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Earl Raab

EXECUTIVE OF THE SAN FRANCISCO COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL, 1951-1987;  
ADVOCATE OF MINORITY RIGHTS AND DEMOCRATIC PLURALISM

With an Introduction by  
Douglas Kahn

Interviews Conducted by  
Eleanor Glaser  
in 1996

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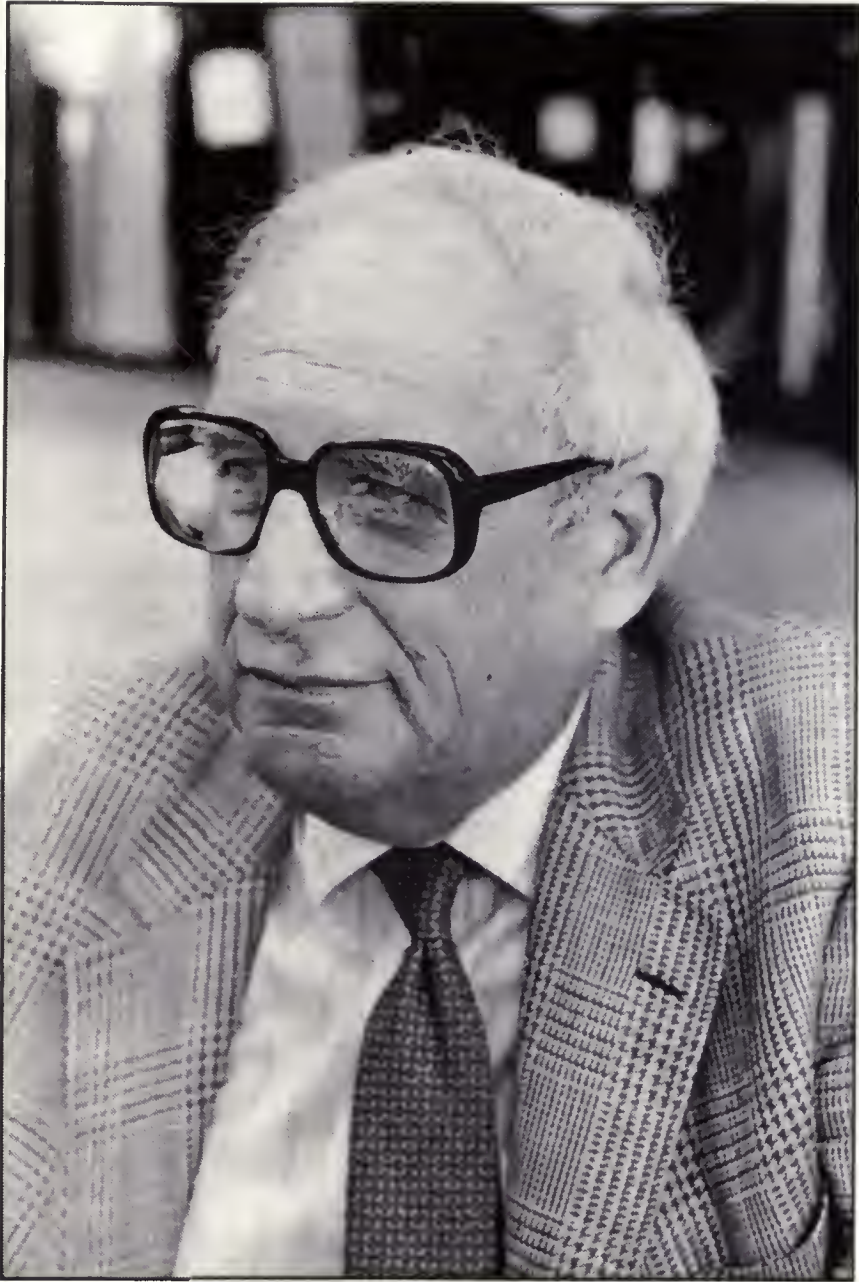
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Copy no. 1



Earl Raab.



Cataloguing information

RAAB, Earl (b. 1919)

Jewish community leader

Executive of the San Francisco Community Relations Council, 1951-1987;  
Advocate of Minority Rights and Democratic Pluralism, vi, 264 pp., 1998.

Early years, political activity, City College, NY; Army combat intelligence; marriage, writing for *Commentary*; to San Francisco, 1951, executive director Jewish Community Relations Council: issues of anti-Semitism, neo-Nazi activities, Soviet Jewish emigration, church and state, civil rights, black-Jewish relations; cooperation with Farm Workers Union, San Francisco and California Mental Health associations, Bay Area Human Relations Clearinghouse, Human Rights Commission, World Without War Council, San Francisco Organizing Project, American Association for the United Nations; discusses political environment of the sixties and seventies, Israel, retirement involvement with Jewish studies. Appendices include extensive examples of Raab's writings.

Introduction by Rabbi Douglas Kahn, executive director, Jewish Community Relations Council.

Interviewed 1996 by Eleanor K. Glaser, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.





## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Regional Oral History Office, on behalf of future researchers, wishes to thank the following persons whose contributions made possible this oral history of Earl Raab.

Edward and Cathryn Bransten  
Sue Bransten  
Jerome I. Braun  
Judith Chapman  
Jesse Feldman  
Dr. Emanuel Friedman  
Joyce & Stanley Friedman  
Lawrence Goldberg  
William & Frances Green  
Peter Haas  
Jewish Community Endowment/Louis Dessauer Trust  
Ron Kaufman  
Betty Leland  
Madeleine Haas Russell  
Donald Seiler  
Rita R. Semel  
Robert & Joan Sinton



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## INTRODUCTION by Rabbi Douglas Kahn

He is known simply as the "Dean of Community Relations." Not just in San Francisco, but throughout the country. Earl Raab has made a permanent contribution to the lexicon of Jewish community relations.

His reputation as "the dean" is not only--or even primarily--because of his longevity in the field. He served as executive director of the Jewish Community Relations Council from 1951 to 1987 and continues to be involved as a consultant. Rather the term stems from his singular ability to cogently analyze the most complex issues facing the Jewish community, to articulate the exceptional aspects of the American Jewish experience, and to identify and implement necessary remedies to safeguard the status of Jews here and abroad.

His intellectual qualities are legendary in our national organization, the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, formerly known as the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council. Every time our national organization meets it is absolutely certain that at least one major speech will make reference to one of Earl's ideas about "a certain kind of America" which is good for Jews. Raabisms, I like to call them.

And, his mediating qualities are legendary here at home. Earl is a craftsman--of ideas, language, and viewpoints. He has the extraordinary ability to listen to differing views, and, without pause, to identify common ground from which to mold a united policy--on church/state issues, anti-Semitism, Israel, civil rights, or any other issue that has the potential to divide the community. Part of the secret to his success is to get all sides to believe that he agrees with their viewpoint without his ever misrepresenting his own views or compromising his principles. Jewish liberals are confident that Earl is a like-minded liberal. Jewish conservatives are equally convinced that Earl is a kindred spirit. In fact, Earl, a veteran of the City College of New York Jewish Trotskyite club (the anti-communist left), with Irving Howe and Irving Kristol among the other luminaries, emerged as a very independent-minded moderate.

Intellect and integrity are one-half of Earl's extraordinary package. The other two main elements, in my opinion, are productivity and local experiences.

Earl is an astonishingly prolific writer. In addition to his highly acclaimed books, with which he frequently collaborated with Seymour Martin Lipset, he has written hundreds of articles, and thousands of background pieces which have influenced generations of Jewish communal professionals and lay leaders. Watching Earl sit at his

beloved Underwood Noiseless--and now on the computer--is equivalent to watching Picasso paint--both in quality and volume. Indeed, Earl's ability to portray the political landscape for American Jews is second to none.

Earl's inspiration comes from the local scene even while always retaining a passion for America's role in foreign policy. Often sought for national posts in the Jewish community that would have required a move to New York, Earl instead relished the front lines and the day-to-day interaction between the Jewish community and other groups. The real issues provided the fuel for his fertile mind.

San Francisco, with its reputation for tolerance and low incidence of institutionalized anti-Semitism, has always been the perfect laboratory for Earl to try out his ideas about American values and the American Jewish experience. Particularly interested in black/Jewish relations, Earl is a pioneer in the area of civil rights and was one of the founding directors of the Human Rights Commission in San Francisco. Decades later, he still plays poker with the other veterans of the early civil rights movement. No doubt, given his poker face, he always wins.

Earl established other institutions as well, including the first Jewish statewide government affairs association in the country. He has pioneered the use of opinion surveys to determine the attitudes of the organized Jewish community on all the key issues of the day. His intellect, integrity, and innovation helped attract outstanding lay leaders to the JCRC--and top-quality professionals including Rita Semel who spent decades working side-by-side Earl prior to succeeding him upon his retirement.

For fifteen years I have had the good fortune and blessing to learn from Earl and to call on Earl. Even though he almost never remembers to return a book he borrowed, I cannot imagine a more extraordinary mentor from whom to learn about Jewish community relations. I look forward to many more years of learning from him.

He may still describe himself as a farmer--fondly remembering his and his wife Kassie's years on a farm in Maine. Or as a doting and loving grandfather. Most of us know him best for his rare ability to combine both vision and the ability to implement the vision, and for sowing seeds for future generations to enjoy the benefits of his extraordinary life and work.

Rabbi Douglas Kahn, Executive Director  
Jewish Community Relations Council

December 1997  
San Francisco

## INTERVIEW HISTORY--Earl Raab

In 1987, when Earl Raab retired as executive director of the Jewish Community Relations Council of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties, he was honored at a community dinner, "...for thirty-six years of outstanding service, not only to this Jewish Community but to the national Jewish community and to San Francisco as well." It was stated that he achieved national distinction for his conceptual vision of community relations. After retiring, Mr. Raab's expertise and national reputation led to his being selected head of Brandeis University's Nathan Perlmutter Institute of Jewish Advocacy.

The author of numerous magazine and newspaper articles, Earl Raab has also written and edited several books. With the publication in 1995 of his latest book, Jews and the New American Scene, written in collaboration with Seymour Martin Lipset, it seemed timely and fitting to undertake an oral history that would capture Mr. Raab's intimate knowledge of the Bay Area Jewish community and document his community-wide activities.

Phyllis Cook, executive director of the Jewish Community Endowment Fund (who terms herself a member of the Earl Raab Fan Club), arranged for the financial support for Mr. Raab's oral history. A list of donors is found in the front of this volume.

Before moving to San Francisco in 1950, Earl Raab had been a captain in the U.S. Army in World War II, then wrote articles while trying his hand at farming in Maine. One of the magazines he wrote for was Commentary, which commissioned Earl Raab to write an article about Jewish life in San Francisco. This perceptive article, "There's No City Like San Francisco," can be found in the appendix of this memoir. Farming didn't work out for Earl but San Francisco did. He was hired by Eugene Block to be his assistant director of the B'nai B'rith Survey Committee, the forerunner of the San Francisco-based Jewish Community Relations Council.

Mr. Raab soon made his mark in the greater community with his concern for the rights and protection of minority groups, and he is closely identified with the history of civil rights and affirmative action in San Francisco. Earl Raab became active on innumerable community boards; he was chairman of the Bay Area Human Rights Clearinghouse that led the way to the Human Rights Commission, of which he was a founding member. He was on the executive committee of the San Francisco Conference on Religion, Race and Social Concerns, on the executive committee of California Fair Employment Practices Commission, and the founding president of the California Association for Mental Health.



Before interviewing Earl Raab, many hours of research were spent in the offices of the Jewish Community Relations Council, reading and physically wrestling with the JCRC files going back more than thirty-five years. Staff members Jenny Link, Lorri Marshall, and Galina Svyatenko were very helpful in making space and Xerox material available to me. I was even included in a birthday celebration for Lorri Marshall. Desk space was tight at times because of various committees meeting to plan for "Jerusalem in the Gardens," a community-wide celebration of Israel's Independence Day. One afternoon Rabbi Douglas Kahn, the current JCRC executive director, told me I was present at an historical occasion because a fax was sent to Yassir Arafat to protest bombings in Jerusalem and Ashkelon.

As part of my research I interviewed Rita Semel as well as Rabbi Kahn, both successors to Earl Raab as JCRC executive directors. I also interviewed Naomi Lauter, former associate director in charge of education in the public schools. Her main assignment was teaching about the Holocaust, emphasizing the protection afforded to citizens by democratic institutions.

After organizing the vast amount of research material into subject categories, Mr. Raab and I began our taping sessions in May 1996 and concluded with the tenth interview in early August. Most taping sessions were about an hour in length. Earl Raab has a fine sense of recall but needed to be assured that he wasn't talking too much about himself! He said he was accustomed to writing his thoughts, not discussing them--"I don't enjoy speaking; I enjoy writing."

From our discussions, it is clear that democratic pluralism is the rock bed of Earl Raab's philosophy, and he referred to that topic several times during our sessions. At one time he expressed great concern for education and democratic pluralism as protection for American Jews. "...the strength of democratic pluralism is the heart of American Jews' security. It had to apply to everybody, it couldn't apply just to the Jews."

Mr. Raab also discussed the JCRC involvement with Soviet Jewry. "But the one issue that I think bore my personal mark, more than any others, and it wasn't important at the time, was the fact that the San Francisco JCRC started activity on behalf of Soviet Jewry in the 1950s; nobody else was doing it."

In recounting the role of the JCRC in the civil rights movement of the sixties and seventies, Rita Semel stated, "Earl felt in our participation, both as individuals and as representatives of the Jewish community, it was very important in shaping the agendas of the Human Rights Commission and other such entities to be mindful of the people we represented so that their interests and concerns had a seat at the

table. He is very well known and very well respected in many quarters of this town."

Rabbi Kahn commented about Mr. Raab's role as a mediator, "He has an extraordinary ability to listen to both sides and to separate out what is fundamentally important and find a way to get people to move from positions they thought they would never move, to compromise and to walk away feeling they have achieved a victory. It's a gift of extraordinary proportions." Naomi Lauter remarked upon Earl Raab's "tremendous vision and analytical abilities. He's brilliant. He really has an exceptional clarity of thinking in terms of dissecting the most complex issue."

At Earl Raab's request, Rabbi Kahn wrote the introduction to this oral history, and we wish to thank him for that.

In the back of this volume is a list of Jewish Community Leaders interviewed by the Regional Oral History Office, which was established in 1954 to augment through tape-recorded memoirs the Library's materials on the history of California and the West. Copies of all interviews are available for research use in The Bancroft Library and in the UCLA Department of Special Collections. The office is under the direction of Willa K. Baum, Division Head, and the administrative direction of Charles B. Faulhaber, James D. Hart Director of The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

Eleanor Glaser  
Interviewer/Editor

Berkeley, California  
March 1998



Regional Oral History Office  
Room 486 The Bancroft Library

University of California  
Berkeley, California 94720

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

(Please write clearly. Use black ink.)

Your full name Earl David Raab

Date of birth April 2, 1919 Birthplace N.Y. CITY

Father's full name Morris Raab

Occupation Store Manager Birthplace Poland

Mother's full name Marguerite (Grecne) Raab

Occupation Sales woman Birthplace Norfolk, Va.

Your spouse Viola Ruth (Kassio)

Occupation - Birthplace Philadelphia Pa.

Your children Earl Benjamin, Elizabeth Jenny

Where did you grow up? Virginia, New York

Present community San Francisco

Education City College of New York (B.A., 1940)

Occupation(s) Jewish Community Relations,  
Writer, Teacher.

Areas of expertise American Jewish Life, Civil  
Rights, Social Problems

Other interests or activities \_\_\_\_\_

Organizations in which you are active \_\_\_\_\_





## I EARLY YEARS, BORN APRIL 2, 1919, IN NEW YORK CITY

[Interview 1: May 9, 1996] ##<sup>1</sup>

Family Migrations

Glaser: Mr. Raab, please tell me where and when you were born.

Raab: I was born in New York City, but as an infant my family moved--at the beginning of a series of moves that we made. We moved to Connecticut when I was an infant. After that, I spent a lot of years in Virginia. This was, of course, the Depression, and my father was involved in moving from one city to another as a kind of troubleshooter for a chain of clothing stores. So during those early years I went to schools in three different cities in the same year. But a lot of that was in Connecticut for a few years. I started school in Connecticut--first grade, that is. Then there was Virginia--Richmond, Roanoke, and Norfolk--back and forth. And in between, a couple more separate years in New York.

Glaser: What was the actual date of your birth?

Raab: April 2, 1919.

Glaser: Your father started moving around almost immediately after you were born. That was rather early for the Depression.

Raab: I think the Connecticut move was a kind of standard move. We were there for a number of years until I started to go to first grade. After that--let's see, how old was I? When I was seven or eight, it was '26, something like that--'27. So I guess it was around 1930 that we begin to move a lot.

---

<sup>1</sup>## This symbol indicates that a tape or tape segment has begun or ended. A guide to the tapes follows the transcript.

Glaser: As a troubleshooter, what did your father do?

Raab: He took over stores that were ailing and managed them, presumably until they got better.

Glaser: Tell me your parents' names.

Raab: My father's name was Morris. My mother's name was Marguerite Greene, with an e.

Glaser: Did you have any brothers or sisters?

Raab: No, none.

Glaser: You moved so much you wouldn't have had close family members with you.

Raab: No, only one, my mother's brother. I was born when my mother was eighteen. She married when she was seventeen. And so he was a rather young uncle. He was younger than she was; so we had a pretty close relationship, except that he was moving a lot during that period, too. He went through the South selling Van Camp baked beans. There was a lot of separation. There were times when, after a while, my mother felt, she really did, that I should be a little more stable. Let's see, in Roanoke, Virginia, I started going to junior high school. Then we had to leave Roanoke; and after that my father was pretty much separated from us for large parts of the year. We'd see him on some weekends, and I used to spend the summers with him in various places.

Glaser: Did you know your grandparents at all?

Raab: Didn't know them. They all died before I was of conscious age.

Glaser: I get the sense of a kind of vagabond experience.

Raab: It was kind of vagabond. I've sometimes wondered, but not too heavily, what those experiences meant--going to a new school and a new city over and over again. But I seemed to cope with it somehow.

Glaser: That calls for a lot of resilience on your part and your mother's as well.

Move with Mother to Brooklyn

Raab: Yes. At that one point, my mother decided that I really had to stay for high school. I really had to stay in a stable situation. So she and I moved to New York, we had been in Norfolk, Virginia. Pretty soon she went to work. I forget the name of the place, but it was a well-known women's wear place, and still during the Depression. She worked late shifts. She used to work from, I don't know, four or three to the evening. So I was pretty much on my own during that whole high school period. I often think, when people talk about--Shall I reminisce?

Glaser: Of course.

Raab: When people talk about diet, for example, I remember during all those high school years when I was a teenager and presumably forming the basis of my physical constitution, we didn't have a kitchen. She and I lived in a couple of rooms without a kitchen. Mostly in the morning I had a cup of coffee and a doughnut in the drugstore before going to school. I had a sandwich for lunch. My evening meals were, I felt, delightful (by myself) and usually consisted of a hot dog, french fried potatoes, and a piece of pastry. That lasted for about four years, or a little more than three years, and it didn't seem to stunt my growth. So I'm not sure that I'm good medical evidence for anything.

Glaser: But was this as lonely as it sounds?

Raab: I guess I did have a kind of resilience. She was a strong woman, my mother. And I made friends, so that I'd get out of school and I'd play ball in the streets and I read a lot.

Schooling**Boys High School, Brooklyn, 1933-1936**

Glaser: Was this in Manhattan?

Raab: This was in Brooklyn. I went to Boys High in Brooklyn.

Glaser: Were there any teachers especially stimulating for you?

Raab: Not particularly, but I began to make some good friends in high school. And then I went on to City College in Manhattan; my

mother moved us into Manhattan for that reason. I had some close friends.

Glaser: Did you have to work your way through school?

Raab: No, I didn't. But it was a free school, of course.

Glaser: Were things very tight, financially, for the family?

Raab: Yes, they were tight financially, but it was interesting, when I think about ghettos. I remember we lived in a real Brooklyn ghetto for a long while when I was going to high school, in a tenement building that must have dated back to the immigrant days. I remember looking out the window and I could see there were no playgrounds, except across the street there was a school with a concrete playground.

There was a recognition on my part and on the part of all others my age that we were going to get out. It was rather clear that we were going to get out. We were somehow going to live better lives, which I think distinguishes those ghettos from some of the inner ghettos that we see today. It may have been because it was a Jewish ghetto, and whether those values permeated or what, that was our feeling: that we were going to get out. And of course we did.

I think things were beginning to get better. I graduated from high school in 1936, so that was the middle of the Depression, and still we had those feelings that we were going to excel in school and we're going to get out of this. There was a sense that things were going to get better. I don't know where it came from. But as I said, as I look back, which I don't too often, it was my mother's own strength and confidence, and the sense of the young people that I knew, that we were going to get ahead. We were going to get an education and then whatever happened, happened.

Glaser: Did you know where that feeling came from?

Raab: No. I think partly it was my mother, who felt that way and exhibited great faith in me, but the other kids had it, too. It was a classic immigrant sense that we were going to get our full education, we were going to go to college, which our parents didn't, and then things would open up for us.

## Religious Education in Roanoke, Virginia

Glaser: Did you have any contact with religion in these growing-up years?

Raab: Didn't. We did in the South, but we left Roanoke. There were apparently a lot of family debts, et cetera. My mother and father had built up a very nice apartment in Roanoke with furniture and so forth. All of a sudden the debts mounted, so that we had to leave Roanoke without anything. We were members of a synagogue in Roanoke.

I remember the first thing I ever wrote that was published was in Roanoke, Virginia, when the rabbi asked me to enter a contest for articles for Young Israel. I wrote an article that they published, which I've never found again. I left just before I was to be *bar mitvah*. My parents were not too religious, particularly, and when we went to New York it was just too much for us to join a synagogue and I never got *bar mitvah*.

I remember, also in Roanoke, for some reason I spoke from the *bimah* once, I was about twelve, to complain about the number of Jews who had Christmas trees. Now where I got that from I don't know; but I know I got up there and made that speech.

Glaser: Does this mean that you belonged to a Reform congregation?

Raab: A Reform congregation. The rabbi used to come over on Friday nights and, with my family, play checkers on the checkered kitchen floor.

Glaser: On the floor!

Raab: Yes.

Glaser: And on a Friday night.

Raab: On a Friday night. In Virginia, Reform was very Reform. In that period, Reform was very Reform.

Glaser: You mean there were no Friday night services, is that what your statement says?

Raab: I think so. I think there were none.

Glaser: I think that was a mark of southern Reform Judaism, to be as much like the Christian community as possible.



Raab: And the fact that I made that speech, I don't remember quite the motivation of it, meant that there were a lot of families which had Christmas trees. I don't know, I'm not sure why that outraged me so much.

#### City College, New York City, 1936-1940

Glaser: When you started to go to college, did you know what you wanted to do?

Raab: No. You know, despite what I say about the sense that we had that we were going to get out, there was no real sense of where we were going to go to. This was City College. These were relatively poor Jews, mostly, at the college at the time. And we were a very provincial group--very provincial group. You think about New York as a place of sophistication. We were very provincial in the sense that we had no idea--Even those of us who were excelling, scholarship, et cetera, had no idea that there were opportunities. We had no sense of all the opportunities, of going to graduate school, for example, or even for the most part of entering the professions.

The profession we tended to think of, perhaps, was teaching in the public schools, which the Jews had taken up. That eventuated many years later in the conflict in Brooklyn. The Jews took over from the Catholics in the schools. I'm talking about numerically took over teaching in the public schools. And then, of course, there were the occasions when the blacks wanted to take over from the Jews. That was the big black/Jewish explosion in Brooklyn in the sixties.

#### Political Involvement

Glaser: But I always think of New York college students as being very sophisticated about political affairs.

Raab: We were very involved in political affairs, I'm not sure how sophisticated. When I went to City College, which was the hub of much of that political wind, my introduction to the college was a strike my first day at the college, with the students demanding that the president resign, striking and not going to class.

Glaser: What was the discontent about?

## Anti-Communism, anti-Nazism

Raab: I don't remember. Robinson, his name was. I became very political in City College. I became, so many of us did, a radical. The first attraction was towards the Communist party, but almost immediately during the Spanish Civil War it became clear to a lot of us that Bolshevism was not a desirable political philosophy as we began to hear about the Communist party in Spain executing anarchists and Trotskyites, not just fascists. So that I became, at the time, what was known as a Trotskyite, which essentially didn't mean anything except an anti-communist radical.

One of my close friends, and I had several, was Irving Kristol. There was an alcove in City College which was the Trotskyites' alcove. We made alliances with the Socialist party, but it was all anti-Communist. This is what's known as an amusing anecdote: one of our friends joined the Socialist Workers Party and we didn't, Irving and I. But we used to hang around with this group and our sentiments were towards this group.

The leader of the Socialist Workers Party, a man named Cannon, who was a real proletarian type, once complained about us that we didn't join. He referred to us as the "perry ferry," which was his pronunciation of periphery. And finally, when Irving and I decided we might as well join--you needed party names, you know this was all very secret stuff--so I became David Perry and he became William Ferry, as in "perry ferry."

In that group in that alcove at City College, were a number of other people, such as Irving Howe. He was the only one who kept his party name. His name was Irving Horenstein, and he took Irving Howe as his party name.

Glaser: Did everybody change their name?

Raab: Well, you took a party name.

Glaser: Explain that. What do you mean by party name? Did you have a fear that people were looking for you or that you had to go underground?

Raab: Yes. This was the vision of going underground, forming cells, and so forth. It was felt that the federal law enforcement people would be after us, and we should have party names. It was all quite exaggerated. As a matter of fact, what we did besides arguing politics, which is the main thing we did, the main activity in arguing politics and engaging in student politics was anti-Stalinism. But as the neo-Nazis, the Nazi Bund, began to

develop, then we did some action things. The Nazi Bund in those days had the temerity, as you know, (this was what? '37, '38, '39) to sell their newspapers on the streets of New York. And we used to go out as cadres, take the papers away from them, with a few little fisticuffs here and there, nothing serious.

The biggest thing then--Shall I keep talking like this?

Glaser: Oh, yes.

Raab: The biggest thing then was a mass rally. They had the ultimate temerity, the Nazi Bund, of holding a mass rally in Madison Square Garden, in the heart of the city of the Jews. Our group was at the center with others, Socialist party and so forth, of planning a counter-rally. It was interesting that the communists, the Stalinists, didn't join us because characteristically they felt it wasn't theirs, and they didn't want us to get all the credit for this. But it turned out to be a monster thing.

I remember late in the afternoon when Irving, a couple of friends, and I started walking down around Madison Square Garden. It was kind of ghostly, and then people started to gather around the side streets in the area. This is '39, I guess. Large masses of people started to gather on the side streets. Every side street was packed with counterdemonstrators! And the police brought out what was then the largest contingent of horse police that they had brought out at one time. They formed lines in front of us on each end of the streets.

I remember there were a number of incidents, there were some on the street where I was. There were some young Italian kids, anti-fascists. They went around with great audacity, with little bottles. I guess the kind of thing you used when people fainted, you put it in front of their noses, or something or other.

Glaser: Ammonia?

Raab: Something like that. They'd go around and put this in the noses of the horses. The police horses would rear and the police would fall off. It was a mess there. Sometimes we found ourselves in the surges that took place. Because, really, it was the largest crowd that had ever gathered in New York. There were a half million people in this counterdemonstration. We found ourselves in the surges, as we were in front of the counterdemonstrators on the wrong side of the horses. So we had to find our way back.

Glaser: How many Nazi demonstrators were there?



- Raab: I think they pretty well filled up Madison Square Garden. Those that had the lack of wisdom to try to pass through the crowds in their uniforms were beaten up pretty badly. But the police had formed some lanes for them, so they went in. And it was, I guess in that sense, a successful counterdemonstration.
- Glaser: In that period, did you know what was going on in Europe?
- Raab: That's one question I ask myself more than others. Not clearly. We knew about the Nuremberg Laws. There was no sense among us of the Final Solution at all.
- Glaser: That was a little early.
- Raab: That was early. We were besotted with our political philosophy. At its ultimate, the political philosophy said that Stalinism was as bad as Nazism and that the imperialist governments of the world were as bad as all of them. So that the necessity was to sweep away the whole thing. I took the Oxford Oath, I remember, as a lot of us did.
- Glaser: What was that?
- Raab: A huge number at City College. I guess Oxford, because it had begun there. The Oxford Oath was a pacifist oath, which said we will not support our government, the American government; we will not fight. The slogans were: "Hell no, we won't go." That was the time when the draft was obviously in the wings. It was a youthful reaction, I suppose, and I wouldn't call it a sophisticated reaction. We could quote Marx and Engels and talk about Martov.
- Glaser: Who was Martov?
- Raab: One of the intellectuals of the worldwide movement. The Third International was the Communist International. The Second International was the Socialist, and the Trotskyites had their own international, the Fourth International. I forget what happened to the first. Second were the socialists; the third were the communists; the fourth were Trotskyites. It didn't amount to much.

