy derives from its defense of human dignity, civil and political liberties and social justice. However, corruption and fraud could compromise its moral mission. The military chaplaincy which sponsored this prayer day, is an important force in America's religious pluralism. The chaplain's motto is, "Community without compromise." It demonstrates that every religious group has the right to be entirely committed to its own traditions, while at the same time, being responsible for the common welfare. That Pentagon Prayer Day was a healthy demonstration that the American genius of unity in the midst of diversity is alive

and well. This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, of the American Jewish Committee.

ANNOUNCER: The preceding was a commentary. The views expressed are not necessarily the views of WINS.

(break in audio)

ANNOUNCER: WINS News time 7:56. Here's a commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: Mother's Day [37:00] is a warm and wonderful national observance that helps bring families closer together. Like most Americans, I enjoy giving flowers and other gifts to mothers and mothers-in-law who surely deserve these displays of love and affection. But I must confess that frequently a shadow hovers over Mother's Day for me. In 1978, I was in Thailand, on an international rescue committee mission to Indochinese refugees. In one refugee camp, a young Vietnamese mother in her mid-twenties was trying to breast feed her malnourished infant. They were both wasted by hunger and disease, and they soon died before my eyes. I think about that mother and her child, and I often wonder what connection that has with our Mother's Day. Well, one connection, I think, is that in the midst of our Mother's Day celebrations today, we should be

finding a place in our thoughts about millions of such destitute, hungry and homeless mothers and their families. And I wonder if our mothers themselves would not welcome our earmarking some of our Mother's Day expenditures to help relieve the poverty and suffering of so many other mothers [38:00] here and overseas. That would make Mother's Day a day to really remember. This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, of the American Jewish Committee.

ANNOUNCER: The preceding was a commentary and the views expressed are not necessarily the views of WINS.

(break in audio)

ANNOUNCER: WINS News time, 7:56. Now here's a commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: Congressman John Lewis of Atlanta was probably the most physically beaten Civil Rights leader in the 1960s. As organizer of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, he led in mobilizing some 10 million voters to register. Like the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., he became, to many American Jews, one of the most respected and trusted black leaders in the nation. In early May, early 2,000 blacks and Jews came together at Queens College to honor the memories of Michael Schwerner, Andrew Goodman,

and James Chaney, the Jewish and black youths who were murdered by white racists in Mississippi in 1964.

Congressman Lewis and I were the keynote speakers of that moving twenty-fifth observance. Lewis told that audience, which included hundreds of young blacks and Jews, [39:00] "We are not each other's enemies. Together, we have many enemies out there, and it is usually the same people who hate blacks and Jews." My remarks centered on the deep trust that Dr. King and Congressman Lewis established with American Jewish leadership. Both opposed fiercely anti-Semitism, as well as racism, supported Israel's democracy and the human rights of Soviet Jews. And Jews reciprocated when they appealed for help. If black-Jewish relations are to be restored to health, Congressman John Lewis and his Jewish peers will be models for that renewal. This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, of the American Jewish Committee.

ANNOUNCER: The preceding was a commentary and the views expressed are not necessarily the views of WINS.

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ANNOUNCER: Here's a commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: From its beginnings, Memorial Day has united symbolically the American people. Powerful bonds of memory and gratitude are shared in honor of the military who sacrifice their lives in defense of human dignity, democracy and freedom. It is a perplexing irony on this Memorial Day, [40:00] that while peace and stability have become increasingly secure in many parts of the world, our domestic streets have become more threatened by crime, drugs and violence. Our major cities, New York, Washington, Los Angeles, among others, have become the new battlefields. The gang-rape of the young woman jogger in Central Park, the high school athletes in New Jersey assaulting a disabled teenager, the daily toll of mindless violence and brutality increases. There will be long discussions and studies about the reasons for this destructive pattern, but one thing seems self-evident: we are indulging almost passively a popular culture that links sex and violence as inextricable. It's fun in entertainment to main, rape and even kill. In many ways, the value of human life is becoming shredded before our eyes. We, all of us, had best reverse that dehumanization while there is still time. Memorial Day should remind us that American military men and women did not sacrifice their lives in

order to preserve a morally vicious society. This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, [41:00] of the American Jewish Committee.

