



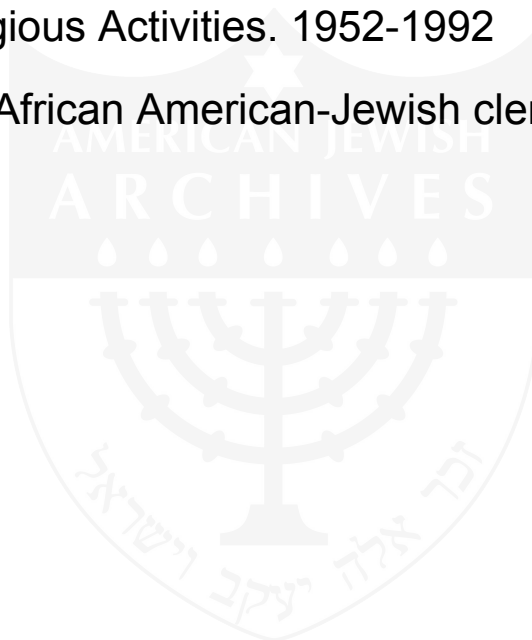
THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

Preserving American Jewish History

MS-603: Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum Collection, 1945-1992.

Series C: Interreligious Activities. 1952-1992

Box 11, Folder 1, African American-Jewish clergy dialogue, 1990-1991.



BLACK CLERGY - NYBR RABBINIC STEERING COMMITTEE

NYBR

Rabbi Irving Block
Rabbi Joseph Potasnik
✓ Rabbi Marc Schneier
✓ Rabbi Gilbert Rosenthal
✓ Rabbi Moses Birnbaum

28 Gramercy Park South, NYC 10003
85 Livingston St., Bklyn, NY 11201
164 East 68th St., NYC 10021

✓ R/marc Tanenbaum

BLACK CLERGY

Rev. John Blackwell

Metro/Suffolk Area, UCC,
475 Riverside Dr., Rm. 1126, NYC 10015

✓ Rev. Robert Foley

39 West 190th St.,
P.O.#144, Bronx, NY 10468

Rev. Wendell Foster

1377 Jerome Ave., Bronx, NY 10452

✓ Rev. Pat Reeberg

3403 Cannon Place, Bronx, NY 10463

✓ Rev. Glen Missick

86 Morningside Ave., NYC 10027

✓ Rev. Terrence Hensford

St. Mark AME Church, 95-18
Northern Blvd., Jackson Heights, NY 11372

MINUTES

AFRICAN-AMERICAN/JEWISH CLERGY DIALOGUE

**Steering Committee
Tuesday, June 11, 1991**

IN ATTENDANCE:

Rabbi M.A. Birnbaum, Rev. J. Blackwell, Rev. R. Foley, Rev. T. Hensford, Rev. Pat Reeberg, Rabbi G.S. Rosenthal.

Prior to the convening of the meeting Rev. Wendell Foster dropped by on his way to an important meeting at City Hall. He distributed his City Council resolution commending Israel's rescue of Ethiopian Jews. He informed the clergy group that there is talk in the Council, of taxing houses of worship for water, sewer and garbage. This seems to be related to the strong fight the religious groups waged on the landmarking issue.

Rabbi Rosenthal acting as chair convened the meeting at 11:45 A.M. He informed the group that Rabbis Fenster and Schneier were unable to come due to other pressing commitments.

Minutes of Last Meeting

Rev. Foley noted the absence of his suggestion for encouraging media to run positive public service announcements promoting civility. He added that this should not only be confined to media but also include corporate advertising.

Plan for Next Plenary Meeting

Rev. Foley - Joint plenary meeting; have meetings of African-American and Jewish clergy groups precede plenary. Theme: developing a more civil, courteous society. Have Police Commissioner Lee Brown. Rev. Blackwell - suggest that service agencies require their employees who deal with the public be courteous. Provide training and make civility requisite.

Rev. Foley - at this plenary also discuss human relations panel.

Consensus - meeting in October with a project/interreligious service slated for before Thanksgiving. Proposed locations for joint plenary;
First choice:

Interchurch Center, 475 Riverside Drive

Alternate:

Brotherhood Synagogue, Gramercy Park.

Proposed date:

First choice: Wednesday, October 9, 1991

9:15 A.M. - Respective business meetings

10:30 - Plenary

12:30 P.M. - 1:30 - Lunch

Rev. Reeberg and Rabbi Rosenthal will prepare papers to be delivered at meeting. They will be ready one month in advance so Commissioners will have a chance to review them. Commissioners of Police, HRA and Youth Services are first choices with Human Rights as alternate. Subcommittee of Pat, Bob, John, Irving, Gil and Moshe will help prepare papers and how day will look. Responsibility for contacting commissioners as follows:

Bob - Commissioners Brown and Murphy.

Pat - Commissioner Sabol; Irving - Human Rights (if necessary).

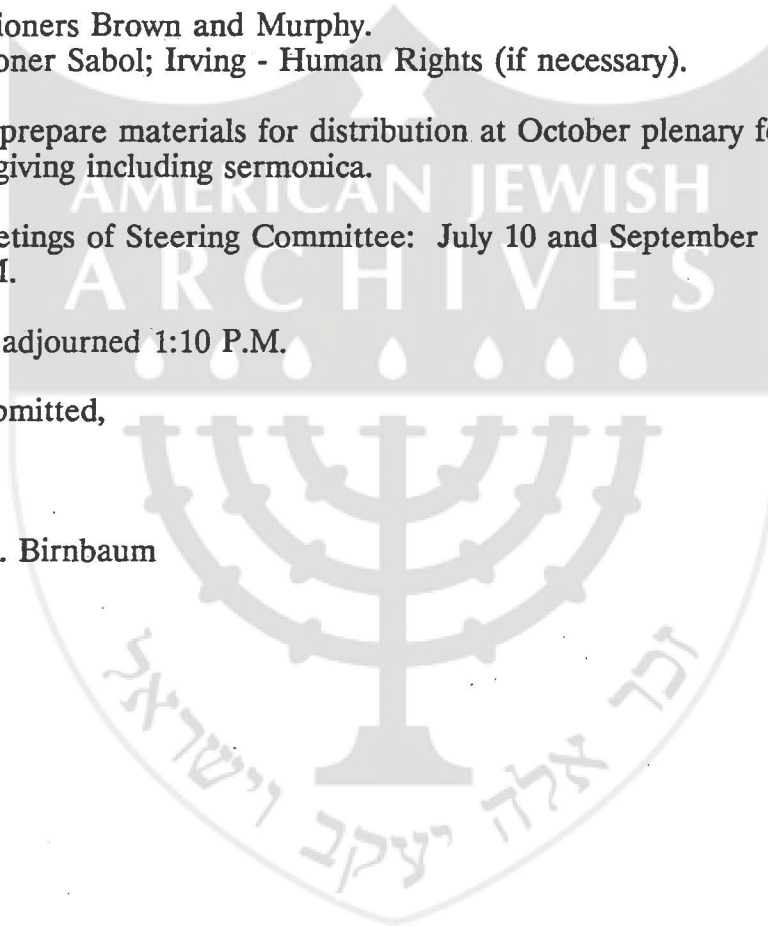
Need to prepare materials for distribution at October plenary for a Sabbath of Civility/Thanksgiving including sermonica.

Next meetings of Steering Committee: July 10 and September 12, both at 11:00 A.M. - 1:00 P.M.

Meeting adjourned 1:10 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Rabbi Moses A. Birnbaum



BLACK - JEWISH CLERGY DIALOGUE
STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING
at NEW YORK BOARD OF RABBIS 10 East 73 Street NYC
May 16, 1991
MINUTES

In attendance: Rabbi Myron M. Fenster, Chair; Rabbi Moses A. Birnbaum, Rabbi Irving Block, Rev. Robert Foley, Rev. Wendell Foster, Rabbi Gilbert S. Rosenthal, Rabbi Marc Schneier.

Rabbi Fenster convened the meeting at 12:10 P.M.

Rabbi Fenster reflected on the previous day's conference held in Queens by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn commemorating the twenty-fifth anniversary of "Nostra Aetate" and the quarter century of ensuing dialogue.

Rabbi Fenster posed this question to the group: "Where does our dialogue go from here? Can we do anything to solidify the relationship between our two communities?"

Rev. Foster offered that the Jewish community should participate in the United Black Church Appeal in much the same way Blacks participated in the "Night of Stars for Israel" held some years ago in Madison Square Garden. There are 78,000 Black congregations nationally, with some 5,000 in New York City. Rev. Foster continued by calling for the support of the Jewish Community in pressing the media to promote positive role models rather than always spotlighting the negative; those that get into trouble. We should celebrate each other's history - e.g. commemorate Holocaust in his church.

Rev. Foster requested support on the landmarking bill he has introduced in the City Council which provides for a neutral review of hardship cases involving non-profit property. As chairman of special events, he would like to receive suggestions on observing in the City Council historic anniversaries.

Positive example of what can be done: a school in District 9 was at the bottom of the ratings. With the help of the Rohatyns it is now in the top 3. Negative example: bad tone at the New York Post; former mayor a chief offender.

Rabbi Schneier said: "Talk is lovely, dialogue is significant but what we need are specific projects - as the Yiddish has it from the Hebrew - "tachlis" - (substance)" Some specific suggestions: twinning synagogues and churches. Finding ways Jewish community can be of assistance to Black community and vice versa. Dialogue started by Prof. Ernest Schwarz at Queens College is a good model, though he keeps a low profile and visibility and getting the message out are important.