As I was saying, we could go through all of this intellectual stuff because we were concerned about the situation in the country with poverty, which was deep, and our concern about the blacks. But it wasn't very deep. And what was almost startling was what happened immediately to most of us when the war broke out. We immediately began to see that the hope of defeating the Nazis and the hope of a more democratic world lay in America.

So the transformation that we went through was so quick that I think it indicated how shallow our earlier affiliations had been. We were protesters. We really didn't think that a revolution was coming, I don't think. But we were protesters.

Glaser: But doesn't youth have to go through that period?

Raab: I guess so. In City College, of course, it was a beehive.

**##**

Raab: I was part of a small group which wrested the control of the City College daily student newspaper away from the communists, the Stalinists. We never talked about communists then; we talked about Stalinists. We kept control of it for a long time.

## II U.S. ARMY

### Work in Baltimore, Maryland, before Being Drafted

Raab: I was in the army, after some experiences, and I went to officer's school in Miami and graduated up in the first dozen of this large class, because after all, I'd just come out of college so I knew how to take tests.

Glaser: Give me a little background here. Was there a period of time between your graduation and entering into the service?

Raab: Oh, a very short period. I had a low number; I knew that I was going to be drafted. After I graduated, I left New York and went down to Baltimore for about a year. I worked at various things. I worked on the docks for a while as what they called a dock walloper, which meant that you did everything that they wanted you to do, carrying things and--.

Glaser: Did you have to join a union for that?

Raab: There was a mockup every day, so that I was a day-by-day worker, and I was not a member of the union. I was still in my political period. I remember walking the lines of the steel workers' organizing committee when they were organizing. But I worked on the docks, and then was drafted there in Baltimore, finally.

Glaser: Did I read somewhere that you were a social worker in Baltimore?

Raab: That was one of the things I did in Baltimore.

Glaser: For which agency did you work?

Raab: This was the first social welfare agency. I forget what they called it, but this agency initiated much of the early AFDC [Aid for Families with Dependent Children], I guess, and other things. I used to travel out to the outlying areas and some of the black

areas and talk to the people, try to get them as much money as possible. I took a civil service test and got the job. The place was full of young women who had just graduated from social work school, first graduates of a social work school of that kind. I didn't have that degree. I felt that they were not sympathetic enough to the poor people out there, so I used to do things which weren't exactly by the rules in order to get more money to these people. I was still in that mode.

I also was still working in the Trotskyite movement, though not seriously. But I remember that one of my assignments was that I went night after night to the homes of black families in Baltimore, I guess to persuade them to revolt against the oppressive white regime of America. And they used to look at me as though I were crazy.

Glaser: I'm suprised that you didn't try to organize the other social workers.

Raab: I just felt (I guess the term then was bourgeois) that they were the ultimate expression of the bourgeoisie. In any case, that ended when I was drafted, with almost a sense of relief. We all realized what the situation was, almost all. There were some who never did.

### Combat Intelligence and Officer's Training School

Glaser: So you were shipped down to Florida?

Raab: I was drafted in Baltimore. I was sent to an infantry camp in Georgia, Camp Wheeler, where I did my basic training. And at one point after the real basic training--again on the basis of what they used to call intelligence tests, which they gave everybody, and again on which I did well because I was so recently from school--they put me in combat intelligence.

I was supposed to find enemy troops; that's what combat intelligence was. Except I never did learn how to read maps, so I couldn't find them. I found out what combat intelligence meant really one day when an officer said to me, "If you can't find them, you stand up and let them shoot at you so that our troops know where they are."

A few of us who were in it graduated the day before Pearl Harbor. We all shook hands; we were sure that we were not long for this life as combat intelligence. And while we were waiting

for something further, a call came for me to bring in my rifle, which is one of the nicest calls I ever got, I guess I felt at the time. They were setting up these civilian groups to watch and keep track of the movement of airplanes all across the country.

Glaser: Civil defense?

Raab: Civil defense spotters. We were supposed to train these spotters. That's when they moved me to Tampa, Florida, where for a long while I lived in a hotel with this other group. We went out every morning in the countryside and told people, who knew as well as we did, how to identify planes--because we didn't know very much about it. You want another amusing anecdote?

Glaser: Yes.

Raab: We used to go out in groups of three or four, sometimes staying overnight. One of duties was to make speeches to civilian groups, Rotary Clubs, et cetera, at their luncheon meetings. At one of the luncheon meetings there were three of us, and it was one fellow's turn. Somebody got up and asked a question. We didn't know the answer to most of the questions. One fellow got up and asked the question, "If the plane you're trying to identify is above the clouds, how do you identify it?" And this was a slick fellow. He answered immediately, "In the course of fifteen seconds the plane will go through three different air pockets and you will be able to identify its direction," which didn't make any sense at all. The second fellow and I sat next to each other. We looked at each other, expecting to be lynched, but it was accepted.

Anyway, it was after a while that I decided that this was no way to fight a war and that eventually they were going to get wise and I'd be back in infantry or whatever. And it was then that I went to air corps officer's school in Miami.

Glaser: How did that come about? Did you put in for it or did they tap you?

Raab: They were constantly asking. When I was first drafted, I remember they used to say some of us should become infantry officers, and we laughed at that. Our knowledge about war dated from the films we'd seen about World War I, "All Quiet on the Western Front," et cetera. So the idea of becoming an infantry officer didn't appeal to us at that time.

Glaser: Trenches were not for you.



Raab: But they continually asked. And at this point I decided it was time to get out of what I was doing, which was sitting in a hotel in Tampa, some resort or some boarding house in western Florida, drinking too much and not doing much of anything else. So that's why I did it.

Glaser: And officer's training was in Miami Beach?

Raab: Three months. To go back to an early part of the story, it was then, as I said, I graduated in the first ten or so of the class, a large class. And the tradition had always been that the highest twenty-five graduates would be sent to Washington for intelligence work. They called me in an interview. In the interview, it became clear that they did have a record of me. They said, "Now, you were a president of the anti-war club at City College." And I was. I said, "Yes." They said, "You were the president of the philosophy club," which was taken over by the Trotskyites. I said that I was. So I don't think they trusted me to work in intelligence then.

#### Panama, the Galapagos, and Kassie

Raab: I became, essentially, an administrative officer in the air corps, and was almost immediately sent to Panama.

Glaser: What did you do in Panama?

Raab: I was the adjutant. The commanding officer of every squadron was, by necessity, a flying officer. The adjutant was the nonflying officer who ran the squadron. That was me.

Glaser: So you were involved with administrative tasks and personnel tasks?

Raab: Yes, that sort of thing. They sent us into the Galapagos, where I spent a lot of time, where we were guarding, with my bomb squadron--B-24s, whatever--guarding against Japanese invasion of Panama.

Glaser: In the Galapagos Islands? You and the turtles?

Raab: Turtles and the iguanas.

Glaser: I didn't know we had a base there during the war.

Raab: Yes. We were there most of the time. I met my wife in Panama.

Glaser: What was she doing there?

Raab: She was a civilian working for the army air corps, in a secretarial corps.

Glaser: What is your wife's name?

Raab: Kassie, with a K.

Glaser: I saw someplace her name listed as Ruth.

Raab: Her name is complicated in evolution. She was born Viola Ruth Eichenstein, which is her father's name.

Glaser: Beckenstein?

Raab: Eichenstein. Her mother's name, however, was Kaselman [spells]. She took that for brevity's sake. Her parents were divorced early on. She started working in Philadelphia when she was a teenager. She became known as Kassie, for Kaselman. Some people still call her Vi, some people call her Ruth, and I always called her Kassie.

Glaser: So you were married while you were in service?

Raab: But late, rather late. We met about 1943, maybe late 1943, in Panama. I was in the Galapagos twice. In between they brought us back to Panama for a while. We spent some time in the north of Panama and then we were sent back to the Galapagos. The B-24s patrolled the area constantly looking for Japanese submarines. At one point we may have sunk one; we all got a battle star or whatever they give. In any case, I used to travel very often on those patrols. They would very nicely fly me into the base where she was and drop me off and pick me up a day later. So we used to go on dates which were quite expensive for Uncle Sam, I think.

Glaser: But other than that, it sounds as if you had very boring duty.

Raab: Yes, it was.

Galapagos was the epitome of army boredom, and people didn't get off unless they were in a favored position like me. There were troops that were there for over a year without getting off. There was nothing there, absolutely nothing except the iguanas and the turtles. We played poker, we drank, we did our patrols. A USO troop came in once, you know with these young good-looking girls. They came on the stage, some in fairly abbreviated show business uniforms. One would expect, if one didn't think about it, that they would be greeted wildly by the troops. Instead, the troops became angry and really were almost out of control.

Glaser: Why angry?

Raab: They had been sequestered there so long, and all of sudden they were almost teased by this exhibition.

Glaser: Which island of the Galapagos were you on?

Raab: I think it was Floriana, I'm not sure. I forget. It went close to Floriana. It was a rock. We called it the rock and it was a rock. There was no vegetation on the island, on the rock we were on. It was rough flying in the patrols because this was the equatorial front. We had to fly through it every time, and when I went on my dates I was thinking how much I was putting myself in harm's way because of this thing. They couldn't go too high. We lost a couple of crews because of the weather.

Glaser: And what year were you married?

Raab: Nineteen forty-five.



### III CIVILIAN LIFE

[Interview 2: May 23, 1996] ##

#### UC Berkeley

Glaser: When you got out of the service, did you have any difficulties in adjusting to civilian life?

Raab: I don't think so. I'd been in for five years, and we'd just gotten married. In New York we had just a nice period. We bought tickets to every show on Broadway at the time, and there were some very good ones. Then I decided to do some graduate work. Because San Francisco seemed such an enticing place, we left and went to Berkeley, where I did some graduate work at UC Berkeley.

Glaser: Oh, I didn't know that! I thought that you came out on your writing assignment.

Raab: No, this was early. See, I was back here twice. In '46, we came and I did some graduate work at Berkeley in English literature. But all the time the thought was I was going to do some writing, and we were interested in getting a farm.

Glaser: Why?

#### A Farm in Maine

Raab: Because it seemed romantic; it was part of post-army dreams, I guess, good for relaxation. It seemed romantic and also I figured it was a good way to do some writing. A good friend of mine, Hal Lubin, went with the two of us. I did a year and a half at Berkeley, I didn't push to a degree because we wanted to get going. We went back east early in '48 and bought a dairy farm in Maine, traveling around to find one. With two years of that, we came back to San Francisco in 1950.

Glaser: But in between you were writing.

Raab: I was doing some writing. I started writing articles for Commentary, which I haven't found yet.

Glaser: How did you make the connection with Commentary?

Raab: Irving Kristol, I think, was one of the editors, and I decided to send some articles there. I wrote for various others: I wrote for the New England Homestead rather regularly and some other periodicals just to make some money, which we needed because there wasn't enough money coming from the cows to sustain the farm. So I paid the mortgage with my writing.

Glaser: Were you happy as a farmer?

Raab: Yes, but the winters were extremely severe for us. At the beginning, we had twelve milking cows, Ayrshires--beautiful cows. Kassie and I were alone during the winters, Hal left. My image of the winters was one day where it was something like close to thirty degrees below zero, and what was coming out of the sky was a sleet of almost pure ice. Our water came from a well and the pump broke. Of course, cows have to have a lot of water. There was a deep well in front of our house. I stood in front of that deep well in the evening with a bucket and a little rope and lowered the bucket down--I don't know, about seventy-five times--to bring up water for the cows on the edge of the well, with all of that slippery stuff while Kassie watched me anxiously from the kitchen window. [chuckles]

Glaser: Aside from the winter hardship, wasn't there a sense of isolation?

Raab: My friends used to come from New York during the summer. They helped me hay. We did everything in a kind of old-fashioned way. I guess partly out of romanticism but partly out of poverty. We had horses, we didn't have machines--I had a car, of course. So we hayed with horses, and we did everything with horses, plowed with horses.

## IV MOVE TO SAN FRANCISCO, 1950

"There's No City Like San Francisco"

Raab: Friends came up, mostly from New York, helped and kept us company, and it was enjoyable. My idea was, of course, that I would do my main writing in the winter when there wasn't anything else to do. But it turned out that there were a lot of other things to do.

Glaser: Probably more than in the summer.

Raab: Well, as much, and more arduous. In any case, that was an interesting two-year period. And then when we decided it was time to leave, we figured that San Francisco was the place to go. So we then came to San Francisco. That was in 1950.

Glaser: I had thought you came to San Francisco because of the assignment to do your article, "There's No City Like San Francisco."<sup>1</sup>

Raab: Well, I did. We were thinking about either San Francisco or New Orleans, which we both liked. When we went to New York and stopped in at the Commentary offices, they said that I should do an article on San Francisco. So we came out here, partly motivated by that but also by the fact that it was one of the cities that we thought we wanted to live in. And it was, it turned out to be.

Glaser: And it turned out to be for quite a few years. How did you go about making your contacts with people and with organizations for that magazine article?

Raab: Obviously, the first person I saw, because somebody told me he was the first person I should see, was Eugene Block, who was the editor of the Jewish newspaper here and the director of the Jewish

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<sup>1</sup>See appendix.

Community Relations Council [JCRC], which he'd just begun. He gave me names. I talked to him first and he gave me the name of Jesse Steinhart, who was the reigning power in the Jewish community and in parts of the general community as well. He was the man behind Governor Earl Warren, politically. Also Rabbi Saul White, Rabbi Alvin Fine, and a couple of other people, I don't recall who.

Glaser: How much time did you spend on your research?

Raab: I think two weeks, a dozen interviews, that's all.

Glaser: It's a very impressive article.

Raab: Well, I think that a review of a community can be more impressive if you don't spend too much time in it because it gets confusing, perhaps. Not so much San Francisco at that time. But I think in general it's possible if you talk to the major people in the various compartments, of the Jewish community in this case, you get a good profile, which you can then work on without all of the qualifications that would be made if you interviewed a thousand people.

Glaser: You're more apt to be able to generalize?

Raab: Right. I think so. After all, articles are fairly short and that's what they're about in a way--generalization. Although I think I had some qualifications in that article.

Glaser: Do you still feel that the Jewish community is moribund and the leadership is entrenched?

Raab: No, no. First of all, I started, I think the article might indicate that, with some respect for the leadership in a way, for their character. It developed even more so. But it was during and after 1967 that San Francisco joined the rest of the American Jewish community, became more like it and is indistinguishable in some ways in its basic profile. Partly the rest of the American Jewish community became closer to San Francisco. Those changes were fairly radical and can be described I think best when we get into the questions about the treatment of Israel by this community.

V JEWISH COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL

Associate Director, Original B'nai B'rith Survey Committee

- Glaser: How did it come about that you joined the JCRC? At that time it was the B'nai B'rith Survey Committee.
- Raab: It was until about two years after I came. They changed the name.
- Glaser: Why did they change? Because that means there was separation from B'nai B'rith.
- Raab: It was an attempt to become more communal, more inclusive, which a community relations council should be. So it was thought best not to be so identified with one organization because it was supposed to be an organization of all the organizations in San Francisco.
- Glaser: Did Gene Block or did you institute that change?
- Raab: We were both there at the time. I was the associate director almost from the beginning, and Gene spent a good part of the time editing the Bulletin. He worked for eighteen hours a day, so we worked closely on most things. He was more involved in the beginning with matters related to the internal Jewish community. I became more involved with the general community.
- Glaser: I have to back up and ask you how the job was offered to you. How did it come about?
- Raab: Out of the article, really. I came here in '50 and started a job in January '51. I was given the job before then, I just didn't start until January '51. I had started writing magazine articles of all kinds. That one, of course, early for Commentary. I did trade magazines; I was the correspondent in Northern California for the Coin Machine Review.



Glaser: The Coin Machine Review?

Raab: Yes. I was making a living. Kassie was working.

Glaser: What work did she do?

Raab: She was a secretary at the beginning almost at Coldwell Banker. That's in the city. We lived on Jones Street, a cable car ran by it at the time, and it was a very nice living experience.

I dropped Gene Block a note at some point and said that I was writing and I was interested in Jewish affairs. If there was any way to write occasional things for the Bulletin, I would be glad to do so. He called me in and offered me the job. That's the way it happened.

Glaser: At that point, did you find yourself surprised by your interest in Jewish affairs? Because judging from your background, you were not highly immersed in Jewish affairs. I mean, you're an ex-Trotskyite.

Raab: Yes, but almost all ex-Trotskyites were Jews, so there was that association. I did not have, if I can make the distinction, a great interest in Judaism and certainly no real knowledge. I had an interest in the Jews as an historical force. The experience of the Holocaust probably, undoubtedly, which was even then just emerging, really, in all of its dimensions, was one of the things that propelled me, I'm sure. The main difference between the San Francisco Jewish community and those in the rest of the country really had to do with Israel, which I'm sure we'll get into.

But there was an interest, as there was in the rest of the country, in strengthening democracy in this country, coming out of the experiences of the 1930s for the Jews. I had a great interest in that. When Gene asked me to take the job and in effect told me this was one of my main assignments, I became interested. But I became increasingly interested as the job went on.

I wasn't sure what the future would be with the career, so to speak. Nobody thought of careers so much in those days. I can remember with amusement now that I said to Gene, "Yes, I'll take this job. But I want it understood that whatever time there is that I'm not engaged in the office I'll be doing some writing." And Gene said, "Fine." Now, he knew that right after a certain period there wouldn't be any such time. But that was our understanding at the beginning, which is kind of funny.

Organization of Office

Glaser: Had he had an assistant before you came on the scene?

Raab: He had one short-lived assistant, and they had parted some time before.

Glaser: So it was really a one-man show until you showed up.

Raab: It was essentially a one-man show. Or, if Gene had been an ordinary man, it would have been a half-man show because he was doing the Bulletin. But of course, he put in a tremendous number of hours.

Glaser: How was it organized at that point? Were there subcommittees? Was there a board?

Raab: There was a board of representatives from organizations plus at-large members and a few subcommittees, not too many at the time.

Glaser: What changes did you make in the early years?

Raab: One of the things that I guess I instituted was outlying JCRC committees--the South Peninsula, Marin, and North Peninsula. Eventually one developed in Sonoma as well; that was much later. Our involvement in the general community was generally my responsibility.

Glaser: What was the relationship to the Federation in those early years?

Raab: We were always, and the JCRC still is, an independent agency, so-called. In the sense that most of the JCRCs, especially the smaller ones but even a couple of the larger ones like in Los Angeles, are committees of the Federation. The administrative line ran from the Federation board down. The policy line ran from the Federation board down for those that were committees of the Federations. We were an independent agency which was wholly funded by the Federation.

Glaser: Did that happen as soon as it was separated from the B'nai B'rith?

Raab: Well, it happened before. You see, the B'nai B'rith--and this was largely, I think, Jesse Steinhart's work prior to World War II. That Survey Committee started, as some of the others did in '38, '39, because of the press of Hitler and propaganda in this country. It was set up as an independent agency. The Federation gave it some money, and it stayed independent.

Anti-Semitism in San Francisco

Glaser: Did you get a sense from Gene Block how much anti-Semitism there was at the time the Survey Committee was established? My impression is there was not too much anti-Semitism compared to back east.

Raab: Well, there are a couple of things. As I pointed out in that article of mine, there was a difference in the sense that this was the frontier, it really was, in 1849 when the Jews came. The Jews came at the same time that other people came and were integrated as a result. Being the frontier, and that being the fact, Jews became prominent in civic life late in the nineteenth century, early in San Francisco's history. In that sense, there was much less of a tradition of anti-Semitism than there was in eastern cities.

In addition to which, Jews did not come en masse to the city. They came gradually, it was an evolutionary growth. So there was no shock to the community at any point of eastern European Jewish immigrants of the kind of experience they had in the east. When I came, one of the differences was that there were no neighborhoods which excluded Jews. There might have been a few places, small places, I don't know, but basically there were none. Which was not true of the large eastern cities up to that point where there were neighborhoods, enclaves, and developments with protocols that excluded Jews. In San Francisco that never happened.

There was a pattern, I'm sure, of employment discrimination against Jews that occurred in San Francisco. Just as I came, I think it was in 1950, the State Department of Employment did a survey asking employers, among other things, whether they would hire Jews in white collar jobs if they were qualified. And 25 percent of California's employers said they would not hire Jews even if they were well-qualified. I'm sure that affected San Francisco, the tradition in insurance and so forth.

The other thing is that the Jews started out in good economic position generally in this community, a high level of self-employment, professionals, lawyers, et cetera. So employment discrimination did not become an oppressive factor, but I'm sure it existed. In the period when this Survey Committee was set up, there were Nazi sympathizers in the city, groups in the German community, which was considerable. One of the jobs of the Survey Committee in that period was keeping track of some of these.



Clearly, there was less anti-Semitism here. See, there had been a Jewish mayor, even though he turned out to be a crook.

Glaser: Abe Ruef?

Raab: Yes. The Chamber of Commerce had elected one person (I forget who) president of the Chamber of Commerce. These things didn't happen much in the east in the cities of this size. Also, certain other civic traditions indicated a low level of anti-Semitism. I always point to the board of education. When I came, the tradition--it was not written down anyplace, but it was adhered to by mayors very closely--that on the seven-person board of education, two were always Jews. These were appointed jobs at that time. Two were always Protestants, two Catholics, two Jews, and one from the Labor Council. And they never changed. The police commission at the time that I came was a three-person board: one Protestant, one Catholic, one Jew, and that was invariable.

I remember when I felt things were changing. I knew, for example, that the police commission would never be able to stay with one Protestant, one Catholic, one Jew; the black population would demand some representation. Some day the Latino population would demand some. At some point (this was after I was a director) I said to my friend and mentor, Sam Ladar, who was one of the early chairmen of the JCRC, great person, member of the police commission. I said to him, "I think it's time to push for legislation that would make it a five-person board, because if it stays as a three-person board one of these days there's not going to be a Jew on it." And for understandable reasons. I mean there are the pressures from minority groups in San Francisco. But there was reluctance to do that.

Glaser: I always thought of this as being a strongly Catholic city.

Raab: Well, it was, especially in the sense that the government, especially the civil service, the bureaucracy, and the politicians were Irish and Catholic; sometimes Italian and Catholic but largely Irish Catholic. The University of San Francisco is known as the wellspring of political life and personages in San Francisco. But again, there were a lot of Protestants and there was also that general frontier sense of tolerance, which at that point meant tolerance for Protestants and Jews as well as Catholics.

### Importance of Democratic Pluralism

Glaser: When you began your work here, what was your underlying philosophy?

Raab: My underlying philosophy, and this related to my main interest in Jewry, was that the important objective of forces like the JCRC was to strengthen democratic pluralism.

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Raab: Democratic pluralism was essential and important for the Jews and their future, but also this was a mission of the Jews. It was an important contribution of the Jews to the general society, this concept of democratic pluralism, because the Jews had or should have a special awareness of its importance. Of course, I came in at a time when the leading agenda for the country, community, was civil rights. And civil rights demonstrated this principle at the time more than anything.

I was always disturbed in later years when there developed some apparent problems between blacks and Jews, and there were some Jews who used to say (this was in later years), "Look, we were so helpful to them in civil rights, how can they treat us this badly?" It was not altruistic. There were values involved, and certainly Jewish values. But civil rights was good and necessary for the Jews. It was clear that insofar as equality of opportunity could be institutionalized, it would be institutionalized for the Jews and everybody else as well as the blacks. For example, though 25 percent of employers in 1950 in the state of California said they wouldn't hire Jews no matter how well-qualified for white collar jobs, that vanished from the face of California after the civil rights period. Because the civil rights laws applied to the Jews as much as, although not as urgently, to the blacks.

### Totalitarian Personality

Glaser: William Becker has written that you "expanded and developed the thesis that there existed the totalitarian personality." How did this analysis work out through your assignment?

Raab: I'm not sure. I talked about totalitarian personalities, but as I became more involved in all of this I became more concerned with totalitarian conditions in society, which I then felt could

develop totalitarian personalities. My basic thesis is about the development of totalitarian societies and their bigotries. For example, most people who joined the Nazi party (although this flies in the face of a recent book with which I disagree) most of the people in Germany did not support Hitler because of anti-Semitism. They supported him for other reasons. But they went along with his anti-Semitism because it didn't make any difference to them. This is what we found over and over again, that these are the vulnerable people, the people who are not violently anti-Semitic.

In America, for example, maybe a third of the population, and there is some documentation, essentially says, "Well, I don't care whether he's anti-Semitic or he's not anti-Semitic as long as he lowers taxes, fixes welfare." Or whatever they feel they need politically. It's that large group which will join the totalitarian movement and then accept its programs. And in that sense they became totalitarian in their support. That's what I believe or I think the documentation shows.

In America, for example, there was one particular survey which showed that the followers of Father Coughlin, the most anti-Semitic personality leader in our history, the followers were, in terms of numbers and percentages, scarcely more anti-Semitic than those people that did not follow Coughlin. They were following him for other reasons, and they accepted his anti-Semitism because it didn't make any difference to them. The indifference of the people is the biggest danger.

Glaser: Did it give them a sense of empowerment?

Raab: The anti-Semitism?

Glaser: Following somebody like Father Coughlin?

Raab: Following somebody like Coughlin certainly gave them a sense of empowerment. As they got into it, they accepted the strength in the idea that the Jews were at fault. They wouldn't necessarily start with that idea; but if it was the party line, they were willing to accept it and that strengthened their views.

The same thing happened in Louisiana recently. What's the name of the--

Glaser: David Duke.

Raab: David Duke was a Ku Klux Klanner, an anti-Semite, and everybody knew it. But when they interviewed the people who supported him, most of them supported him because of his view about affirmative

action, too much federal government, et cetera, not because of his prejudice. But they were indifferent to it; they were willing to accept it.

Glaser: I was surprised he was defeated when he ran for office, because he had a strong following.

Raab: Well, a couple things that save America, and that's to get back to your earlier question. There are institutions in democratic pluralism and there's a culture of democratic pluralism which is important to constantly strengthen because they make a lot of people afraid of extremism. We continually notice, even in the current period, that when people are seemingly credibly charged with extremism, a lot of Americans back away. They're afraid of them because it's contrary to the general concept, however vague it may be, of a country in which there is pluralism and democratic pluralism.

This happens with respect to--you'll have to supply some names--

Glaser: Do you mean with Gingrich's Congress?

Raab: Not with Gingrich so much. Partly with Gingrich they talk about extremism; but especially with the guy that's way out there who ran for president.

Glaser: Oh, Pat Buchanan.

Raab: With Pat Buchanan. The various interviews and surveys showed that a lot of people who agreed with him on some of his points were afraid of him because they said he was an extremist. And that was a specific word that they used over and over again.

Glaser: But after the extremism he displayed at the 1992 Republican Convention, I was surprised that he came back so strongly this year.

Raab: He had a message, obviously, which a lot of people were interested in. A lot of workers were interested in his message about keeping jobs in America, for example. That struck strong. But they fell away. His support was constant at a certain level. What was it? Maybe even as high as 25 percent--this is among Republicans--but never higher, because they were afraid.

The same thing happened to George Wallace. He had a lot of ideas which Americans were interested in. And as a matter of fact, a very large number of people in polls before the election said they would vote for him, because he was a kind of protest



statement. But there weren't so many that voted for him because they were afraid of him. If there's any word that resonated with them, it was extremism. Political extremism is, in a way, the opposite of democratic pluralism. This is what I felt the mission was of the Jewish Community Relations enterprise, here and around the country: to strengthen the institutions--which means the laws, et cetera, and the culture, which also means laws and education--of democratic pluralism. That was our mission, because extremism was our big enemy.



## VI WORK WITH COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

### Farm Workers Union

Glaser: I want to ask you about how in your early years you went about making your contacts and relationships to organizations in the general community. For instance, you worked with the Farm Workers Union very early on. What other organizations did you work with?

Raab: The Farm Workers was, I guess, part JCRC and part just me. There was an organization developed; it was called the Friends of the Farm Workers. I became active in that. Bill Becker was involved at that time. Bill Becker was the organizer of the farm workers in those early years. He preceded Cesar Chavez. I became involved in that. Of course, there were a lot of minority groups involved in the farm workers at that time.

### San Francisco and California Mental Health Associations

Raab: See, one of the functions, in a way, of a community relations professional was to develop some relationships: a) with public officials and b) with influentials in the community who were influential in particular communities and/or with public officials. So I became a member of the board of the Mental Health Association, for example, in San Francisco. And then I was the president of the California Association of Mental Health, partly because I was interested and partly because these were influentials that I was working with. But the main contacts during that period were directly with public officials or the civil rights movement.



Anti-Poverty Program and Civil Rights Movement

Glaser: You were a major drafter of San Francisco's first anti-poverty program? That was really early on.

Raab: Yes.

Glaser: Was that an outgrowth of your work with the Farm Workers Union?

