



# THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

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D R A F T

CONFIDENTIAL

SUGGESTED OUTLINE FOR PROPOSED TALK BY GOV. JIMMY CARTER

TO: ROBERT LIFSCHUTZ  
CC: BERT GOLD, RITA HAUSER

FROM: RABBI MARC H. TANENBAUM

DATE: SEPTEMBER 17, 1976

THEME: AMERICA'S DISTINCTIVE GENIUS LIES IN ITS ACHIEVING "UNITY  
IN THE MIDST OF DIVERSITY"

PURPOSE: TO REJECT ANY APPEALS TO ANTI-SEMITISM, ANTI-CATHOLICISM,  
RACISM, ANTI-WASPISM, ANTI-ETHNICISM - ANY APPEALS TO HATRED  
OR SUSPICION AGAINST ANY GROUP WHICH WEAKENS NATIONAL UNITY,  
MORALE AND INHIBITS COLLABORATION OF ALL GROUPS - RELIGIOUS,  
RACIAL, AND ETHNIC. UNITY OF AMERICAN PEOPLE ESSENTIAL TO  
HELP NATION ACHIEVE ITS NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL OBJECTIVES.

TIMING: POSSIBLY COLUMBUS DAY - DISCOVERY OF AMERICA - OCTOBER 11  
UN HUMAN RIGHTS DAY (?), OCT. 24.

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THEME DEVELOPMENT:

I - IN 1492, CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS SET SAIL UNDER THE FLAG OF SPAIN IN  
AN ATTEMPT TO REACH THE EAST - CHINA AND INDIA - FOR THE PURPOSE  
OF DISCOVERING "A NORTHWEST PASSAGE" TRADE ROUTE TO THOSE COUNTRIES.  
IN THE 14TH AND 15TH CENTURIES, TRADE WITH THE FAR EAST WAS THE  
MONOPOLY OF THE ITALIAN CITY-STATES, WHOSE MERCHANTS CONTROLLED  
THE VALUABLE CARGOES OF SPICES, SILKS, GEMS AND RUGS. THE VOYAGE  
OF COLUMBUS, AND THOSE EXPLORERS OF OTHER EUROPEAN NATIONS BORDER-  
ING ON THE ATLANTIC, WERE HEROIC ATTEMPTS TO FIND ALTERNATE TRADE  
ROUTES THAT WOULD ENABLE THEM TO BREAK THE MONOPOLY AND TO HAVE A  
SHARE IN THE MATERIAL WEALTH OF THE MYSTERIOUS EAST.

II - THE MAIN PURPOSES OF THOSE VOYAGES OF COLUMBUS AND OTHER EXPLORERS WERE MATERIAL GAIN - TO DISCOVER THE FABLED EL DORADO. THE DISCOVERY OF AMERICA WAS IN FACT AN ACCIDENT - BECAUSE THIS HUGE CONTINENT WAS HITHERTO UNKNOWN TO SPAIN AND OTHER NATIONS OF EUROPE.

BUT WHAT HAS FOLLOWED DURING THE PAST 484 YEARS SINCE 1492 HAS BEEN FAR FROM AN ACCIDENT. FOR OUT OF THE FORBIDDING WILDERNESS AND HAZARDS OF THIS VAST LAND LITERALLY STUMBLING OVER BY COLUMBUS HAS BEEN CARVED AND FORGED THE GREATEST DEMOCRACY IN THE HISTORY OF MANKIND. THAT HISTORIC ACHIEVEMENT IS THE RESULT OF A VISION EMBRACING VALUES AND IDEALS THAT CONTINUE TO LIFT UP THE HEARTS NOT ONLY OF AMERICANS BUT OF MILLIONS OF PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THE WORLD TO WHOM THE AMERICAN DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION INSPIRES HOPE FOR THE FUTURE. AT THE CENTER OF THAT VISION IS OUR COMMITMENT TO LIVING OUT IN DAILY LIFE THE IDEAL OF DEMOCRATIC PLURALISM. MORE THAN ANY OTHER NATION IN HUMAN HISTORY WE HAVE CREATED A SOCIETY BASED ON RESPECT FOR DIFFERENCE. IN AMERICA, DIFFERENCE IS NOT PERCEIVED AS A THREAT, BUT AS A SOURCE OF ENRICHMENT. THAT VISION OF PLURALISM IS AN AUTHENTIC BREAKTHROUGH IN HISTORY, AND WE OUGHT NOT TAKE IT FOR GRANTED, BUT RATHER CELEBRATE ITS CONTINUED MEANING FOR ALL OF US.