Rev. Foley gave an interesting analysis for the establishment of the Partnership of Faith. Revs. Forbes and Caliandro were not perceived as affecting the social fabric of the city and this was their response to that perception.

Rabbi Birnbaum conveyed a message from Rev. Pat Reeberg, who could not be present, that the New York Board of Rabbis take action supporting the Civil Rights Bill before Congress. It was noted that most major national Jewish organizations have been supportive of the Bill.

Rev. Foley called for the formation of interreligious human relations panels for conflict resolution.

Rev. Foster plans to arrange a meeting with Police Commissioner Lee Brown on the topic of promoting civility in the city.

The meeting ended with a flurry of specific suggestion; publicity focused on a vision for the future; promoting theme weekends for sermons, etc.; a joint plenary meeting of the organizations of our respective communities; networking our respective professionals, e.g. - put Black fundraisers in touch with Jewish ones at the UJA-Federation.

Meeting was adjourned at 1:50 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Rabbi Moses A. Birnbaum



BLACK/JEWISH DIALOGUE

March 7, 1991

How Afro-American perceive Jewish people
How Afro-Americans perceive Jewish people

Introduction

I appreciate the opportunity to participate in this vital dialogue. I join my brothers and sisters on both sides in the hope that this experience will bring healing where healing is required and foster cooperation where possibilities exist.

There is a great word from God our Father, "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper who love thee." Psalm 122:6;

And another, "And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee;..." Gen. 12:3.

The vast majority of Afro-Americans are most likely to be counted among those the author of, "God, History and the Jews", referred to when he wrote,... the Jews claimed a special relation with God and made the world believe it. Therefore our propensity is to be ready to get along with you even though sometimes through the course of history we have reasons not to get along with you. We have always been concerned about what the Jewish community thinks of us.

The biblical history perception:

It is almost impossible to find an Afro-American who would refuse to accept the Bible. That part of our development has always meant the Jews and Blacks were allies together.

There is a deep seated belief that if you bless the Jews, God will bless you. And of course, the opposite view is also held; if you curse them you will be cursed.

Since we believe Jews to be God's people, we believe the talents they have and the successes they experience are due to the fact that they are blessed by God. The manner in which we acknowledge the sufferings in their history is to acclaim their deliverances. If it had not been that God was on their side, the sufferings would have led to their annihilation as occurred with other peoples of the Bible.

The recent past perception

During the lifetime of most of us in this dialogue, Jews have always been thought of as friends. The perception has been, you could get a job from a Jew. You could get credit from a Jew. You could get entrance, if Jews were in, blacks could be in.

The perception was, the goals and objectives of the two groups were the same. It was therefore believed that giving, political support to Jewish candidates would enhance the condition of Afro-Americans. It was believed that both financial support as well as leadership of our social organizations, was safe and secured in the hands of Jews. The NAACP being the prime example.

We firmly believed that our numbers at the polls and the money of the Jews was an unbeatable combination. We believed that situation aided our cause and led or would lead to betterment in the quality of our lives.

When Afro-Americans became politically matured. When we began to field our own candidates and narrow our rhetoric to our specific concerns, something happened. The perception was that if Jews, could not politically represent Blacks, Blacks could not depend upon political and financial support from Jews.

The present perception

The experiences of the recent past has caused the present perception to be one of suspicion and distrust. Many Afro-Americans see no difference between American Jews and Israeli Jews. Bonds for Israel and "Never Again", are as well known among us as "I am somebody" and "Black is Beautiful".

We are concerned about the perception that Jews are allied with the government of South Africa against the people of Nelson Mandela. We wonder how Jews participate so thoroughly in the diamond industry when there are no diamonds in Israel. We wonder, why you quit the civil rights struggle before we had won. We wonder why only 20 percent of your people voted for David Dinkins; and fewer for Jesse Jackson.

There is a perception that if we quit ourselves as men, Jews will not be our allies. There is a perception that you demand a subservient role for us in the relationship. There is a perception that if any black leader sees the need for Israel to be more humane towards the aspiration of the palestinians he is anathema.

I believe there is little or actually no difference between the perception and the reality of this situation. But as I wrote in the

beginning we are Bible believers. Some of us believe that we are of the lost tribes of Israel. Most of us believe we are children of Abraham by faith. Therefore in either case we are brothers.

There are many reasons to eradicate the differences between us and work in harmony with each other. This dialogue makes possible a clearing of the air. It creates a real opportunity for two people of common needs to find common ground between them. The abiding and overbearing perception is that Blacks and Jews are inextricably joined together.

AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

Bishop Norman N. Quick

March 7, 1991

*Men. Passage about 4 verses -
Amos 9:17*

If we are to move from this point, I believe you must all ~~be~~ willing to accept that we understand better than you what our problems are and not to continue to attempt to make us change our opinion of our situation.

The second river of Eden:
Toward the reconstruction of Black/Jewish relations.

What I have to say about black\Jewish relations comes from the same place all my other understandings come from, the Bible. I have been taught to look at the world never directly but always indirectly through a biblical text. In that way what I see relates me to both the world and the Bible. What I know comes from both experience and faith. There are ways we are different, but in that way I think we are the same. Surely more a prophet than a politician, King spoke to the world in terms which were filled with the dust and tears of the people leaving Egypt. His sense of the struggle for civil rights was filtered through the texts of Exodus and Isaiah. So here is my text to help us advance the cause of Black\Jewish dialogue:

"And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from there it parted and became four rivers. The name of the first is Pishon; the one which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. And the gold of that land is good. There is bdellium and onyx stone. And the name of the second river is Gihon; the one which compasseth the whole land of Cush. And the name of the third river is the Tigris (Hidekel); the one which flows to the east of Assyria. And the name of the fourth river is the Euphrates."

Our minds are on the Tigris and Euphrates today because they still flow into the gulf of Arabia and the place where the rivers divide, the place where the garden once bloomed is called Iraq today and not Eden. It is hard to see Eden through the smoke and fires. Perhaps somewhere the trees which were pleasant to the sight and good for food still grow alongside the smoldering carnage of war and the wreckage of a thousand guns. Perhaps. But for today I want you to join me in thinking about the second river of Eden, the Gihon, the river which compasseth the land of Cush which is Ethiopia.

This river is a flowing symbol of our relationship and our struggle for justice. When we have lost touch with each other, and we have lost touch with each other, we must return to the river and drink of it and mark its course well, and that is how we will find each other again and perhaps in the end follow the river upstream to the garden.

Amos is the one who God sent to teach us the meaning of the Gihon, the second river of Eden,

"O' Children of Israel, are you not like the Ethiopians to Me, saith the Lord. Oh have I not brought up Israel out of the land of Egypt? and the Philistines from Caphtor and the Syrians from Kir?" (9:7)

The first lesson of Amos is that every liberation is spiritually identical. Every nation has known slavery and the strong hand and outstretched arm of God has been extended to all peoples each in their time and in their own Egypt. When we reflect on that fact, we are drawn closer to each other and

closer to our common God. The God who dispenses freedom to every nation and holiness to every human being.

Let me suggest that this lesson penetrated Jewish teachings and Jewish life in a thoroughgoing way. It is, I believe, an important reason for the uniquely overwhelming sympathy and support Jews gave to the civil rights struggle until the black power movement annulled the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. and began the burning of bridges to the Jewish community and all other sympathetic whites. We have been taught the lesson of Amos, that the same God who brought us up out of Egypt had brought up a thousand other nations from a thousand other Egypts. We were taught to understand the heart of the stranger because we were ourselves strangers in the land of Egypt, and that willingness to use slavery as a proof text for compassion and social justice represents I am proud to say, a profound historical and religious choice made by the Jewish community, a choice urged upon us by God to be sure, but still our overwhelming choice. It is a choice each and every nation faces as it contemplates the lessons of its own Egyptian bondage. It is the choice of learning only the lessons of slavery which bind us together, only the lessons which lead to the appreciation of our mutual holiness, our common spiritual history, and our loving and emancipating God.

Let me remind you of what you already know. The experience of slavery can teach other lessons. Slavery can be used to teach hatred, revenge, and racism. We learn from history but we only learn what we choose to learn. And so let me say with deep regret, that we have heard the experience of black slavery used too often by blacks to teach heretical and discordant lessons. The teachings of Farad Muhammed are not the teaching of Martin Luther King, the teachings of Louis Farrakan not that of Roy Wilkins, the teachings of Al Sharpton not the teachings of Shelby Steele.

But it is also true that the teachings of Meir Kahane are not the teachings of Abraham Joshua Heschel. The teachings of Ed Koch are not the teachings of Elie Wiesel. The teachings of Jackie Mason are not the teachings of Irving Berlin. We Jews are also responsible for some of the pollution floating down the Gihon river. We are responsible for publicly and forcefully and unequivocally renouncing the racists in our midst who have not learned, and who do not teach the authentic biblical lessons of slavery. We must not allow them to foul the river Gihon with the stench of their loathings.