Raab: No. No, it wasn't. It was an outgrowth of my association with Mayor [John] Shelley and my work in the civil rights movement. The poverty program came on everybody suddenly. Jack Shelley, the mayor, called me and said, "I don't know what this is all about, what we have to do. Why don't you go to Washington and find out what this is all about?" So he sent me to Washington and I found out some things. Deadlines were pressing all over the place for applications. A young black man, who I knew from the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) and who was close to the mayor, and I spent twenty-four hours in a motel room downtown in San Francisco, drawing up the application for the poverty program in San Francisco.

That's how it started; that's how we got our money, et cetera. This was after my involvement in the civil rights movement. And its an interest that I think relates to another subject. One of the first things that happened when we sent this application in was the establishment of an anti-poverty operation in San Francisco, starting with an executive committee. I was appointed to the executive committee and I immediately withdrew. This was a point where the civil rights movement was turning into the black revolution. There was strong feeling in the black community. I knew at that particular point that they had to do it alone. There were too many white people involved, and a little edge of the fact that there were too many white Jews involved in their business. So I thought that it was a healthy thing not to do that job.

Glaser: I'm surprised at the timing of that because I thought that kind of feeling came more in the eighties.

Raab: No, no. It was the late sixties and the early seventies. We started with the legislative program for civil rights. Can we talk about civil rights for a while?

Glaser: Sure.

Chairman, Bay Area Human Relations Clearinghouse, 1952-1962

Raab: And that started almost immediately after I joined the JCRC. I set up something called the Bay Area Human Rights Clearinghouse. Finally it was called the Bay Area Human Relations Clearinghouse. We had our JCRC office on First Street, in a kind of barn. Barn isn't the appropriate image, that goes back to my farm days. It was a kind of loft situation, divided up, and there was a good-sized meeting room without any windows, which I thought would be an excellent idea, and not very decorative. But every week we held a meeting of the Bay Area Human Relations Clearinghouse, which is, in a sense, the first time that it was brought together on such a regular basis.

I was the chairman of it. Black leaders--NAACP, black church leaders and others, Willie Brown was a member at the beginning. Some Latinos, not very many because their organization hadn't developed yet. The Asian organizations hadn't developed yet, but the Japanese American Citizens League was a member. And some Protestant and Catholic clergymen and civil rights people. And then we worked with the Council for Civic Unity [CCU], which was a membership organization, and developed an approach to desegregation in the schools there, and actually evolved into a political kind of thing. It was a forerunner. It was there that the people and the ideas that formed the Human Rights Commission in San Francisco.

The Council for Civic Unity was formed immediately after World War II, an individual membership organization which was an influential force against racial inequality and bigotry of any kind. Gene Block was one of its founders, and it always worked closely with the JCRC. Ed Howden, the director of the CCU, who later became head of the State Fair Practices Commission, deserves a special place in this city's history because of his role in advancing equality and maintaining intergroup harmony. He told me recently that about three quarters of the CCU membership had probably been Jewish. Frank Quinn, another giant in this field, followed Ed as head of the CCU.

Glaser: You fought for fair housing in that group.

Raab: Fair housing, yes. But fair employment was the first goal, really, and the schools. In 1964, the Human Rights Commission was established.

Glaser: I have the dates that you were chairman of the Bay Area Human Relations Clearinghouse from 1952 to 1962.

Human Rights Commission, 1964

Raab: Yes. And then what happened was that Mayor Shelley came in. At some point after that things got very hot in the city, and there was established an interim Human Rights Committee for the City and County of San Francisco. I served as vice chairman of that. But that was preliminary, and all the time that we had it it was this interim committee that mediated both the hotel and auto row sit-ins and so forth. During that period, we set up the law for the Human Rights Commission, which I think started in 1964. And of course at that point the need for the Bay Area Human Relations Clearinghouse became somewhat obsolete because we had the commission.

Glaser: Talk about the mediation that was necessary between the hotel association and the civil rights group, because you had some difficulty with the labor unions at that point. They felt that they wanted to be part of it when you were mediating.

Fair Practices Committee

Raab: This was a period when the bridge between what is called civil rights litigation period and the black revolution took place. You know, this was the first city in the state that passed a fair employment practices commission law. We passed in the city of San Francisco a fair employment law that was engineered very much through the Clearinghouse with the Council for Civic Unity.

Glaser: Daniel Koshland was very active in the Council for Civic Unity.

Raab: Yes. There were a lot of Jews involved. Colman--

Glaser: Jesse Colman?

Raab: Jesse Colman. He had been on the board of supervisors. This was while we were getting the city fair employment thing passed. Then he was appointed in a temporary position on the board again. He was invaluable in his help in getting the fair employment law passed in San Francisco.

There was a lot of opposition to it. It was such a new thing. But we passed it, and it became the opening for passing a state law. We had then set up the Human Rights Commission, and in the place of the Bay Area Human Relations Clearinghouse we established the California Fair Practices Committee which was the

one which worked for, and finally secured, fair employment law in the state plus the fair housing law in the state. Bill Becker became the full-time director of that.

### Affirmative Action

Glaser: Did this lap over into the area of affirmative action?

Raab: Affirmative action, a most exasperating subject for me, was in our consciousness from the beginning. Let me go back. You asked about the labor unions. One of the things that happened is after we passed the state law--we passed the city law, then we passed the state law. Some people felt the battle was won. Two things began to happen: one is that where there were no blacks in obvious employment we or the NAACP went to a given employer and said, "Why don't you hire? There's some qualified blacks out there." And they'd say, "Well, we'd like to, but the unions won't let us because they've got seniority," et cetera, et cetera. And then, of course, we'd go to the unions and say, "Why don't you--?" "Oh," they'd say, "we'd be glad to accommodate our situation, but the employers won't let us."

The law was in the books but it didn't always work because there were kinds of resistance that were difficult. So there developed the idea for direct action. That's when the hotel stuff started and the automobile row stuff started. And the department store, too, was just starting. It was a lively period. [chuckles] I was involved in some of that negotiation, automobile row directly. We were getting to affirmative action. It became clear when the law itself wasn't working that something more had to be done to nudge the employers, to nudge the unions, et cetera, to comply with the law in reality. And that we called affirmative action from the beginning.

On automobile row, it was discovered that there were no black mechanics all along automobile row. Now in that case it was a matter of our knowledge that there were qualified black mechanics in town. First of all because it was an occupation which blacks enjoyed in the South, so there were mechanics here, but they weren't being hired. Laws on the books but it wasn't happening. Talk to the owners or managers on automobile row, and they said, "Well, they're not coming; they're not applying." And this was happening in other places.

Then the idea developed that there are black mechanics; you've got to let them know that you're willing to hire them. You



haven't been willing over these years and therefore they're not even applying. So what we required, and we wrote it into the law, was that they advertise in black newspapers and put signs up which said--you know, it became slowly the phrase--"Equal opportunity employer." And if they advertised in black newspapers, then it became clear. So that broke that logjam. We called that affirmative action.

Glaser: Did you actually use that term?

Raab: We used the term, sure. When we sat down around a table, I remember this, to draw up the law which established the Human Rights Commission, we talked about affirmative action. We talked about these things that I'm saying. Advertising to let the minority community know that those jobs were available. There was the question of keeping records. It became important. These things evolved into all kinds of monsters. But keeping records became important.

Glaser: What kind of records?

Raab: Of minority hiring.

Glaser: You mean the employer had to keep the record?

Raab: Well, the employer had to. In the case of department stores, there was no black face visible at any of the department stores. If you went to the janitors' places, you might find some. But in the store, as salesmen, as cashiers, no place on the floor was there a black face.

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Raab: One of the points was that there was, if you want to put it this way, not much qualification needed to do most of those jobs. And in terms of some blacks who were otherwise qualified but certainly had less experience in that sort of thing than whites who were looking for that kind of job, then we said, "What you really should do, it's not brain surgery, is when these people come in, give them some training, two week's training." We called that affirmative action.

Glaser: Did you stand start up the Apprentice Opportunities Foundation at that point?

Raab: Bill Becker mainly did that. We did that at the Human Rights Commission, and Bill Becker was very involved in that. But an apprenticeship is another example of what we'd think probably was affirmative action.

The other thing I wanted to mention was keeping records. In other words, when black faces started popping up here and there in the department stores, for example, there was a question of token representation. You know, the employer would hire a black person and say, "Look what we've done." It was a pretty lonely face. So we said, "In compliance with the law, which requires the employer to show (and I told you about the bouncing back and forth between the employers and the unions) your good faith, why don't you keep some record of how many are coming in. We'll see if it's really going more slowly than it should. In which case you might need more advertising in the black newspaper for example, or whatever."

Actually, there developed a system. In the department stores we had people walking through and actually keeping track of the numbers that appeared, with their approval. That we called affirmative action. We didn't say, "You've got to hire sixteen the next month." We just said, "You've got to go back and keep some records so we'll know if any progress is made. And if not, then maybe more affirmative action can be tried."

Early on in the Human Rights Commission, in the JCRC in its policy positions, our position was, and the words were used from 1960, certainly '64 on, "We support affirmative action, we oppose quotas." It was a standard form and we all understood what it meant. It became blurred later on, which is another story.

Glaser: Well, in 1973 you drafted a statement defining affirmative action. In reference to quotas, you said: "Hiring and promoting quotas are not to be used routinely but only when there has been a clear refusal on the part of an employer to apply affirmative action program in good faith. Quotas are not a program but at best a strategy of last resort. They do not find people, prepare people, or match people to job requirements or job requirements to job needs."

Raab: And that was the kind of statement that had been made years earlier by the commission, by the JCRC. One of my favorite lines was, "quotas stand in the way of affirmative action," because they don't require any kind of special training where it's needed. They don't require anything at all by way of remedial work, and therefore they're not only not necessary, they're harmful.

See, what began to happen--the difference between the face of this city now (and I say face) and the face of the city in the 1950s is astonishing. If you go into department stores, if you go on automobile row, if you go in banks, where there were absolutely no black faces visible, you now find them in vice presidencies in banks and so forth.

In later years, as the federal government got into the act and their bureaucratic requirements became heavy, many large commercial organizations like banks and some of the larger businesses said in effect to their personnel people, "Look, we don't want any trouble. Just hire sixteen blacks. We don't have to have any trouble. We'll meet it." And that's not the way affirmative action is supposed to work. But it was an early concept. It was built into the Human Rights Commission of San Francisco in 1964.

### Black-Jewish Relations

Glaser: I think there's been a problem in black-Jewish relations in getting blacks to understand the Jewish point of view about quotas. That since big colleges, for instance, had been closed to Jews or only open on the basis of a quota, this is something that we've felt very strongly about.

Raab: I wrote a piece in Commentary in 1970 on quotas. Just as kind of an anecdote related to all of this, I was vice chairman of the Human Rights Commission at the time, and we had some businessmen as chairmen, which we thought was the worst idea. I was a vice chairman and the nominating committee asked me to become the chairman when some chairman went out. Again, I said no. In my mind, it wouldn't be good for black-Jewish relationships for me to become chairman. There was one black leader in particular who was on the nominating committee who said, "I don't understand it. Why don't you do it?" And I showed her my article on quotas, and also the Commentary article I had written on the black revolution and the Jewish question. And she said, "I understand that it probably wouldn't be a good idea."

Glaser: The Intergroup Clearinghouse was formed by the Human Rights Commission.

Raab: The Intergroup Clearinghouse was formed as a consequence of a black-Jewish situation. At the time that this all occurred, Andrew Young was the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations. He said something that Jews took exception to.

Glaser: He embraced Arafat, didn't he, or met with the PLO [Palestine Liberation Organization]?

Raab: He met with the PLO. It was in connection with Israel, I think. There was a big commotion about black-Jewish war. The media have always loved the idea, in their own endearing way, of black-Jewish



rifts. Because the blacks and the Jews, at one time, were always together, you know, and this seemed like a dramatic thing. There was a lot of commotion about it in the media. The eastern headquarters, of course, was all excited. As a result of that-- This was much later. Dianne [Feinstein] was mayor at this time. What do you have there as a date?

Glaser: Nineteen seventy-nine.

Raab: Nineteen seventy-nine. Was she mayor then? It seems kind of early.

Glaser: I thought she was mayor in the eighties.<sup>1</sup>

Raab: Yes, I thought so too. As a result of this, today the Human Relations Clearinghouse has gone out of existence. We felt that it was important for blacks and Jews to get together and the other minorities who had developed organizationally in the community to have a place where they could discuss and perhaps forestall inter-minority problems. That's when we went to the mayor and the Intergroup Clearinghouse came out of the commission, but it was set up separately as a kind of part commission, part independent, part mayor's creation for that purpose.

#### World Without War Council

Glaser: Are you active in World Without War Council?

Raab: I was always active in that, and this was again one of those things. It happens, you know, when professionals--directors of JCRCs, for example--become involved out there in the community, they're also going to be involved in some things in which they have some special interest. That was the case with the Mental Health Association. It has some purpose for them, professionally, but they go one place rather than another out of their own interests often.

During the seventies, late sixties, especially in the seventies, a great deal of furor grew around the Vietnamese War and after that about the Cold War. And it was a kind of furor which some of us felt was not healthy to the community. Extremely divisive and, let me put it in its grossest terms, willingness to

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<sup>1</sup>Dianne Feinstein was mayor from 1978 to 1988.

accept totalitarian ideas, as in the case of parts of the New Left.

There were many Jews during that period on the campus who were engaged in radical politics in campus terms (this happened after the '67 Israel war) who suddenly felt alienated from what was happening in the New Left circles vis-a-vis Israel. The PLO was picked up by segments of the New Left as a valid cause and oppressed by Israel, which was the handmaiden of American imperialism. This was the formulation which often came out. This kind of thing, being on campuses where future leaders were being developed, was kind of frightening and counter-indicated in terms of our concern with democratic pluralism. There were political philosophers of the New Left such as--

Glaser: Mario Savio?

Raab: Savio, yes. He was early on and there was no such problem with him. It came later. I'm thinking of a professor of political science named Marcuse. He was one of the mentors of the New Left in California and elsewhere in the country, and he was delivering an anti-democratic message. It was certainly anti-American: "America is imperialist, and attached to that is the fact that Israel is just part of this American plot and it is important," he said, "to bring down everything before we developed any new political system."

They didn't have much of an idea about what the new political system was, but they knew that the old had to be levelled to the ground. That's the kind of thing that was happening on the campuses, a little bit elsewhere.

World Without War was an anti-war operation that was thoughtful, that was not anti-American. I thought it was a very healthy antidote to the extent that it would be effective to that kind of sentiment, which is related to what I talked about before. I thought it was a threat to the culture of democratic pluralism, some of the things that were happening.

#### San Francisco Council on Religion, Race, and Social Concerns

Glaser: We haven't talked about the San Francisco Council on Religion, Race, and Social Concerns. You were on the executive committee. I think it started in 1963. What were its programs and how was it organized?

Raab: At this point, the Bay Area Clearinghouse was fading out of existence. This was organized to bring together the different religious groups in the city on the same kinds of issues. Father Eugene Boyle was very involved. The organizational membership, in a way, was the Catholic Church--at least that part that Father Boyle represented--the Protestant Council of Churches, and in terms of the Jews, a combination of the Board of Rabbis and the JCRC, because it was a clerical thing basically.

Anecdote: our first large meeting of this conference took place at the University of San Francisco in a large hall. About a thousand people came and they served lunch. As the sandwiches were being brought out, it was discovered that there were ham sandwiches there. And the Catholics, Father Boyle and his friends, were horrified. They took all their ham sandwiches, took them to the kitchen. [chuckles] It was an interesting kind of episode.

Glaser: How did this, or did it, overlap with the Human Rights Commission?

Raab: Well, the Human Rights Commission was a formal city mechanism, with subpoena powers, et cetera. And the Interfaith Council existed at the same time, but it was a voluntary operation.

Glaser: I have a note that it took action on equal job opportunities in church construction. Was that a big thing?

Raab: Well, I don't think it was such a big thing, but it was a big thing for them to do. We turned to them for that kind of thing.

Reverend Jim Jones

Glaser: Jim Jones, of People's Temple, was a member of the council. Do you want to talk about him?

Raab: Yes, he was a member. Almost any clergyman could be a member. It's a sad subject. I knew Jim Jones, of course. He came into the JCRC office on a couple of occasions, especially with a young black whose name I don't recall. A young black maybe twenty, twenty-one, maybe nineteen, who I knew in other civil rights circles and was very fond of. This young man was a member of Jim Jones's church, and he brought Jim Jones in a couple of times to see me, to talk about various things. The young man was one who died in the massacre. But Jim Jones was an embarrassment to a lot of us because he had a church which seemed to be valid. We didn't

understand, although we were interested in cults in terms of the Korean man--

Glaser: Reverend Moon?

Raab: In terms of Reverend Moon and Jews for Jesus, et cetera. We really didn't understand the cultish aspects of Jim Jones's church until it was too late. He was a part of us.

Glaser: Your group even defended him against attack by Supervisor [John] Barbagelata.

Raab: I don't remember the details. I think that was one of the occasions on which this young man brought him into my office. And Barbagelata was generally thought of in our circles as anti-civil rights. He was the reactionary member.

Glaser: He was a dinosaur?

Raab: Yes. So we may have very well have gotten, I'm sure we did, involved in that for some reason. I don't remember the details. But I say it was embarrassing, some of the things that we did before we found out what he was.

## VII PERSONALITIES

Governor Pat Brown

Glaser: In the years of the early sixties, Governor Pat Brown instituted a lot of liberal reform actions. Did the JCRC have any input on that? He had the Fair Employment Practices Act. He had a Consumers Council that was part of the state office.

Raab: We had an input in a couple of ways. Now, the general idea was not for the professionals to be the point person in all of these things, but to have the professional get Jewish influentials who were involved to do things, which they did. And there were plenty of those with Brown. But in addition, Bill Becker became his human rights person after the Fair Employment Act was passed. They were Ed Howden and Bill Becker.

Glaser: Who was Ed Howden?

Raab: Ed Howden was the director of the Council for Civic Unity and one of the pioneers of civil rights in this city. He became the director of the FEPC, the Fair Employment Practices Commission. And Bill Becker came out of the staff of Governor Brown as his human rights director. It was during that period that I also became a consultant to Brown's social welfare board. So that that plus all of the people who were close to him politically, there was plenty of connection to Pat Brown, as there's always been a connection to the mayor of this city.

Glaser: Want to talk about the different mayors and your relationship to them?

Raab: Well, Shelley in particular. Of course, there was connection to all of them, largely through lay people who were associated with JCRC in one way or another. I never had the concept of the JCRC as just a board which took policy, but there had to be layers of influentials out there who related to the JCRC. Not necessarily



coming to the board meetings, which some of them wouldn't come close to, but who had influence in one place or another and who would become accustomed, we hoped, to consult with the JCRC on matters that related to Jews.

Glaser: Why wouldn't some come close to the JCRC?

#### Mayor George Christopher

Raab: Well, let me start with Mayor [George] Christopher and Walter Haas, Sr. Walter Haas, Sr., apart from being an important influential with the Republican congressman, was an important influential with Mayor Christopher. But Walter Haas, Sr., with all of his responsibilities, et cetera, would not have had the time and perhaps not the patience to sit through monthly board meetings of the JCRC. And I felt that was fine. Walter Haas used to call the JCRC constantly to talk about one issue or another. We used to call him to talk about something that we knew either the congressman or Mayor Christopher could do. Mayor Christopher was helpful in some ways and so was the congressman.

Glaser: Which congressman was that, do you know?

Raab: Shipping line. Can we go another half hour and quit?

Glaser: Sure. No problem. Did you finish talking about those who were influential but didn't want to come. And you wanted to talk more about Shelley, I think.

#### Mayor John Shelley

Raab: Well, Shelley came on at a time when the whole civil rights thing was breaking loose and a number of Jews who were close to the JCRC were close to him, and I was in his office frequently. Anecdote? We finally passed the Human Rights Commission law. I remember I was in Shelley's office right after it was passed and he said, "Well, you're going to be the director, right?" And I said, "No, I don't want to be the director." He was startled by that. He had assumed all the way through that because of my involvement in pushing it, I would take the director's job. But I didn't. Bill Becker was director for a while before he took on Governor Brown's job. Frank Quinn was director.



Glaser: Who followed Christopher as mayor?

Raab: Shelley.

Glaser: Shelley followed Christopher?

Raab: Yes.

Glaser: And who followed Shelley?

#### Mayor Joseph Alioto

Raab: After Shelley, there was Alioto.

Glaser: Ah, yes. What was your relationship with him?

Raab: Very close.

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Raab: We instituted the policy of approaching every new mayor as a Jewish group, to talk to him about our problems and about appointments. I think we started that with Alioto, but there were people close to him like Howard Nemerovski so I saw him rather often. And they all developed the habit of calling the JCRC when there was some Jewish-related thing.

#### Jewish Community Relations Council Leaders

Raab: Shelley called me once when there was the matter of an appointment on the board of education. A Jewish member was still appointed. He suggested a name, which I won't mention because he's still active in politics. At that point we were very interested in Renny Colvin becoming that Jewish member. So Shelley called me with that name, and I said Colvin is much closer to the Jewish community, and it went to Colvin. It took the other fellow many years to forgive me for that because he heard about it. And Colvin, of course, was great.

You know, there's one thing I'd like to say. Sometimes I say "I did this" and "I did that"; in terms of policy it was always a matter of corroboration with the leadership. And I'd like to talk about that JCRC leadership. What happened was the

one thing I did institute was an advisory board made up of all past chairmen of the JCRC, which met monthly and was very important. They were very important individually and as a group in giving advice and helping to bring policy to the JCRC board. Nothing they decide is constitutionally a position of the JCRC. They are advisory but it's a very helpful body because they come with their experience and so forth and offer advice, which is usually good. They are a remarkable group of people. Renny Colvin was the first one, Sam Ladar was one, Ed Bransten was one. I'd like to list them all, you know, but I probably don't remember. These were the early ones. Sam, as I say, was my closest mentor. Sam, Renny, and I used to meet for lunch constantly.

I'll think of all their names and bring this thing later. But sometimes when I say "I," I mean "We," [chuckles] because these kinds of policy things were discussed with them and with the current officers. The current officers always sat on the advisory committee that met once a month.

Another thing which we did and instituted was something which I think I used to call the "X committee," which consisted of people like Walter Haas and Dan Koshland--

Glaser: Does that mean external rather than being former when you say "ex"?

Raab: Who?

Glaser: When you say "ex committee"?

Raab: Oh no. "X" was just "X" because we didn't know what to call it. Because it was such an informal committee, it was not formal at all.

Glaser: You started to tell me who was on it. It was Walter Haas--

Raab: And Dan Koshland, Dick Goldman. Those were the people who were not able to come to monthly meetings of the JCRC, nor were expected to, but were important people out there with important connections and important ideas. I didn't meet with them monthly. About every two or three months we'd have a luncheon and I'd raise some problematic issues and ask their opinion of it. I think that was important.

Mayor George Moscone

Glaser: Could you go back and finish up on the mayors, because after Alioto came, Moscone-- What was his first name?

Raab: George.

Glaser: George, right. Did you have much of a relationship with him?

Raab: Yes, same thing: very close. People were very close--in this case, a little more because he played poker sometimes with my poker group.

Glaser: Can't get much closer than that!

Raab: He used to have little gatherings when he appointed somebody to a commission or whatever. One day he told the group after he talked about the person who was appointed, "Now, one last word, never play poker with Earl Raab."

Mayor Dianne Feinstein

Raab: And then, of course, there was Dianne [Feinstein]. We were close to her. I mean, we always went in when the mayors came in, asked to give them a list of people. We weren't the only ones who did that. We might talk about appointments and about our issues. And she was always close. She was helpful on the Board of Supervisors, as a matter of fact, when she was there.

Glaser: What help did you need with the Board of Supervisors?

Raab: How widely read is this?

Glaser: Widely.

Raab: [chuckles] I had an altercation with Dianne once, or the Jewish community had. It was kind of interesting, it relates to style. This was during the period when the Soviet Jewry issue was very high on our agenda. There were only three places in this country where there was an official Soviet presence: the embassy in Washington, the U.N. presence in New York, and their consulate here in San Francisco. There developed in the Soviet Union and in the State Department of the United States a great desire to establish an American consulate in Leningrad. And as part of that and prior to that to have a sister city relationship between San

Francisco and Leningrad. There was a big push by the Soviets and by the State Department for that sister city relationship.

We, meaning the community in the JCRC and Bay Area Council on Soviet Jewry, which worked with us (they got their funds through us from the Federation), we resisted it, for obvious reasons. We said, "As long as there are Jews who are imprisoned in Leningrad, as long as there are so many Jews who have a request to leave Leningrad and are not allowed to, it would be improper for there to be a sister city relationship." The State Department and others asked the Board of Supervisors to pass a resolution to establish a sister city relationship. We had a lot of votes, but we had Dianne's leadership in resisting that.

Some years later Dianne, for a short period, became a protagonist for a sister city relationship when she was mayor. Relationships were getting better between the Soviet Union and the United States. She had visited the Soviet Union for the first time, and when she came back she indicated an interest in this. There were still problems with Jews in Leningrad. She said it would help us if we became a sister city, and we said that the order should be the other way around. We resisted that, heavily and with anger on both sides for a time. I wrote a piece in the Bulletin, I remember, which she referred to as purple prose. It may have been. [chuckles] There was a rather stormy session, me and the Jewish delegation, in her office. And she finally dropped it, but it was sort of a traumatic episode. The only kind of problem we ever had with Dianne.

She was very helpful. Let me give you some examples of the ways in which she was helpful. During the period of her mayoralty, there were anti-Semitic episodes in San Francisco. I guess some vandalism with swastikas on synagogues. But even more than that, smoke bombs, pipe bombs in synagogues, around synagogues. Nobody ever got hurt but it was scary. We went to Dianne and said, "This has gotten to the point where there should be some special law enforcement attention." One of the people with whom JCRC always wanted to maintain a good relationship, a special relationship, with was the chief of police, and we always did, from Chief Cahill on. Still, when we went we found that sometimes if something happened in one precinct and another precinct didn't know about it, there was no kind of overall police eye on the situation, which we felt might be important in order to establish a pattern.

So we went to Dianne with this problem, and she called in the chief and other police officials and said that there should be one person assigned to the job of watching the whole thing. Whenever an incident occurred and wherever an incident occurred,

the report of that should go to that one person and that person should be in charge. It should be a person with some authority.

A mayor's word is law with police chiefs, that's a direct authority. So they established such a situation with a person who was very good and very helpful in that situation. He knew what the situation was in the city because he did get reports now from everywhere. But also it was a special assignment.

There was a neo-Nazi group around at that time, had maybe eight people in it, but it was quite troublesome and he kept track of that and helped solve a few situations. He was very close. So that was something that Dianne did that was important; and we were grateful to her.





## VIII STATE, LOCAL, AND NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

[Interview 3: May 29, 1996] ##

San Francisco Organizing Project

Glaser: What was your involvement and/or the JCRC's involvement with the San Francisco Organizing Project?

Raab: Mike Miller's project?

Glaser: I don't have a person's name for that. All I know is that it was an interreligious group, and it seemed to come from the San Francisco Organized Training Center.

Raab: What I recall is a project which Mike Miller was running, which had to do with organizing in mainly disadvantaged areas in the Mission and elsewhere. The relationship, if that's the one, was just a cooperative one. San Francisco Organizing--?

Glaser: The San Francisco Organized Training Center developed into the San Francisco Organizing Project. It brought together people from all over the city to bring about quality education, decent and affordable housing, safe neighborhoods, and civil and equal rights. Does that sound familiar?

Raab: Well, I think it was Mike Miller's. I was a supporter, but the JCRC was not much involved.

President, San Francisco Mental Health Association and Founding President, California Mental Health Association

Glaser: All right. Then I want to ask you about the California Association for Mental Health. You were the founding president of that.

Raab: Of the state. I was the president of the San Francisco Mental Health Association and I was the founding president of the state association.

Glaser: Right.

Raab: Aside from the fact that as I told you it was one of those projects that I got involved in because there were a lot of influential people involved and because it was a matter of special interest to me, the most notable thing about being president of the California Association for Mental Health was that we were the liberal vanguard for helping to close down (Pat Brown was in that) the state mental hospitals because of the conventional liberal wisdom that these were just warehouses where nothing therapeutic was going on and that people would be better off if they were treated in their community.

Therefore, the closing down of the state hospitals was presumably in conjunction with a state legislation which helped set up local mental health treatment centers. I'm afraid what we discovered after years was that the local training centers were not set up adequately enough. But in addition, it became a matter of general wisdom that there were some people who belonged in state institutions who were--it's a hard thing to say--essentially untreatable. The relationship between the closing down of the state mental hospitals and the rise of the homeless street population has been noted, so that this comes under the category of unintended consequences. We thought we were great liberal pioneers at the time, but there may have been a miscalculation.

Glaser: Another thing occurring at the same time was that you were instrumental in getting the communists out of the mental health scene.