ON THIS COLUMBUS DAY WE WOULD DO WELL ALSO TO RECALL THAT OUR COUNTRY IS A TESTIMONY TO THE LABOR, COURAGE, INDUSTRY, LOVE AND SENSE OF DUTY OF MILLIONS OF AMERICANS - CATHOLICS, PROTESTANTS, AND JEWS; SPANISH, ITALIANS, IRISH, GREEKS, GERMANS, POLES,

SCANDINAVIANS, DUTCH: BLACK, BROWN, RED, AND WHITE PEOPLES FROM PRACTICALLY EVERY NATION OF THE EARTH. TODAY AMERICA IS THE GREATEST SYMPHONY OF LIBERTY AND FREEDOM OF THE HUMAN FAMILY THAT EXISTS ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD, AND THAT MONUMENTAL ACHIEVEMENT WAS A TRIUMPH OF THE SPIRIT, OF RESPECT FOR THE DIGNITY AND RIGHTS OF EVERY CITIZEN.

III - IT IS APPROPRIATE TO RECALL ON THIS DAY THAT QUITE RESPECTABLE SCHOLARS ARE PERSUADED THAT CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS WAS A MARRANO. IT IS BELIEVED THAT HE WAS BORN OF ITALIAN JEWISH PARENTS IN GENOA, AND WAS FORCED BY THE RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE OF THE SPANISH INQUISITION LITERALLY TO "GO UNDERGROUND" WITH HIS RELIGIOUS BELIEFS. IN THE 15TH CENTURY LITERALLY TENS OF THOUSANDS OF JEWS WERE FORCED AS A RESULT OF PREJUDICE AND RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE TO BECOME CHRISTIANS PUBLICLY AND REMAIN JEWS PRIVATELY BEHIND CLOSED DOORS. AND ONE THEORY HOLDS THAT RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION WAS A FACTOR LEADING COLUMBUS AND SOME OF HIS SAILORS AND CREW WHO WERE ALSO MARRANOS, SECRET JEWS, TO FLEE THE OLD COUNTRY IN SEARCH OF FREEDOM OF CONSCIENCE IN THE NEW WORLD. WHETHER OR NOT THAT WAS THE ACTUAL CASE, WE DO KNOW THAT IT WAS AN HISTORIC FACT THAT TWO CENTURIES LATER, THE PILGRIM FATHERS CAME TO THIS COUNTRY IN SEARCH OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY, THE RIGHT TO BE THEMSELVES, IN THEIR OWN TERMS. THEY FLED THE ENFORCED CONFORMITY OF THE ANGLICAN ESTABLISHMENT IN ENGLAND. TRAGICALLY, THEY WANTED FREEDOM OF CONSCIENCE ONLY FOR THEMSELVES, AND DENIED IT TO OTHERS WHO DID NOT SHARE THEIR VIEWS.