Let me point in pride to the fact that Meir Kahane's party was clearly condemned by the majority of the Israeli people and was ruled off the ballot in Israel by the Supreme Court because of its racist platforms. Let me ask a hard question. Have Maddox, and Sharpton; have Farrakan and Mason been as thoroughly discredited and disavowed in the black community? It is not my intention to make a scorecard of racists, only to reemphasize the damage done not only by the words of racism from both our communities, but also by the silence of those who know they are

wrong, who know that they poison the waters of the Gihon.

The next lesson of the river is that if one God brought up every people from every house of bondage, then it surely follows that the law of that one God must be the law of all peoples. And that law transcends race, and that moral code does not allow us to appeal to slavery as an excuse for moral lassitude, or to use past suffering as a foundation for present damage claims. The law says do not favor the rich just because they are rich, but it also says do not favor the poor because they are poor. "justice, justice shall you pursue" and the work of justice requires moral standards which pay no heed to past slavery.

If every nation has been redeemed by God, then surely every nation could lay claim against its own Pharaoh. In 1302 Pope Innocent III canceled the debts of the church in Europe to the Jewish community. Are we entitled to make a claim today against the Catholic church? In 1492 Ferdinand and Isabella expelled the Jewish community from Spain. Are we entitled to claim against Spain today? What forbids us is not the expiration of some statute of limitations, what forbids us is the effect that such thinking has on our children.

Our children must learn to mobilize all their efforts and energies to achieve success on their own merits. They must learn to refuse to allow themselves the use of race or religion as an excuse for failure, for criminal behavior, or for the unwillingness to study and learn and achieve despite the odds. When a child is told that his or her ancestors were cheated and robbed, imprisoned and exploited, they can all too easily surrender to anger and revenge, to confrontation and fantasy theories of conspiracy rather than using what resources they have to begin the long journey out of Egypt.

Although we must all work to level the high hills some runners are forced to climb, we must teach our children and understand ourselves that there never has been, and until the Messiah comes (or comes again) there will never be a level playing field for success in the world. Therefore the tasks facing black parents are the same tasks which faced Jewish and Korean and Dominican and Irish and Italian parents in their own time and in their own Egypts. It is actually a two fold task verging on the contradictory. We must teach our children to spare no effort in leveling the playing field, while working and striving as if there were no hills in their way. We must teach our children that they were victims, while never allowing them to use their victim status as an excuse for failure. We must teach them that they were oppressed without allowing them to become bitter or vengeful at the great great great grandchildren of the oppressors. We must teach them that they are in Egypt while reminding them always, when they are sitting in our house and when they are walking by the way when they are lying down and when they are rising up, that they will not be the first nation to be left in Egypt unredeemed. They must be given hope that the second river of Eden still flows. Sometimes like a hidden brook and sometimes like a mighty stream, but the river of justice and

righteousness still flows, and men and women of all colors and all faiths are floating upon it and following it back to the garden where all rivers are one and where His name is One.



Summary of
African-American - Jewish Clergy Dialogue Luncheon, 12/12/90
at
The New York Board of Rabbis, 10 East 73rd Street, NYC, 10:30 A.M.

In attendance:

Reverends: John A. Blackwell, John E. Brandon, Cecily Broderick y Guerra, Herbert Daughtry, Robert L. Foley, Sr., Wendell Foster, Thomas P. Grissom, Jr., Arthur Harris, Earl B. Moore, Marvin J. Owens, Jr., Bishop Norman N. Quick, Patricia Reeberg.

Rabbis: Moses A. Birnbaum, Allan Blaine, Irving J. Block, Joshua Chasan, Harvey Falk, Myron M. Fenster, Louis Frishman, Marc Gellman, Paul L. Hait, Barry Kenter, Hyman Levine, Joseph Potasnik, Gilbert S. Rosenthal, Marc Schneier, Jeremiah Wohlberg.

Rabbi Irving Block, chair of the New York Board of Rabbis Interreligious Affairs Committee welcomed the participants.

Rabbi Myron M. Fenster, NYBR president and convener of the meeting delivered a prepared statement (see attached) in which he outlined the history of the relationship between African-Americans and American Jews. Rabbi Fenster indicated that the meeting was planned as an opportunity to "let our hair down" without great formality and structure. Rabbi Fenster felt that a frank airing of those issues deeply troubling to both sides is important. He looked forward to further communication and the sharing of pulpits. Rev. Wendell Foster responded in a prepared statement (see attached) affirming Rabbi Fenster's call for frankness and endorsing the idea of pulpit exchange. Rev. Foster expressed abhorrence of anti-Semitism, e.g. the recent Strugnell scandal. In regard to the process initiated at this meeting, Rev. Foster said: "let's light the candle and keep it burning."

Affirmative Action

In the lively discussion which ensued around the meeting table and at lunch, the African-American side stressed the need for affirmative action defined as preferential treatment in employment, education and culture to compensate for generations of discrimination. This, in the African-American view, is consistent with the biblical concept of reparations. The Jewish side emphasized the antipathy of Jews to quotas which have historically discriminated against them and eviscerate the merit system.

Anti-Semitism

Both sides raised the issue of anti-Semitism. There is a media-driven perception of increased African-American anti-Semitism. A number of the black leaders expressed the view that there is far less anti-Semitism in the African-American community than Jews think.

Israel

The Jewish side raised questions regarding the origin of support for the Palestinian

uprising in the black community and the singling out of Israel's trade with South Africa while ignoring black-African and Arab economic ties to that state.

Common Problems

AIDS, drugs, violence; We all suffer from deterioration in the declining quality of life.

On the Process

The above summary does not attempt to convey the simultaneously warm yet challenging atmosphere at the meeting. While momentous issues divide the groups, the parallels between the histories and traditions of the two communities plus the bonds which exist among fellow clergy were strong and pronounced. Many speakers on both sides emphasized the need for knowing one another even if all problems cannot be solved. The possibility of an all-day conference was raised.

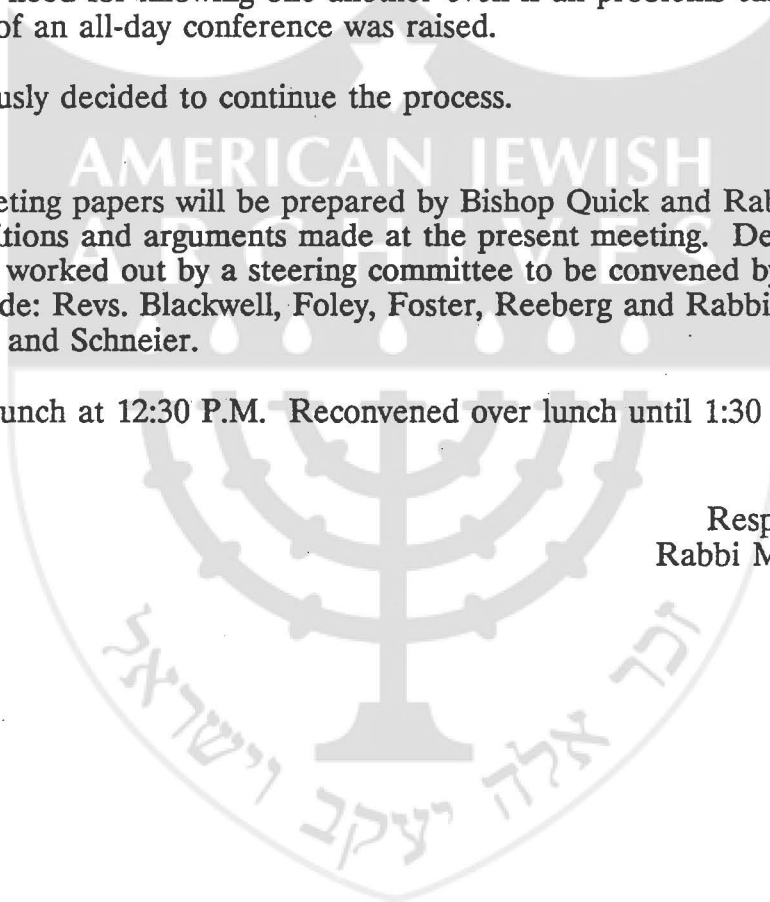
It was unanimously decided to continue the process.

Future Plans

At the next meeting papers will be prepared by Bishop Quick and Rabbi Gellman to deepen the positions and arguments made at the present meeting. Details of the next meeting will be worked out by a steering committee to be convened by Rabbi Rosenthal which will include: Revs. Blackwell, Foley, Foster, Reeberg and Rabbis Birnbaum, Block, Potasnik and Schneier.