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ANNOUNCER: -- Rabbi Tanenbaum.

TANENBAUM: Beginning at sundown this Thursday evening, the Jewish people will observe Shavuot, the festival of weeks, or Pentecost. Originally, a biblical festival of thanksgiving for new crops in ancient Palestine, Shavuot assumed great spiritual significance through its celebration of the giving of the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai. The rabbi's speak of Shavuot as the concluding festival to Passover. The physical freedom won at Passover became humanly meaningful to the spiritual freedom, realized by Israel's accepting the moral law. Every human society requires law, and moral respect for the law as the foundation of civilized life. The notion that true religion and morality are a matter of private conscious or good feelings alone, and that law, discipline, and ethical standards are a burden, ultimately contribute to anarchy. This anti-law mentality, which exists in many [42:00] parts

of our world society may well explain the spread of crime, violence, corruption, and terrorism. When Jews recite the 120 words Decalogue on Shavuot, they are, in fact, calling prophetically on themselves, and on all peoples to a society in which respect for moral law is the surest guarantee for all human liberties. This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, of the American Jewish Committee.

ANNOUNCER: The preceding was a commentary and the views expressed are not necessarily the views of WINS.

(break in audio)

ANNOUNCER: Now, here's a commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: It was not as publicly dramatic as the turbulent revolutions for democracy in China, the Soviet Union, and Poland. But it was a revolution for liberty nonetheless. Last week, President Richard von Weizsäcker of the Federal Republic of Germany met in New York with several Jewish and Christian groups. He declared the commitment of his government and its political and other leaders to a total rejection of Nazi ideology, and its [ferment?] here as the constitutional democracy. [43:00] I believe that that was

not just another public relations speech made for export to America. President von Weizsäcker has become something of a legend in West German, especially to German youth. He has made one powerful speech after another, insisting that Germans must face the horrors of Nazi hatred and brutality, in order to learn lessons for building a democratic future. During his American Jewish Committee address, he also spoke movingly of the special relationship that West Germany has established with Israel since the early 1950s. The Federal Republic of Germany, today, is economically and politically, the most powerful nation in Europe. All of us, I believe, have a stake in encouraging its democratic future, and its commitment to human liberties. This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, of the American Jewish Committee.

ANNOUNCER: The preceding was a commentary, and the views expressed are not necessarily the views of WINS.

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ANNOUNCER: WINS news time, 7:55. Here's a commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: [44:00] Father's Day is at least as old as the Ten Commandments and the Bible. The Fifth Commandment enjoins, "Honor your father and mother." Rabbinic

commentators indicate that respect for fathers and mothers are among the primary marks of being human. The tradition adds that reverence for parents stands next to reverence for God. But that respect for parents is not automatic, nor a one way street. That ancient wisdom hold that parents need to be worthy of children's respect, trust, and love. Thus, if a parent lives a life of crime, dissolution, or corruption, a child is justified to be disobedient. In Ancient Rome, as in Judaism, the father had a clearly defined identity as the *pater familias*, he was trained in the home to be model of courage, responsibility, restraint, and realism. For a whole host of reasons, the image of the modern American father has frequently become confused. Is he daddy, buddy, or money-making machine? It might be helpful on Father's Day to try to recover some of the clarity of the father's role and [45:00] influence in the past. That would be at least as important as buying him five more dazzling ties. This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, of the American Jewish Committee.

ANNOUNCER:       The preceding was a commentary and the views expressed are not necessarily the views of WINS.