THAT LED ROGER WILLIAMS IN 1638 TO FOUND THE COLONY OF RHODE



ISLAND AS A HAVEN FOR ALL PEOPLE OF ALL RELIGIONS TO WORSHIP AND TO LIVE AS FREE PEOPLE. AND I AM PROUD IN A PERSONAL WAY THAT I CAN TRACE MY OWN RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL COMMITMENTS TO AMERICAN PLURALISM BACK TO ROGER WILLIAMS AND HIS COLONY WHO WERE THE FIRST BAPTISTS IN AMERICA. I HOPE IT WILL NOT BE MISUNDERSTOOD WHEN I SAY THAT I TAKE PRIDE ALSO IN THE FACT THAT THE BAPTIST CHURCHES, TOGETHER WITH SUCH OTHER DISSENTING CHURCHES AS THE METHODISTS, PRESBYTERIANS, QUAKERS, AND OTHERS, PLAYED A CRUCIAL ROLE IN LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS OF DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA THROUGH THEIR DISTINCTIVE EMPHASIS ON THE LIBERTY OF THE INDIVIDUAL CONSCIENCE (THAT IS BEHOLDEN ONLY TO GOD), ON THE EQUALITY OF ALL PERSONS - RICH AND POOR, EDUCATED AND IGNORANT, BLACK, BROWN OR WHITE - AS SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF A COMMON CREATOR. THESE FRONTIER CHURCHES ALSO PLAYED A CRITICAL ROLE IN SETTING STANDARDS OF PUBLIC MORALITY IN BUSINESS, IN PUBLIC LIFE, AS WELL AS IN PERSONAL AND SOCIAL RELATIONS. THEY WERE PIVOTAL IN ADVANCING SOCIAL REFORM ESPECIALLY FOR THE WELFARE OF THE COMMON PEOPLE: AND TO THEM WE OWE AS WELL A NATIONAL COMMITMENT TO EDUCATION AS A DEMOCRATIC RIGHT RATHER THAN AS AN ARISTOCRATIC PRIVILEGE.

(DOCUMENTATION, INCLUDING STATISTICS, QUOTES, TO BE FOUND IN MY PAPER ON "THE EVANGELICAL RENAISSANCE AND AMERICAN PLURALISM.")

IV - THUS, THE GENIUS OF AMERICA, RESTS ON A SIMPLE BUT ELOQUENT IDEA - THIS NATION, AT ITS BEST, HAS BEGUN TO REALIZE THE DREAM OF CENTURIES - UNITY IN THE MIDST OF DIVERSITY.

1) - AMERICA IS NOT A MELTING POT - IT IS A MOSAIC. ITS UNPRECEDENTED MATERIAL AND HUMAN ACHIEVEMENT OF PROVIDING

A HIGHER STANDARD OF LIVING FOR MORE PEOPLE THAN HAS EVER BEEN BEFORE FOR SO MANY MILLIONS OF PEOPLE IS THE RESULT OF THE CONTRIBUTIONS MADE BY MEN AND WOMEN - ALL OF THEM AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER IMMIGRANTS, EXPLORERS FOR NEW ALTERNATIVES AS WAS COLUMBUS - FROM EVERY RELIGIOUS, RACIAL AND ETHNIC GROUP THAT HAVE COME TO OUR SHORES. ALL OF US REMAIN INDEBTED IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER TO EACH OTHER, AS WELL AS TO OUR IMMIGRANT ANCESTORS.

2) AMERICA IS THE ONLY COUNTRY IN THE WORLD THAT HAS NOT SUFFERED FROM RELIGIOUS WARS. IN THE OLD COUNTRY, MILLIONS WERE MASSACRED AS A RESULT OF RELIGIOUS HATREDS AND FANATICISMS. AND IF WE LOOK AROUND THE WORLD TODAY, WE SEE TRAGICALLY HOW SUCH RELIGIOUS HATREDS CONTINUE TO TAKE SO MANY THOUSANDS OF LIVES IN PARTS OF EUROPE, THE MIDDLE EAST, AFRICA, ASIA. AND THAT IS WHY I BECOME VERY UPSET WHEN I HEAR REPORTS THAT SUCH HATREDS REAR THEIR UGLY HEADS IN THIS GREAT NATION. THERE IS NO ROOM IN AMERICA FOR BIGOTRY AGAINST CATHOLICS, JEWS, PROTESTANTS, EVANGELICALS, BLACKS, BROWN OR ANY OTHER OF OUR CITIZENS. - I CONDEMN THE INTRODUCTION OF ANTI-SEMITISM IN THE RECENT SENATORIAL CAMPAIGN IN ARIZONA, (AND I APPLAUD SEN. BARRY GOLDWATER FOR TAKING SUCH A FIRM STAND AND SAYING THAT ANTI-JEWISH HATRED HAS NO PLACE IN AMERICAN POLITICS.) I WOULD ADD THAT ANTI-SEMITISM HAS NO PLACE ANYWHERE ELSE IN AMERICA OR ANYWHERE ELSE IN THE WORLD.