Adjourned for lunch at 12:30 P.M. Reconvened over lunch until 1:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Rabbi Moses A. Birnbaum



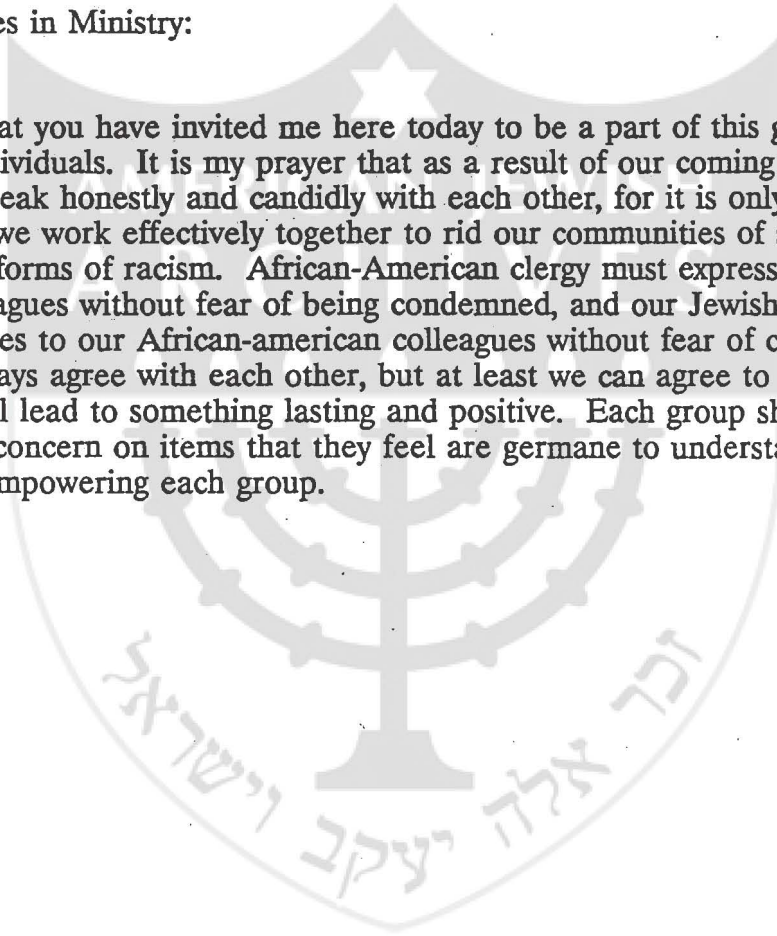
Statement by

**The Rev. Thomas Wendell Foster of United Black Appeal, NYC
at The African-American - Jewish Clergy Dialogue Luncheon, 12/12/90**

To my Colleagues in Ministry:

I am honored that you have invited me here today to be a part of this gathering of distinguished individuals. It is my prayer that as a result of our coming together again today, we will speak honestly and candidly with each other, for it is only through honesty and candor can we work effectively together to rid our communities of suspicion, mistrust and all forms of racism. African-American clergy must express themselves to our Jewish colleagues without fear of being condemned, and our Jewish colleagues must express themselves to our African-american colleagues without fear of condemnation. We may not always agree with each other, but at least we can agree to open, frank dialogue that will lead to something lasting and positive. Each group should be willing to express their concern on items that they feel are germane to understanding, respecting and empowering each group.

Thank you.



Statement by

**Rabbi Myron M. Fenster, President of The New York Board of Rabbis
at The African-American - Jewish Clergy Dialogue Luncheon, 12/12/90**

This dialogue proceeds on the assumption that former joint efforts between Blacks and Jews in expression of social concern, has been good for America, in that it has seeded its population with a vision of a more democratic life. Blacks and Jews may have only inched America forward, but even that has been measurable. We gather to ask what can be done to restore the creative aspect of the dialogue.

Unfortunately, suspicion and hostility has crept into the relationship. Jews don't want to hear about slavery and economic repression. Blacks don't want to hear about anti-Semitism and Holocaust history. How then is it possible to work toward common goals? The two peoples have each gone their own way and have grown apart.

There is initially the pragmatic view. If David Duke can win 44 percent of the vote for the Louisiana legislature, he may then threaten a senate race and have even higher aspiration. It is just possible that with recession upon us, America could be fertile for a first-class demagogue. It is not hard to imagine which will be the most targetable groups.

The higher ground reminds us that if America is to be a great nation, it needs the enrichment of Blacks and Jews working harmoniously. If speaking to each other will bring a restored relationship into being, then it is not only right but imperative that we do so. Speaking to each other frankly and fully is not for a moment or an hour but if good will is there and the spirit of our various traditions move us, we can at least make a beginning. Initially, we have to appreciate the value even of a formal declaration of proposed cooperation. That alone will stir our various constituencies. Over these last months the New York Board of Rabbis participated in an ecumenical meeting at St. John the Divine in which a wide variety of religious and ethnic groups participated in addition to political and labor groups. Those who participated in it will recall a very deep responsive chord was evoked from the six thousand people who were present. At least for that moment, people who may never have spoken to each other before, suddenly were pulling for the same goal. We should not overlook the value even of symbolic acts, such as the mere convening of this meeting today.

I would want to ask you, would rabbis be received in Black churches today? How would ministers fare in Jewish synagogues? What would they talk to each other about? Could they go beyond the common heritage of prejudice, of the pain of rejection? Would Jews be able to be frank enough to ask whether Black anti-Semitism is part of the religious heritage of the teaching of contempt? What would happen if an Afro-American minister asked the Jewish congregation whether their lack of identity is racist or sociologically oriented, is it their tradition or their inclination that permits rejection and worse?

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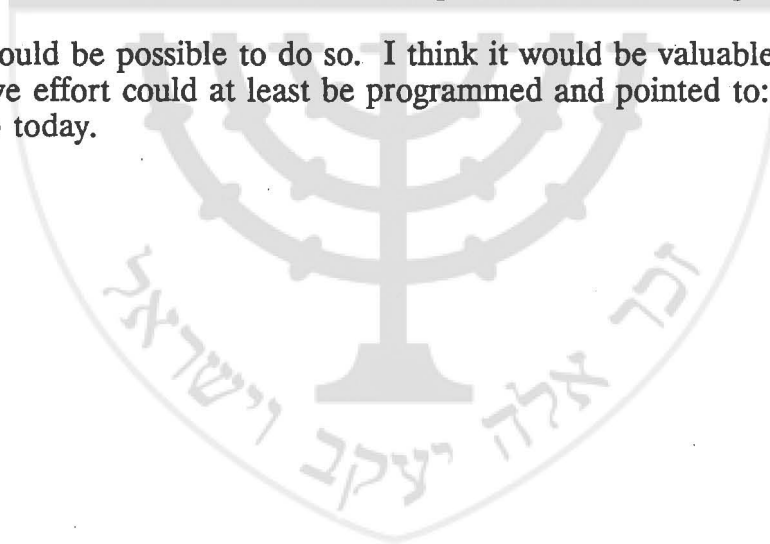
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Rabbi Myron Fenster's remarks
at the Clergy Dialogue Luncheon
Page 2

Personally, I should like to think it would be possible to broaden the scope of this effort so that we could speak not only to each other but to our constituencies. I was much encouraged by the Interfaith Forum religious dialogue where I experience the effort at stereotypical breakdown. It was based on religion, color and sex. I realized then that even in the heated atmosphere of this hour, we can talk to each other without posturing or heated rhetoric. The implications of that experience were most encouraging.

What I am suggesting then is that we focus on our personal and group experience as we have come to know it and speak of both our aspiration and our pain. If we could do it without rancor and retracing the past, that would be helpful. Is that possible? I notice that with my Catholic clergy friends I sense that they feel more comfortable if I don't bring up, "the 'A' word" namely, the issue of abortion. With Blacks and Jews is it possible to bring up the Israel situation which most Jews feel very keenly about, especially after the Temple Mount incident where they feel America dumped on them. So is it possible to speak of these various flashpoints without turning each other off?

I hope that it would be possible to do so. I think it would be valuable to hear how a more cooperative effort could at least be programmed and pointed to: This is what I hope we will do today.



Introduction

The recent conflict between elements in the Afro-American and Hasidic communities in Crown Heights have brought to the fore a number of grievances, complaints, ~~and~~ charges and countercharges. At an ongoing series of meetings between representatives of the local communities and various branches of the city government, including the Police Department, many of these deeply-felt complaints were aired and examined.

Where justified, appropriate remedial measures have been taken in response to the feelings and interests of the Afro-American and Hasidic communities, as well as of Hispanic, Asian, and other groups in the population.

One of the persistent charges emanating from the Afro-American community is that the Lubavitcher Hasidic community has been receiving "preferential treatment" from the Police Department.

This ~~brief~~ report is an effort to examine that issue in some detail, with a view toward separating perceptions, misperceptions, and realities. As the outcome of this report indicates, where the charges are deemed to be valid and justified, appropriate actions have been taken to assure fair and equal treatment to all our citizens of Crown Heights, while keeping in mind the special needs arising out of unique religious, cultural, and lifestyle requirements. Such sensitivge regard for unique circumstances is the policy of the department toward any religious, racial, or ethnic group in the community whose distinctivness justified attention.

Pgh 2 - The October 23rd incident...which come into contact with them. The population of the 71st precinct consists primarily of the Hasidim and Caribbean blacks. The balance of the precinct is composed of Hispanics, Asians and others.

The intensity of those relationships is underscored by the fact that many of the Hasidim are victim-survivors of Nazi violence and brutality. Both for historic and religious reasons, the Lubavitcher are generally insular, suspicious of any kind of threats of violence, and therefore isolates itself from contact with outside groups. Apart from a large middle-class and stable Afro-American population, a substantial youth population sees itself as powerless and wronged, and has struck out against the Hasidim in Crown Heights as a target symbolizing the larger white society.. The relative material prosperity of the Hasidim has confronted Afro-American youth with their own failures (often out of their control of circumstances) and the ensuing response has been one of rage and violence in opposition to the law.

The resort to Nazi-inspired ~~swastika~~ slogans of "Heil Hitler" and "Kill the Jews" ~~added to~~ the burning of the Israeli flag has added a demonic quality to the rage and has elicited the most fearful reactions of the Hasidim who now seek even greater assurances of police security.