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ANNOUNCER: WINS news time, 7:56. Now, here's a commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: In Communist China, during these awful terror-ridden days, the politburo ruthlessly destroys the replica of the American Statue of Liberty, symbol of the pro-democratic Chinese people. In the United States last week, the Supreme Court rules that there can be no restraint on burning of the American flag. Don't misunderstand me, I don't want to suggest for a single moment that there is even the remotest analogy in these actions, but it does tell us something about how differently symbols should be understood in Chinese communism and American democracy. From our religious traditions, and from psychoanalysis, we know that symbols and symbolic language are the means by which human beings express [46:00] their deepest meanings and values. The Chinese totalitarian leaders seek to control, totally, the inner life of their people, and therefore, destroy the symbols of their souls. In our American democracy, flags and other national symbols must not become idolatrous objects. But surely, the American flag, which symbolizes our deepest commitments to democratic freedoms and human liberties, cannot be desecrated at will. The surest moral response to Chinese oppression must be the celebration of our democratic

symbols, not encouragement of their denial. This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, of the American Jewish Committee.

ANNOUNCER: The preceding was a commentary and the views expressed are not necessarily the views of WINS.

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ANNOUNCER: -- commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: Firecrackers, outdoor picnics, patriotic speeches, Statue of Liberty celebrations. Fourth of July is observed, again, this year, with such festivities. It is good for the nation, and for our people's usually harried psyches to have occasions for such celebrations. But somewhere in the [47:00] midst of the revelry, we ought to make sure that the ideals and values for which the American Revolution was fought do not get lost altogether. The American historian, Professor Richard Morris says, "It is important to regain the humane sense of national pride that was strong in revolutionary times." That pride sprang from the belief that America was, and is, a new experiment. It is based on a rejection of European class privilege, corruption, and authoritarian government. And on the positive side, America embodies the drive of ordinary

people for political equality, religious and personal freedom, and economic opportunity. That means, doing something real and meaningful about housing, schools, adequate wages for the poor, taking care of the homeless, protecting the environment, among other concerns. Not speakers and fireworks only, but of such acts of defending human life is what July 4<sup>th</sup> is really made of. This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, of the American Jewish Committee.

ANNOUNCER: The preceding was a commentary and the views expressed are not necessarily the views of WINS. [58:00]

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ANNOUNCER: WINS news time, 7:56. Now, a commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: The bicentennial of the French Revolution, climaxed by the observance of Bastille Day next Friday, has evoked much controversy among historians as in the media. Was it a blessing that resulted in the Declaration of the Rights of Man, or was it a revolution that made terror and violence its life force? For Jews, the French Revolution also had a split personality. On the positive side, it ended the old regime, the feudal monarchy which had denied Jews elementary rights as citizens. For most French and

other European Jews, the revolution carried, therefore, the Messianic hope of emancipation after so many centuries of oppression. Theodore Herzl, the architect of modern Zionism, was seized by those hopes for a liberated future, for his people and for all mankind. Then Herzl went to Paris as correspondent for the leading Viennese newspaper. In 1894, he encountered the bitter anti-Semitism of the Colonel Dreyfus [49:00] trial. The existence of both secular and religious anti-Semitism in the French republic 100 years after the revolution was traumatic for him. That encounter with the failing side of the French Revolution started Hertzl on his journey to create a Jewish state where Jews might finally be genuinely free, both as citizens and as equals. This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, of the American Jewish Committee.

ANNOUNCER: The preceding was a commentary and the views expressed are not necessarily the views of WINS.

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ANNOUNCER: Here's a commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: The images in Poland were contradictory and distressing. Last week, President Bush made an

unprecedented gesture for improved relations between the United States and Poland, based on political economic reforms, and respect for human rights. Over this weekend, a group of Polish working men brutally beat up on an American Orthodox rabbi and his students. The Jews had come to Auschwitz to protest the Carmelite convent built on the grounds of [50:00] that murderous death camp. I happen to believe that the nuns and Polish Catholics have every moral right to memorialize the several million Poles whom the Nazis killed. But they do not have a right to transform Auschwitz into an essentially Catholic holy place at the expense of what that purgatory represents to the Jewish people. I've spoken last week with Polish Catholic and other bishops in Krakow, Paris, and the Vatican. They share entirely our view that Auschwitz must be preserved as a sign and a warning. And that the Carmelites should move to another convent. The longer the standoff lasts, the heavier will become the burden on Catholic Jewish, and on Polish American relations. This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, of the American Jewish Committee.