- I ABHOR APPEALS THAT ARE BEING MADE IN A GROWING NUMBER OF CONGRESSIONAL RACES TO "VOTE FOR EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANS ONLY". OR TO "BUY FROM EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANS ONLY". MAYBE IT IS NOT INTENDED THAT WAY, BUT SUCH APPEALS ARE NOTHING LESS THAN



THAN DISCRIMINATION AND BIGOTRY THAT IF LEFT UNCHALLENGED WILL UNDERMINE THE DEMOCRATIC FOUNDATIONS OF THIS GREAT AND BELOVED COUNTRY. IN THIS DEMOCRACY, FROM THE DAYS OF ROGER WILLIAMS TO THIS MOMENT, WE VOTE FOR PEOPLE ON THE BASIS OF THEIR QUALIFICATIONS AND THEIR MERITS, NOT ON THE BASIS OF THEIR RELIGIOUS OR RACIAL OR ETHNIC IDENTITIES. IF SUCH RELIGIOUS OR OTHER FORMS OF GROUP CHAUVINISM ARE ALLOWED TO PREVAIL, WE WILL BALKANIZE AMERICA. BEYOND THAT, WE WILL VIOLATE EVERY ARTICLE OF THE AMERICAN CONSTITUTION AND THE VERY SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES OF THE FOUNDING FATHERS OF THIS NATION.

- THERE HAS BEEN MORE THAN ENOUGH NATIVIST, ANTI-CATHOLIC BIGOTRY IN THIS COUNTRY IN PLACES OF COMMERCE AND EDUCATION. THERE HAS BEEN MORE THAN ENOUGH RACISM IN THIS COUNTRY. THERE HAS BEEN MORE THAN ENOUGH REGIONAL PREJUDICE BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH IN THIS COUNTRY. UNITY IN THE MIDST OF DIVERSITY REQUIRES THAT WE FINALLY GIVE UP THE FALSE BASIS OF GROUP SECURITY.

IT IS AN IRRATIONAL MENTALITY AND IT IS BASICALLY ANTI-AMERICAN TO BELIEVE THAT YOU ACHIEVE A SPURIOUS SENSE OF SUPERIORITY BY POINTING TO SOMEONE ELSE'S SUPPOSED INFERIORITY.

V - ULTIMATELY THE STRENGTH - THE VERY GENIUS OF AMERICA - RESTS ON OUR CONTINUING TO SUSTAIN A HEALTHY BALANCE BETWEEN LEGITIMATE GROUP IDENTITY AND GROUP INTERESTS IN TENSION WITH THE COMMON WELFARE. IF A GROUP ELEVATES ITS OWN INTERESTS AS AN ULTIMATE END IN ITSELF THAT BECOMES GROUP IDOLATRY AND WILL DESTROY THE COMMON GOOD. IF WE SEEK TO SERVE THE COMMON GOOD AND NEGLECT

THE LEGITIMATE INTERESTS OF THE MANY GROUPS WHICH COMPOSE OUR NATIONAL MOSAIC, WE WILL LOSE TOUCH WITH THE REALITIES OF LIFE OF AMERICA. (THAT IS WHAT HAPPENED TO THE ANCIENT HELLENISTIC EMPIRE. IT WAS THE MOST POWERFUL AND MOST ADVANCED ECUMENICAL EMPIRE THEN KNOWN TO MANKIND, BUT IT LOST CONTACT WITH THE CITY-STATES OF THE EMPIRE WHERE THE HUMAN VITALITIES WERE NOURISHED. ULTIMATELY EVEN THE EMPIRE OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT COLLAPSED. WE SEEK TO LEARN FROM THAT HISTORY, AND NOT BE FATED TO REPEAT IT.)