Raab: Well, that's a strong statement. Because I'm not sure-- What I was involved with, bringing it down a level, was taking the mental health association out of being a general do-good organization. This was an interesting operation and related somewhat to my thinking later in terms of Jewish community relations. When I went on the board of the San Francisco Mental Health Association, the board was made up of traditional politically liberal people. There was a tendency of the association to take on all kinds of projects, including peace in the world and so forth, with the sense that war was bad for mental health, and therefore it was proper for Mental Health Association to become involved in that.

I had a strong organizational feeling then, and I really applied it to the community relations field as much as possible, that an organization has a kind of mandate. When it exceeds its

mandate, it often does damage to itself. What I remember was rather mischievously--this may have been after I became president, I'm not sure--bringing to the board's attention statistics which showed that mental illness drops during wartime, which presumably it had and this was through World War II at least. Presumably it does because there's more of a sense of community or whatever during such periods.

Glaser: Support.

Raab: And therefore I suggested that if we were really interested in mental health that we should support war in order to bring the mental health illness rate down.

Glaser: [laughs]

Raab: This of course was facetious, but I was making a point. And the Mental Health Association, when I was involved with it, became more closely concerned with mental illness and not with all of the social ills of the world. That's really what I was involved in, I'm not sure what the exact political affiliations of the people were.

Glaser: Did you ever have the feeling that, aside from agencies exceeding their mandate, sometimes organizations and agencies exceed their lifespan?

Raab: Yes. Yes, and it's an interesting question for the Jewish organizational world. Incidentally, prior to that question, I've had that strong feeling about Jewish community relations agencies. I don't think they've yet exceeded their life, meaning-- See, one of the things that's involved in what I've just said is that boards of organizations sometimes tend just to reflect the opinions of the people who happen to be on the board. And they're willing to go anyplace with it.

Glaser: But isn't that normal?

Raab: But there has to be a discipline, I think, in most of these organizations unless they're set up just for that purpose. There has to be a discipline for board members which says that their opinions relate to those matters which are germane to that organization; of course it's their opinion, and it should be expressed. But when they try to turn the organization into a vehicle for their opinions on everything in the world, then that becomes very dangerous and destructive of an organization.

It was destructive to the Mental Health Association. This is partly what I'm still involved in relationship with Brandeis

University and what I've been doing there. It's my feeling that, when we get to it, Jewish community relations boards and agencies have become unclear about their mandate, which is a whole big subject.

Glaser: We'll discuss it later?

Raab: Yes.

Glaser: All right.

Aside from the California Association for Mental Health, you were on the governor's advisory committee on mental health and a board member of the National Association for Mental Health.

Raab: I may have been, but I didn't travel much so that I never stayed on those national boards very long. My main activity in mental health was on the local and state level.

Vice President, American Association for the United Nations

Glaser: What did you do as a board member of the American Association for the United Nations?

Raab: This was again the double kind of involvement, one that was an opening to many influentials in the community. The other aspect is that the United Nations, presumably, was compatible with Jewish community relations.

Glaser: In what sense?

Raab: In the sense that there was a lot of involvement in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, for example, and the whole question of democratization, if you will, of the world was part of the early concerns of the United Nations. And this was part of the concerns of Jewish community relations certainly in the fifties and the sixties. The question of Soviet Jewry arose and how the United Nations might treat that. And these were all matters of concern, so I became a member of the board. I was interested in the U.N. I became a member of the board. I was the vice president of the San Francisco Association of the United Nations as I recall, and I did a weekly radio program about UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization).

Glaser: On which station?



Raab: On the local NBC station. I did a lot of that and I did the first live program that KQED ever did. As the vice president of the United Nations, I was moderating something on the United Nations or talking about it. And it was done in a belfry, in the attic of the Mark Hopkins Hotel, with all kinds of crude lights and so forth. But it was the first live program that they did.

#### U.S. Opposition to Genocide Pact

Glaser: You must have been disturbed that the United States didn't ratify the Genocide Pact.

Raab: Yes. That was part of the international concern that the U.N. interest touched on. The community relations field in general, including our JCRC of course, pushed constantly for the United States to ratify the Genocide Pact.

Glaser: Why wouldn't they?

Raab: There was a concern from quite right wing circles in the Senate that this would somehow impinge on the sovereignty of the United States in that as proposed if there was a violation of human rights that might touch on the Genocide Pact in this country, it could be brought directly to a world court and therefore bypass American courts. It was a highly overcharged concern. Of course we were not successful for many years.

Glaser: That issue of national sovereignty has been something that the right wing in this country has talked about for a long, long time.

Raab: Yes. As a matter of fact, when I was doing this, when I was involved with the AAUN and with this UNESCO program on radio that I did, during that period there was a constant strong right wing attack on the United Nations itself with slogans of "Get the U.S. out of the U.N." and so forth.

Glaser: We hear that still today.

Raab: Yes, but muted. This was, I suppose, in the McCarthy period and among the right wing groups following the McCarthy period. The seventies wiped all of this kind of thing out of the serious voice of the country. It really did.

Glaser: Why the seventies?





## IX POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT IN THE SIXTIES AND SEVENTIES

The Right Wing and the New Left

Raab: Well, the late sixties and the early seventies. The Vietnam War, the civil rights stuff, et cetera, came to a crescendo. And that's when there was such a turn in the American temper that affected community relations and a lot of other things. In a sense, this was a period when people were on the streets, when the issues of civil rights, anti-Vietnam War, women's rights all came into the ascendancy. The right wing was pushed to the fringe. They were louder than ever perhaps because they were being pushed to the fringe, but they were pushed to the fringe.

Glaser: Yes, but you had a backlash. Because of the Vietnam War, people became more isolationist in this country.

Raab: Oh, that was a concern. See, when I was involved in this period (since we're talking about me), I was as I indicated anti-Stalinist, anti-Communist as I came in. I was anti-right-wing from the beginning, anti-political extremism, which I abhorred and which was dangerous for the Jews. The opposite of democratic pluralism is political extremism. And then there was the phenomenon of the New Left, which grew up in the late sixties. That New Left developed along with these new issues, which were women's rights and civil rights and anti-Vietnam War, and it was very difficult.

I would say I always considered myself a liberal, and I would say that this was a very difficult period for liberals because the communists were fading but the Soviet Union was still the Soviet Union with, for example, huge slave camps which included Jews and many others.

And then came the New Left, which associated itself in some ways with some of the things that liberals approve, such as civil rights, but which contained certain dangers of their own, to

democratic pluralism, to certain Jewish agenda items, including Israel. That's why it was such a difficult period for liberals who were beleaguered on all sides.

Glaser: When you talk about the New Left, are you talking about the things that were happening on campuses?

Raab: Yes, that was the most dramatic stage, what was happening on the campuses. And I remember, for example, that as usual the Jews, who were the same as everyone else except more so, were at the forefront of the New Left movement. In Berkeley, for example, the SDS [Students for a Democratic Society] were very much in the forefront. But many of the Jewish students who considered themselves radical began to feel very uneasy as many of the New Left organizations turned towards attacks on Israel. They epitomized, perhaps, the difficulty that I talked about that the liberals were in, especially during this period. It's part of this problem, as I say, for liberals, which is a problem for Jews in some ways.

In 1964 Mario Savio got up and made his maiden speech in Berkeley, which reverberated around the country so much, in which he talked about-- What was the term? Because the precursors of the computers had cards.

Glaser: Oh, punch cards.

Raab: Punch cards. And he said, "Mutilate the cards" and "Stop the machines," and so forth. He was talking about impersonality. It reminded me of what I had read about in the 1920s, when a similar thing happened in the colleges around the country. It was not a period where students were worrying about how they were going to make a living after they got out. That was not a consideration. Economics was not a consideration.

But in the 1920s it was the same situation with a much smaller population in the colleges. I guess along the lines of "Man does not live by bread alone," there was a concern about the culture and about the impersonality then, about the mechanization of things and so forth, about some crushing of the individual by the new industrial forces, et cetera. The movement of the students and all that rebellion took place amongst a lot of students in the 1920s and was cut off by the Depression and then by the war. It came back in the early sixties. Again, not out of economic concerns, because there weren't any economic concerns for most students then.

In Mario Savio's cry, it was pure "Let's return to individuality, get rid of this big machine that's crushing all of our spirits." That quickly turned to politics of course. Of

course in the sixties it quickly turned to questions of Vietnam and quickly turned to civil rights, I think secondarily. And it was radicalized in a different way. It took some of us a little while to separate interests in Soviet Union from the New Left because there were some old Marxists still there. These were old Marxists, I don't mean in age.

Glaser: But in loyalty?

Raab: Loyalty, both towards the Soviet Union, there was still plenty of that, and developing more in an organized way towards Communist China. But with them there were these large groups of young people who abhorred the Soviet empire and the Chinese empire because these two were crushing operations. And these were the New Left.

Marcuse may have been in San Diego at the time--he was a political scientist faculty member. He was one of the people who, certainly during the Savio period, was an icon for them. What he was saying, and he wrote a lot about it, was "Let's bring everything down, including what's in the Soviet Union and communist China. They're not satisfactory. In this country let's bring everything down before we decide exactly how we want to rebuild again. Democracy is a farce. America is not a democracy." This was Marcuse's message which the New Left was picking up.

This was difficult for the liberals and the Jewish liberals. Difficult for two reasons for the sophisticated Jewish liberal, I think. Marcuse's message was a disturbing message: "Bring down democracy." We weren't ready for that after Hitler, the sophisticated liberals. We had more faith in America than that, the older liberals. Also, the turn against Israel, which the New Left took because they took the Palestinians as a third world group which needed support and was oppressed by Western imperialism, including American imperialism. And Israel was an arm of American imperialism. That was the point. And that made great trouble for a lot of the Jewish liberals on campus. It made Jews uncomfortable who considered themselves radical on campus.

In the community relations field I felt that this was something that we had to pay attention to. And frankly, we had to support the basic American concept of democracy. There was no substitute as far as we could tell that anybody could come up with that worked. We had to oppose political extremism; and Marcuse, as far as I was concerned, came within the category of political extremism. So that's why it was a difficult period.

American Civil Liberties Union

Glaser: What was and what is the JCRC's relationship to the American Civil Liberties Union?

Raab: It's been a little spotty. The JCRC and community relations field in general, certainly, the Jews have been traditionally very strong supporters of the ACLU because the concept of democracy, which we understand is a concept which protects minorities as well as expresses the will of the majority. The Bill of Rights, et cetera, that's the heart of democracy for Jews, for liberals. And the ACLU represented that. Things got a little dicey much later on working with the ACLU. The Skokie incident epitomized that.

## Nazis in San Francisco and Skokie, Illinois

Raab: We had a situation in San Francisco, in the seventies, eighties, especially when there was a small band of Nazis, which I mentioned, had formed here. When I say small, I mean no more than eight people who were identified as belonging to an organization although it's not clear what kind of sympathizers they had. Policy questions arose.

One of the hazards is that I may repeat myself. They appeared as a uniformed band of eight, ten. They went to the Board of Education meetings as a unified band. They went to the Board of Supervisors as a unified band. They went to Board of Education meetings in order to protest integration. And the Board of Education people came to JCRC and said, "What should we do? Should we refuse to allow them entrance into our meetings?" And the Board of Supervisors came to the JCRC and said, "What kind of statutes can we pass? How about a statute which would outlaw the wearing of Nazi uniforms?"

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Raab: The survivors were beginning to organize at one point, with our help in a way, which is a story about the JCRC which I suppose should be told. I don't remember the year when--

Glaser: We'll go over that later, about the Holocaust and about the survivors.

Raab: Okay. In any case, the question was what should we do about them? There were serious discussions and heated discussions in JCRC



circles and in the Jewish community. We came up with a policy recommendation to the Board of Education which said, "Go on about your business and don't prevent them from coming, although you have to keep them in control." To the Board of Supervisors, we said no laws. Passing a law to outlaw Nazi uniforms is: a) contrary to the American tradition and b) won't do any good anyway. As a matter of fact, in the early rise of the Nazi party, Prussia once outlawed Nazi uniforms. It didn't help. They wore beer buttons in a certain pattern during that period so that everybody knew they were Nazis. That didn't last very long.

Glaser: But surely the ACLU would not have opposed your recommendations?

Raab: No, the ACLU was with us on that. I think it was an important step for the Jewish community to take in terms of its support of the Bill of Rights. Even in terms of its sophisticated knowledge about how you fight Nazism. But with respect to the ACLU, when the Skokie situation arose we mostly found ourselves on the opposite side from the ACLU.

There was a San Francisco episode, because this was still during the period when this Nazi group existed here, and they were asking for permission to demonstrate here, speak here, hold open public meetings. Again, the JCRC took the position that if they want to meet in front of City Hall, let them meet in front of City Hall. We figured, incidentally, that our job was to educate. When they held a meeting, we usually had a public meeting in the community sponsored by us, the Jewish community, and all of its allies: black speakers, Latino speakers, Christian speakers, et cetera. We held a kind of counter-rally.

But in terms of them holding a meeting, we said, "Let them do it, but it depends on where they want to hold it. Do they want to hold it in front of City Hall? Fine. If they want to hold it in front of a synagogue at a time when Jews are gathering, no. That's not an exercise of free speech in our judgment; that's an attempt to provoke." The police usually took our judgment on these things.

The ACLU was not too happy about some of our positions then or our position on Skokie. And a lot of us were not happy about their position on Skokie, which in a sense was akin to our position on allowing Nazis to meet outside the synagogue. In Skokie they were planning to parade in a Jewish district.

Glaser: It was more than a Jewish district. It was inhabited by many Holocaust survivors.

Raab: So the same thinking was involved. This was not an exercise in free speech.

Glaser: It was very provocative.

Raab: So that's where we parted company with the ACLU.



X ORGANIZATION OF JEWISH COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL

Key Staff Members

Glaser: I want to have you talk now about the JCRC as an organization. Would you discuss how it was organized, the personnel, the functions of the JCRC. How it was organized in terms of projects, committees, commissions, concerns of each, and how consensus was reached.

Eugene Block

Raab: To begin with, the JCRC grew because of the nature of the problems that developed. I became the director when Gene Block retired. There were two of us. Gene was, I guess you could say, half time because he spent half the time editing the Bulletin. But his half time was kind of phenomenal: his half time was equal to somebody else's full time. He was here at seven in the morning and he worked through the night, with remarkable energy.

Gene was the first director, the director of the B'nai B'rith Survey Committee, the predecessor of the JCRC, which was founded in '38 or '39 because there were concerns about Nazi and fascist influences in this area. He left his jobs; he had been an editor of San Francisco newspapers for years. He was a remarkable man in a number of ways, including the fact that as director he did not have a heavy hand. I worked mostly outside the Jewish community and he never looked over my shoulder, which is hard for a director to do. I was the associate director for most of that time.

When he retired in the early 1960s, I became the director. Israel made a difference. To give you an indication of how the JCRC grew, in 1967, which made a difference for American Jewish

consciousness about Israel all over the country and markedly in San Francisco, we had an Arab propaganda committee but no Middle East committee. There was an office in town which raised money for AIPAC and held some events for AIPAC, which was at that time a one person operation in Washington.

Rita Semel

Raab: Rita Semel, who had worked for the Jewish Bulletin, for Gene Block as a matter of fact, as an assistant editor for some time, had her own public relations office. One of her tasks was AIPAC. When we began to incorporate that activity, Rita became involved on a part-time basis with the JCRC in that capacity. Further than that, we became involved in the civil rights movement. Rita took on the administration of the Council on Religion and Race, and Social Concerns, again from her office, as a part-time employee of the JCRC. Eventually she became a full-time employee of the JCRC involved in both interreligious and Israel-related activities.

I must tell this story about Rita, because it suggests the remarkable impact she has had on this community. I think I've mentioned that every time a mayor was elected we went in to see the mayor. Among other things we offered a list of people that we thought would be appropriate for various kinds of jobs, appointments in his administration. Of course, we weren't the only ones that did it. Our list was made up of Jews who were connected to the Jewish community. The Archdiocese used to give a similar list. One year, the Archdiocese put in this list for recommended appointments and they were all Catholics except for one, and that was Rita Semel.

Glaser: That's quite a testimonial to her.

Raab: Yes. She was unusually effective and had been working closely with the Catholics.

Glaser: You talked about Rita; I think you want to talk about some other people.

## Naomi Lauter

Raab: Well, again, this grew like Topsy. Naomi Lauter came on first (if you want years, we have to look them up)<sup>1</sup> as a volunteer as the JCRC became more involved in Israel. She was interested very much in Israel. She'd been involved with AIPAC as the volunteer for a quite a while before then. She was also heavily involved in the schools, public schools--integration and so forth. And she came to the JCRC as a volunteer and worked as a volunteer. Then she started to become a part-time employee, highly underpaid for some time, until she became a full-time employee of the JCRC. She was working finally as a full-time staff member while Rita was a full-time staff member.

Because there came an obvious need for it, we developed a South Peninsula committee, a Marin committee, and a North Peninsula committee. That required more staff; so that we ended up with five professionals, plus the support staff. It was per capita, for what it's worth, a much larger professional operation than any in the country. It was a remarkable staff. At that one time, Rita Semel was a full-time staff member and was capable of running any JCRC in the country.

There was formed through NJCRAC [National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council] a national committee not of professionals but JCRC directors. The first rule was that only the directors would be involved in this. But I insisted, and the logic was clear to everybody, that Rita had to be a member too because of her status.

## Rabbi Douglas Kahn

Raab: So at one time we had Rita Semel, Naomi Lauter, and then more recently, Doug Kahn. Like Rita, Naomi could have run an organization by herself, as indeed she did so well afterwards when she became director of AIPAC. Doug Kahn now is nationally acknowledged. He's one of the first people that NJCRAC calls when it wants advice on something. We had all those people at one time, plus a couple of others, so that it was really a remarkable staff, each with exceptional talent. We took on also the media.

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<sup>1</sup>Mrs. Lauter was interviewed for background material and stated she came in as a volunteer in 1970 or '71 while still in school. Upon her graduation in 1973, Earl Raab offered her a part-time job.

There was obviously an increasing need to do more media work. The Board of Rabbis had hired Sydnee Guyer part-time. This task was switched over to us and then Sydnee Guyer, another exceptional talent, became part of our staff also.

### Committees and Projects

Glaser: Tell me about the committees' structure.

Raab: We had a schools committee for most of this time. This was during the period of integration when we were involved in the efforts to integrate San Francisco schools in what you might call democratic education in the schools and a little later in Holocaust education in the schools.

We had a separate urban affairs committee, which was involved in civil rights business. After 1967, we had a Middle East committee, Israel-centered committee. These committees were made up of JCRC board members and other people who were brought in. We had a lot of special committees necessarily. At one point we had a committee (this is interesting, I think) of Jewish school administrators who were concerned about their jobs as a new era of affirmative action came in. Also, we used to hold biannual luncheons with school administrators in the various districts to talk about church/state--

Glaser: We'll talk about that later.

Raab: --which is part of the schools committee and so forth. Renny [Reynold] Colvin became involved with them as a legal counselor. What is of interest about the administrators' committee, which was useful to us in a general way, less useful to them in terms of their specific interests, is that they disappeared. Jewish administrators disappeared. There just were fewer of them, probably because of the new affirmative action push. We used to have meetings of Jewish administrators with a dozen of them at least. And they were top administrators like George Karansky and Izzy Pivnik, who were on the top level of the school administration. They're gone. It's no longer easy to find a Jewish administrator. So there were ad hoc committees like that.

Glaser: You had an ad hoc committee on foreign affairs to deal with apartheid and dive--

Raab: Divestiture.



Glaser: [laughter] Divestiture. How effective was that? I suppose you had to come to some consensus.

Raab: Yes, and you know, during that period we had, for what it's worth, a strong public position obviously opposed to apartheid. Trying to organize in the community at that early time, we had difficulty finding a lot of interest in the black community because it wasn't at the top of their consciousness as early as it was on top of ours, partly because of our foreign affairs experience. That changed, of course. But there was a debate about how far one should go about divestiture, for example. We had trouble with that consensus, as I recall, because as they say there are arguments on both sides.

Glaser: I can recall that very active South African woman, Helen Suzman, was opposed to divestiture, thinking that it would hit hard on the black working class.

Raab: Yes, there was that. We supported general action. There was a so-called Sullivan Principle that we supported that had to do with American businesses in South Africa; that they should be involved in breaking down apartheid in their own workforce and so forth, which we pushed heavily for. On divestiture we had a problem. I don't think we came to a clear position on that.

Glaser: What was the difference between commissions, committees, and projects?

Raab: Well, we called them commissions, the grander title, better it seemed to everybody. We called our basic committees at one point commissions, I'm not sure it's done anymore, like the schools commission. They were ongoing commissions. And then there were ad hoc committees. We even had one on Vietnam. Positions on some of these issues touch on the question of consensus and what is meant by consensus. The philosophy was that, unlike the Jewish organizations in general, we were an organization of organizations and we spoke for the community and that was our strength. When we went to a legislator, state or federal or local, we could say this is what the Jewish community thinks, the organized Jewish community. We never attempted to speak for all the Jews, the organized Jewish community thinks this or that.

In order to do that and be credible, we needed more than a slight majority in the vote. And the debate is still going on. They're having a meeting here next Monday to decide what a consensus is. My interpretation of our consensus was about 70 percent. If more than a third of the organizational delegates had a contrary position, you could not call it a consensus. And it depended on how strong the opposition was, because this was a



matter of utility. We go to a congressman and say, "This is the position of the Jewish community," and seven angry Jewish delegates come into the same legislator the next day and say, "This is our position," then you've lost some credibility.

One of the problems that developed in the Jewish community was the increasing complexity of the issues and the increasing difficulty of knowing when there was a consensus. In the early days there was no problem. On civil rights there was no problem: we got 70 percent and more in the JCRC. But more than that, there was no opposition out there. My sense of it is that some Jews didn't care much one way or another, in which case they didn't interfere with consensus in the organized Jewish community.

The main problems of consensus that we had--I think there was one on the divestiture that you talked about. And there was the whole Vietnamese issue, clearly no consensus in the Jewish community about what should be done. There was one too, for example, that developed on the Israeli incursion of Lebanon when they went up to Beirut.

Our general philosophy was that where there is no consensus but where it is an issue that is within our mandate, then it is necessary for us to do something, to conduct pro/con educational programs.

Glaser: Among the board members?

Raab: And among the Jewish community in general. At the time of the Lebanese incursion and the controversy about it, we had meetings after meetings all over the community--here, Marin, North and South Peninsula. We presented panels with somewhat different points of view. Where there is a referendum coming up, we particularly felt that this was something that we need to educate about, more than tell the Jews how they should vote. In any case, where there was not a consensus and the issue was still within our purview of concerns, we felt that we still had a function.

Glaser: You have a Latin project?

Raab: Well, there have been a lot of projects. The Latin project relates to establishing relationships with Latino organizations and influentials. This was almost a part of the general area of minority organizations in the city, because originally, as I said, in the Bay Area Human Rights Clearinghouse we mainly had Jews, blacks, the Japanese Americans Citizens League, and some Christian ministers. Latinos were not well organized then. We normally did not have to establish anything new during that period to establish relationships with the leadership in the black community, it was

there. We did that regularly through the civil rights operations. But Latino organizations began to spring up, and then we felt that we should make some deliberate efforts to make contacts there. The Asians have been the last really to organize in this way, the Chinese are the last. The Japanese did it a long time ago.

Glaser: You had a labor project?

Raab: [sighs]

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Raab: In connection with the strategy that a community relations operation should be in touch with the influential leaders of the community and organizations of the community in common concern, organized labor was traditionally one of those in the Jewish community. I may have to go back a bit. In terms of anti-Nazi and anti-fascist activity, organized labor was there in our support. In this community, I'm talking about California and elsewhere, in terms of fighting for civil rights the labor movement was an important part of that.

To work with us, you know, perhaps many years ago, before the war et cetera, it was not so clear where all of organized labor stood. But in our period organized labor has stood for civil rights, has worked alongside the Jews for civil rights. Furthermore, organized labor in general became an important force, a pro-Israel force in American politics. So for all of those reasons, we were interested in maintaining the connection with labor. This way we were always close with the director of the Labor Council and so forth.

The question continually arose when we talk about these situations and coalitions and so forth, What's the *quid pro quo*? And it wasn't always easy for us to support every labor position. One of the things that's happened to the Jewish populations in the last couple of decades is that they've become increasingly less interested in labor causes. When we asked the question on our last survey here, couple of years ago, "Would America be better off if labor was more organized?", we didn't get much of an affirmative response from the Jewish community.

Glaser: Was that in San Francisco?

Raab: San Francisco. So we had trouble with the *quid pro quo*. We became involved somewhat, mostly on the staff level or with one or two lay people, in some labor disputes with the Jewish Home for the Aged, for example. That's about it. But we had this project and labor people did sit on it. It didn't meet regularly.

Glaser: You had a middle class project?

Raab: Did we?

Glaser: According to your files, yes.

Raab: That's a peculiar title. I need to find out some more about it.

Glaser: Okay. Community affairs commission?

Raab: I think that was the urban affairs commission.

Glaser: Okay. Jews To and From Arab Lands?

Raab: Well, of course you've got down there Soviet Jewry commission, I'm sure, which became extremely important.

Glaser: We'll go into a whole discussion of JCRC and Soviet Jews.

Raab: There've also been particular concerns, certainly about Syrian Jews and Ethiopian Jews, those two classes of Jews in particular. And this was the commission which essentially had those agenda items in mind. The Syrian Jewish problem was always extremely difficult to deal with; there was no leverage. The Ethiopian one, there was leverage and really more activism on Ethiopian Jewry.

Glaser: You had a committee on religious affairs?

Raab: I don't know. That must have been for some ad hoc reason.

Glaser: A spinoff from the urban affairs committee was the social welfare and public policy committee.

Raab: It was mainly for taking positions on state legislative issues, for the Jewish Public Affairs Committee of California which we helped set up.

Glaser: Okay. I'll just read these off and you can tell me about them. Extremism and overt bigotry?

Raab: Well, that was a kind of ongoing operation which had to do with following the formation of right wing groups, including the Nazi group that I talked about. That's what that was about.

Glaser: You had a special program committee.

Raab: That must have been for some specific ad hoc reason.



Glaser: Legislative committee? That must have been a very active one. I think you were a pioneer in that, were you not?

Raab: Starting with the civil rights business and the California Fair Employment Practices Committee, which was the lobbying operation in California for civil rights legislation in the state, we in San Francisco were more often in touch with Sacramento than was Los Angeles; probably because we were closer [chuckles] and partly because of Bill Becker, who was the chairman of that committee and who was in San Francisco as the regional director of the Jewish Labor Committee, which operated very closely with the JCRC.

Other issues arose in the state legislature that were direct Jewish concerns. Occasionally, just to give you an example, the humane slaughter bill, would occasionally arise, a proposal for humane--

Glaser: For kosher slaughter?

Raab: No, for humane slaughter, which in some cases jeopardized kosher slaughter. So it was something that we had to watch; it almost passed once when we were preoccupied with an Israeli crisis. And again, for many years we used to handle it from San Francisco, including going up there and through our state legislators, rather than Los Angeles. Finally, there developed more and more bills, some of them church-state bills. Bills like humane slaughter, which we had to watch out for so that kosher slaughter wasn't made illegal in the state. And secondly, positive things: about Jewish teachers and Jewish holidays or Jewish children and Jewish holidays. This sort of thing started to come up more and more so that really from San Francisco--and this was initially conversations between myself and Sanford Treguboff, who was then the director of the Jewish Welfare Federation. We called together a meeting with Los Angeles and began to set up the Jewish Public Affairs Committee. It included, as it still does, all the organized Jewish communities, San Diego, Los Angeles, Long Beach, San Jose, San Francisco, East Bay.

The legislative committee that we established was a committee to look over bills and to make recommendations to our delegate or delegates to the meetings of JPAC [Jewish Political Action Committee] which decided what should be done in the state. That was the way decisions were made.

Glaser: I have, for your early committees, the energy and associational freedom, and I don't think those were longstanding ones.

- Raab: No. Energy was a one-situation kind of committee, energy having to do with some relationship to the Middle East and the question of--
- Glaser: I think that grew out of the 1973 war in Israel with the tight--
- Raab: The long gas lines and so forth.
- Glaser: Right, right. And how best to conserve energy.
- Raab: Right. Now, that was what it was about. It didn't get very far except in terms of some education on conservation, but not much on policy.
- Glaser: What about associational freedom?
- Raab: Associational freedom was an interesting one. If I can remember the detail. I can remember who was involved. The general question that arose was legislation that related to whether private clubs could discriminate. And the question was raised, What about associational freedom? There's a lot more involved in that. If we support a law which says you can't form an Italian club, and presumably they have to have a liquor license and that's how the state got into it and would make it illegal for them to have it. If you can't form an Italian club and keep out other people because that's discriminatory, then the question is what about a Jewish club? Suppose Jews want to get together? There were some other deeper questions involved with that.
- Glaser: Willie Mays was given membership to the Concordia Club. I don't think he ever used it, and it's distasteful to call him a token black, but that's actually what he was.
- Raab: It was a strategy. There are arguments back and forth. Take the Concordia Club, and especially with respect to women.
- Glaser: But you had some problem with that too, didn't you?
- Raab: On the Concordia Club?
- Glaser: About women not being members, whether you were going to hold meetings there.
- Raab: Yes, as a matter of fact, and we stopped holding our meetings there at some point. But in any case, on the one hand this is a private club and people ought to be able to get together. On the other hand, with respect to women for example, this is a place where people meet on business. The exclusion of women has an obvious affect on their ability to move economically. We talked



to a lot of people in the Concordia Club, and they moved a little bit, reluctantly. But there was another aspect to this that had to do with the Home for the Aged. The question was actually raised by government bodies as to whether the Hebrew Home had to be open to everybody.