ANNOUNCER: The preceding was a commentary, and the views expressed not necessarily the views of WINS.

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ANNOUNCER: Now a commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: The passing last week of Rabbi Gunter Hirschberg, president of the New York Board of Rabbis, has removed from the New York scene, [51:00] and the American rabbinate, one of its most distinguished and beloved leaders. Born in Germany, Rabbi Hirschberg was rescued through the children's escape mission to Great Britain in the late 1930s. Those traumatic experiences may well have left him a bitter, hostile person. But it is a mark of his extraordinary moral character that he became a man of genuine tolerance, caring and respect for other people. A deeply committed liberal rabbi, he demonstrated true regard and appreciation for every branch of Judaism and Jewish life. As Board of Rabbis president, he (inaudible) from Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform rabbis, and other Jewish leaders, the same quality of loyalty that he gave to them. Rabbi Hirschberg was also an active leader in the movement for Jewish Christian understanding. The fact that Cardinal O'Connor and numerous non-Jewish leaders came to his funeral to pay last respects is another sign of his wide impact for good. Gunter Hirschberg was a cantor with a beautiful baritone voice, which he used later as a

preaching rabbi in congregation (inaudible). His elegant voice and the warm [52:00] soul it expressed will reverberate among us for years to come. This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

ANNOUNCER: The preceding was a commentary, and the views expressed not necessarily --

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ANNOUNCER: Now a commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: I first met Felix Bloch, the alleged Soviet spy, during a mission to Vienna in mid-1986. I was part of an American Jewish Committee delegation that explored with the Austrian government organizing educational programs for Austrian youth about Nazism and anti-Semitism. Ronald Lauder, then recently appointed American ambassador to Austria, arranged for our group to meet with key embassy specialists for a briefing on Austrian American relations. Felix Bloch was present at that meeting, and at subsequent discussions. In light of his years of service in Austria, it was clear that he had much knowledge of Austrian American relations, and close contacts with its leaders. A number of people have asked me about Bloch's Jewish

background. He was apparently born of Austrian Jewish parents, but he was converted at an early age to the Presbyterian [53:00] church. Seemingly, his parents thought that as a Christian, he would be spared the horrors of anti-Semitism that his family had suffered in Austria. Whether he was a Christian or a Jew, I share Henry Kissinger's view, that if the government has hard evidence against Bloch, they should file charges, and end this unseemly trial by mass media. This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

ANNOUNCER: The preceding was a commentary, and the views expressed not necessarily the views of WINS.

(break in audio)

ANNOUNCER: Now here's a commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: Beginning at sundown this Wednesday evening, the Jewish people will observe the 24-fast day of *Tisha B'Av*, the ninth day of the Hebrew month of Av. *Tisha B'Av* is a solemn day of self-denial and reflection. Jews mourn the destruction of the First and Second Temples in Jerusalem, both of which took place on *Tisha B'Av*. Why were the temples in Jerusalem destroyed? The Talmudic sages said

that these terrible destructions of the holiest places resulted from *sinat chinam*, hatred [54:00] without cause, and the temple will be restored through the Messiah only where there is *ahavat chinam*, unconditional love and respect between people. Today, there are few more distressing demonstrations of causeless hatred than the savage hostage taking of innocent civilians by the fanatic Hezbollah. There is confusion now between terrorism and counter-terrorism. The Hezbollah specialize in torturing and murdering innocent civilians and foreigners, while the Israelis captured [Sheik Obaid?] as a terrorist leader. They did not kidnap him. They engaged in counter-terrorism to try to save lives, not destroy them. Tisha B'Av this year will be a time to mourn over so much causeless hatred, and to look for ways to establish a civilized respect for the dignity of every human life. This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

ANNOUNCER:       The preceding was a commentary, and the views expressed are not necessarily the views of WINS.