It is a social-psychological fact of life that settled groups view "the outsider" and "the stranger" with fear, suspicion, and resentment. Those lingering fears when triggered by events erupt into violent behavior and lawlessness.

The Afro-American and Hasidic communities show signs of being virtually complete strangers and outsiders to one another. There appears to be little knowledge by both groups of each others' histories, cultures, religions, traditions, and lifestyles. In their respective mutual isolation, large vacuums of knowledge and information exist, and invariably negative and hostile stereotypes about each other fill the vacuum. (How to overcome that almost total ignorance of each other is an important issue still to be addressed.)

A dominating factor in the group behavior of the Hasidim is their universal reverence for the Lubavitcher rebbe, leader of a worldwide religion, and holding the stature akin in his community to that of the Pope in the Roman Catholic Church. It raises the imaginative question: how would the community react to Pope John Paul II's living on Eastern Parkway? Would he be receiving "preferential treatment"?

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DRAFT

Introduction

On November 14, 1990, Police Officer Hector Ariza of the 90th Precinct held a press conference to charge publicly that Williamsburg's Hasidic Community receives preferential treatment from the 90th Precinct personnel. P.O. Ariza alleged the following:

- Arrests and summonses have been voided because the suspects were Hasidim; and
- Hispanic sections of the Precinct are targeted for summons activity while Hasidic areas are not.

These specific allegations were the subject of an Internal Affairs Division investigation which concluded that, with the exception of one traffic summons, they were unfounded.

P.O. Ariza's press conference was one of a number of responses to an incident which occurred on October 23, 1990, in which a crowd of approximately 300 Hasidim converged upon the 90th Precinct to protest the arrest of one of their members. The ensuing demonstration became increasingly tumultuous, despite heavy rains, and resulted in injuries to 46 police officers as well as the arrest of one demonstrator.

The incident was characterized by the media as a "riot" during which "Hasidic Jews attempted to storm" the 90th Precinct. Because only one arrest was made, this incident was viewed by some members of the Hispanic Community as an example of the preferential treatment which they believe is accorded to the Hasidic Community.

The October 23rd incident, as well as the various responses to it, reflect the intense nature of the relationships between the Hasidic community and the other social and ethnic groups and organizations which come in contact with them.

The population of the 71st Precinct consists primarily of the Hasidim and Caribbean blacks. The balance of the precinct is composed of Hispanics, Asians, & others.

One of the organizations that has traditionally had a close working relationship with the Hasidic community is the New York City Police Department. This relationship has, on occasion, given rise to accusations that the Hasidim receive special treatment at the expense of other groups. These concerns were heightened by the demonstration of October 23rd and subsequent events.

With the incidents which occurred in the 90th Precinct last year as the precipitating factor, the purposes of this Report, therefore, are to:

- discuss some of the unique cultural characteristics of Brooklyn's various Hasidic Communities; and in relation to their multi-ethnic neighbors;
- describe and evaluate the Police Department's response to the Hasidic Community; and
- spell out the Police Department's Policies relative to the issues reviewed.

(A) The intensity of these relationships is underscored by the fact that many of the Hasidim are survivors of Nazi brutality. Both for historical and religious reasons, the Hasidim are generally insular, suspicious of any kind of threats of violence, and therefore seals itself from outside groups. Apart from a substantial middle class black population, a large youth population sees it itself as powerless and wronged, and has struck out against the Hasidim as a target symbolizing the white society.

A dominating factor in the group behavior of the Hasidim is their reverence for the behavior of their rabbis, leader of a worldwide religion and holding the stature of a prophet to that of the Pope in the community.

The "outsider" and "stranger" contacts are characterized by fear, suspicion, and mistrust and result into violent behavior and language. There appears to be little knowledge of the culture, customs, and traditions of the Hasidim.

The Hasidic Community of New York

Hasidism is ^{an} ~~the~~ ultra orthodox form of Judaism. It is a deeply religious movement which was founded in 18th Century Poland by a Rabbi known as the Baal Shem Tov (Master of the Good Name). He taught that sincere feeling in worship is more important than the academic study of Judaic scripture ^{tradition} and ^{law} and that one should live in constant awareness of the pervasive presence of God. Baal Shem Tov's teachings quickly attracted scores of adherents throughout the Jewish communities of Eastern Europe.

The Hasidim subscribe to traditional Jewish principles and values and adhere strictly to the laws prescribed in the Shulhan Aruch, the Code of Jewish Law. However, unlike other orthodox Jews, the Hasidim also observe additional rituals and ceremonies which were adopted traditionally by their spiritual leaders ("rebbe"). As a rule, the Hasidim maintain high intensity and frequency of religious behavior.

Today, Hasidic groups are many and are spread throughout the world. While most Hasidim live in Israel, Hasidic groups are also found in major cities of the United States and, in particular, New York City. Hasidim are generally identifiable by their garments, beards and sidelocks ("payos").

Although the Hasidim have much in common with each other, there are many issues on which various Hasidic groups disagree.

Traditionally, each sect observes the beliefs, practices and customs of its particular rebbe. Since these practices can vary substantially, they sometimes lead to disagreements among members of different groups. One major controversial issue is Zionism. For example, while most Hasidic groups tend to be mildly anti-Zionist, the Satmar Hasidim are staunchly anti-Zionist, while the Lubavitchers tend to be pro-Zionist.

much like the Amish.

requirements

The religious demands of Hasidism often have an effect on the social structure of the community. Hasidic communities, ~~by their very nature~~, *as a means of preserving the distinctive character of their way of life,* strive to remain isolated from the general population. Furthermore, Jewish law prohibits virtually all activities on the Sabbath, including the use of mechanical devices. Because Hasidim are prohibited from using any mechanized means of transportation on the Sabbath, they are virtually compelled to live within walking distance of their synagogue. As a result, the Hasidic communities are densely populated and are centered around the principal religious institutions. As the community expands, -- the need for additional housing in the immediate area becomes acute. In an already overcrowded environment, this is always a potentially explosive issue.

The Hasidic community in New York City is located primarily in the Borough of Brooklyn. There are three discrete Hasidic communities in Brooklyn; Crown Heights, Williamsburg and Boro Park. Each is discussed briefly below.

The Hasidim of Crown Heights - 71st Precinct

The 71st Precinct, which is located in the Crown Heights area of Brooklyn, is populated by the Lubavitch Hasidim, also known as the Habad Hasidim. In addition, the world headquarters for the Lubavitch Organization is located at 770

Eastern Parkway, also within the 71st Precinct. *In a certain sense, the Lubavitcher Headquarters is viewed as the center of this Hasidic universe, world.*

do not proselytize but
Lubavitch Hasidim believe that they must interact and reach out to all other Jews, regardless of their lack of religious observance. In contrast to other sects, the Lubavitch conduct programs by which they attempt to "rekindle the heavenly spark" in the non-religious Jews by persuading them to perform some religious act. Although Lubavitch men are readily identifiable as Hasidim by their garb and the wearing of beards, they do not always wear the long black top coats as is the custom among other Hasidic sects.

The population of the 71st Precinct consists primarily of Hasidics and Caribbean Blacks. A review of the 1990 Census figures discloses that 9.4% of the precinct population is White and 78.4% is Black. The balance of the precinct is composed of Hispanics, Asians and others.

The Lubavitch Hasidic population of Crown Heights traditionally doubles in size during the fall months when Hasidim from all over the world arrive there to observe the Jewish ^{Holy days} ^{High} holidays at Lubavitch World Headquarters on Eastern Parkway.

The World Lubavitch Headquarters has often been the cause of community friction over the years. Until the early 1980's, a Police vehicle was assigned in front of the location 24 hours a day. In addition, the service road on Eastern Parkway at the 770 Block had been used as a play street for Hasidic children.

Currently, the service road is closed for approximately one half hour at a time, whenever crowds emerge from religious services on holidays and the Sabbath. (Police escort is also provided for Christian churches on Sunday and Christian holy days when requested)

There is currently a Hasidic civilian patrol, known as the Shmira Patrol, operating in the Crown Heights area. The Shmira Patrol has never been sanctioned by the Police Department. The Shmira Patrol became the source of community unrest in 1987, when a number of minority people were assaulted by Shmira members who suspected them of community crimes. In response, an authorized, racially mixed civilian patrol was created in the 71st Precinct. Currently, this patrol is predominately staffed by Blacks, although some Hasidim do participate.

The Lubavitch Rebbe, worldwide leader of the Lubavitch community, resides in Crown Heights and has been provided a police escort for many years. The escort was established in response to threats against the Rebbe and as a courtesy in recognition of his international stature. Its purpose is to assure the Rebbe's safety during his occasional visits to the cemetery and to expedite access to care should a medical emergency arise.

Lubavitch weddings are held outdoors as is the Hasidic custom. Frequently, outdoor weddings require a police presence because they involve the closing of a street and/or a large volume of pedestrians. However, this is not a community problem in the 71st Precinct because Lubavitch weddings are often held in backyards.

The major source of friction between the Hasidim community and the Black community is the competition for good housing. Since both communities are expanding rapidly in a confined geographic area, there is an increasing competition for sparse housing resources.

The Hasidim of Williamsburg - 90th Precinct

The Satmars are the predominant Hasidic sect in Williamsburg. -- They are, perhaps, the most ultraconservative and culturally isolated of all the Hasidic sects. In addition to other identifying characteristics, the Satmars wear traditional Hasidic garb, including black top coats and black hats. Every phase of the group's social structure is oriented to the preservation of the group norms. The Satmar choose to remain isolated and to resist assimilation. They are, in essence, a closed society.