Glaser: Because it was getting federal funds?

Raab: Yes. And the only federal funds that were involved were the Medicare money. And this was seriously raised. It was one of those things that we were involved with about that time. The JCRC took some positions with respect to the Concordia Club, for example; it was a necessity to open it up. With respect to clubs in general, if there were no business operations going on, then obviously governments should stay away. But if there is anything that would touch on creating a discriminatory status, then we pushed for action on that.

On the Hebrew Home, we took a strong position that older Jews who want to be in a Jewish institution with Jewish practices, which can only be done if most of them were Jews, that should be permitted and Medicare was not a factor that could militate against that. There was a piece of legislation up in the state, there was a push from the federal bureaucracy against it in those terms. We defeated both of them. This was something that was going on nationally, so it wasn't just us. There were interesting discussions.

I think I'm running out.



## XI NATIONAL, REGIONAL, AND LOCAL RELATIONSHIPS

[Interview 4: June 5, 1996] ##

### National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council

Glaser: Would you discuss the relationship between the JCRC and the national body, the NCRAC?

Raab: When I came to JCRC, in 1951, there was a great controversy in this community about whether it should join the newly formed organization, at the time it was called the National Community Relations Advisory Council, which was an attempt to bring together, after the fragmentation of the 1930s in particular, all the public policy agencies. And at that time the focus was on the national agencies, but there was a handful, maybe not much more than a dozen, local communities which had begun to form such bodies in the late thirties and were supposed to join as well.

There was great controversy because there was some resistance, and in this community particularly, because there was some resistance to the idea of a kehilla that would dictate Jewish opinions. The American Jewish Committee stayed out for quite a while. I forget the year, it was in the fifties when it decided to join, but initially it stayed out for that reason. And in this community, which of course was, in terms of these national agencies, rather dominated by the American Jewish Committee, there was great controversy about joining.

I remember Jesse Steinhart, the great leader of the Jewish community at that point, was opposed to the idea. Edward Bransten was the great champion of joining NCRAC. Finally, it was inevitable, in the fifties we joined NCRAC. It was understood that NCRAC (now the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council, we still call it NCRAC) as its name implied was an advisory body. Of course the national agencies, especially the major public policy agencies--Committee, Congress, and ADL--insisted that it had no policy direction over Jewish

organizations. So it was advisory. It was a kind of clearinghouse where groups came together, even then every year, to try to decide on some policies which were advisory but which represented that magical word in Jewish public policy life: a consensus.

Today there are about a hundred and fifty local Jewish communities that belong, either with independent community relations councils or public policy committees of federations, and about thirteen national agencies. The problem has been that it is advisory. We send people every year to NCRAC. They put out a policy manual every year which is the result of the deliberations of the plenary on various issues, most of which this community and most communities do not take action on because they seem to go in recent years beyond the purview of community relations tradition.

Glaser: Does that mean that the national body has become a weaker body?

Raab: The national body is a fairly weak body. It's not a national agency, really; it's got to be thought of as a coordinating council. And the national agencies that belong to it, especially as I say the major public policy agencies, watch it very carefully to keep it within certain limits. They don't want NCRAC to become an operating agency. That's been the phrase: "It should not be an operating agency but a coordinating agency." In other words, not do anything in its own name. This is not the case with local CRCs; local CRCs are operating agencies.

It's a big controversy; it's still going on. And NCRAC has gotten somewhat weaker with budgetary deficits and so forth, and the insistence of the national agencies that it should not become too operational.

Glaser: At one time it must have been a lot stronger, because in the files there is a letter that you wrote to Al Chernin saying that there was not enough JCRC presence in the NCRAC process.

Raab: That's interesting. What year was that?

Glaser: There was no date on the letter. And then you went on to write that there's tension between the national agencies and the local community relations councils.

Raab: I say it's interesting because the more things change, the more they remain the same. This remains a tension underneath NCRAC. And mainly local councils, JCRCs or CRCs, feel that NCRAC does not represent them enough.

Now, for example, there is one change taking place because NCRAC tried to take a move this year. National agencies always had on the books a veto power over any policy recommendation. That's all they are, policy recommendation from NCRAC. This year, in what was considered a bold move, NCRAC among other things asked that this veto be removed. It had a strategic committee which determined that. And the national agencies acceded, because these are after all just policy recommendations.

But the local councils do not feel that they are represented enough in NCRAC vis-a-vis the national agencies, and they do not feel that they have a national coordinating body themselves. It's something which has to come to a head at some point. And the federations, which mainly fund the local councils through the national federation council, have to help bring it to a head.

The fact of the matter is that, and I speak with some bias, the mass of American Jews are reflected more in these local councils than they are in the national agencies. The national agencies have been very important and useful bodies in American life and continue to be with their research and resources, and so forth. But the American Jewish Committee represents, offhand I don't remember how many people but certainly thousands of Jews around the country. The ADL, in terms of membership, represents a certain number of thousands of Jews around the country. The Congress represents a smaller group, actually. If you add up the people who are represented by the CRCs, it's a massive number. So there is that.

There's also the fact that life has changed in America, not just recently but in the course of the last few decades, so that there is more potential power, legislative for example, public policy power, emanating from the communities, not just a matter of what happens in Washington, D.C. The community councils are in touch with people who become congressmen after they were members of the local board of supervisors and follow them through and are usually the closest contacts with these congressmen. With the kind of populist mood that's overtaken the country, where there is more power exerted out in the communities than there used to be--not just for the Jews, but for everybody--then the importance of the CRCs, I think, is underestimated just on that account.

#### East Bay Jewish Community Relations Council

Glaser: Tell me about the relationship the San Francisco JCRC had with the East Bay JCRC.



Raab: [pause] There has never been in my time, although a couple of times there has been proposed, a functional relationship between the East Bay CRC and the San Francisco CRC. There is now, I understand, an experimental new relationship. The East Bay JCRC I think it can be said without prejudice, is a weaker operation. It's a tougher operation because those are large expanses out there. You know the East Bay includes different regions that are temperamentally more different than the regions in San Francisco. You put together Berkeley and Piedmont and some of the others and they're very disparate groups and large extensions of land. So it's been difficult.

The East Bay Federation has not raised as much money. They don't have as many Jews. The East Bay Federation has not raised as much money and has not given the same support to CRC. And the East Bay has generally been relatively weak. There've been times when in San Francisco we have provided the East Bay with materials that we've produced--action alerts, for example. We've tried to bring together the East Bay and San Jose at times with San Francisco, on the staff level mostly. They've tried to coordinate and help. There have been a couple of proposals for the CRC in San Francisco to really administratively take over the East Bay CRC. In the past they haven't worked out, for fiscal reasons largely.

Glaser: But you were very active, when you were leading the San Francisco JCRC, in working with the East Bay organization when the two Berkeley propositions, E and J, came up.

Raab: It's been our position that a lot of the things that happen here affect them in the East Bay. A lot of the things in the East Bay, perhaps particularly Berkeley because it gathers so much publicity in the mass media, our San Francisco mass media as well as East Bay mass media, we have an investment in helping in those situations. And we did help to draw together the East Bay and San Francisco forces in order to defeat those referenda.

#### Koret Foundation

Glaser: I want to ask you about the relationship with the Koret Foundation. In 1986 you were approached by the foundation to submit a grant proposal for a research paper. You were to do the research, be the interviewer, and write up a paper identifying the needs best related to the Koret Foundation's interest in the Bay Area Jewish community. I wonder what the outcome of that was, and

also if this, except for population numbers, wasn't the same area of the demographic study done by the Federation?

Raab: Oh, that was much later. I talked to a number of people in that project; and the conclusion, which was an obvious conclusion supported by what I heard, was that Koret wasn't focused enough at the time. There tended to be grants approved more whimsically on the feelings of individual board members of Koret. It wasn't clear to the board of Koret at the time what the real focus was, and I thought that a sharper focus was necessary. I don't know if there were any results from that report or not, it's filed someplace. But it was something that happened in Koret eventually. So it did take on more focus with respect to Israel, with respect to Jewish continuity, et cetera.

When I was director, we never applied particularly at any time for funds from Koret. But with its new focus it's been possible for the San Francisco JCRC under Doug Kahn to apply for funds to fund trips of public officials to Israel. There's been a big relationship since.

Glaser: Was your study done before or after the fight between Mrs. Koret and the board members of how the funds should be allocated?

Raab: Oh, that controversy was cooking at the time, but it extended beyond my report.

Glaser: Well, did your report help to focus the board?

Raab: I don't know.



## XII JEWISH COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL AND ANTI-SEMITISM

### The Core of Its Program

Glaser: I want to ask you about anti-Semitism and its part in the JCRC program.

Raab: The core of the JCRC is the area of policies which affect the security and status of Jews, not beyond that. Civil rights falls within that and a number of other things. But anti-Semitism, of course, is at the center of it always, and a measure of the status and security of Jews in a way, although we always look for preventive programs and situations on a large scale. But anti-Semitism is number one. In other words, if there was an incident of anti-Semitism in San Francisco, this immediately was the top of our agenda. Always.

Do you want to know something about the state of anti-Semitism?

Glaser: The specific actions taken. For instance, there was literature protesting the San Francisco Planning Commission's approval of the Hebrew Academy's construction on 14th Avenue. You also had anti-Semitic programs on radio station KSAM by Richard Cotten. How did you handle things like this?

Raab: There have been incidents of the kind you mentioned. There have been incidents of vandalism on synagogues, swastikas--usually difficult if not impossible to trace. Usually it was estimated that these were done by young people. There were a few serious incidents, such as pipe bombs and so forth. There were the neo-Nazis and there were programs on the air and in the media.

Role of the Media

Raab: There has been a switch since television. In the early days, that is to say as early as when I got into the business, what prevailed was a kind of strategy that had been pronounced by Feinberg of the American Jewish Committee of "quarantine," what you do when you try to keep a disease insulated. For instance, there was the famous anti-Semite at the time, this was in the early fifties--Gerald L. K. Smith. And when he came to town, the idea of the Jewish agencies was to have the newspapers pay as little attention to him as possible. The idea being that if he didn't get publicity, he couldn't gather a crowd and he couldn't do any damage or spread his ideas.

Well, you know that worked during that early period for a number of reasons. The newspapers were open to that idea. We developed and had relationships with the editors and so forth, and they were partial to the idea. It was a period so soon after the Holocaust that it was easily accepted. When television came, it became impossible. There was so much competition for news. And then of course gradually television news became television entertainment; the two were indistinguishable. So that technique was no longer possible. And the newspapers couldn't do it unless television did it.

Our approach to the media was out of our concern for the Bill of Rights. It started to become, "Look, we don't want to stop people from speaking, although we don't think you should rush after them to get them to speak. But if you have them speak, it's important, we feel, that you have at least a larger ratio of people who speak the opposite message who appear on your media."

There was one television station, I remember, at the time when the neo-Nazi group was in town and we wanted to put on an anti-Nazi program. The manager of the station sat in his office and he said, "Look, if we put you on with an anti-Nazi message, then we have to go to the Nazis to put on a message in order for there to be a fair balance," which of course infuriated us. It led to a campaign of education, not compulsion but a campaign of education.

Most of the media did come to understand that this is not a matter of equal treatment on the air. It's about that time that we began to have annual gatherings, lunches, of the top media people in the City: the managers of the TV and radio stations and the press, and the program managers as well. And these gatherings were always well-attended for the years that we held it. This was



one of our messages, of course, as well as a description of what the JCRC and the other agencies did.

### Other Defense Organizations

Glaser: When you say other agencies, you mean the defense agencies?

Raab: Yes. There is an old vaudeville joke, sort of a Jewish vaudeville joke, about the three rug stores that were one next to the other. One rug store on the left put up a sign saying, "These are the cheapest rugs in town." And the other one on the right put up a sign saying, "These are the best rugs in town." And the other one in the middle just put up a sign saying "Main Entrance."

Glaser: [laughter]

Raab: And that was my concept of the JCRC, that we were a composite of all of these, especially the agencies with offices here: the ADL, the Committee, and Congress. For example, when we went to see a congressman, as we did and still do, the delegation went once a year to tell them our programs, or when we went to make a complaint. For example, something happened in Japan, I think a profusion of anti-Semitic literature, whatever it was. And it was decided that there should be a delegation going to see the Japanese Consulate General here. On those JCRC delegations we always included people from the ADL and Committee and Congress, because as far as we were concerned they were part of this operation. By the same token, the understanding was that they would not go by themselves to such people.

### Types of Anti-Semitism

Glaser: There was a JCRC paper describing three types of anti-Semitism (I'm sure that you wrote it) each of which was different, serious, and called for different programs. One was covert acts, one was anti-Semitic attitudes, and the third was organized anti-Semitic movements. Your conclusion was that covert acts were on the increase, attitudes were slightly down, and not an increase in major anti-Semitic movements but they were more vehement. Would you say that about this decade and at this time?

Raab: No more but more vehement?

Glaser: Yes.

Raab: Yes.

Glaser: As far as movements.

Raab: Yes, I think that before the middle of the 1960s, in other words for about two decades after World War II, anti-Semitism was really in the closet. It was not tolerated, it was not spoken openly, et cetera, to any great extent. There were some small fringes who continued publishing things. But it broke open; it broke out of the closet in the sixties.

Interestingly enough, it broke out initially from the left, to use that term loosely enough, in the sense that it broke out from some of the militant black quarters in terms of the controversy about black and Jewish teachers. There was some terrible anti-Semitic poetry and other material being read over the air, which we hadn't seen before since the war. Then, of course, there was the stuff that came out vis-a-vis Israel and the Arabs that had the tinge of anti-Semitism at times. That followed the 1967 war, which among other things marked the real surge of Palestinian nationalism. It was in the sixties that both of these things happened in America, in the late sixties, and we began to see this.

Eventually it came from right-wing sources itself. We did something here that had to do with a dozen criteria for anti-Semitism. This was annually put in the NCRAC annual plenary book on anti-Semitism. One of the criterion of whether anti-Semitism was serious is whether there is a strong reaction to it.

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Raab: Did I mention to you (because we're getting to the point where I might be saying things over and over) a recent example in Cincinnati? Two years ago I was speaking there to a Jewish group. The day before a paper in the suburb had published an editorial, quite offensive, about how Clinton had appointed so many Jews; easily interpreted as an anti-Semitic editorial. This was a small suburban paper. The Jewish community was in great furor over this.

I said when I spoke, and it was easy for me to say this because I was leaving town the next day, that I prophesized within twenty-four hours the archdiocese of the area, a strong one, would publish a condemnation, and the Council of Protestant Churches in this area would publish a strong condemnation of this. That the major metropolitan newspapers would publish a strong condemnation,

and that the public officials would. And of course I left town, but then I was told that this was exactly what happened.

Glaser: Why were you so sure of that?

Raab: Because this is the temper that has been set up, and I think it's one of the accomplishments of the community relations field. Whenever anything happened in San Francisco, for example, this is one of the things that we wanted to insist on when we went to the Council of Churches, the Catholic Archdiocese, the media people, the public officials. We said, "This has to be responded to immediately so that the public knows that this is something which is condemned." This didn't happen overnight. In other words, we couldn't stay away from these people for three hundred and sixty-four days of the year, and on the three hundred and sixty-fifth go to them and say, "You've got to do this." We'd been in contact with them for a number of reasons. This was one of the businesses of community relations over the years so that it just took a phone call. Of course, at a certain point you didn't even need that phone call; they'd call us and say, "What can we do? How should we respond?" And that happened over and over again, whenever there was anything like a serious anti-Semitic incident in this city. You measure the strength of anti-Semitism against European anti-Semitism and that didn't happen in Europe, that kind of total reaction. It had to happen in this country, and it's been happening, I think, partly the result of the community relations activities.

At these NCRAC annual plenaries there were always great discussions and controversy about what kind of statements should be put in this about the evaluation of the state of anti-Semitism, because there were people who understandably did not want to minimize the extent of anti-Semitism. They didn't want to say there's no anti-Semitism. There's never been no anti-Semitism. They wanted to keep the concerns high; others felt that this was outside of reality and shouldn't be done. My formulation was--and this is, by the way, documented by the ADL, by law enforcement agencies, and so forth--that throughout these last years (I'm talking about the seventies, eighties, and nineties) there has been no significant increase in the numbers of Americans who belong to or support organized anti-Semitic or racist groups. But over these years, those that are part of these groups and the groups themselves have become more vehement. They've become more violent as an expression perhaps of the license that's in the air in the country.



Violent Groups

Glaser: But isn't there a growth of anti-Semitism and violence when you look at the militia movement?

Raab: Well, the militia movement, as I understand it, is a very split movement. Some of it is related to the racist groups and some of it is not, really. If you want to take the membership of the militia groups, you'd have to divide the groups into different kinds of bodies, some which are and some which are not. The anti-Semitic people do want to infect those groups; but they don't start out as anti-Semitic groups at all, most of them.

You talk about the skinheads, you talk about the Aryan Nations, you talk about those groups, and the ADL and the law enforcement agencies are always going up and down a little bit over the years. They're very minuscule and they have not increased in membership although their programs have become more open and more violent. If you want to measure anti-Semitism by attitudes in the American population, there's a rather weak way to do it in that there have been so many surveys of the American population, by the ADL and by others. And all of these surveys indicate that the expressions of anti-Semitism have continually gone down since the sixties and continue to go down--the question of whether the Jews have too much power and all of those old Jewish stereotype questions. Critics of the surveys will say that people are more sophisticated and know what they have to say. On the other hand, that itself is an indication of something, because one of the ways to reduce anti-Semitism is to keep it in the closet.

Glaser: Or to make it nonacceptable.

Controlling Anti-Semitism

Raab: Nonacceptable. So that's that. We can never say--and this has been one continuing discussion in the Jewish community relations field, obviously, and in the community--it can never happen here. We can never, after our experiences, be too dismissive of the possibilities of anti-Semitism arising. But we have to be concerned, I think, and this has been the brunt of what I have thought about anti-Semitism: the way to go is to make the control of anti-Semitism stronger and stronger. In other words, make it so that culturally, legislatively, and otherwise, people are

constrained from expressing anti-Semitism and are constrained from finally becoming anti-Semitic.

There've been a lot of episodes in San Francisco that sort of indicate this one way or the other. One of the early episodes, early in terms of my career, was a refugee family from Germany, a man and a woman, who were terrified by calls in the middle of the night. Various kinds at three o'clock in the morning, four o'clock in the morning. Finally they brought it to our attention, brought to the police's attention. It was a difficult thing to follow, obviously--teenage kinds of voices--and it went on for several years. It was a nightmare.

Finally, the police found out who they were. They were a handful of teenagers. The police brought them in and arrested them. One of the things we wanted to do was to interview them. What we found was that this group of young anti-Semites had not been brought up in anti-Semitic families; they've not sat around the table at night and heard anti-Jewish jokes and so forth. It was a kind of fad of the time among the restless young people to at some point pick up the phone, arbitrarily take a name out and call them up, harass them a little bit, then call somebody else. As a matter of fact, for the first year that they talked to this terrified couple they did not strike an anti-Semitic note.

Glaser: Why did they continue for so long?

Raab: First of all, because it was clear when they first called them that these were good victims because they were terrified and pleaded with them not to call. And they passed this around in the City so that kids did it. About a year down the line it became apparent that this was a Jewish couple, and that this increased their terror a great deal. That's when they started making their Jewish references. So anti-Semites are created. They're not just born.

#### Senator Pete McCloskey

Glaser: You had your hands full with Pete McCloskey, although you started off having a fairly good relationship with him, because you wrote to him addressing him as Pete. And then all of a sudden (well, I don't know whether it was all of a sudden) he changed so that he was calling Begin a Hitler, spewing all kinds of anti-Semitic things.



Raab: Pete McCloskey considered himself a maverick Republican. He was anti-war, and a moderate Republican in the traditional sense. We maintained relationships with all of the California congressmen in the area, and they often turned to us, what do the Jews think of this immigration proposal?, and so forth. We had good relations with McCloskey. And then he did become related to Arab groups, in Washington, D.C., particularly. And he began making these dangerous statements about Israel like, "If the Jews insist on trying to push their way in Washington on this issue, there's going to be a great backlash of anti-Semitism in the country." Now, that's more than a comment, that's a threat. That raises serious implications.

I spent time talking to him, and more and more time arguing with him. Although at one time, in the midst of my arguing with him, he told a group of Jews that I was his chief advisor on the subject. I may have been his advisor but he wasn't taking my advice. [chuckles] And at the end of his congressional career and after it was over, his ties to Arab groups and moneyed Arab groups became clearer and clearer.

#### Dual Loyalty Issue

Glaser: I think one of the serious charges he brought up was the dual loyalty issue.

Raab: Yes. It's an interesting thing, because the dual loyalty issue was one that was at the heart of traditional anti-Semitism. It of course raised a lot of fears in the Jewish community when Israel became prominent. As a matter of fact, it was one of the foundations of the American Council for Judaism here. They were afraid that there would be charges of dual loyalty, and they spent a lot of time planning the opposite. There were periods in the seventies, maybe into the eighties, where the issue became quite hot.

McCloskey raised it; some other congressman raised it too. There was a congressman or senator from Maryland [Senator Charles Mathias] who really was quite respectable and well-known, who wrote an article in Foreign Affairs which attacked dual loyalty in general, not just the Jews but including the Jews on Israel. It's an old thing, you know, that has been raised in this country for many years. I wrote a couple of articles on it.

The interesting thing is that it's faded away. Dual loyalty is such a basic piece of anti-Semitism, such a basic piece that

even before there was Israel the charge was dual loyalty. In Russia, the charge was that Jews are not just Russian citizens; they're part of a worldwide conspiracy to destroy the czar, et cetera, et cetera. And that's dual loyalty. They're not real loyal Russian citizens. In Germany the same thing was raised with respect to communism, for example, that the Jews were turning the czarist plot on its head. The Jews are not good German citizens; they are more often part of a conspiracy of a worldwide communist conspiracy so that their loyalties are elsewhere.

Dual loyalty, in one form or another, has always been the heart of real modern anti-Semitism. When Israel came, it was an open question of how much is this going to be raised. As you indicate, with McCloskey and some others it was raised. Now it seems to have died away. It has died away, doesn't mean it will never reappear. But it's died away for this past decade, partly because Israel has become such a favorite of the American people.

#### Favorable Attitudes Toward Jews

Raab: An interesting survey result is that if you ask--and the pollsters have asked this almost every year for the last thirty years--if you ask the American people different questions that are related to this, "Do the Jews have as much loyalty to Israel as they have to the United States?" a third of the American people will say yes. Now, that kind of result used to scare the hell out of us. But we find that most of those people are themselves so favorable towards Israel that they don't see anything wrong with the Jews having as much loyalty to Israel as the United States. Now if the situation became severely different so that Israel and the U.S. were at odds, then that might be different.

Glaser: What do you think accounts for this favorable attitude toward Israel on the part of Americans?

Raab: Several factors. One is that for many years the strongest foreign affairs idea that the American public had was anti-communist. They were afraid of communist imperialism, not just in terms of this country but around the world. Israel became seen after '67, and was portrayed, as America's ally in keeping Soviet adventurism from overcoming the Middle East. Of course it had something to do with oil, too; but in American public opinion this was an important item.

However, I think a couple other factors are overlooked sometimes, and the main one is the place of the American Jew in

American life. I think integration, whatever problems it raises internally for the Jews, it's had the effect of so many non-Jewish Americans feeling friendly towards Jews and therefore towards Israel. Again, come to the survey question which is asked over and over again, "Are Israelis or Arabs more like us Americans?" A cultural question. Nine out of ten Americans say Israelis are more like us. So there's that cultural closeness. And I think that's related also to the fact that they know the Jews of America so well through television, if nothing else, through public officials.

Glaser: It's interesting the number of Yiddish words that you will find in the newspapers and on television.

Raab: Yes.

Glaser: But if Israel was so accepted because it was seen as a bulwark against communism, what happens now that there isn't a Soviet Union? It's a Russia that's in decline economically, politically, and militarily.

Raab: It was something that concerned some of us in the field when the Cold War was over, but I guess there'd been that long period of feeling close to Israel and that Israel was our ally. And then the cultural factor just became extremely strong. They like us. The Arabs are not like American Jews. You know, when you talk about anti-Semitism, the other side of the coin is how Americans feel about Jews positively. When you ask the questions it's amazing, Americans are almost Judophiles. They have as much respect for Jews, except for a small percentage, as they have for Protestants or for Catholics. And it's a cultural thing; the Jews are intertwined in this country.

You know one of the tests of anti-Semitism, I think one of the strongest tests, is whether people are willing to vote for Jews for public office. You notice the disproportion of Jews there are in Congress who are identified Jews and who were elected by constituencies that are over 90 percent non-Jewish.

In one of our surveys here in San Francisco, I asked the question, kind of impishly I guess--this was a survey of Federation members, would non-Jews resist voting for Jews for Congress? And over a third of the answers said yes, which is completely incomprehensible because at that time four out of five of our congressmen were Jews. There was a time when there was Lantos in Marin. There was a time when--

Glaser: Lantos wasn't in Marin. Lantos--

Raab: Lantos in the Peninsula. Barbara Boxer was in Marin. Mrs. Sala Burton was a congressman from San Francisco. And at that time Dianne was our mayor. But still, over a third of the Jews said that non-Jews wouldn't vote for a Jew, which is interesting. And this is an area in which 95 percent of the constituency is non-Jewish and all these politicians were identified as Jews.





## XIII ISRAEL

Identification with Israel

Glaser: I want to ask you about your intense interest in Israel, because coming from your background one would not expect it. Did this come about because of working with the JCRC?

Raab: It came about heavily through the years. I was not raised a Zionist, and except for the Zionist socialist movement, the basic socialist movement was kind of anti-Zionist because it was anti-nationalist. But I lost all that by the time I left the army. I became close to Israel, I guess, for a number of reasons. One was the number of times I went and visited Israel, because Israel was what followed the Holocaust. In other words, for national, tribal, and political reasons rather than religious reasons.

I want to say something more. You know, before '67 there was a great deal of apathy among American Jews about Israel. They really took it for granted and except for a significant minority of American Jews, for the most part they did not have religious or even strong national feelings about Israel.

A brief description of what happened: I think one of the reasons there was so much attraction was because a) they saw it as a refuge for Jews after the Holocaust; and b) they saw it as a kind of refuge and museum, if you will, for people who were like their grandmothers and grandfathers. These were the Jews that they knew and remembered. There was that cultural affinity that they felt. They did not feel it as much for the Jews from Arab and African countries who went to Israel. I think this is a subject which needs a lot more examination, but it's in this history of American Jewish and Israeli relationships, although I'm sure some people would object. After this last election in Israel, there was one professor who said that what happened in this election is that Jerusalem defeated Tel Aviv. And Maarive, the newspaper--

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Raab: This was a matter, the newspaper said, of Middle Eastern values conquering Western values.

Now this is a reflection of the past on my part, and I'm just applying this to the past because I think that the same thing happened to American Jews. They had a sense that the Jews of Israel were Western people like themselves with Western values like themselves, and the Arabs were not. The Arabs were still being, to some extent, portrayed in stereotypes with their uniforms on and their scraggly beards, such as in Arafat's case, and their terrorism and so forth. I'm not sure what the reaction of Americans or American Jews is to the Eastern Jews of Israel.

Glaser: Do you mean Sephardim?

Raab: The Sephardim. If Israel had been comprised almost entirely of Sephardim during those years between '67 and now, the American Jews would not have been so enthralled with Israel, and Americans would not have been so enthralled with Israel. And that's not all Jews, obviously. But that's a way of describing one of the reasons, the strong cultural reason because of this sense of cultural affinity, that Americans had a special sense and relationship to Israel, and that American Jews themselves have a special feeling towards Israel.

Glaser: Well, it's amazing that that feeling didn't change when you had those long lines of automobiles waiting to tank up after the '73 war when gasoline was rationed.

Raab: I remember that well, of course. The fear all over the country among Jews was that the rationing lines would cause anti-Semitism. And of course the pollsters were out immediately at the lines to ask people who they blamed for that. And all over the country it came out the same: they blamed the oil companies, they blamed the Arabs, they even blamed the American government. But they did not blame Israel and they did not at all blame the Jews. That's the way it came out. It's part of the same picture.

Glaser: That's amazing. But I think that was not true of the feeling of people in Europe.

Raab: Europe has always had different feelings about Israel and about Jews.

