



THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE  
AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

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

Series E: General Alphabetical Files. 1960-1992

Box 84, Folder 18, Koch, Ed, 1987.

# INSIDE CITY HALL

By DAVID SEIFMAN

## Koch & rabbi go at it again

MAYOR Koch has called a well-known rabbi a "schmuck" for divulging details of his private conversations with John Cardinal O'Connor involving Israel.

The rabbi, Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee, responded that he was "deeply offended" by the mayor's "continuous personal attacks."

"If he keeps it up, I'm going to consult a lawyer about [suing for] defamation," Tanenbaum lashed back.

Koch insisted that "schmuck" has "become a word that's acceptable with everybody. It's not an obscene word. It's emphasizing foolish."

The mayor laughed when informed that Tanenbaum was threatening a lawsuit.

"He should understand he's a public person," Koch said, noting that Tanenbaum is a radio commentator.

"I'm surprised a commentator would be so thin-skinned."

The fight between the two men began in December when Koch accused the rabbi of violating a "personal trust" by telling a reporter about the cardinal's plans to visit Israel.

Immediately after a front-page story appeared, the Vatican ordered O'Connor not to meet Israeli leaders in their Jerusalem offices, fearing that would be viewed as an endorsement of Israel's annexation of Jerusalem.

Koch blamed Tanenbaum for the ensuing controversy.

To clear the air, Koch and Tanenbaum met at City Hall a couple of months ago.

But Tanenbaum said the mayor "used the occasion as an act of revenge."

He said Koch attacked him for speaking out last year on the close historical ties between Greeks and Jews shortly after the mayor called the Greek government anti-Semitic.

Koch said he thought their meeting "ended nicely."

The mayor's latest shot at the rabbi came in an interview published this week in the Jewish World, a Long Island weekly.

Koch said he still believes that "on that particular issue" — the cardinal's Mideast trip — Tanenbaum is a "schmuck."

Tanenbaum shot back: "When I get around to writing what actually happened, it will show the mayor did not know what he was talking about."

**★★★**  
Koch aides are spreading the word that the mayor scored a 55 percent favorable rating in a new, unreleased poll.

There was some despair in the Koch camp in January after a Newsday poll showed the mayor's popularity had dropped below 50 percent for the first time in his mayoral career, presumably because of the corruption scandal.

Koch aides say they believe



RABBI TANENBAUM  
"Deeply offended."

that survey was flawed because questions about the highly charged Howard Beach racial attack immediately preceded those about the mayor's performance.

The latest survey, part of a poll conducted for Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan by Penn & Schoen Associates last month, puts Koch over the critical 50 percent mark again.

★★★  
THE Dept. of Investigation prevented Controller Harrison Goldin's cousin, Jay Goldberg, from reaping windfall profits in a 1983 Staten Island real estate deal.

Goldberg was a member of the city Tax Commission when his wife shelled out \$4576.90 for a 10 percent stake in a \$165,000 land purchase near the Goethals Bridge.

When Goldberg came up for reappointment in 1984, the Dept. of Investigation told him he'd have to sell the interest in the property. He complied.

Goldberg was said to be "furious" when the Board of Ethics later ruled that he didn't have to sell out after all, as long as he didn't take part in any city decisions involving the property.

The parcel was sold in December 1986 for \$815,000. Goldberg, who quit the Tax Commission last summer, would have walked off with a \$75,000 profit.

★★★  
OUR Worst-Timing-of-the-Month Award goes to the Kings County Democratic Coalition, which is honoring Assemblyman Roger Green at its 10th annual dinner on April 5.

Green made headlines recently — for all the wrong reasons.

A clerk at the Brooklyn Board of Elections was indicted for putting a false notation in official records, without which Green would have been unable to run for reelection on the Liberal Party line.

Joe Ferris, the chairman of the reform KCDC, said the decision to honor Green was made months ago and, in any case, the assemblyman has not been charged with any wrongdoing.