The Satmar community of Williamsburg began to flourish at the end of World War II when European survivors of Hitler's atrocities came and settled in the area. There are approximately 25,000 Hasidim currently living within the 90th Precinct, roughly 25% of the precinct's population. Because each Hasidic family has an estimated average of 7.6 children, competition with the Hispanic population, which comprises 50% of the precinct, for the limited local housing resources is keen. As in the 71st Precinct, this competition for housing and other limited resources in the area is the root of most of the problems between the Satmar Hasidim and their Hispanic neighbors in the 90th Precinct.

Although the Satmar sect is the predominant Hasidic group in Williamsburg, it is not the only one. There are approximately 20 different Hasidic sects within the 90th Precinct, not all of which get along. From time to time, there has been some intergroup conflict.

There is also a Hasidic civilian patrol which operates within the 90th Precinct. The Shomrim Patrol, as it is known, operated under the authorization of the 90th Precinct until 1989, when members of the Patrol assisted in the apprehension of a robbery suspect who was subsequently severely beaten and hospitalized in critical condition. In the wake of this incident, Shomrim members refused to provide their names to the Police Department because they feared harassment. In response, the Department rescinded the patrol's authorization.

Nonetheless, the Shomrim Patrol continues to operate in Williamsburg without official sanction.

The absence of any visible means of identifying Shomrim Patrol members or vehicles has led to problems. Because so many Hasidim carry portable radios or telephones, i.e., all school personnel, volunteer ambulance personnel, etc., they are often mistaken for members of the Shomrim Patrol. At times, this has resulted in the Shomrim Patrol being accused of misconduct which, in fact, has been committed by other Hasidim.

There is also a Hasidic Volunteer Ambulance Corporation (The Hatzolah), which provides emergency medical service to the community, including non-Hasidic members of the community. In addition to Williamsburg, the Hatzolah also operates in Crown Heights and Boro Park. Volunteers, who live and work in the community, are contacted by radio whenever an emergency occurs and respond directly to the scene in their private vehicles. When an ambulance is required, another volunteer is contacted who then responds with it. Frequently, responding volunteers display red lights in their private vehicles and ignore traffic signals when responding, thereby arousing the anger of other community members who view this as a flagrant violation of law.

A large number of Hasidic weddings are held in the streets of Williamsburg each year which require a police presence. According to a Community Affairs Officer in the 90th Precinct, there is an average of three weddings per day during the warm months. Most of these weddings are relatively small and whatever crowd control problems develop are usually handled by the precinct sector concerned. However, on occasion, weddings draw abnormally large crowds, numbering in the thousands. These weddings require the assignment of a detail of police officers for the purposes of traffic and crowd control.

There is regular interaction between the Hispanic and Hasidic communities at the monthly Precinct Council meetings. Although the attendees at these meetings are predominantly Hispanic, the meetings are well attended and a number of Hasidim also attend.

The Hasidim of Boro Park - 66th Precinct

The 66th Precinct, located in the Boro Park Section of Brooklyn, is almost entirely Jewish. Consequently, there has been minimal inter-group tension in the 66th Precinct. There are both Orthodox and Hasidic Jews living in Boro Park.

There are approximately 30 different Hasidic sects in the area, with the Bobov sect being the predominant one. Rabbi Halberstam, the leader of the Bobovs, resides in Boro Park. Boro Park is also home to a community of approximately

6,000 Sephardic Jews, most of whom live in the vicinity of Ocean Parkway. There are approximately 90 schools and 190 houses of worship located within the 66th Precinct.

Although there are no fixed posts in the 66th Precinct, special attention is given to the houses of worship. There is a House of Worship ("H.O.W.") conditions unit, composed of one sergeant and ten police officers, operating in the precinct. Although the H.O.W. car gives special attention to religious institutions, they also respond to radio runs.

When the Department is fully staffed under the Mayor's Safe Streets, Safe City Program by the end of FY94, specialist functions in precincts, like the H.O.W. cars, will be eliminated and their tasks assumed by beat officers as part of their community policing responsibilities. In fact, under the Department's one-year plan for the implementation of community policing, the functions of the House of Worship Unit are scheduled to be taken over by beat officers.

There are two civilian patrols operating within the 66th Precinct. The first is the Precinct Community Patrol, which is composed of volunteers from both the Jewish and Catholic communities. The second patrol, the Shomrim Patrol, is the more active of the two. Known locally as the "Bakery Boys", the 66th Precinct's Shomrim Patrol, unlike its counterpart in the 71st Precinct, is registered with and sanctioned by the Department.

There are approximately 35 to 40 outdoor weddings held in the 66th Precinct annually. Generally, one patrol car is assigned from the Precinct and sometimes the Borough Task Force lends assistance at those events. The Hatzolah Volunteer Ambulance Service also operates in this precinct.

Of the three precincts that have substantial Hasidic populations, the 66th Precinct experiences the least inter-group tension.



The Police Department's Relationship with the
Hasidic Community

Historically, the Police Department has made diligent efforts to be responsive to the needs of the Hasidic community of Brooklyn. Over time, various practices and customs have evolved as a result of this diligence. For the most part, these practices serve legitimate functions and typify the type of problem-solving strategies that are characteristic of community policing. However, some of the practices appear to have little value as part of an effective policing strategy and, instead, seem to be provided merely as a courtesy to the community.

To the extent that such practices exist, they constitute a drain on public resources in fiscally difficult times. More important, they contribute to a perception of disparate treatment which has, in the past, sown the seeds of community unrest. The Department has therefore, reviewed these practices in order to determine what role, if any, they should play in the Department's transition to a new policing style.

Arrest Policy

One area which has given rise to considerable controversy is arrest policy. There is a perception that Hasidic prisoners are routinely afforded expedited arrest processing.

It is clear that arraignments can be and, on occasion, have been informally expedited at the request of ranking police officials. However, there is no evidence to suggest that this is routinely done for Hasidic prisoners.

While extraordinary circumstances may, on occasion, warrant expedited arraignments, they should not be routinely afforded to any group, Hasidic or otherwise. In the absence of compelling circumstances, it is the policy of the Department that all prisoners be processed in the same manner and as expeditiously as the system permits.

It has also been suggested that, whenever a Hasid is to be arrested, a supervisor responds to the scene to assess the situation, whereas, in other arrest situations the assessment is made at the station house. Under Departmental policy, it is the responsibility of the desk officer to determine the validity of all arrests that are brought before him or her. (Patrol Guide Section 110-2, p. 1, Step 9).

In situations where a police officer issues a summons for Disorderly Conduct, and is the complainant, the Patrol Supervisor is required to respond to the scene to verify the arrest and the condition of the violator. (P.G. 109-2, p. 3, Add'l. Data).

Finally, the patrol supervisor is required to respond to and direct activities at radio runs involving weapons, serious crimes and emergencies. (P.G. 103-2, p. 9, Step 1). Given the history of community tension in Crown Heights, it is the policy in the 71st Precinct for a supervisor to be called to the scene whenever there is an incident between Blacks and Hasidim.

None of these procedures are unreasonable. Each is designed to provide adequate police supervision in proportion to the nature of the incident. However, it is against Department policy to require a supervisor's presence at every arrest of one group while having no similar requirement for other groups. Such a procedure would not help to further any legitimate police objective and would be inherently prejudicial.

One final issue has been raised with respect to the arrest of Hasidim. Occasionally, Hasidic prisoners are walked to the precinct rather than transported by patrol car. This practice is utilized on the Sabbath if feasible and consistent with safety.

It appears that this custom is rarely invoked, primarily because so few Hasidim are arrested on the Sabbath.

However, if walking a prisoner to the precinct on these rare occasions helps to facilitate the arrest and proves effective in avoiding major community unrest, then it serves a valid police objective and should not be proscribed.

Summons

Another allegation frequently made is that Hasidim do not receive summonses and that, when they do, the summonses are voided. In an analysis of the 90th Precinct's summons activity, conducted in connection with the investigation of P.O. Ariza's claims, summons activity was found to be equitably dispersed throughout the precinct. Furthermore, of the eight summonses that were voided during the two year period of 1989-1990, three were parking summonses issued to vehicles owned by Jewish citizens and one was a signal light summons issued to a Jewish male which was voided because the traffic signal was found to be malfunctioning. The other four voided summonses were not issued to Jewish members of the community.

Department policy provides that summonses may be voided only if prepared in error. There is no evidence to suggest that this policy is not being followed. However, in view of the potential for misunderstanding, the policy has been reiterated.

Police Liaisons

In the course of reviewing Police/Hasidic relations, it was learned that a number of community leaders have been designated as "Police Liaisons" and have been issued Police Department I.D. cards. Of the seven I.D. cards issued to community leaders, six were issued to members of Jewish communities. While these credentials facilitate communication between the Department and these community representatives at the scene of incidents or community events, their uneven distribution does little to diminish the perception of preferential treatment.

In order to achieve the legitimate purposes of this practice while eliminating any disparities, the Department has established a broad based clergy liaison program which encompasses all denominations. To assure more equal representation, active recruitment of clergy from all religious groups has been undertaken, with final approval of the issuance of credentials awarded by the Police Commissioner.

