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

Series E: General Alphabetical Files. 1960-1992

Box 84, Folder 15, King, Martin Luther, Jr, 1963-1986.

# NEWS

FROM THE

# COMMITTEE



THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE Institute of Human Relations, 165 E. 56 St., New York, N.Y. 10022, (212) 751-4000

The American Jewish Committee, founded in 1906, is the pioneer human-relations agency in the United States. It protects the civil and religious rights of Jews here and abroad, and advances the cause of improved human relations for all people.

MORTON YARMON, Director of Public Relations

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEW YORK, Aug. 5...The American Jewish Committee today urged its members and chapters and other civil rights advocates to plan local events to mark the 20th Anniversary March on Washington August 27 "to underscore our continued commitment to complete the unfinished civil rights agenda."

As part of this endeavor, AJC has issued a booklet entitled The Moral Legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr., by Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum, National Interreligious Affairs Director of the American Jewish Committee. Made possible by the Nathan Appleman Foundation, the booklet outlines the "five challenges to America's churches and synagogues, and to all the nation's Christian and Jewish communities" enunciated by the late Dr. King.

Like Isaiah, Rabbi Tanenbaum states, 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." In pursuit of those goals, Rabbi Tanenbaum points out, Dr. King presented his challenges:

- \* To enhance the dignity of the human person.
- \* To uproot prejudice.
- \* To support social justice.
- \* To encourage non-violent direct action.
- \* To promote universal love.

"The themes Martin Luther King, Jr. sounded in 1963," Rabbi Tanenbaum asserts, "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

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NOTE: For a copy of the booklet, The Moral Legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr.; write to Morton Yarmon, American Jewish Committee, 165 East 56 Street, New York, NY 10022.

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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."

We honor the moral legacy of Dr. King, Rabbi Tanenbaum added, "by working to curtail racial, religious and ethnic prejudice in our nation and through the world."

He quotes a 1958 address to a Jewish audience by Dr. King:

"Our common fight is against these deadly enemies of democracy [racists], 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."

The same sense of justice that motivated Dr. King to speak out, as he did, against Soviet anti-Semitism, says Rabbi Tanenbaum, led him to speak out in support of Israel, and to urge his country to work for peace in the Middle East. He quotes from an address Dr. King delivered ten days before his death:

"I see Israel 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, Rabbi Tanenbaum says, Martin Luther King, Jr. "held fast to his vision." He quotes this "ringing affirmation" of the universal struggle to overcome prejudice:

"We have made it clear that we cannot be the victim of the notion that you deal with one evil by substituting another. We cannot substitute one tyranny for a more just one. We cannot substitute justice and then turn around and be unjust. It is a but it is a very immoral course and it is condemned it with all of our might."

"May the memory of this righteous man continue to be a blessing for us all," Rabbi Tanenbaum concludes.

Founded in 1906, the American Jewish Committee is this country's pioneer human relations organization. It combats bigotry, protects the civil and religious rights of Jews at home and abroad, and seeks improved human relations for all people everywhere.

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