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MAR 17 1987

3/11/87

Koch


Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, AJC  
165 East 56 st. N.Y. 10022

Dear Rabbi Tanenbaum:

I am appalled at the scurrilous and vulgar behaviour of the Mayor in referring to you as a "SCHMUCK". I suggest that you do the following for the sake of the taxpayers of NYC. When Mayor Koch calls you a SCHMUCK; he is merely displaying poor taste and making a "SCHMUCK" of himself. Mayor Koch has however done more than any official since Boss Tweed to inundate NYC with corruption:

MAYOR KOCH IN TOTAL VIOLATION OF THE CIVIL SERVICE LAWS OF NYC HAS TAKEN 25000 COMPETITIVE CLASS POSITIONS AND HAS APPOINTED 25000 INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE NEVER TAKEN THE REQUIRED CIVIL SERVICE TESTS FOR THE POSITIONS THEY ILLEGALLY OCCUPY. THESE 25000 PROVISIONALS ILLEGALLY OCCUPY COMPETITIVE POSITIONS. A GOOD EXAMPLE OF SUCH A POSITION IS THE JOB HELD BY STANLEY FRIEDMAN'S WIFE FOR THE LAST EIGHT YEARS. THE AJC SHOULD PUBLICIZE WHAT KOCH HAS DONE TO PREVENT JEWS AND ALL WHO BELIEVE IN MERIT FROM HAVING A CHANCE TO ADVANCE. I ATTACH SOME MATERIAL AND WOULD BE GLAD TO MEET WITH YOU TO DOCUMENT KOCH'S CORRUPTION.

Sincerely,

  
Dr. George Silberman  
915 E. 17 st. Bklyn. 11230  
(bus) 213-5924  
(h) 718-258-6144

1/16/87

Hon. Joseph A. Califano, Chairman  
Commission On Government Integrity  
c/o Richard Emery, New York Civil Liberties Union  
132 West 43 St. N.Y. 10036

Dear Sir:

I am a career civil servant working in the NYC Dept of Social Services currently as Director of Social Services of the Bellevue Shelter for Homeless Men. My performance evaluations are consistently excellent, I have been granted a merit increase and have on numerous occasions turned down offers of provisional promotions because I firmly believe in the principles of the merit system in civil service and the sanctity of the civil service laws.

The mayor of the City of New York has totally prostituted the requirements of the civil service laws and has caused the appointment of thousands of illegal patronage employees holding down competitive lines in violation of the law. Often subterfuges are used for circumventing the requirements of provisional appointees by having individuals serve for years on end in an "acting" capacity until they ostensibly qualify for an illegal provisional sinecure.

As long as thousands of managers, personnel officials and individuals who approve hiring, contracts, purchase of services etc. are employees who serve on provisional lines because of whom they know rather than because they have qualified for the competitive lines they occupy; there will be no end in sight to the municipal corruption which is now in the forefront of the news.

Virtually all of the corrupt officials on the front pages are provisional employees. A salient fact is the presence of convicted felon Stanley Friedman's wife in a provisional job on a competitive line she has never qualified for.

Attached is some recent correspondence re: an "acting" appointment in my own agency. Mr. Theordis Norton, Director of Administration in the NYC Office of Personnel called and wrote to me following my letter to Mrs. Gambino (She according to Mr. Norton had called Judith Levitt directly on this matter). Mr. Norton in three telephone conversations with me promised that he would send me a written report on my complaint and a copy of the written recommendation of the Personnel Director on this matter. Mr Norton never kept his promise.

This relatively minor example is typical of twenty five thousand such examples in NYC under Mayor Koch's single-minded desire to exterminate the merit system.

Please conduct hearings on the matter I have raised in this letter. There will be far less corruption if the civil service laws are upheld. I will be glad to testify and present documentation at any hearings you may hold.

Yours truly,

Dr. George Paul Silberman  
915 East 17 st. #302  
Bklyn. 11230

cc: Theordis Norton

6/14/86

Hon. Josephine L. Gambino, Department of Civil Service  
State Campus, 1220 Washington Ave., Albany 12230

Dear Ms. Gambino:

I should like to bring to your attention a matter which typifies the corruption, patronage, incompetence, and contempt for legitimate employees which permeate the HRA under Mayor Koch's endeavors to exterminate the merit system.