Glaser: But I mean especially after the '73 war and the oil embargo, they were very bitter.

Raab: Oh, I think so and I think Israel would not exist today if it had to depend on Europe rather than America for all those guns and stuff.

Glaser: Israel did not get an awful lot from France. I remember DeGaulle was in office when there was a shipment of matériel that was actually paid for, arms and things, and he refused to let it go out of the harbor.

Raab: After 1948, when they were really looking for rusty guns or anything they could get, they got a lot from Czechoslovakia. At first, they didn't get a lot from the United States, except mainly what American Jews smuggled in.



## XIV CONSENSUS WITHIN THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

[Interview 5: June 19, 1996] ##

Divisive Issues

Glaser: Did you go back east for the NCRAC meeting?

Raab: No.

Glaser: Can you explain this article in the Jewish Community Bulletin<sup>1</sup> about the difficulties between the religious groups and the CRCs? I read it over three times and I don't understand how they can issue a consensus without having it on their letterhead, in order to appease the Orthodox Union.

Raab: Well, the basic issue was the question of veto, of the Orthodox Union or the national organizations having a veto. NJCRAC wanted to get rid of the veto as such by the national agencies because it seemed to be slanted against the community organizations which didn't have such veto. The JCRCs did not have such veto. Although it hasn't come up very often really, but as a matter of principle. However, this question of a caucus is an interesting one, because I've been playing with the idea that even the JCRC might have to do that on occasion. It was raised a little bit in terms of CCRI [California Civil Rights Initiative] in the recent wrangle at the JCRC, which was just settled the other night apparently.

But you take the question of same-sex marriages, which might come before the JCRC. Or maybe better the question of support or opposition to vouchers by the state to religious schools, which would mean financial support to religious schools. Catholics would get most of it, but Jewish schools would get some of it. There's a split in the JCRC, there would be no consensus.

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<sup>1</sup>See appendix.



Although the majority would be opposed to vouchers, there would be strong opposition to that position from the Orthodox and a lot of others. In that case, the JCRC, in order not to be completely absent from this debate, which is an important debate, might turn itself into a clearinghouse where those groups who want to come together and oppose it can do so easily, because they're all together in the CRC. And those on the other side can come together easily, and the JCRC can even provide some help for both. So in both cases it would be a community caucus.

I'm not sure that it's a good idea to have it under the letterhead of the CRC, and I'm not sure it would make much sense to have under the letterhead of NJCRAC such a community caucus which is not a consensus. But I think NCRAC should be involved in it.

If it's under NCRAC letterhead, then it doesn't make much sense, because if it's a community caucus, minus consensus, and NCRAC is a consensus organization, then their letterhead shouldn't be there at all.

Glaser: Well, evidently they conceded to this in order that the religious bodies not walk out.

Raab: Yes. The idea of forming caucus within NJCRAC, or JCRC for that matter, I think is one of the ways of the future because arguments have become a more divisive environment in Jewish community on policies than they were thirty years ago. So that's true. But I still think the CRC and NJCRAC ought to be at the center of it to help keep the community together.

Glaser: Why are things more violent in the Jewish community?

Raab: More divisive. I don't mean physically violent, rhetorically violent. A question is being raised again of what is a consensus. Consensus is not a number. You know we usually say 70 percent is a consensus because the simple majority is not enough of a consensus for a voluntary community. Let's take a hypothetical situation. Seventy percent of the group is in favor of a policy, 30 percent oppose. If the 30 percent who opposed are rather indifferent about the whole thing, then it's more clearly a consensus than if 30 percent are vehemently opposed.

The idea of a consensus in terms of these public policy organizations is that you can go to a legislator or a public official or even the Jewish community and say credibly this is the overwhelming feeling of the people. That's the whole purpose of a consensus. And if 30 percent feel very strongly that there's a

different position which should be taken, you can't credibly go to a legislator and say that.

There are several ways that ought to be done in the future. One is that you go to a legislator and say look, 70 percent have voted this way, 30 percent have voted another. That's not a happy thing to do unless you have to do it, and it lets legislators off the hook. Or you can just invoke the community caucus business. See, the idea is to be able to present this kind of consensus and to have an overwhelming consensus on a number of issues which will be critical to the Jewish community. On Israel for example, on support of Israel.

Glaser: What I got from this article is that NJCRAC was trying to strengthen itself, other than abolishing the veto.

Raab: Well, NJCRAC wanted to, for example, hand out the money to the national Jewish agencies. That was one of their original ideas, but it's not an idea which worked. They dropped that a long time ago.

Glaser: Where would the money come from?

Raab: From the federations to NJCRAC who would then hand out the money, which would centralize everything, centralize a lot of power in NJCRACs. But it didn't work for a lot of reasons. National agencies wouldn't accept it, and the national agencies get more money from their own fundraising than they do from the federations anyway. So that didn't work. Another thing it would do, it would strengthen the role of the CRC. If you weaken the role of the national agencies, you strengthen the role of the CRCs in NJCRAC. And that's something that the CRCs have been calling for.

#### Changes in the Community Relations Agenda

Raab: I'm writing the paper now, sending it initially for the Perlmutter Institute at Brandeis. The working title is "The Graying of the JCRCs," with the subtitle "The New Era in Jewish Public Affairs Institutions." And by graying I mean that time has caught up with a lot of the practices of the CRCs, and one of the reasons is that there are stronger minorities in the Jewish community about certain issues, such as vouchers for religious schools.

Thirty years ago, JCRCs and NJCRAC could take a position that this is very bad for church-state separation. And while the Union of Orthodox Congregations opposed that position, they were a

fairly weak group around the country. Not so much in New York City but around the country. After all, no more than 10 percent of the Jewish population belongs to Orthodox congregations in this country.

Now it's not just Orthodox congregations. Now there are a lot of other people in the Conservative movement, for example, and elsewhere who feel that the answer to Jewish continuity is strengthening Jewish religious schools. There are a lot more than there were thirty years ago. So it's not so easy to take a position and ignore the minority. And that's the kind of situation that's happened.

The other thing that's happened is that the CRCs and NJCRAC have tended to extend their agenda. You can follow this in NJCRAC plenary statements, because that's when all the groups come together. They've been having these annual plenary statements since the early 1950s, so if you look at those annual statements of policy (they call them program plans), then you can sort of follow the changes in the Jewish public affairs or community relations agenda.

Originally the talk was anti-Semitism, church-state separation, fighting hate groups, liberalizing immigration laws. And the agencies were very influential in all of those things. And civil rights came in there because the Jews were very much affected directly by civil rights laws and by the changing of the American society concept, which did change, that everybody had to be treated lawfully in an equal manner. Jews profited greatly from the civil rights laws.

Then, and I don't remember the year, there was one year I noted where the program plan changed. It was when President Johnson was in and the War on Poverty began and the program plan said in order to insure everything we've got to be involved in issues of poverty.

Now there's a *segué*, and a logical one, because the impacted poverty of a group like blacks, whose poverty was presumably related to their oppression over the years and their absence of civil rights over the years, was a matter of concern to Jewish security and status. That argument could, I think, readily be made, because when there is a such an impacted poverty in an identifiable ethnic or racial group, then those things can develop in society which threaten the security of Jews.

It was interesting that when this started, the year that NJCRAC program plan said the Jewish agencies should get involved in that, said it most strongly, was the year of the riots in Watts



and so forth. And Jews, I could tell, were visibly disturbed by those riots. It wasn't just that some Jewish stores were affected, which is no longer the case because those stores have disappeared by this time. But it was that law and order was seriously diminished, and Jews have an historical experience that when law and order goes Jewish security is threatened. So you can go that route easily, and I think for a large number of reasons the Jews should have gone that route, particularly since the black community and the Latino community were part of their coalition at the time in many things.

However, it moved on from there, so that there began to appear on JCRC and NJCRAC agendas items which didn't even relate directly to the poverty or disadvantage of impacted racial and ethnic groups. Our enemy is political extremism, we've known that, that's what Hitler stood for, et cetera. And this impacted poverty, et cetera, raised all of these issues of political extremism that we saw. It was out of that disadvantage that anti-Semitism in America came out of the closet in the black community. And out of that has come a backlash which might affect law and order.

But there was a further extension, which may not have been so easily seen as legitimate in terms of the agenda. That was when these agencies began to put on their agenda items like poverty in general--and not just that of the welfare of the black community. Also, capital punishment, even after the time when capital punishment was just visited on minority groups in this country. And the environment is another example. Now, the environment is something which affects all of us and which all people should be concerned with. But it's hard to put it within the dimensions of Jewish security. Those issues have begun to be raised.

This comes back to the point we were talking about. A lot of Jews began to be disturbed about items appearing on the agenda with which they did not agree and which seemed to them to exceed the bounds of agencies which were set up to fight for Jewish security.

Glaser: Did you feel that on the local level or is this NJCRAC?

Raab: In a way, you feel it more on the local level than you do on the national level, because on the national level it's usually abstract. The people that come together for NJCRAC meetings are the people who have been most active politically. On the local level you have more of a sense of what there is in the grass roots, in the sense of what's happening in the grass roots. This

gets so diluted by the time you get to NJCRAC that you don't have that grassroots feel very much anymore on some of these issues.

There was a point when I stopped distributing NJCRAC annual programs to everybody on the JCRC, for example, because much of it seemed irrelevant to what were the concerns of the JCRC and did exceed those bounds that we were talking about. So that's the thing that's happened that has complicated the whole field of Jewish community relations, especially what I call the consensus sector of the Jewish community public affairs, at the core of which is very much the JCRCs and NJCRAC.



## XV MORE ON ISRAEL

Attitudes of American Jews

Raab: You know if you want to go further, there have been also some more visible divisions on Israel than there were thirty years ago, which is complicated in the same way.

Glaser: Thirty years ago would be the time of the '67 war.

Raab: Yes, and the '67 war was really when most American Jews became engaged with Israel. Before that they took Israel for granted, except for a smaller group. Of course there was no division in Jewish communities--'67 war was a great victory, Israel was established, and so forth. Later, in the so-called Lebanese incursion, there began to be visible cracks in the American Jewish community as there was in Israel. The Intifadah took place.

What is the future of Israel and what's the best peace policy for Israel and what is our concern, JCRCs, NJCRAC and the special agencies that were established for Israel, such as AIPAC? Properly speaking, our concern was not so much what should we say to the Israeli government, because we had no leverage or position to say anything to the Israeli government or Israeli activists, because they could very well say to us, "You come over here and become a citizen and engage in this discussion."

Glaser: They did, they did say that.

Raab: They did say that. But the question was what do we say to our policy makers; that was something for us. And there was a rule kind of established. This is a bit after '67, before the Lebanese incursion, when there started to be questions raised. And there was a kind of standard understanding that Jews would not publicly criticize the State of Israel, because that would endanger, presumably, the affinity that American policy makers had towards Israel. More, it would threaten the legislation that was

favorable to Israel, the money that went every year. More money started coming from the U.S. government than from the American Jews.

So that was a kind of understanding and it started breaking visibly during the Lebanese incursion from American Jews who were concerned about what they considered Sharon's excesses in Lebanon. But they pretty much stayed by the rules by and large. Write letters to Israelis if you want to but don't rock the boat with our public officials. And there is a kind of a little irony here. American Jews have always been more partial numerically to the Labor party for a lot of reasons, and they were not too partial towards the Begin administration. Jewish supporters of Begin in this country made strong points that there should not be from American Jews public criticism of the Israeli government.

Commentary magazine began to fall into that mode, and others, and Likud supporters. As I say, there were little cracks that you could see after the Lebanese incursion. But when the Labor government came back into power, the Jewish supporters of Likud in this country, who had said that there should be no public criticism of Israel, began to heavily criticize the Labor government publicly, which I think finally smashed to smithereens the question of American Jewish silence. We did not approve of what Israel did. There is still though the problem of things which everybody wants for Israel: support by America, which is essential for Israel's security. All Jews want American support for Israel, and these two Jewish groups in America began to become partisan about what the American government should do to push Israel one way or another. But there was an important consensus again that had to remain, and that was if there was a crisis for Israel everybody was to stand up together in support of Israel. So the point is that I was talking about the split on the domestic agenda front before; now there's more of a split on the Israeli front.

It gets nasty sometimes. It got nasty just before the election when an Israeli minister in the Peres government came to talk to a Jewish group in New York and was physically attacked by some Jews. So there is a nasty aspect to it. But there is, I think, simmering underneath what wasn't simmering thirty years ago.

Again it's a question of a majority position and minority position and how do consensus agencies handle that kind of problem. So that, in addition to the same kinds of divisions in the domestic agenda, has created a new era of challenge for the consensus sectors of the Jewish public affairs establishment.

Effect of Incursion into Lebanon

Glaser: Following the incursion into Lebanon, you had to have a public relations effort here because of the negative feeling within the community.

Raab: Yes, and again anticipating the kind of problems that would develop and kinds of institutional problems that were developing. We did without publicly criticizing the movement of the Israeli armies up to Beirut, which was the arguable point. The initial incursion was not so arguable but the movement of the troops to Beirut was.

Glaser: Also there was the massacre at the camps.

Raab: And that massacre, yes of course, which Israel was indirectly involved in. Without taking a position attacking Israel openly, nevertheless we did not take a position supporting it. There were a couple of options here. One of the options was to take a position supporting or opposing. The other option was not to make a statement on it. Which was, one must admit, an action of a kind. After having supported almost everything the Israeli government had done, publicly to remain silent on this was a signal. The Israeli Consul General, whoever it was at the time [Mordechai Artzielli], was quite aware of this and was unhappy about the fact that we didn't issue a statement in support. But we didn't issue a statement in opposition, although most of the individuals sitting around on the JCRC table were individually opposed to what happened.

The other option was to go out in the community and let all of this be vented. We held meetings all over the area in the various regions with speakers on a spectrum of opinion, supporting and opposing, so that people could listen to it and talk about it. I guess that was partly the beginning of my understanding of how the public affairs field was going to have to change eventually.

American Foreign Policy ##

Glaser: Why was it necessary to make a statement that it was appropriate for the JCRC to express concern for the U.S. peace efforts in the Middle East, since it does not take a partisan stance in regard to a specific U.S. foreign policy?

Raab: As I understand your question, why did we take a position supporting U.S. support of peace process in the Middle East although not on other foreign affairs and matters.

Glaser: And you explained that it was appropriate to do so.

Raab: Well, there are two kinds of things there. One is that it was appropriate to do so because first of all the mandate of CRC and other such agencies, NJCRAC, we always took to be the security and status of Jews in the United States and elsewhere. In fact this was the beginning of the defense agencies in this country. The national defense agencies were built not so much around security of American Jews as around what was happening to Jews in Russia and Romania and so forth--the American Jewish Committee and the American Jewish Congress. But in our terms that's always the definition of our concern, our mandate: security and status of Jews in this country and elsewhere, which is why we became involved heavily in the Soviet Jewry business. And we became heavily involved in trying to persuade the American government to shape its foreign policy towards Russia so that it would help Soviet Jews. So we've been involved in foreign policy that was within our mandate.

That is the minimal reason for American Jews to be concerned with Israel. We did not state that our concern was a religious concern with Israel and so forth, but that in effect the Israelis as Jews would be threatened by another Holocaust if there was not a) American support of Israel and b) support for the peace process. So it was within that group--

Glaser: But then, Earl, you are saying that you do take a stance with regard to specific U.S. foreign policy.

Raab: Oh yes. Well, I think we don't take enough positions on U.S. foreign policy. I think it has to remain within the circle by mandate, which is the security and status of Jews abroad. And for that reason it's legitimate for us to be concerned about the safety of Jews in Israel, as well as in the Soviet Union, as well as for a period in Syria. I've often expressed a concern that there are some aspects of the United States policy which affect our concern about these things, which the American Jewish community does not take a position which it might.

Glaser: For example?

Raab: For example the defense budget of the United States, let's say, in general. A lot of American public policy people, non-Jewish, have pointed out, sometimes with a little bit of ironic glee, that the surveys show that American Jews by a large proportion want the



United States to supply to Israel the defense materials that Israel needs in large number. And at the same time, a large portion of American Jews feel that America's defense industry should be cut back severely. That contradiction is something that was noted, and I think it is a contradiction.

America has stood, at least in the past and I think for some foreseeable future, between Israel and destruction. That was clear in the '73 war when Israel needed arms so badly that it stood in danger of being overwhelmed within forty hours if it didn't get them. That's when Nixon made his emergency decision to send them, and it saved Israel. So that a strong United States and a strong United States foreign policy was important for the peace of Israel, security of Israel. And therefore we should have perhaps more often at least discussed those issues so that American Jews could take into consideration when they were in touch with their legislators, et cetera, the effect of some of these policies on Israel. Does that touch your question?

#### Arab Boycott

Glaser: It does. I want to ask you about the Arab boycott of Israel, this goes back quite a few years. What did the JCRC and NJCRAC do? There must have been a very strong effort because that was overthrown.

Raab: Yes, it was an effort. The CRCs were involved in terms of legislation mostly, and the Congress did develop legislation opposed to the Arab boycott and stood in the way of it. And this CRCs was involved in talking to its congressmen on this issue. This is one of those issues, though, on which there was a lot of national action in terms of the corporations that were involved. I don't remember that there were such corporations that this JCRC could act on. What we did do was inform the Jewish community about the corporations that were complying with the Arab boycott.

Glaser: Wasn't Bechtel one of those?

Raab: I'm not sure. You see, Bechtel was working closely with the Arabs. Maybe I just need to be refreshed, but I don't remember what kind of boycott Bechtel could have been involved in Israel. Whether there were some things they could have done that they



didn't do, maybe so. And there was some talk with Bechtel, mainly though about this kind of thing.

I remember where there were approaches to Bechtel, stimulated by the CRC, on the question of Jews working for Bechtel in Arab countries. That was where we were most heavily involved. It was a tough issue, and this was the question of whether they allowed Jews to work for them in their contracts. They had plenty of Jews working for them. As a matter of fact, Bechtel was one of the business organizations which hired more Soviet Jews than any other business organization in town.

But this was a matter of working in the Arab lands and hiring Jews to work in the Arab lands. That issue became very murky and I don't think came to any clear point, although we put a lot of pressure on. Because Saudi Arabia, for example, was able to either allow visas to be issued for Americans to come over to work or not allow visas to be issued. And if they wouldn't allow visas to be issued for Jews to work over there, question was what was the responsibility of Bechtel, who said they were willing to hire them but that Saudi Arabia wouldn't let them in.

So I remember us being involved in that, and that was one of the things that became a public issue. For example, it never came to this with Bechtel, but some of the corporations, and this is where civil rights laws were helpful to Jews--I think Amoco was found guilty under American civil rights laws for not hiring Jews, although they said their problem was the resistance of the Arabs. So that's where we were involved.

Glaser: Did you get involved at all in Israel's action regarding the Law of Return and Who Is a Jew?

Raab: This is after my time. There was no question about that. See, CRC felt this was not a matter of Israel's foreign policy. It was a matter that related very much to American Jews, the relationship between American Jews and Israel without any intervention of the American public policy establishment. And they took a strong position here, and the Federation itself took a strong position here.

#### Emigration from Ethiopia and Syria

Glaser: You got quite heavily involved, by you I mean the JCRC, with the issue of Ethiopian immigration. Was this true also for Syrian Jews?

Raab: Yes. As I say, it fell within our mandate. We had a commission on oppressed Jews abroad, which did engage particularly in the activities with respect to Syria, not Soviet Jewry because they had their own commission. But this was for Syria and very much for Ethiopia. This again was a matter of pressing American officials, American public policy people, to adopt public policy which would be helpful and to put pressures from the American government on Syria and on Ethiopia. There was some success with respect to Syrian Jews, although it was very much under cover.

Glaser: I thought there had to be money paid for each of the Syrian Jews to allow them to leave.

Raab: Yes, which was fine with us. I mean it was just a matter of allowing them to leave.

Glaser: It was bribery that was necessary.

Raab: Yes, for Syria. As far as I can tell, the American public policy institutions or Israel or the American government have not been able to do much with Syria. With Ethiopia, much more was done, really, so that the Ethiopian Jews were allowed to leave. Israel, of course, brought them in; but the American government provided funds for the resettlement of Ethiopian Jews in Israel. That was part of our agenda; it wasn't a very difficult part.



## XVI AMERICAN ISRAEL PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Northern California Chapter

Glaser: Tell me about the JCRC role in forming AIPAC's Northern California chapter.

Raab: It had been a one-man American-Israel public affairs committee in Washington for a while. What was his name? Of all names to forget! He was a remarkable man and I'll think of him. But there had been that one-man office early on, this was before '67. And there had been an office in San Francisco to raise money for that national office. That was Rita Semel who did that job. She was an independent public relations person and she handled that account. In the meantime, the Jewish community of San Francisco had been known throughout the country as the heart of the anti-Israel Jewish movement in the country--the American Council for Judaism. The JCRC, until 1967 or thereabouts, did not have a Middle East committee or an Israel committee. We had an Arab propaganda committee.

This presumably was on grounds that we were not going to be so much involved in American policy with respect to Israel. But we were involved in protecting American Jews against attacks by Arab organizations. It smacked of the American Council for Judaism still and their influence in a way.

Glaser: What do you mean by that?

Raab: The dual loyalty business.

Glaser: Oh.

Raab: That was the heart of their argument, that we would weaken our position as American citizens if we were supporting Israel so vehemently. But of course that all broke up in '67 and in the following years. Immediately, the night after the first

announcement of the '67 war, JCRC was involved in gathering together the rabbis, for one thing, and a few other people who were involved. Out of that night grew the understanding that the JCRC, as the public affairs' unified voice, had to be at the center of anything that would happen with respect to Israel in American public policy.

Two things happened: the JCRC established shortly thereafter a Middle East committee rather than an Arab propaganda committee, frankly concerned with the status of Israel. Also we established at the time, as a kind of bridge so as not to shock everybody too much, a Northern California chapter of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee. Rita again operated as the part-time staff of that, but the direction came from the CRC. Of course later that went out of business, essentially as it was no longer needed. First of all, as the Middle East committee of the JCRC became fully operative. Secondly, of course, as AIPAC expanded widely in Washington, then they established their own section in the West.

Glaser: Was Morris Amitay the first national AIPAC director?

Raab: No, Morris Amitay was not the first one. He was just one of the interim directors.

Glaser: I'm sure between the two of us we'll think of it. [It was I. L. (Si) Kenen.]

Raab: Yes, he was a wonderful man. I can see his face.

#### American Presidents and Israel

Glaser: What was your personal summation of the attitude of the various American presidents toward Israel?

Raab: [pause] Well, in terms of the period of my involvement with the business, I guess I came in when Eisenhower was president. Wasn't he? Who was president in 1951?

Glaser: Eisenhower was a little later than that, wasn't he? No, Truman came in in-- Oh, maybe so.

Raab: I don't remember Truman being president when I was there. Maybe at the end. I was on a farm when Truman was president.

Glaser: Let's do it with Eisenhower.



Raab: Eisenhower--that was the period when there was not much activity by Jews speaking seriously with respect to Israel. And Eisenhower was not a head over heels advocate for Israel as far as we could see. Let me get my years straight. The '67 war, who was president of the United States? [pause] [laughter] It was, of course, Lyndon Johnson.

Following the relationships of the presidents to Israel after Eisenhower traces a dramatic change. Eisenhower had opposed the Suez campaign of England and Israel, and succeeded in reversing it. U.S. foreign policy was concerned with maintaining relationships with the Arab countries, in order to keep access to Arab oil, and to prevent Soviet adventurism in that area. Even during J. F. Kennedy's administration, there was a stand-offish relationship. In that period, the head of the Israeli Defense Force was not allowed open access to the U.S. armed forces camps.

The 1967 war changed the U.S. stance somewhat. Israel began to be seen as a major force to prevent that Soviet adventurism. The Lyndon Johnson administration was notable for its friendship for and support of Israel. Richard Nixon worried Jews when he talked about reassessing the U.S. role, but he saved Israel by quickly sending critical military materials to Israel when it faced problems during the 1973 war. Carter had some explicit sympathies for the Palestinians which also worried Jews for a while. But in recent years, the United States and its presidents have been clearly supportive of Israel.

#### Relationship with South Africa

Glaser: Talk about Israel's relationship with South Africa at the time when apartheid was still in existence.

Raab: It was, you might say, a kind of touchy period for Jewish community relations because we were, as you know, close companions of the black community in that period. The fact of the matter was that the community relations councils in this country had no problem early on in publicly condemning apartheid in South Africa. That was easy and that was done early. Incidentally, we wanted to form some specific kinds of anti-apartheid coalitions. At that point there was not a great deal of interest in the black community on the subject of South Africa. That developed later.

The complications for us grew later, not on the question of apartheid, which we always publicly opposed and asked our legislators to oppose, but when questions of some specific

remedies came up, such as disinvestment. The question of whether the University of California should disinvest itself from South African stocks and bonds held by corporations which operated there. I remember specifically the Sullivan Law, which was a proposition that American corporations should increase the number of South Africans they hired when they were down there and generally act in a proper fashion, not have apartheid in their own places. We supported that proposition.

Glaser: But didn't you have to act as apologists for Israel's relations with South Africa?

Raab: Then there was Israel. We had some problems, which we didn't take a position on, with certain remedies, but in general we were strong opponents of apartheid. Israel's relationship with South Africa, which was often very veiled--but clearly there was a relationship with the South African government--was a kind of embarrassment to us. And the only thing we could do was to point out our opposition to apartheid in this country by American Jews.

Secondly, more quietly, we did tell the Israeli government through the counsel general, et cetera, that this was an embarrassment, not just to us but perhaps to their position in America. This didn't cut much ice because, presumably, their relationship to South Africa was an important relationship to Israel. That was all we could do. On occasion we had to try to fend off resolutions, even from the Board of Supervisors in the city, which would attack Israel for this relationship. It wasn't a happy period.

#### The 1996 Election in Israel and the Peace Process

Glaser: With Likud in power now, do you see any change in the relationship between Israel and the United States?

Raab: You mean in the recent election?

Glaser: Right.

Raab: Well, I suppose that still has to be discovered. One of the problems is, as I see it, nobody knows exactly what Netanyahu is going to do because he hasn't been in power that much, or even in public that much. And my interpretation, for what it's worth, is that a majority of the Israelis are still very much interested in peace because they know the consequences of not having it. They are, by majority, still willing to trade some land for peace--by

majority. This leaves out the minority that doesn't want to give up an inch and talks about a greater Israel. The majority are willing to trade land, but want, apparently and obviously, a lot more reassurances about their security if such a trade takes place than they felt Peres was getting for them. They want things to move more slowly for the same thing.

One of the survey results which always fascinated me and which came up constantly, both in the surveys in the San Francisco area which we did every couple of years, and in surveys generally within national Jewish community which didn't happen that often. We always asked two questions. One was, "Would you approve of the Israeli government giving up some land for peace?" And the great majority of American Jews in this area would say yes. The second question was, "Do you trust the Palestinians to honor that peace?" And the great majority would say no.

So the Israeli Jews were just ridden with that kind of inner conflict. They wanted peace, they were willing to give up some land for peace, but they didn't trust the Palestinians. And apparently, eventually, not Arafat either. So I think that was the meaning of the election as far as the peace process is concerned. I think the parliamentary election indicated other splits in Israel. But Netanyahu, along those lines, may still, especially with America's encouragement, pursue certain kinds of peace, with Jordan certainly and Egypt. There's no question about trying to deepen that, but also with Palestinians. But he's not willing to give as much as Peres was. And as far as Syria's concerned, he's altogether cold about the idea of making compromise on the Golan Heights.



## XVII COUNTERING NEO-NAZI ACTIVITIES

[Interview 6: June 25, 1996] ##

Rudolf Hess Bookstore

Glaser: I want to ask you this morning about the burning of the Rudolf Hess Bookstore. You've mentioned it in passing, but could you give me some details?

Raab: There were a number of times, or at least several times, in the history of the JCRC when the emotions and actions of some group out there spurred the JCRC. We weren't always in the front. We had been, of course, interested in Holocaust education and had been meeting with school people many times about instructing the instructors and so forth about the Holocaust and putting it in the school curriculum. And we had done what we did about the neo-Nazis in town, which finally got rid of them. But the survivors had not yet been heard from fully. The survivors did not feel part of the organized Jewish community with what we did because we hadn't really made them part of it in any formal way.

When the Rudolf Hess Bookstore opened up, a Nazi bookstore, (this was when the neo-Nazis were still here) the anger was very high. Our position was the usual measured position; that is to say, we were looking for ways to close it down but not in ways that would violate the First Amendment. The group of survivors became enraged with the Nazi store and just went down there and trashed it.

Glaser: The bookstore was really provocative since it was across the street from a synagogue that most of the survivors belonged to.

Raab: Well, it was one of the things that we were working on in terms I think we discussed before. The First Amendment does not cover provocation, and we were trying to work on that theme with the authorities. But closing down a bookstore is a tender business.



Glaser: Did you actually have contact with the proprietors of the bookstore?

Raab: We had contacted the proprietors. They were unhappy but at the moment they didn't know how to get out of it.

