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Box 85, Folder 5, MacArthur Foundation, 1986.

Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum

November 28, 1986

Mr. Leonard Yaseen
2 Bay Avenue
Larchmont, NY 10538

Dear Leonard,

I am deeply grateful for your interest in proposing my name for a MacArthur Foundation award. Your thoughtfulness has touched me deeply.

As you well know, I have dedicated twenty-five years of my life to finding ways for overcoming hostility and conflict among Jews, Christians, and Muslims. Through dialogue, scientific studies, and other programmatic means, I have endeavored to lay foundations for advancing mutual understanding, knowledge, and friendship between religious, racial, and ethnic groups in the context of a vigorous democratic pluralism. I believe that we have made impressive progress in these areas during the twenty years since Vatican Council II - especially in the United States.

But along with many others, I am very much alarmed by the growing epidemic of religious and political fanaticism in so many parts of the world. These extremist ideologies, fueled by religious and political absolutisms, challenge the very foundations of constitutional democracy and pluralist societies. Indeed, I view this as the central issue that confronts mankind - an issue that has profound consequences for world hunger, refugees, human rights, social justice, international economy, war and peace.

I believe that I am at the height of my intellectual and creative powers. I am eager to devote whatever influence I have to a systematic examination of the proliferation of religious and secular fundamentalisms and its corrosive effects on pluralism and co-existence. Through my decades of thinking, writing, and program development with Christians, Jews, and Muslims in the United States, Europe, Latin America, Southeast Asia, and Africa, I believe that I have amassed a good deal of insight and experience in conceptualizing and developing models for countering anti-democratic and anti-human tendencies. If I had the leisure and financial independence, I might well be able to make a basic contribution to helping advance democratic pluralism and civic peace on an international scale.

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Ultimately, I should like to see my research and program activity lead to the establishment of an Institute on Global Pluralism. Such an institute would mobilize the best minds and decision-makers of various nations to help instill theological and political ideologies supportive of democratic pluralism in their respective societies. Such ideologies would pave the way for a commitment to global pluralism as a peaceful means for resolving international conflict. Fully matured, it would replace the current tragedies of religious, racial, and ethnic conflict which result in so much human suffering and destruction.

If the Board of the MacArthur Foundation is interested in exploring this proposal, I would be more than happy to submit some of the books, monographs, and model programs I have produced over the past quarter century.

With much appreciation of your kindness, I am

Cordially, as ever,

Marc H. Tanenbaum
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