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RABBI MARC TANNENBAUM

## Pluralism Discussed At JCC

By NEIL THOMPSON

It's called pluralism, and, according to Rabbi Marc Tannenbaum, who last night addressed the Jewish Community Center on "Judaism, Ecumenism, Pluralism," it's this country's most important export for the world.

Rabbi Tannenbaum, national director of interreligious affairs for the American Jewish Committee, defined pluralism as a principal which states that "every religious, racial and ethnic group is entitled to participate in society as equals, and they are first-class citizens by right."

The rabbi cited cases of trouble in Ireland, Lebanon, Cyprus and Uganda as examples of what happens when pluralism is not practiced.

An acknowledged expert in interreligious affairs, Rabbi Tannenbaum is the only rabbi who sat in on the deliberations at Vatican Council II. He helped set up the American Jewish Relief Effort for Nigeria and Biafra, and was the first president of the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization.

One of his goals has been to improve relations between Jews and Non-Jews, and he said he has spent the last 25 years working on it.

He said that one sign of progress was that different religions now have text books which don't criticize other religions. The new textbooks, he said, "clean out the underbrush" of misunderstanding between different religious groups.

Rabbi Edgar Weinsberg, of Temple Beth El, asked about his views on pluralism, said "every individual should retain his or her group identity, and cultural and religious values, while encouraging others to do the same. The greatness of America lies in its pluralistic outlook, which calls for mutual acceptance between groups with varying values and traditions.

"Any hate group," he said, "that seeks to vilify another group should be tolerated in a society like ours as long as they verbalize their views without acting upon them. It seems to me that the right of free association does not include the right to act violently toward others.

"Any individuals and groups have the right to counter, through peaceable and lawful means, any hostile efforts which weaken the fabric of democratic society," he said.