Glaser: No, no, I mean the neo-Nazis themselves, not the people who owned the store property.

Raab: Contact with the neo-Nazis? No. We didn't have contact with the neo-Nazis. We had contact with the police intelligence group, which had contact with the neo-Nazis. We felt sure that we were going to get them out one of those days, but the survivors didn't want to wait. Their rage was understandable. They trashed the store. And it was only after that we helped provide attorneys and so forth for the survivors. Nothing happened to them. But it was that stimulus which really made us more serious about finding a way to institutionalize the survivors within the Jewish community. To put it simply, we formed a survivors committee within the JCRC.

Glaser: I want to go back a little bit because there are some steps in between. Something happened to the temple as a result of the trashing, and then the store was burned. Is that right?

Raab: A burning of what store?

Glaser: The bookstore.

Raab: Well, that was the trashing that I'm talking about.

Glaser: I thought at first--

Raab: That's the burning, yes.

Glaser: I'm sorry I interrupted you.

Raab: No, that's all right.

#### Survivors Committee

Raab: We formed a survivors committee. Naomi Lauter staffed it; it was a regular part of the JCRC. And they stated several purposes, one of which was to establish a Holocaust memorial of some kind in San Francisco. Another was to heighten the Holocaust education. They became directly involved. You know, we'd been holding the regular Yom Ha Shoa memorials each year in memory of the survivors. Large

attendances. The survivors became directly involved in that. I think those were the three kinds of priorities they expressed, which everybody went to work on right away. As a result of the survivors' emphasis on this, the memorial was established in San Francisco.

Glaser: The Palace of Legion of Honor.

Raab: Palace of Legion of Honor, right, and that was a direct result of that chain of events. JCRC did it at the stimulation of the survivors committee.

#### The Holocaust Memorial

Glaser: I understand that the memorial itself was controversial.

Raab: Well, first of all the architecture is kind of crucial. I don't remember the name of the architect, a famous architect.

Glaser: George Segal.

Raab: George Segal. George Segal was controversial; his statuary was controversial; the design was controversial. Of course that's happened all over the country when memorials have been established. What do you do? What's most expressive of that ineffable situation? A lot of us and people who were "art-qualified" if you will, thought this was good. Rhoda Goldman became very involved in that effort.

There were various controversies. The artistic one or the expressionist one was one that continued. The other was where it was to be. As everyone knows, it was out in the open by the Palace of the Legion of Honor. I remember Mayor Dianne Feinstein objected to it being there. She said it would be constantly vandalized. And some of us said to her, "You know, it's going to be vandalized on occasion somewhat. We'll fix it. But it's not going to be constantly vandalized." And it hasn't been. On occasion something's happened and it's been fixed.

Glaser: But wasn't there also the controversy that it should be on the East Coast? I assume it's because of greater population.

Raab: Well, but there were memorials all over. This was the San Francisco Memorial. The East Coast had memorials, some of them later than ours. Most eastern cities have had memorials for a long time.

Glaser: And you wrote the words for the first dedication plaque.

Raab: Yes, that's right.

Glaser: Why is it that Rhoda Goldman got involved with this?

Raab: I don't know whether this was after her trip. She made a very important trip for her, and this was when she went to Israel once with a group. The group went to Dauchau, and she was extremely moved by that. She became deeply involved in these matters ever since. She was a great treasure for the Jewish community.

### Other Genocides

Glaser: Can somebody speak of the Holocaust, using that term when talking about what's happened in Rwanda, Cambodia, and other places?

Raab: Yes. As you know, the term Holocaust did not spring up in 1946. You'll have difficulty finding the term referring to the Nazi genocide until the 1960s. And as a matter of fact, this was partly because the consciousness of the Holocaust had to grow. Even after the war there was, I wouldn't say disbelief in any revisionist sense, but really a failure to be able to comprehend the enormity of it. So it wasn't really until the 1960s that somehow our consciousness became forced to understand, because now there were lots of things written, to understand what really had happened. So these efforts were around that period. Then the survivors committee and the survivors themselves did not have any force in the community early on. The survivors committee punctuated that.

Early on, in answer to your question, there was an interesting kind of thing, as we may have talked about. There was some friction starting in the 1960s, middle 1960s, between the black community and the Jewish community based on several things. Partly it came out of a certain kind of radicalism and a certain kind of third world radicalism that grew on some of the campuses among some black intellectuals. Partly it was the result of direct competition as in the east when black teachers wanted to replace Jewish teachers.

But the rhetoric grew. And one of the things that happened on occasion was a kind of resistance by some of these people in the black community to our claiming the Holocaust because they said, "What about our Holocaust?" And indeed, I remember being engaged in a couple of public discussions of that kind, which I

did not seek. The Middle Passage, which is the term describing the voyages that were made with black captives in which so many of them died, and the slave business in which so many of them died, could be counted a Holocaust. We understood early that you can't compare these kinds of human tragedies. You certainly can't compare them numerically. You can't say, "Well, ours was worse than yours because we had six million; you only had one million." Impossible. And intolerable.

We always wanted to make the point that the Nazi Holocaust was singular, that it had some special qualities. We said that the black experience, the black genocide, also was singular and had some special qualities. We never wanted to merge the two, so we would say, "Well, we're not just against the Jewish Holocaust; we're against everything that hurts mankind and they all are the same." It couldn't be the same. It couldn't be the same because that memory became part of the Jewish memory, indeed a religious part of the Jewish memory, and could not just be fused with all other injustices in the world. At the same, we couldn't make the claim that the injustice was greater than anybody else had ever encountered, just that it was different and singular, and that it had to be remembered as a Jewish Holocaust. But not that it was in any way superior to the black experience.

That lasted for a while. That resistance by some blacks to that, because they felt that this American society was paying too much attention to the Holocaust and the Jews and not enough to theirs. They may well have been right. Not too much, but not enough. So there was that for a while. Then it sort of disappeared, that kind of controversy. But we have to continue to remember that Rwanda and Cambodia, which you mentioned, that these are tragedies that are not comparable, none of these are comparable to anybody else's.

### Isolating the Nazis

Glaser: Earlier you mentioned that you got rid of the neo-Nazis. How did you do that?

Raab: If you remember, we had a special police unit established to be concerned with anti-Semitism in the City, a police unit primarily of one fairly highly-placed policeman detective. He kept in touch with them always and finally discovered the leader. We tried to keep them isolated as much as possible in terms that were discussed. They could hold a meeting but not in front of a synagogue, et cetera. We had the question of order high in the



consciousness of the police so that they would be careful about where they would allow them, where they would give them a permit, and when they would give them a permit to speak, on grounds that certain kinds of places and times would create police disorder. That's a common category when you hand out permits, but they were particularly conscious of our concerns.

The group was never larger than a dozen. When nothing much happened some of them faded out. Finally our police contact found that the leader of the Nazis had some kind of a record in his past, and he was advised he would be in less trouble if he moved elsewhere, which he did. This is not something the JCRC did, but it's something that the police did, I guess out of a heightened sensitivity. I'm not sure what our policy would have been, but they did it.

Glaser: But there was an incident in the seventies when the Nazi group disrupted a school board meeting.

Raab: I think this was even before the police unit was set up. There were a couple of incidents. There were some firebombings, or attempted firebombings which some of us thought might have been neo-Nazi activity. And then there was the appearance of this uniformed group. They disrupted a Board of Supervisors meeting and they disrupted the school board meeting. This was around, however, the specific question of school desegregation. That was their express concern at the time. They'd come to meetings, six, seven, however many, dressed in uniforms, sit together, get up and make statements, and disrupt. I think the police unit must have been in place because they used to watch them there and herd them out whenever things got too hot.

But that was the time when the Board of Supervisors and the school board came to the JCRC and asked whether we felt there was some legislation that might help. And we said no.

Glaser: You issued a statement through the Human Relations Commission defending anyone's right to speak out, even the Nazis. That must have been controversial.

Raab: It was a hot discussion in the Jewish community when we were asked whether we wanted the Board of Supervisors essentially to pass a law prohibiting the wearing of the Nazi uniform publicly. It was a hot discussion in a way, but it wasn't a hard decision because, as we pointed out, there'd been a recent case, which we used in this discussion. In Chicago the Soviet Union had an art exhibit of some kind, and it was at the early height of the Soviet-Jewish endeavor. A number of Jewish teenagers came into the exhibit



wearing a uniform in a sense, wearing a t-shirt saying, "Let our people go," et cetera. The Soviet authority complained to the Chicago police, who threw the teenagers out. It went to court. The court said, "You can't do that. Dress is a matter of freedom of speech and you can't throw them out." So they were able to go back and propagandize on behalf of the Soviet Jews.

We used that specifically as an indication of why it's important for the Jews to maintain that constitutional principle. That's the number-one argument that we made. Number-two argument was that it never did any good anyway. In Prussia early on, Nazis were prohibited from wearing Nazi insignia, and they just wore beer bottle caps instead, and everybody knew who they were. It wasn't the way to fight Nazis. Our way to fight Nazism was to counter them educationally. We had a principle, I think it was a ten-to-one principle: for every impact they make on the media, we want to make ten impacts at the same time. And we did pretty well.

#### More on American Civil Liberties Union

Glaser: The ACLU [American Civil Liberties Union], at the time of the burning of the bookstore, said that the burning was nothing to be proud of. What was the relationship between the JCRC and the ACLU?

Raab: Oh, it was pretty close on most things but not agreement on everything. We weren't--I say we--the JCRC was not proud of the burning, but we understood the anger. I guess we also understood that as an organized Jewish community we had not given enough attention to the survivors, so that we wanted to remedy that. We never legitimized the burning publicly.

Glaser: Sometimes the ACLU takes stands that are a little hard to along with emotionally, even if you understand that they are sticking to what they see as right.

Raab: Yes, and of course Skokie was one ACLU position that we all opposed.



## XVIII CIVIL RIGHTS

Legislation

Glaser: I want to ask you to talk about civil rights now. In the sixties, a great deal of ferment was what was going on in the South. You took a stand deploring any action that threatened dissent. How much were you involved with what was going on in the South and the fight for civil rights?

Raab: In the South we were involved only in talking to our legislators about it. Some of our people went down there. But we were very involved here--in the state. We were very involved in the fifties. The legislative stuff started in the fifties, not the sixties. San Francisco passed the first fair employment practices law in the state, which made it easier to pass the state fair employment practices law. And California passed one of the first fair employment practices law in the country, which made it easier for there to be momentum for the national civil rights laws. But our efforts preceded the national efforts by some time.

Glaser: What was the JCRC involvement with that fair employment practices and also with the fair housing act?

Bay Area Human Relations Clearinghouse

## Fair Employment Practices Laws

Raab: That followed, yes. What happened, sort of sequentially, is that organizationally the Bay Area Human Relations Clearinghouse was established in the fifties--

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Raab: --which brought together with the Jews for the first time, really, organizationally, blacks, black ministers, NAACP, some lawyers-- including Willie Brown--and some Christian ministers; a little later the Japanese particularly and a little later some Latinos. But we were, I guess it's fair to say, part of the center of this operation. The meetings and the fair employment followed from this. The meetings were held in JCRC headquarters every week or so, and I was the chairman of it. We were deeply involved in the effort to get the fair employment practices law in San Francisco. It came out of this grouping of people that had come together, with us as part of the center, and it was an effort in which we were completely engaged.

I remember that at one point the mayor appointed Jesse Colman, and I think Christopher was still the mayor then. There was a vacancy in the Board of Supervisors and there was controversy about fair employment laws at that point. Jesse Colman had once been a member of the Board of Supervisors. There was suddenly a temporary vacancy and the mayor, partly at our request, appointed Jesse Colman to take up that temporary vacancy. Jesse was part of the JCRC and close to it. He was the person who helped to make sure that the local fair employment practices law was passed. So we were centrally involved. Out of that came the state effort.

The Bay Area Clearinghouse, as far as this area was concerned, segued into the Northern California part of something which we set up, called the California Fair Practices Committee. Bill Becker was the first and only director of that. The Jewish Labor Committee, which had hired Bill Becker to work in this area at our request, assigned him to be the director of the California Fair Practices Committee. He was payrolled by them to head that civil rights legislative effort, which we won, and then the fair housing also. In all of those, the meetings were held mostly in the JCRC headquarters and we were a central part of it.

Glaser: And then there was the attempt to overturn, with Prop. 14, the Fair Housing Act.

Raab: Yes, and we were always deeply involved in that. I don't remember their names; there were some Jewish real estate people who helped us greatly.

### Racial Integration

Glaser: What was the role of the JCRC with racial integration?

- Raab: We were on public record and we were active in supporting school desegregation or in promoting the fuller integration of the schools.
- Glaser: But the civil rights committee of JCRC felt that that really depended upon economic integration, didn't it? And that depended on affirmative action.
- Raab: The stimulus for supporting integration, as far as we were concerned, was out of the understanding which then had developed that the educational achievement of all children depended upon the motivation and stimulation of their peers. So if there was a high level of academic achievement in the school, it would affect positively the students who attended it. This was particularly pointed with respect to black children, many who had been denied equal education wherever they came from. So that was our basis for pushing integration. It had to do with raising educational levels and therefore raising economic levels.
- Glaser: You make that sound as if the focus was on schools. But wasn't it also on adult lives?
- Raab: Oh, yes, those aren't adult minds, but--
- Glaser: Not adult minds but adult lives.
- Raab: We didn't think of that as integration so much as equal opportunity. We really didn't. When you said integration those days, I guess it was occasionally used in that context, but generally speaking it meant school integration. When you talked about blacks and others being employed, you talked about equal opportunity. People generally felt, and there was a lot of research about it, if there were blacks on a roughly equal level in employment in the labor pool working out there, that this would have a positive effect attitudes of whites. It would break down stereotypes.
- But that was a kind of after-comment. The thrust was for equal opportunity because we felt that that was their right, that was everybody's right, and that was the basis of the American idea. The question of adult education was a little more sophisticated, which wasn't at the heart of it, really. It was in the schools.
- Glaser: I guess I used the wrong language because I was thinking of what you call equal opportunity and I call integration, meaning that the jobs were open so that there was the integration of job opportunity. But along with this, the JCRC opposed preferential hiring and quotas. I think you still do, don't you?



Raab: Always, from the beginning, yes. I remember I wrote a piece in Commentary in 1970, on opposing quotas and indicating the reason for opposing quotas, because they were just coming up then. We never equated affirmative action with quotas. On the contrary, we felt that quotas interfered with affirmative action. But that was another era. We always opposed preferential hiring. Much of this can be understood in the microcosm of the discussion about the CCRI,<sup>1</sup> which is currently up there in California.

Glaser: You mentioned that last week and it didn't occur to me what you were talking about. Of course you're opposed to that ballot measure.

Raab: But the reason illuminates everything, I think, because the California Civil Rights Initiative says it's opposed to preferential treatment. We know how the Jews feel, incidentally, because we've surveyed them often enough in the country and here, over and over. They're opposed to preferential treatment. Preferential treatment is the opposite of equal opportunity and therefore in contrast with the American idea. We're opposed to preferential treatment in hiring, et cetera, but we're not opposed to preferential treatment in providing children, especially those who come from educationally deprived backgrounds, special opportunities to catch up and therefore compete equally.

The reason we're opposed to preferential hiring is that it's not equal competition; but we do believe that people should be prepared to compete equally. Therefore, when there is a special program-- Let's take one example. There's such a thing as black English, which in the general marketplace is bad English. There are a few people who have a little bit of pride in it as a cultural thing, and I wouldn't want to interfere with that. But kids who graduate from high school with only black English are not going to be equipped to compete either in college or in the labor market. There are programs now, inspired by and run by blacks around the country, to take kids who are in school and let them talk black English if they want to, but also let them know what the proper English is that's being spoken out there in the marketplace.

It's affirmative action in the sense that it's directed specially at black kids, it's preferential treatment. While we're opposed to preferential treatment that interferes with equal competition and equal opportunity, we're not opposed to special treatment which helps people prepare themselves to compete

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<sup>1</sup>CCRI, the California Civil Rights Initiative, Proposition 209, was approved by the voters in 1996.

equally. And that's what's so devilish about the CCRI, by the way. It says preferential treatment, and of course we're against it in a certain way. In another way we're not, and we're afraid although the authors say that we should not be. They say they're not against the kind of thing like black English that I talked about. The language is such that it is against it and could be used against it. So that's why there's been a contention in the Jewish community about CCRI.

Glaser: It's very confusing to the general population. It doesn't make clear what the real intent is.

Raab: That's right. It's very bad. It's bad as referenda often are, because they're not the result of legislative negotiation. It's the result of somebody fixing some language in the backroom.

#### Proportional Representation

Glaser: Why was the JCRC opposed to proportional representation?

Raab: Proportional representation--it all depends where you apply it. Let me give you three examples. If you're talking about proportional representation in the workplace, that's quotas. That means that you say, "Well, we've got to have 10 percent blacks, et cetera, et cetera." That's proportional representation in the workplace; it's quotas. And we're against it because it's opposed to equal opportunity and the American idea.

If you're talking about proportional representation, there are places where it makes some sense, but only a few. If you're talking about proportional representation on the Human Rights Commission, that makes sense, because the Human Rights Commission is there to be sensitive to various groups and should have some people from those groups on the commission. So there are places where proportional representation makes sense, special places, but not in the marketplace.

I remember I was at a NCRAC convention in San Diego at the time of the McGovern Democratic convention, where they adopted some rules for proportional representation. When that was announced from the stage, I felt a shiver go through the Jewish audience. Because proportional representation on a political level is a quota situation again. It means you say to each group: one, you've got so many people; and two, it freezes Jews out of the political process for one thing.

Glaser: I always thought that was helpful to minority groups.

Raab: Well, I don't think so. Again, talking about equal opportunity is helpful. Proportional representation is a form of quotas. It all depends which minority groups you're talking about. For the Jews, whose involvement in, let's say, the Democratic convention was always at least 10, 15 percent of the delegates, if you provide for proportional representation it could go to 2 percent, 2.5 percent. So there was that.

Proportional representation is complex. Proportional representation on a political level is, I think, dangerous to the democratic process because the heart of the democratic process politically is negotiation and compromise. When you start establishing political factions instead of an integrated political group, then you've got troubles of the kind that they had and have had in Europe. Suppose in America you had a situation like Europe so there's proportional representation, which means that each party, depending on how many votes it gets, will get that number of seats in the Parliament. That's one of the meanings of proportional representation.

What would that mean in America? That would mean not just a quota system. It would mean that there would be a black faction, not Democratic party or Republican party, after the fact or before the fact. But you'd have a black faction, you'd have a Latino faction, you'd have a Jewish faction. There would be less of an ability to negotiate their differences if they were already in the Parliament on the basis of that. So that the Jews would have 2.5 percent, instead of what they have now, incidentally which is about 15 percent, I think, in the Congress of the United States.

## XIX BLACK-JEWISH RELATIONS

Andrew Young Affair

Glaser: Let's talk about black-Jewish relations and about the Andrew Young affair when he was a United States ambassador to the United Nations. I think the problem was that he met with a PLO representative when they were not recognized.

Raab: I'd mentioned this, as I've mentioned almost everything so far in our discussions. The media love it when there seems to be a black-Jewish war, especially during those days, because we seemed to be partners, as we were during the civil rights days, certainly. But the Andrew Young controversy, when he met with the PLO he was the U.N. ambassador for the United States. There were objections from the Jewish community, obviously. It flowered all over the press as a big black-Jewish war.

Glaser: But no Jewish group came out and condemned him for that. I mean nobody called for his resignation.

Raab: I don't remember them calling for his resignation, but there was criticism from Jewish groups. There was. And this was advertised as a black-Jewish war because the black press said that the Jews want blacks to do everything that they want them to do. In this city, that was when we first asked the mayor to establish what we called an Intergroup Clearinghouse. Clearinghouse always has been favorite term of mine.

Glaser: Why?

Raab: It has a nice sound of people getting together and not forcing each other to do things.

Glaser: It has a sound to me of finality. You clear it and there it goes.  
[laughs]



Raab: Well, that's true. I hadn't thought of that. That's a kind of financial approach.

We got together with black groups in the city. I remember we sat around and said, "You know, there's all these thoughts about Andrew Young. Are we about to have a war?" And nobody knew what anybody was talking about. That whole issue was a national issue and hadn't touched our relationships, didn't touch our relationships in the city.

### Anti-American Radicalism

Raab: We felt the impacts in the 1960s, when there was this controversy in Brooklyn with schoolteachers. When the third world stuff was rising on the campuses and the radicalism of the campuses was not necessarily pro-Soviet but was anti-American. The new politics was anti-American. And it was felt in those quarters that Israel was the handmaiden of American imperialism, et cetera, and they were the friends of the Arabs, which drove some Jewish radicals in the campuses out of these radical groups.

We began to feel some black-Jewish tensions around that time. That was in the sixties. Part of that was the development of some radical black groups--SNCC [Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee]--and they impacted us here because there was a very strong presence in this area, out of Berkeley and Oakland, extending to San Francisco. They put out a magazine, a newspaper, which strongly followed the third world line about Israel being an evil part of the "American Empire," sympathetic to the PLO and attacking the Jews. It was clearly anti-Semitic. That was all happening in the sixties. That was during the same period.

### Economic Competition

Glaser: But you wrote a paper for NCRAC stating that even prior to the Andrew Young affair the problems between Jews and the black middle class was they felt they were kept back (they being the blacks) from advancement by the Jews.

Raab: I think the main thing that was felt by the Jews were the radical presentations that came from groups like the Black Panthers. Part of that was inspired by some black radical intellectuals on the campuses, as much of all of this came out of the campuses.



However, in the real world there was a competition for a while that was very apparent, or seemed to be, to black middle class people, to professionals, of competition between blacks and Jews on a very basic economic level. More blacks--this happened a little later--were going to college; more blacks were becoming professionals and competing for the same kinds of jobs that Jews were competing for.

In a way, it was a replication of what had happened in the Bedford-Stuyvesant area in Brooklyn at the beginning of all of this when there was direct economic competition between Jewish teachers and black teachers. Now there was some competition between the black middle class and the Jewish middle class, which shored up some bad feelings among the black middle class. But that faded for some reason eventually, probably because there was plenty of opportunity. That's always been the key to economic competition among groups; it's whether there's a broadening economic situation or not. And actually much more competition in recent years has been noted in the civil service, for example, where some of that earlier competition between blacks and Jews was noted. Now, that is much more noted between Latinos and blacks, direct competition, sometimes heated competition, which both groups express.

The economic reasons for black hostility has diminished over the years. In the first Watts riot, there were obviously those situations in which Jews moved out of neighborhoods into which blacks came. There were, therefore, Jewish storeowners and Jewish landlords, and there were feelings there. But by the 1970s, the Jews had gotten out; they were no longer landlords, they no longer had stores there. Economic competition had gone in areas like civil service, and so forth, because there was now lots of opportunity for blacks.

As a matter of fact, this took on a little bit of the early Jewish concern about affirmative action, that in these professional jobs Jews were not getting their due. It happened in San Francisco. At one point in San Francisco history while I was here, to make it somewhat modern, there was quite a number of Jewish administrators. We used to hold meetings with a group of Jewish school administrators. I started holding them fairly often and for various reasons, in terms of central office, principals, so forth. There were at least a dozen, fifteen, twenty at times.

Gradually they began to diminish in number; and it wasn't because there were no longer Jews in that area, although that may have been one of the reasons. One of the things that happened with this group is that they started coming to us and saying, "We're not getting jobs. Minorities are getting jobs for quota

reasons, and we're not getting promoted." And it happened. In the school department, certainly it happened. Reynold Colvin became the attorney for this group of administrators to try to halt some of that. Eventually, if you tried to hold a meeting with Jewish administrators in public schools today, instead of there being twenty, I don't know what there might be, but certainly not more than three or four.

### Pro-Arab Students at San Francisco State University

[Interview 7: July 17, 1996] ##

Glaser: Would you comment on the anti-Semitism and the pro-Arab sentiments that you see at the San Francisco State campus, and the incident with the Malcolm X mural?

Raab: San Francisco State is one of those places which has a large contingent of students from Arab countries who came here to study. Berkeley, of course, had a good percentage. That's a phenomenon which you have to sort of single out. These are Arab students with Arab nationalist feelings, and they can easily ally themselves with what might be called the more radical elements on the campus. But they're not replicated in the communities anyplace, so it's really a campus-specific phenomenon, and it's very disturbing for the Jewish students on the campus.

It's disturbing for the community when it ends up on the front pages of the newspapers, as it did in the case of San Francisco State. But the Jewish students are in a kind of embattled position. I guess the situation is that the Arab students, where there are a lot of them on a campus, are very passionate. They draw enough of the generally radical students, anti-American students, et cetera to make an apparent alliance; and the Jewish students, there are not very many allies for them. It's a peculiar situation, so they sort of stand alone.

Glaser: Why is the situation so much worse at San Francisco State than at UC Berkeley?

Raab: I really suspect that in terms of percentages there are more Arab students at San Francisco State. There always have been, and there is a tradition on the San Francisco State campus.

Glaser: How do you assess black-Jewish relations today as compared to past years?

Raab: I would say they're not as good as they were in the 1960s, and they're better than they were in the 1970s and eighties. There's not much excitement about them. They were good up until about the middle of the 1960s, when the so-called black revolution took place. There were some black groups that particularly engaged in anti-Semitism. And then it depended upon where you were. In this area, there was such a group in the East Bay, in Berkeley and Oakland, which was very disturbing.

The Jewish relationships in the communities have always been good, generally; that is to say relationships with black ministers. It's always been good and it remains good. So that sometimes when there's a big blowup, a person who sits in the JCRC office doesn't quite understand why people are talking about a war between the blacks and the Jews because they're engaged weekly with black leadership and black ministers in common projects. In other words, the media overblows it sometimes and it's very disturbing.

Glaser: Is the Farrakhan issue going to blow away?

Raab: No, I suspect that as long as Farrakhan is in existence or whoever follows him, I suspect it will not go away because Farrakhan is an anti-Semite. The interesting thing there, of course, is that the traditional relationship between the blacks and the Jews--and you use those terms as though there are huge masses of blacks and huge masses of Jews skipping down the street together or fighting each other--the relationships has always been between leaderships. And the black leadership with whom the Jewish leadership has always been engaged are essentially black ministers and some black lawyers related to the NAACP and civil rights.

The black ministers have continued to be a kind of stable base of black life and important in black life, and relationships have been good with them. I would specify black Christian ministers. It's been an interesting phenomenon that the black ministers really have trouble with Farrakhan. Sometimes they have trouble opposing him; after all, he's after their membership, he's after their Christianity.



**XX CHURCH-STATE ISSUES**Importance to Jews

Glaser: That leads into my next topic of church-state issues, which I gather has always been very prominent on the JCRC agenda. Would you talk about that please?

Raab: Perhaps the single thing which distinguishes freedom for the Jews in America has been their equal status in terms of their ability to practice religion. I think it's been central. You know, there's a famous statement by George Washington--although he got it from Jewish sources initially--that in effect he's against the term "tolerance." And he was talking about Jews because he wrote this letter to a Jewish congregation in Newport that the Jews have an equal right, and therefore it's not a matter of tolerating them at all. He excoriated the word tolerance. That's been the prime basis of Jewish equal status in this country. It goes back a long way.

To stay with the JCRC era, fifty years ago, forty years ago, there was still very strong resistance to anything which might breach what was called, and what is still called, church-state separation. As a matter of fact, in the early days (just to draw a distinction between the temper forty years ago and the temper today, which has changed) forty years ago Jewish agencies such as the JCRC were not only opposed to any kind of Christmas celebrations in the schools, they were opposed to any kind of Hanukkah celebrations in the schools. They felt that it had to be kept in one piece.

It's changed because somewhere during that period two things changed, I think. Jews became a little more secure about their position as a religious group in the country. Secondly, as the drive for a more intensified religious identity became stronger in the Jewish community, they wanted to express themselves. Jewish parents, if they were going to have something related to Christmas



in the schools, they wanted to have something related to Hanukkah, whose status is a little made up as we know. But they wanted to do that because they wanted Jewish pride for their children. So it wasn't the case forty-five years ago.

### Supreme Court Decisions

Raab: That's been modified on both counts, I think: the intensity of Jewish identity, the search for Jewish identity; and secondly, a sense of more assurance. The sense of more assurance comes partly from, compared to fifty years ago, Supreme Court decisions which have said over and over again that you can't Christianize the country, to put it roughly. The Supreme Court took the position that you can't have spoken prayers in the schools. This was a cornerstone decision by the Supreme Court during this period. They said that in effect because it's impossible to have spoken prayers in the schools and not have them be sectarian prayers.

When you talk about putting the Ten Commandments up on the board, we're talking about the school context. Much of the church-state conflict and development took place in the public school venue. They said, "Ten Commandments, certainly that's nonsectarian enough." But it isn't, because the Jewish Ten Commandments is different than the Christian Ten Commandments. And the Catholic prayers, of course, differ from Protestant prayers. As a matter of fact, the Protestants in the early days were often some of the most protective of church-state separation because they were afraid of Catholic domination.