Volunteer Ambulance

Another matter of concern is the complaint that members of the Hasidic Volunteer Ambulance Corp. (Hatzolah) routinely disobey traffic signals with impunity when responding to medical emergencies in their private vehicles. It has also been pointed out that some of these volunteers have installed red emergency lights in their private vehicles in violation of the Vehicle and Traffic Law. There is a perception in the Hispanic Community that this conduct is acknowledged and accepted by the local police.

While Precinct Commanders acknowledge that this is a problem, there is no Department policy which permits such activity. Clearly, the Hispanic community's concern in this area is legitimate. It has been made clear to all parties that this type of activity is unlawful and will not be tolerated. It has also been stressed that it is the policy of the Police Department that all who are observed committing these infractions, Hasidim or otherwise, will be summonsed accordingly.

770 Eastern Parkway

Presently, there is enhanced police coverage assigned to the World Lubavitch Headquarters at 770 Eastern Parkway. One sergeant and five police officers from the Borough Task Force are assigned to the service road on the 770 Block on Friday evenings from 1800 hours to 0200 hours and on Saturdays from 1000 hours to 1800 hours. Their primary responsibility is to keep the street open to traffic and to keep the children on the sidewalks. The service road is usually closed for periods of approximately one half hour when crowds emerge from religious services at 770 Eastern Parkway and overflow into the street.

As with the 66 Precinct's House of Worship conditions unit, this Task Force assignment is scheduled for elimination under the Department's one-year plan for implementing community policing. As additional officers are hired under the Mayor's Safe Streets, Safe City program, beat officers engaged in

community policing will assume responsibility for this function. Furthermore, beat officers assigned to this neighborhood will apply problem solving strategies to ensure the safety of citizens attending services at 770 Eastern Parkway while minimizing the disruption of traffic and inconvenience to neighbors.

Police Escort

There has been a long standing custom in the 71st Precinct whereby the Lubavitch Rebbe is given an escort of one unmarked police car for his thrice weekly trips to a Queens cemetery. The oft-cited justification for this practice is that the Rebbe is the leader of a worldwide religion. His stature in the Lubavitch Community is akin to that of the Pope in the Roman Catholic Church. As such, he has been the subject of threats over the years, threats which the Department has been inclined to take seriously. While this service is rarely extended to other religious leaders, an objective threat assessment will be the basis for any police service of this nature in the future.

Street Closings

Another area which has generated friction in the past between the Hasidim and their neighbors is the number of street closings which take place in Hasidic communities. Local leaders have expressed resentment at what is perceived as attempts by Hasidim to restrict the use of public thoroughfares.

Although the Hasidim do apply for a substantial number of Street Activity Permits, usually in connection with religious celebrations, the ultimate determination on these applications is the responsibility of the Mayor's Office of Community Liaison. The Police Department's involvement is limited to a recommendation by the local commanding officer with respect to whether the issuance would unduly interfere with vehicular or pedestrian traffic (A.G. 321-15). The Department's responsibility in this area is simply to make an impartial assessment.

Private Functions

The final custom which warrants review is the level of attendance by Police personnel at private Hasidic functions. Historically local police personnel are often invited to attend private events such as weddings and receptions, etc.

While there are many community events to which police officials are invited and which they legitimately attend, there seems to have been a disproportionate level of attendance at private Hasidic functions. This type of activity can easily contribute to the perception that the Hasidic community is receiving preferential treatment.

While the Department cannot exercise control over the number of events to which its personnel are invited, it can exercise greater control over the number and nature of events actually attended. As a matter of future policy, the nature of the events attended must bear some relationship to

the objectives of the Department or the command. Furthermore, attendance must not be limited to events sponsored by only one segment of the community. Like other police resources, attendance at these events should be dispersed equitably among the various community groups competing for police services.

Conclusion

The working relationship between the Police Department and the Hasidic community is a sound one. In many ways, it typifies community policing in practice. Through close cooperation and extensive communication, the Department has identified the needs of the community and has, for the most part, responded to them in a creative and effective manner.

Over the years, however, certain police responses to the Hasidim have prompted charges of intentional favoritism from other community members. Clearly, there are certain practices which contribute to the perception of favoritism.

In order to ensure that effective police service continues to be provided, while minimizing the perception of preferential treatment, the following measures have been undertaken:

Arrest Policy

- It has been formally reemphasized that all prisoners should be arraigned in a uniform manner and as efficiently as the system permits. While extraordinary circumstances may, on occasion warrant expedited arraignments, they will not be routinely provided to any group.

- Current arrest procedures achieve the objective of providing appropriate police supervision in proportion to the nature of the incident. Furthermore, it is against the policy of the Department to require a supervisor's presence at every arrest of any particular group.
- If walking a Hasidic prisoner to a precinct on the Sabbath helps to avoid major community unrest and increases personal safety, it serves a valid objective and will not be proscribed.

Police Liaison Credentials

Although these credentials facilitate communication between the Department and community representatives, their uneven distribution in the past supported the appearance of favoritism. A program encompassing clergy of all denominations has been established.

Traffic Enforcement

Impartial enforcement of the Vehicle and Traffic Law, in particular the provisions relating to possession of red emergency lights and disobeying traffic signals, is the policy of the Department. That has been ~~reemphasized~~ *implemented*.

Periodic Fixed Post at 770 Eastern Parkway

The enhanced police presence at 770 Eastern Parkway, which is provided by the Borough Task Force on a regular basis will be eliminated, and responsibility for this function will be assumed by beat officers as the Department implements community policing. It will be the responsibility of the beat officers to assure the safety of those attending services while minimizing disruption of neighborhood traffic.

Police Escort

The practice of providing a police escort for the Lubavitch Rebbe will be done only in support of legitimate police purposes.

Street Activity Permits

It is the Department's obligation to conduct an impartial assessment of every application for a Street Activity Permit. This policy has been reemphasized.

Attendance at Local Social Events

Police attendance at community social affairs constitutes an allocation of resources to the community. Like all other resources, it is to be distributed equitably among the various community groups competing for police services.

The implementation of these measures serves to maintain the relationship between the Department and the Hasidic community while helping to dispel any perceptions of favoritism that may exist in neighboring communities. Furthermore, it demonstrates the Department's willingness to be responsive to the concerns of neighboring communities, thereby providing a stimulus for enhanced interaction among the Hasidic community, its neighbors and the Police Department.

As the Department continues its implementation of the community policing philosophy, it is critical that Department procedures reflect the commitment to become partners with every segment of the community. The Police Department will continue to evaluate its performance in providing the best possible police service in the most fair and equitable way.

Marc H. Tanenbaum

August 5, 1991

Police Commissioner Lee Brown
1 Police Plaza

Dear Lee,

Enclosed please find several of my reactions to the document.

I hope the comments prove to be helpful to you.

While I understand the purpose of this report, I still have a feeling that the cause would be better served if there were an overall survey of "the Crown Heights Crisis" within appropriate *which* attention and concern would be paid to the problems and perceptions of the Afro-Americans in relation to the Hasidim, and vice-versa.

But I realize that other factors may be at work here that would call for a special report. In any case, I still think it is important to place the special report in the larger context of concern for the community at large.

If I can be of any further help, please feel free to call on me.

With warmest good wishes to you and Yvonne!

Cordially,



AMERICAN JEWISH
ARCHIVE

The Moral Legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr.

by RABBI MARC H. TANENBAUM



THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE
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Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., lives on in our consciousness today as one of the greatest moral prophets of this century. Cast in the mold of Isaiah, he was, at one and the same time, an outstanding religious teacher and thinker, a great statesman, and a spiritual inspiration for ages yet unborn, whose central mission to his people and to the world was the establishment of justice and universal peace.

Like Isaiah, Dr. King called upon the American nation to "cease to do evil, learn to do right, seek justice, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow." And like Isaiah, he called upon the human race to turn away from war.

Long years have elapsed since April 4, 1968, when this American prophet of non-violence became a supreme victim of bloodthirsty violence. Why do so many Americans continue to feel such pain, such a deep sense of loss at his death? What was there about the

Based on an Address by
Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum,
National Interreligious Affairs Director
of the American Jewish Committee,
at the Ecumenical Service
marking the 51st Birthday
of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.,
at the Ebenezer Baptist Church,
Atlanta, Georgia, January 15, 1980

life and work, the voice and the vision of this man that made him such a compelling, towering figure of our century? At least part of the answer lies in his capacity to tap the best instincts of every man and woman in his ever-expanding orbit.

THE VOICE AND THE VISION

In January 1963, a National Conference on Religion and Race convened in Chicago. It was the first time in American history that some 70 national organizations, representing Catholics, Protestants and Jews, Blacks and whites, came together to examine the role of religious institutions in ending racial discrimination in the United States. It was my privilege to serve as one of the three organizers of that historic meeting; and as its program chairman, it was my pleasure to invite Dr. King to address a national ecumenical gathering commemorating the centennial of President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation.

As that conference, which many historians consider the starting point of a new coalition of conscience in our nation, Dr. King told a respectful audience of 1700 religious and civic leaders:

Through our scientific genius, we have made of our nation -- and even the world -- a neighborhood, but we have failed to employ our moral and spiritual genius to make of it a brotherhood. The problem of race

and color prejudice remains America's chief moral dilemma.

