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

Series G: Speaking Engagements. 1975-1992

Box 107, Folder 41, Meetings [Albany, N.Y.]. October 1978.



Albany, N.Y. Gold

October 13, 1978

Harold Applebaum

Marc H. Tanenbaum

Interview in Catholic Press

In connection with a recent talk I gave at a World Hunger Conference near Albany, N.Y., I was interviewed by a Catholic nun for The Evangelist, the Albany diocesan newspaper. The story was sent by her to the Catholic news service and Religious News Service.

The interview lasted about an hour, and she condensed that discussion into a page-and-a-half story. As a result of that compression, a number of misrepresentations of my views appeared regarding AJC's and my own convictions about abortion and tuition tax credits.

The Religious News Service checked out with me what I actually said to the nun, and wrote a story that comes reasonably close to what I stated during the interview.

Since there will probably be some reaction to the sister's distorted version of my views, I am sending you the RNS story and ask you to send it around to our area directors, and maybe to the JCRCs as well.

cc: Bert Gold
Seymour Samet
Sam Rabinove
Ira Silverman
Selma Hirsch
Mort Yarmon

CHRISTIANS, JEWS SHARE COMMON CONCERNS,
RABBI TELLS A CATHOLIC NEWSPAPER

By Sister Mary Ann Walsh
Religious News Service Correspondent (10-9-78)

ALBANY, N.Y. (RNS) -- Despite the differences which separate Christians and Jews, there are common moral concerns "which can keep both groups working together until the next millennium," according to a Jewish leader.

"Christians and Jews are united by the deep bond of appreciation for human life," said Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, director of interreligious affairs of the American Jewish Committee.

Christians and Jews must lobby together for human rights, he said in an interview with *The Evangelist*, newsweekly of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany.

Rabbi Tanenbaum came here to address the Conference on Food Policy sponsored by the St. Joseph's Spiritual Life Center at Valatie, an Albany suburb.

He cited some of the potential areas for joint Catholic-Jewish lobbying -- the escalating nuclear arms race, violence, human rights violations, family breakdown, rising cost of education, protection of life.

"The silence of the liberals of the anti-war movement is deafening now, although 2 to 3 million Cambodians have been massacred in the last 18 months," Rabbi Tanenbaum said.

"In joining together to speak out and work against such injustice, Christians and Jews can give evidence of their deep concern for human life. The silence now is equal to the silence during World War II during the extermination of the Jews by Nazi Germany."

Rabbi Tanenbaum said "Christians and Jews are called to give moral, spiritual and ethical affirmation to society. Their collective efforts are not a luxury, but an urgent human necessity for the survival of mankind in the 20th century."

"Such an affirmation is not easy," he said. "The forces of American society have overwhelmed every community, Jewish and Christian."

Rabbi Tanenbaum referred to the problem of family breakdowns, noting that some statistics show that "in some Jewish communities, 40 per cent of the families have single parents."

One cause of this family breakdown is the "chain of rugged individualism which has become distorted," he said.

He said this distortion leads to "institutionalized greed, where the primary goal is the fulfillment of the self, even when this fulfillment takes place at the expense of others. Self-determination has gone to the extreme."

Rabbi Tanenbaum also commented on the issues of tuition tax credits and abortion as major problems facing American society today.

"The American Jewish Committee has opposed tax credits on the basis of the Supreme Court decision interpreting the First Amendment," he said. "Nevertheless, I have encouraged American Jewish Committee leadership to continue to try to find ways of bringing relief to hard-pressed parents whose children attend parochial schools."

Rabbi Tanenbaum said "the American Jewish Committee is presently studying Jewish religious sources as well as medical ethics, with a view to arriving at a consensus on the abortion issue."

"There is presently a diversity of views in the American Jewish Committee membership as there is in the country at large," he said. "While some see the issue as the right of a woman to control her own body, others view it as the snuffing out of human life." Rabbi Tanenbaum said he personally believes abortion is wrong after three months gestation.

He said he agrees with Father Andrew Greeley's recent assertion that "anti-Catholicism is part of the wallpaper of America" and is the "anti-semitism of the liberal."

"Both Catholics and Jews, as well as blacks and Hispanics, are woefully underrepresented on the corporate boards of the Fortune 500," he said. "There is a silent discrimination in banks, insurance companies, and public utilities."

Rabbi Tanenbaum suggested that the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights join with the American Jewish Committee to oppose this type of discrimination. "To oppose anti-Catholicism, there needs to be organization," he said.

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hunger



Albany Mtg
Oct 9

October 5, 1978

Rabbi Mark Tannenbaum
American Jewish Committee
165 East 56th Street
New York, NY

Dear Rabbi Tannenbaum:

I was very pleased to have had an opportunity to talk with you, albeit briefly, on the way to the Albany Airport after our participation in the NorthEast Task Force Conference. Let me once again tell you how moving I have found your address, and how very much I was able to identify with the prophetic tradition you both articulate and embody. I am only sorry that the tape recording made by the coordinator of the Conference apparently did not come out with sufficient clarity for a transcription. I was hoping to share the words with the rest of our staff, and perhaps even in our national newsletter. Perhaps before too long we will have another opportunity for other members of our staff to meet you.

I am keenly interested in picking up the thread of our conversation. At your suggestion I will phone your office within the next week to schedule an appointment at your convenience in New York. In order for you to know somewhat more of our work here at Oxfam-America, I am enclosing a sample of our literature and a few project reports.

I hope our forthcoming meeting can be the beginning of a long and warm relationship. I look forward to it with great eagerness.

With all best wishes, I am

Sincerely yours,

Laurence R. Simon
Laurence R. Simon
Director
Development Education and Advocacy

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