I am a career civil servant working as the director of social services of the Bellevue II Shelter for Homeless Men. I have twenty years supervisory experience, an MSW, PhD, CSW, certification as a field placement supervisor for social work students, speak French, Hebrew, Hungarian, German, and am also certified in Spanish. My performance evaluations are consistently excellent. I have no desire to change my job unless an examination I am eligible to take should be scheduled.

The HRA is a cesspool of nepotism and patronage. Nowhere is the move to annihilate civil service more prevalent than in the fiefdom of the boss of the shelter system; Robert White. His signal lack of competence is matched only by his desire to surround himself with cronies of questionable merit and fitness. (In the HRA as a whole 90% of the managers are illegal; in Robert White's fiefdom the figure is 100%.)

Recently, an entry level employee with no supervisory experience bragged to me that because of his friendship with Robert White he could become the director of a shelter any time he wanted to. This entry level employee; Charles Smith has no supervisory experience nor the minimum qualifications to meet the open competitive specifications for any managerial position in the shelter system. He is simply being assigned in an "ACTING" capacity till he soaks up the necessary experience to be placed on a patronage provisional line. Mr. Smith is now my boss. This action is a total violation of the law. No NYC official is however willing to enforce the law. I have complained to the HRA IG, Judith Levitt and to HRA Personnel. I have received no response. The head of HRA personnel, Lillian Barrios Paoli, called me a "horse's ass" in front of one hundred people on April 11, 1986 when I asked why she does not uphold the civil service laws.

The root cause of the corruption in NYC municipal government is the replacement of 25000 merit civil servants with 25000 provisionals who owe their loyalty to the individual who got them their job. I am a tenured civil servant. When numerous people were stabbed in the shelters I single handedly complained and went to the media until metal detectors were obtained. I first sent six memos to Robert White followed by letters to the Mayor which were all ignored. None of Robert White's provisional cronies dared complain for fear of losing their jobs.

Kindly respond to this letter and please be sure to ask for a copy of the recently completed 300 page HRA Inspector General's report which details the present state of incompetence and mismanagement in the shelter system. Please ask for it before it is buried and suppressed.

Appreciatively

*Dr. George Silberman*  
Dr. George Silberman  
1077 E. 27 st.  
Bklyn. 11210

cc. Judith Levitt, Robert White, Robert Hayes  
FBI AGENT Bolt, (for Rudolph Guiliani)

6/6/86

Commissioner George Gross  
250 Church St. N.Y. 10013

Dear Commissioner Gross:

Whenever I accuse you of corruptly and actively violating the civil service laws in the HRA; you equally dishonestly reply that there is no violation of the civil service laws in the HRA and if you knew of any you would take corrective action.

I submit for your immediate action the following case:

Robert White is the incompetent person in charge of Family and Adult Services which includes overseeing all the shelters for single adults. Mr. White's only accomplishment of note is the placing of his equally incompetent friends and relatives on the payroll in violation of the civil service laws. A most egregious example is his desire to take an entry level employee and close family friend, Charles Smith and instantaneously make him into a director of a shelter although the man has no supervisory or administrative experience. Since Mr. Smith cannot qualify for a provisional appointment under the open competitive specifications, Good Friend Bob White is having him work as an "Acting" Director till he soaks up enough experience to get a provisional appointment. There would be nothing unusual in this one example; were it not for the fact that Charles Smith bragged to me in advance of his close ties to Robert White. Mr. Smith is scheduled to assume directorship of the Bellevue II Shelter eff. 6/11/86. I resent being supervised by an individual with absolutely no qualifications other than close personal ties to the incompetent and corrupt Robert White.

I request immediate action. You are supposed to uphold the laws and not subvert them. You are supposed to ensure quality and not act simply as a sponge soaking up hundreds of patronage hacks.

yours truly,

*George Silberman*  
Dr. George Silberman  
1077 E. 27 st.  
Bklyn. 11210

CC. Judith Levitt  
Rudolph Gulliani