And in words as ringing today as when he first uttered them, Martin Luther King, Jr. enunciated five challenges to America's churches and synagogues, and to all the nation's Christian and Jewish communities.

What were these challenges?

1. To Enhance the Dignity of the Human Person

Segregation denies the sacredness of human personality. Deeply rooted in our religious heritage is a conviction that every man is an heir to a legacy of dignity and worth...Our Judeo-Christian tradition refers to this inherited dignity of man in the Biblical term the image of God. The image of God is universally shared in equal portions by all men. The tragedy of segregation is that it treats all men as means rather than ends and thereby reduces them to things rather than persons.

The churches and synagogues have an opportunity and a duty to lift up their voices like a trumpet and declare unto the people the immorality of segregation. We must affirm that every human life is a reflex of divinity, and every act of injustice mars and defaces of image of God in man.

2. To Uproot Prejudice

All race hate is based on fears, suspicions, and misunderstandings, usually groundless. The church and synagogue can do a great deal to direct the popular mind at this point. Through their channels of religious education they can point out the irrationality of these beliefs. They can show that the idea of a superior or inferior race is a myth that has been completely refuted by anthropological evidence.

3. To Support Social Justice

A third effort that the church and synagogue can make in attempting to solve the race problem is to take the lead in social reform....They must support strong civil rights legislation and exert their influence in the area of economic justice. Economic insecurity strangles the physical and cultural growth of its victims. Not only are millions deprived of formal education and proper health facilities, but our most fundamental social unit -- the family -- is tortured, corrupted, and weakened by economic insufficiency. There are few things more thoroughly sinful than economic injustice.

4. To Encourage Non-Violent Direct Action

It is my personal conviction that the most potent instrument to gain

total emancipation in America is that of non-violent resistance. Violence as a way of achieving racial justice is both impractical and immoral. It is impractical because it ends up creating many more social problems than it solves. It is immoral because it seeks to annihilate the opponent rather than convert him. It destroys community and makes brotherhood impossible. Non-violence makes it possible for one to rise to the noble heights of opposing vigorously the unjust system while loving the perpetrators of the system.

Love is not the spineless sentimentality which refuses to take courageous action against evil for fear someone might be offended. Love is treating fellowmen as persons, understanding them with all their good and bad qualities, and treating them as potential saints. God is not interested merely in the freedom of black men, and brown men, and yellow men; God is interested in the freedom of the whole human race -- the creation of a society in which all men appreciate the dignity and worth of the individual.

5. To Promote Universal Love

A final challenge that faces the churches and synagogues is to lead men along the path of true integration, something the law

cannot do....Court orders and federal enforcement agencies are of inestimable value in achieving desegregation, but desegregation is only a partial, though necessary, step toward the final goal which we seek to realize, genuine intergroup and interpersonal living...Something must touch the hearts and souls of men so that they will come together spiritually because it is natural and right. A vigorous enforcement of civil rights will bring an end to segregated public facilities which are barriers to a truly desegregated society, but it cannot bring an end to fears, prejudice and pride, and irrationality, which are the barriers to a truly integrated society...True integration will be achieved by men who are willingly obedient to unenforceable obligations.

THE MORAL LEGACY OF MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. IN THE 1980S

The themes Martin Luther King, Jr. sounded in 1963 are equally critical for human survival today: respect for the dignity of every human being; an end to racial, religious, and ethnic prejudice; a deepened commitment to social and economic justice; non-violent-direct action as the truest expression of love and justice; the invisible inner law of universal love which binds all men and women of the human family together as brothers and sisters.

There is an epidemic of dehumanization in the world today. Every continent is shaken by violence, terrorism, massacre, and torture. And where are the voices of conscience to speak out against these acts?

The Bible tells us that each human being is created in the sacred image of God and is therefore of ultimate worth and preciousness. Yet the meaning and value of human life is being ignored the world over. Three million men, women and children were massacred in Cambodia...300,000 Black Christians were murdered by Idi Amin in Uganda...nearly one million Black Christians and animists were exterminated in the Sudan and Burundi; tens of thousands of Black Christian Ibos and Moslem Yorubas died in the Nigerian-Biafran conflict...countless Catholics and Protestants have been murdered in Ireland.

How can the world put a stop to this terrorism and violence?

We honor the moral legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr. by joining together in a national and international determination to reject violence and those who advocate violence. We must work to deromanticize all appeals to the use of violence and terrorism as a means of liberation, for from a moral standpoint, no ends can justify such anti-human means. "That which is hateful to you, do not inflict on others" was the first formulation of the Golden Rule, uttered by Rabbi Hillel, a contemporary

of Jesus of Nazareth in first-century Palestine.

We honor the moral legacy of Dr. King by working to curtail racial, religious and ethnic prejudice in our nation and throughout the world.

Prof. Gordon Allport of Harvard University, in his monumental study, The Nature of Prejudice, reported on a series of case studies of the lynchings of Blacks in the South. His researchers found that every lynching was preceded by intensive "verbal violence" against Blacks on the part of racist bigots. The racial epithets pictured Blacks in hostile caricatures and stereotypes, robbing them of their humanity and of any claim to human compassion. "There is an inevitable progression," Prof. Allport wrote, "from verbal aggression to violence, from rumor to riot, from gossip to genocide."

Blacks and Jews have both been the victims of verbal violence that led to physical violence. The nightmare of slavery was made acceptable by dehumanization of Black people. The murder of 6 million Jews in the Nazi Holocaust, was the culmination of centuries of teachings of contempt for Jews and Judaism.

Martin Luther King, Jr. understood deeply and intuitively the destructive effects of racism and anti-Semitism. He knew that human rights are indivisible; that attitudes and actions which diminish respect for one branch of the human

family are easily turned against another, and that no one is safe from the scourge of hatred.

Dr. King made this point explicitly, in an address to a Jewish audience in May 1958:

...the segregationist makes no fine distinctions between the Negro and Jew. The racists of America fly blindly at both of us, caring not at all which of us falls. Their aim is to maintain, through crude segregation, groups whose uses as scapegoats can facilitate their potential and social rule over all people.

Our common fight is against these deadly enemies of democracy, and our glory is that we are chosen to prove that courage is a characteristic of oppressed people, however cynically and brutally they are denied full equality and freedom.

Because he knew deep in his soul that the demeaning of any group's heritage diminished him and his people, Dr. King was an outspoken foe of Soviet anti-Semitism. Speaking to the American Jewish Conference on Soviet Jewry in 1966, Dr. King denounced the Soviet Government's efforts to destroy the Jewish culture and heritage of Soviet Jews:

While Jews in Russia may not be physically murdered as they were in Nazi Germany, they are facing every day a kind of spiritual and cultural genocide...the absence of opportunity

to associate as Jews in the enjoyment of Jewish culture and religious experience becomes a severe limitation upon the individual. These deprivations are part of a person's emotional and intellectual life. They determine whether he is fulfilled as a human being. Negroes can well understand and sympathize with this problem. When you are written out of history as a people, when you are given no choice but to accept the majority culture, you are denied an aspect of your own identity. Ultimately you suffer a corrosion of your self-understanding and your self-respect.

The same sense of justice that motivated Dr. King to speak out against Soviet anti-Semitism, led him to speak out in support of Israel, and to urge his country to work for peace in the Middle East. In an address to the Rabbinical Assembly of America, just 10 days before his shocking, untimely death, he declared:

I see Israel, and never mind saying it, as one of the great outposts of democracy in the world, and a marvelous example of what can be done, how desert land almost can be transformed into an oasis of brotherhood and democracy. Peace for Israel means security and that security must be a reality.

As long as he lived, Martin Luther King, Jr. held fast to his vision. In the same speech to the Rabbinical Assembly, he offered this ringing reaffirmation of

the universal struggle to overcome prejudice:

We have made it clear that we cannot be the victims of the notion that you deal with one evil in society by substituting another evil. We cannot substitute one tyranny for another, and for the Black man to be struggling for justice and then turn around and be anti-Semitic is not only a very irrational course but it is a very immoral course, and wherever we have seen anti-Semitism we have condemned it with all of our might.

* * *

On April 5, 1968, the day after Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated, Morris B. Abram, then president of the American Jewish Committee and a collaborator of Dr. King's from their earliest days in the civil rights movement, issued a statement that movingly expressed a Jewish appreciation of Dr. King's moral legacy:

When the pain and bewilderment is somewhat diminished, those of us who believed with him that the course of America could somehow be changed, that despair could be replaced by hope, and that peaceful solutions can be found to the profound problems that tear our communities apart and perplex us all -- all of us who so believe must reassess our actions and our participation in rebuilding the

country in which we live. From this reassessment must come bold and practical steps that will demonstrate that we care deeply about the conditions of our fellow citizens, and that we are prepared to do more than we are now doing to help heal the wounds in the souls of America -- Black and white.

We all know that the corrosive poverty that afflicts 50 million citizens must be eliminated and that the insurance of a sense of dignity and well-being must be achieved. I urge you to go forth and act in your capacities as an individual citizen, in the traditions of Judaism and in the best interests of the whole country. Let us speak for a segment of white America in declaring our dedication to the principles for which Martin Luther King died.

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Zecher Tzaddik L'vrochoh.

May the memory of this righteous man continue to be a blessing for us all.

*This publication has been made possible
by a grant from*

**THE NATHAN APPLEMAN INSTITUTE
FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF
CHRISTIAN-JEWISH UNDERSTANDING**