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ANNOUNCER: WINS news time, 7:56. Now here's a commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum [55:00] of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: During the present hostage crisis in the Middle East, Israel reportedly has offered to release Sheik Obaid and several hundred Shiite prisoners in exchange for three captured Israeli military men and the other Western hostages. By normal bargaining arithmetic, that must strike many people, including some Jews, as a strange imbalance. In part, that is a matter of standing Israeli government policy, that each Israeli soldier is assured that Israel will never abandon them, whatever the cost. But from the perspective of a long and honored Jewish tradition, that assurance is not a modern novelty. From ancient times in Palestine, and throughout the long diaspora, the freeing of captives, *Pidyon Shvuyim*, has been held to be one of the most sacred religious duties of Jewish tradition. In the seventeenth century, the Jewish community of Venice, Italy, organized a society for redeeming the captives who were captured by pirates. But much like the United States and modern Israel, ancient Jews were also concerned over ransom that would incite enemies to [56:00] seize more hostages for money-making purposes. In any event, what is operating in the Israeli psyche today when releasing hostages are not

just political calculations, but a long humanistic tradition, which regards life as sacred and deserving of redemption. This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

ANNOUNCER: The preceding was a commentary, and the views expressed are not necessarily the views of WINS.

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ANNOUNCER: -- news time, 7:56. Now here is a commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: Congressman Mickey Leland was called a martyr to the hungry and starving. That is an appropriate description for the Congressman from Houston, Texas, who tragically lost his life last week in an airplane crash in Ethiopia. Some 15 people died with him, among them Ivan Tellem, a young Jewish leader from New York. The fact that Leland and Tellem traveled together on that mission of mercy says a great deal about their shared commitments to relieving the terrible suffering and hunger of tens of thousands of African refugees. [57:00] Mickey Leland won the admiration and loyalty of many Jewish leaders, who knew that he never traveled to Ethiopia without paying special attention to the plight of the black Jews of Ethiopia. Committed to

improving black Jewish relations in America, Congressman Leland organized an exchange program of black and Jewish students, who together visited Israel and African countries. In 1985, the compassionate congressman mobilized a citizen's campaign to win public support for increased food aid for destitute Africans. I joined in that effort, because I knew Mickey Leland was a mensch for blacks and Jews, and for understanding between all peoples. This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

ANNOUNCER: All news, all the time. This is WINS.

(break in audio)

ANNOUNCER: Wednesday's time, 7:57. Now a commentary by Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

TANENBAUM: "A man should not be miserly, nor be too lavish. He who avoids extremes and follows the middle course in all things is a wise man." Those words were [58:00] written in the twelfth century by the great Jewish scholar Maimonides. I thought about that great wisdom on moderation as a way of life, as I witnessed accounts of the extravagant, \$2 million party given in Morocco last week, celebrating the seventieth birthday of Malcolm Forbes. I don't know Mr. Forbes, he comes across as a nice, bright, fun-loving man,

and I wish him many more years of good health and success. But quite frankly, these images of some 600 of America's best and brightest engaging in their lavish self-indulgence upset me very much. While all that gorging and boozing was going on, a couple hundred miles away in North Africa, there are tens of thousands of starving Africans scrounging on the ground for grains of wheat in order to survive. Frankly, the contrast is morally obscene. I believe Mr. Forbes when he says he contributes heavily to charity. But if he really wants to celebrate next time in a meaningful way, I hope he will invite his many influential friends to visit the refugee camps in Africa, or the homeless people here. [59:00] Maimonides and an awful lot of Americans would join in wishing him a truly happy birthday. This is Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee.

ANNOUNCER: And the preceding was a commentary. The views expressed are not necessarily the views of WINS. All...

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