So what has developed, as these court cases have continually said that you cannot put a sectarian religion in a place of public prominence or influence, is the development of the idea that there's a difference between separation of church and state and separation between religion and state. That's happened more recently.

Maybe the holiday celebrations in the schools are an example. The courts have tended to say, and the Jewish sentiment has tended to move in this direction, that you cannot have just Christian-related celebrations in the schools. If you're going to have religious-season-connected celebrations in the schools, that has to be for all religions. The same thing happened in terms of the public square with respect to having even Christmas trees, even a cross perhaps, in Union Square.

The courts have tended to say, because that situation has risen around the country, you can't have this sort of thing in the public square for one religious season but you can have them if you have them for all religious seasons. And this is the distinction that has come up that Jews have not quite dealt with because it's difficult for them. But as I say, there was a time when they were opposed to any kind of religion-related seasonal expression because they felt that even if it was a Jewish religious expression, it was a foot in the door for others. It's evolved so that many Jews, and more Jewish agencies, now accept the idea that you can separate church and state in the sense that no one church can dominate, but you shouldn't try to separate religion and state in the sense that as long as it's a multilateral expression of some kind, it's okay.

### Equal Access

Glaser: What is the issue of equal access?

Raab: In the schools?

Glaser: Yes.

Raab: Well, there again, as this pressure developed--and this pressure developed certainly from some Christian sources--that there be more possibility of religious expression in the schools, it was buttressed by some Jewish acceptance of this ideas as long as it was multilateral and not unilateral. The Congress passed specific laws which said that religious expression is part of freedom of speech and therefore the schools have to allow it, in essence. Just as the courts once ruled that if people want to pass out Bibles that's part of freedom of speech too. They said that if there are groups of students who want to have religious exercises during the day on school premises--not in the classroom, but on school premises--that's okay as long as it's open to all the religions. That's equal access.

Jews were afraid of it. Again, they're still caught in this bind a little bit as to how they feel about this multilateral expression of religion and at what point it becomes dangerous. But a lot of Jews are interested in the ability of Jewish students to get together in the schools.

Government Aid to Religious Schools

Glaser: How did the JCRC stand on government aid to religious schools?

Raab: With all of these changes that I've talked about, there are certain staples that have remained standard on this church-state menu. One of them, as far as the JCRC is concerned and as far as the Jewish public at large is concerned, is opposition to state aid to religious schools. It became breached a little bit at a point, and again the same tension arose, when there was a question of whether free lunches which the government was providing should be also allowed to religious schools. Essentially, the Jews withdrew their opposition to that.

But of course the main tension that's gone on in the Jewish community, which was always heavily opposed to religious schools, was because aid to religious schools essentially meant aid to Catholic schools. Most of the tax money would go to Catholic schools, and there was a feeling that this was a real genuine church-state issue. But that also has become more complicated in some Jewish minds because of the growth of more intense Jewish identity and higher interest in Jewish religious schools.

Glaser: Orthodox Jewry has always opposed that stand of separation of church and state, hasn't it?

Raab: It's not easy to discern in San Francisco, where there may be 2 to 3 percent Orthodox, but in New York City of course it's different. Nationwide, it's 10 percent. It can be reflected in the yearly positions of NCRAC, where they have opportunities for dissent from positions taken. I think most of the dissents over the years (there haven't been too many) have been by the Union of Orthodox Congregations about church-state issues, about aid to religious schools.

I would point out, because of what I've been talking about, in this case especially the growth of the Jewish identity strength, it's been more than the Orthodox who have become a little more interested in aid to religious schools. After all, the schools that we have around San Francisco are mostly not Orthodox schools. And most of the families who send their children there are not Orthodox families.

Prayer in Schools

Raab: So that there's been that dissent. It's a good measure, the dissents of the Union of Orthodox Congregations. They've dissented on that score, and they've dissented perhaps on a couple of others, but also on the question of silent prayer in the schools, which is another example of the ambiguity within the Jewish community. As I said, forty years ago the JCRCs were against anything that seemed to smack of church-state permissibility. One of the positions they've always maintained is they're against silent prayers in the schools. Now, when you talk to the Jewish lawyers in the national agencies, they will agree that there's nothing in the Constitution that prevents silent meditation, silent prayers in the schools. But they're afraid that it's a foot in the door.

Glaser: Wasn't there a court decision on silent prayer that it was against the First Amendment?

Raab: I don't remember that specifically. You don't mean the Supreme Court?

Glaser: Yes.

Raab: Maybe. I don't remember that. There were certainly Supreme Court decisions against--

Glaser: I think it was in the case concerning action in Alabama.<sup>1</sup>

Raab: I don't remember that specifically and I don't remember that silent prayers as such have been ruled out. Congress has certainly fooled around long enough with trying to pass a law saying it's okay. The Supreme Court has generally ruled out sectarian prayer and in certain situations (that may be one of them you refer to) to other kinds of prayer which tend to be sectarian.

You know, what does silent prayer mean? It depends on, and this is what the court decisions have been about, it depends on the surrounding circumstances; you know, what the teacher says. But if it's a matter of silent meditation and the teacher's saying, "Look, this is a time when you can think anything you want

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<sup>1</sup>This court case, launched in 1995, was decided by the Eleventh U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in May, 1997. The court found that a moment of silence is not an illegal attempt to bring prayer into public schools.



quietly to yourselves, including religious thoughts if you want to have them."

See, there's always been a tension between the two phrases in the First Amendment: separation of church and state and freedom of religion. There's a tension there always, and this is one of the points of tension. If a young person wants to sit in a room and pray to himself, silent prayer, and you say he can't, it strikes many as an interference with freedom of religion. It doesn't establish a religion of any kind unless the teacher makes some unfortunate comments to open it up. But that's been one of the changes. There's more and more sentiment in Jewish agency life that perhaps silent prayer isn't too bad, and there's some movement in the Jewish community.

President Clinton made a speech last year in which he said that the Constitution (I don't quote him exactly) does not mean that the public schools are a religion-free zone. It made some Jews uncomfortable. But then the President said he drew that specific wording from an interfaith document, which had just been published with the support of NCRAC and the American Jewish Congress, as a matter of fact.

This gets back to the central question, the central shifting in Jewish thought about church-state separation. More and more people are thinking that it means preventing any church from getting a specific foothold or favoritism from government. But it does not mean that either the schools or the public parks have to be religion-free. That's still the argument that's going on today within Jewish circles. You've seen a gradual change in it over the past forty years.

### Creationism

Glaser: Have the JCRCs ever gotten involved with the evolution versus creationism issue, or is that too parochial?

Raab: No. It hasn't happened in the San Francisco Board of Education, that argument, that debate. But where it happened in Sacramento we got involved. There were attempts in Sacramento in the State Legislature either to get rid of the theory of evolution in the school systems or to insist on creationism. We, the JCRC, have gotten involved. Creationism is one of those things like prayer, or perhaps even the Ten Commandments, where one version of creationism is different from another version of creationism. So the question is, is it going to be the Christian version, the



Protestant version, the Catholic version, or the Jewish version.  
And that's why Jewish agencies have been concerned about the  
attempt to implant creationism in the place of evolution.



## XXI OTHER RELIGIOUS GROUPS

Muslims

Glaser: In our discussion this morning you've talked about various sects of Christians and of Jews. There's no mention on your part of Muslims. Shouldn't that be coming into the fore?

Raab: People say so. Population statistics suggest that there is now a sizeable number of Muslims in the country. In the beginning-- we're talking about a forty-year period in any case, fifty year period--at the beginning at that period the word Muslim could not be heard. You talk about interfaith groups, interfaith cooperation, you're talking about Christian-Jewish statements made by politicians and by the leaders of these interfaith groups. There were a couple of them in the City; particularly, for example, the Conference on Religion and Race was made up specifically of Catholics, Protestants, and Jews. When we had appointments to certain positions where there were a few religions that were supposed to be represented, it was Christians, Catholics, Protestants, and Jews.

I guess, again as part of that period which emerged in the nineteen sixties, not so much out of the growth of any strength of Muslim religions but out of Arab nationalism and out of the great impulse starting in the late nineteen sixties to have everybody represented--the diversity theme which we still see in American life--that the Muslims began to be mentioned. So that on interfaith in Mid East today, you're very likely to find a Muslim. But this has been one of the changes in the last forty years. One of the problems for the Jews, of course, has been the development of the black Muslim movement, which they identify with the Nation of Islam.

National Council of Churches

Glaser: What was the relationship with the National Council of the Churches?

Raab: National Council of Churches in that period, and again we're talking about the watershed period in the last fifty years which began in the late 1960s, after 1965. At the point when that watershed occurred and radicalized a number of groups with respect to Israel and the Arab-Israeli conflict, and this happened on the campuses and it happened in certain specific religious circles.

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Raab: The National Council of Churches, this Protestant body, began to issue more and more and specific criticisms of Israel vis-a-vis the Arabs. Some of this, incidentally, was related to certain bodies in the Protestant world which were engaged still in specific missions through the Arab world and therefore had this kind of involvement with the Arab world. And of course, this was partly the politics of the Catholic Church. As far as the Vatican was concerned, they also had a stake in the Arab world and in essentially missionary activities in the Arab world.

You've got to remember that much of the Arab population in the San Francisco area, unlike Detroit perhaps, was Christian. They came from Ramallah and from areas in the Palestinian world which were Christian. This reflected, obviously, some missionary efforts on the part of certain Christian sects. They had an investment; so that there were often adversary statements made out of the Council of Churches with respect to Jews that bothered Jews.

Moonies

Glaser: Would you talk about the period when the Moonies were very strong in San Francisco? Not just in San Francisco, in the whole Bay Area.

Raab: Sometimes, one gets the feeling that the items, which become let's say front page items for the Jewish Bulletin or for the JCRC, just happen to get there because they've emerged as a media phenomenon. Which doesn't mean that there's nothing behind them, but it does mean that they don't necessarily reflect certain kinds of reality. The Moonies were of great concern to the Jews at one point. Yet

I'm not convinced that at the time they were so concerned there were more missionary activities by these groups than there are today.

Glaser: Which missionary groups?

Raab: Well, the Jews for Jesus and certain other groups, as well as the Moonies which are still operating. The image that comes to my mind is the story of the guru of one big movement in the Eastern religion who came to this country, he said, specifically to find out why so many and even the majority of his followers were Jewish in origin. Jews have always been disproportionate in these groups. In the Moonies they were disproportionate.

There's the old saying, the Jews are like everybody else only more so. And they're more so partly because they're a middle class, lingual, visible group on the campuses. On the Berkeley campus, when everything broke in the sixties and counts were made there was a highly disproportionate number of Jews involved in those radical groups. There are a highly disproportionate number of Jews in San Francisco involved in the gay groups that have come out of the closet. The Jews are disproportionate in that sense, in that they're middle class, they're educated, they come out, and they're seeking.

This was true of these missionary groups as well: the Jews for Jesus of course, the Moonies, and the Eastern religions as well. People aren't so much worried about them, I guess because the Moonies seemed so clearly a mind-washing group. Even though they were a mind-washing group, nevertheless they drew a disproportionate number of Jews because they were attractive to a disproportionate number of Jewish kids who were looking for something more, something different.

Anyway, at one point the Moonies were at a certain height, I guess, in this area. And it was around the same area where Jews were being radicalized, young Jews and so forth, when things were changing. The educated edge of the middle class youth were looking elsewhere and constantly seeking. A number of them were picked up by the Moonies. I don't know what the nature of the threat was; it was never clear to me. I never felt, a lot of us never felt, that the Moonies, Jews for Jesus, or any of the other groups, including Hare Krishna (of which there were disproportionate number of Jews) that any of these groups were going to really make any inroads in Jewish population.

The concern was always with the individual Jewish soul, and the individual Jewish soul that's lost is lost. That's unfortunate, but in large terms it wasn't that large, it was just



dramatic. And, as I say, any time one Jew is subverted religiously it's an affront. JCRC set up a special committee and there were a couple of people who were experts, a psychologist in Berkeley and somebody else who we kept in touch with. But there wasn't anything we could do.

We weren't about to do any reverse brainwashing, that kind of capture. And the way the Jewish community can fight the Moonies, and so forth, is by strengthening its own Jewish education, and so forth. Concern about it died, although I suspect that the numbers aren't all that different. Partly because perhaps some of these groups became a little less popular, although the Moonies still have a huge organization, and because other things occupied our minds. Some Jews are lost, how many are regained I don't know, but it's never been a huge figure.

Christians in this country, since before the Civil War and throughout the nineteenth century, had huge efforts at converting the Jews. Huge efforts. And it was offensive, as it is today. But they never converted very many Jews.

## XXII SECTARIAN POLITICAL ACTIVITY

### Civil Rights Period

Glaser: Within this decade, it seems to me, churches have become, and maybe just some specific churches, much more politically active. Is that your sense also?

Raab: Yes. We make the division between the mainstream churches and the fundamentalist churches. Both became more active in America a number of years ago around social gospel. In the civil rights period, when we of the Jewish community were so involved in civil rights. When we had these weekly meetings, for example, of people and of an organization which led the civil rights fight in this city early on, around the table were some black leaders, JCRC leaders, and some religious leaders. In that sense, they became politically very active, more so than they had been before. Civil rights turned on their activity, as it did in a sense Jewish activity.

In this city, the Protestant churches and Catholic churches had a strong civil rights movement. There were special groups that were set up, Catholic civil rights groups, that became part of our effort then. The Jews had no concern regarding this activity on behalf of civil rights. These were the same groups that had opposed Nazism and had joined with Jews in opposing Nazism. Jews had no concern with that kind of political activity.

### Fundamentalists

Raab: Jewish concern with Christian political activity came later on when the fundamentalists became politically active. Partly there was good reason for it. When we talk about fundamentalists we mean fundamentalists in an evangelical movement. The definition

of an evangelical movement, which is true of so many of the fundamentalist movements, is that it wants to evangelize, it wants to convert people. And there is a special interest in converting Jews because, as we know, this was something that was clear in the Christian conversionary efforts on the Jews in the nineteenth century. Early on there was a period when Jews and Jewish agencies were (I'm generalizing here, of course) happy enough with fundamentalist activity because much of the fundamentalist activity related to supporting Israel. It's part of the conversionary doctrine that the Messiah won't come until the Jews are converted and Israel is converted. The idea being that the Jews go back to Israel and become Christians and then the Messiah would come.

Glaser: And then there was that minister's statement that God does not hear Jewish prayers.

Raab: It's interesting because at the same time that Jews were pleased that the fundamentalists were supporting Israel for those reasons and anti-Communist reasons as well when Russia was supporting Arabs, a majority of Jews were always uneasy with fundamentalists because they felt that this was a major seat of anti-Semitism. Even the conversionary attempts were an aspect of anti-Semitism. And it's true that some of the fundamentalist leaders have made statements that clearly indicate that the Jews have to convert in order to get to heaven. This was always part of that Christian doctrine.

Pope John, the great changer of Catholic philosophy, and this happened again in that euphoric period in the 1960s and so forth, broke Catholic tradition more heavily than any one before in these terms by actually issuing a proclamation that Judaism was legitimate on its own. It was not a transition, it was legitimate on its own. And this was a new concept in formal Catholic and much Christian theology. That's the struggle, and it's still the struggle, to get from the Christian community the concept that Judaism is legitimate, not just a transition to Christianity and therefore incomplete until it makes that transition.

There is one other aspect to this in terms of the fundamentalists. If it's not clear that those people who call themselves fundamentalists, the born-again Christians, are more anti-Semitic than other Americans, it was clearly true at one time and it related to the factor of education. I'm talking now about surveys and statistics and so forth. At one time, and I'm talking about even early in this fifty year period that we're surveying, the fundamentalists and the activist fundamentalists were heavily located in the South. Statistically they were at lower educational levels than others, and anti-Semitism always

correlated very directly with educational levels. The less education, the more anti-Semitism in attitudinal surveys. So that if you put those two together, you find that fundamentalists were more anti-Semitic.

It's not so clear that's true any more, perhaps because there are fewer and fewer less educated fundamentalists. But it was always related to education. But the Jews always felt that the fundamentalists were anti-Semitic, which may have been, as I say, more true once than it is now because of educational levels. Still, I think that Jews feel less and less a threat out there in America.

I think the main source of threat that many of them feel are the newly politicized fundamentalist movements because of the statements of some of the leaders, whether there's more anti-Semitism down below or not among the fundamentalists today.

When [Pat] Buchanan, who is in essence a Catholic fundamentalist, when Buchanan got up at the Republican Convention and said that, in effect, there is a religious war in this country, he scared the hell out of the Jews. A religious war to them, spoken by a Christian, means that they're going to be the fodder for a religious war. As you indicated, there are other religious leaders who've gotten up and made statements that scared the Jews. This is of continuing difficulty.

Even the abortion issue touches the Jews, I think. Not just because of their liberal ideas about abortion, although that's a factor, and the more liberal ideas of Judaism about abortion, depending on which denomination you belong to. But because Buchanan, to name him again, and Reed of the Christian Coalition, et cetera, when they talk about abortion they're talking about passing laws which will impose upon the population restrictions directly based on sectarian religious belief. And this is what scares the Jews. I think this scares the Jews more than anything.

#### Jewish Political Affiliation

Raab: Jews have become more conservative on a lot of issues. They are still more liberal than any other part of the white population. But they've become more conservative, or at least their conservatism shows more on issues like welfare for example, on crime and punishment. They're very strong on the death penalty, for example, and so forth.



Where was I?

Glaser: How Jews are more liberal but getting more conservative.

Raab: They're more conservative. But the one thing that unites even the conservative Jews is a concern about Christian fundamentalism. Jews are more conservative than many of us like to think. Jews continue to vote for the Democratic party by an 80 percent margin. But it's my feeling, and there's evidence, that one of the reasons why they're so close to the Democratic party is because they're so estranged from the Republican party. There are some feelings about budget, about economic policy, in which a good 40 percent of the Jews could subscribe. But the Republican party has not seemed hospitable to the Jews, and the winds of sectarianism constantly blow from the Republican party.

Glaser: Well, Pat Buchanan's speech was certainly a wake-up call.

Raab: That was the kind of thing that really turned the Jews off. You know, it was in the San Francisco Convention when Jesse Jackson made a speech and I was in a large Jewish audience, it so happened. You could sense that people got a little rigid because of the Christian fundamentalist nature of his remarks at that time. That's what scares Jews. Jews are not subject to employment discrimination very seriously in this country at this point, or housing discrimination. Nor is there any largeish group, although all of them are fringes, who proclaim that they're after the Jews. But the main thing which still scares them, it comes back to the church-state issue, I guess, is the idea that there is going to be religious oppression or exclusion and any remarks which move in that direction.



## XXIII SOVIET JEWRY

Early Activities in the 1950s

Glaser: The JCRC became involved with the Soviet Jewry matter very early on. It became the mailing address for the Bay Area Council for Soviet Jewry. Number one, why did the JCRC get involved? And what were the different areas of activity between the JCRC and the Bay Area Council?

Raab: Historically, you have to start a little earlier, although it becomes personalized. My influence on JCRC policy was always ancillary, related to the policy-making board of the JCRC or the extent to which I could influence the policy-making board. But the one issue that I think bore my personal mark more than any others, and it wasn't important at the time, was the fact that the San Francisco JCRC started activity on behalf of Soviet Jewry in the 1950s. We held rallies in Union Square on behalf of Soviet Jews in 1950; nobody else was doing it.

Glaser: That's very early.

Raab: That's very early. And we did radio programs on Soviet Jewry in the 1950s and so forth. That was just partly out of my political history because I knew about the oppression of the Jews and of the Soviet Union. And I was so opposed to the Soviet Union in general, to the oppressive Communist regime in Russia. I knew they'd slaughtered Jewish poets and writers so that I pushed that. But it was not important. It was not important because there was no opportunity, there was no chance that anything we could do would influence the Soviet Union in the 1950s. Stalin was still riding high in the early 1950s and there was no way we could touch them. There wasn't even an organized Jewry in the Soviet Union.

Soviet Jews Begin to Organize

Raab: That early activity is a kind of historical oddity. It was only when the 1967 War took place, when Israel became a strong entity, a dramatic entity-- First of all, it was after Stalin died in the late 1950s, but that didn't change policy with respect to Soviet immigration so much. Soviet Jews began to organize. If you want to talk about the influence on that whole issue, you've got to start with the Soviet Jews because they organized themselves, protested themselves, heroically. Without that base, nothing more would have been done.

It's an interesting episode in Jewish history and the history of community relations even. When suddenly the Soviet Jews broke out heavily in protest, and the Soviet Union after Stalin's death seemed to be less Iron Curtain-ish, a little less Iron Curtain-ish than it had been with him in charge, it was only then, despite what we'd done in the 1950s here, that the serious idea of a Soviet Jewry movement in this country developed. And then there was a controversy, a real big controversy in the American Jewish community and the community relations community. What should our slogan be for Soviet Jews? To be rough about it: a) is the slogan "Let them practice religion freely" or b) "Let them go"? That was a debate within our circles in American Jewish life.

There was also a concern in some establishment quarters, and by establishment I mean the federations, NCRAC, national agencies. There was some concern about putting Soviet Jews at risk. Do we name people who want to get out of the Soviet Union or would that put them at risk? And then there was the philosophical question: do we say Jews, certainly those who want to, should stay in the Soviet Union and be allowed to have freedom? Or do we say they all should leave? Those were the stark alternatives. A movement grew up, an alternative movement within American Jewish life, which was antagonistic to the apparent hesitation and ramifications of this debate.

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Raab: We're going to engage in direct action to free the Jews and do whatever we have to do that so that they can go to Israel. That's the whole purpose. None of this nonsense about freedom for the Jews as a major kind of slogan. One of the leaders of that national alternative movement was a San Franciscan, Hal Light, who established the Bay Area Council for Soviet Jewry. I don't know when it got its name, but he became part of the council, whatever

it was, the national body of the groups that were coming up around the country like the Bay Area Council for Soviet Jewry.

The establishment was furious at this alternative movement for a couple of reasons. One, because every establishment is furious when an alternative movement arises; and secondly, because they had these more conservative concerns. You know, "We've got to talk a little more with the Soviet Jews to find out what they want to do, and do we really want to say that all Jews should leave," and so forth.

Glaser: What establishment group are you talking about?

Raab: I'm talking about NCRAC and all the agencies in NCRAC. In San Francisco, because of our early interest in the Soviet Jewry situation, we were more sympathetic to the Bay Area Council than the national groups wanted us to be.

#### Israel's Role

Raab: Israel played a tremendous role in the whole Soviet Jewry business, and part of it was a behind-the-scenes role, a hidden role. There developed a tension between this alternative movement and the State of Israel on this subject. That tension related to the feeling of the alternative movement--alternative movements tend to be a little paranoid for obvious reasons, sometimes for good reasons. It tended to feel that the State of Israel had a double agenda with the Soviet Union: a) to get the Jews out. Israel certainly wanted the Jews out and into Israel. But b) they had a political interest in terms of their relationship to the Soviet Union and the Soviet Union's relationship to the Arab countries and so forth. So they wanted to handle this situation themselves and in their own way.

Partly this was true. Israel had a natural double agenda in terms of their relationships with the Soviet Union. But the alternative movement put the most sinister kind of glow on this natural double agenda. The national agencies were, of course, close to the State of Israel, and its particular apparatus, big apparatus, related to the Soviet Union and Soviet Jewry. It was a Massad operation very heavily. So there was great antagonism between Israel and the alternative movement which attacked Israel directly sometimes, and between our national agencies and the alternative movement.

Here, we were more sympathetic, as I said, because of our historic position and feeling about the Soviet Union and the plight of the Soviet Jews. It was not without friction because it was an alternative movement even here, and alternative movements are interested in separating themselves from the establishment and moving ahead on their own. But we became closer here than any other chapter of this alternative establishment elsewhere in the country. And we were subject to much castigation by the national agencies and by the Israeli government on that score. They were furious at us.

As I say, we had some of our troubles, just bureaucratic troubles, but we sent out the first request for Bay Area Council membership. A large mailing in the city was sent out through the JCRC. Then when the question of financing the Bay Area Council came up to the Federation, we supported that, although the funds came through the JCRC to the Bay Area Council. But it was never a matter of us deciding whether we should give it to them or not. We were the channel and we spoke on behalf of their budget. After the initial period of bureaucratic friction between us, we became very close. And the closer we became, the more angry at us became the national agencies and the Israeli government.

The National Conference on Soviet Jewry was set up by the establishment, and the friction between them and the Union of Councils for Soviet Jewry always continued. It was interesting because the basis for the development of this alternative movement was legitimate. The establishment was dragging its heels a bit, and yet-- You know, there's an old saying, "Revolutionaries should be free to establish the revolution and then they should be shot."

Glaser: [laughter]

Raab: Because sometimes revolutionaries aren't the best people to conduct the ongoing affairs. In any case, that continued to last for a long while. And after that, incidentally, we did things together. When there were demonstrations in front of the Soviet Consulate, it was the JCRC and the Bay Area Councils and so forth.

Glaser: Were you as involved as the Bay Area Council was in having people write to Soviet dissidents in order to establish lines of communication?

Raab: The programmatic front was not clearly defined between us and the Bay Area Council. We tried to do things together, and there were some things which we did as they did because they were just different audiences. We got synagogues to adopt certain Jews in the Soviet Union, the bar mitvahs which were done in the name of



somebody in the Soviet Union. We had people call, write letters to the Soviet Union. That was a continual effort on our part and the Bay Area Council. It became amicable, we just had different fields. We could widen the circles in which these things were done.

Glaser: Is the name of the national group that you mentioned but couldn't remember the American Conference on Soviet Jewry?

Raab: No, the Conference on Soviet Jewry was the establishment group. This was called the Council of-- Doug Kahn, incidentally, I first knew him when he was a student and a Soviet Jewry activist and he came back years later. But he would know what that council's name was exactly. [Union of Councils for Soviet Jewry]

We succeeded. You see, one of the lines that we tried to establish was that the JCRC, by staying in connection with the Bay Area Council, would engage in the kind of political activity for which it was best suited in terms of having all of the organizations in the Jewish community together. For example, when there was a question of whether Leningrad should be made a sister city of San Francisco, and I've talked about that in connection with Dianne Feinstein, this was basically a JCRC function. Some of the demonstrations were basically Bay Area Council functions although we cooperated with them. Hal Light was an important man in Jewish life finally.

### Project Yachad

[Interview 8: July 24, 1996] ##

Glaser: In one of our earlier interviews, you mentioned Hugim. Would you explain that please. And was Soviet Jewry its primary focus?

Raab: Well, they're not related I don't think. The way that Hugim came up in our history, I think, was that some years ago, when we were pursuing what I always thought was one of the chief functions of an agency like this, which was to raise the level of informed consciousness about issues in the Jewish community. We held Hugim, which means discussion groups, all around the city. We had leadership people in the Peninsula and Marin and San Francisco meeting for maybe four or more sessions, a couple hours apiece or two or three hours, and discussing the issues. It was really a very fruitful enterprise; people remembered it for many years.

Glaser: Would you talk about Project Yachad?



Raab: Which was that?

Glaser: It's a one-to-one relationship with a Soviet Jewish person or family.

Raab: Yes. Now this was something that we certainly shared with the Bay Area Council for Soviet Jewry. I'm not sure whether they came up with it first, but in any case, the idea was for two purposes: one, to dramatize the problem in this country and in our community. Secondly, to help raise the morale and give evidence of support to Soviet Jews, which was a constant function that everybody thought was necessary throughout the Soviet Jewry movement. There was, in different ways, always an attempt to establish a one-to-one relationship.

After things eased up a little bit but not altogether, there was a constant effort to make trips to the Soviet Union and take Jews from this area to go over there to personally meet some embattled Soviet Jews and in some cases to establish a permanent relationship with them. In other cases there was just a correspondence-kind of relationship between specific Jews in this area and specific Jews in the Soviet Union. In some cases, as you know, there were bar mitzvah ceremonies which were shared between here and the Soviet Union, always with a double purpose in mind.

#### Trip to Moscow, 1967

Glaser: Did you ever go to the Soviet Union?

Raab: I went there early. I was there in 1967.

Glaser: Was this an official visit or as a tourist?

Raab: No, this was an official visit, but the Soviets were not supposed to know that it was official. Several of us went. It was an early visit in these terms. We went to Israel first and we loaded up with Israeli mementos to give to Soviet Jews. The Soviet Jewry movement in the Soviet Union, in Russia, was still very minimal, so it was not, as happened later on in later years, that everybody had long lists of Soviet Jews that they knew were trying to get out. But here there were only a few.

We went to the Soviet Union and we wished to exhibit our little, obvious Israeli, mementos. As a matter of fact, we carried El-Al handbags in the hopes the Jews might notice us. We

used to go up to people. We'd speak Yiddish loudly in order to attract attention and so forth. We did collect some names.

Glaser: Did you have any feeling of apprehension when you entered the country?

Raab: This was a bad period. As you remember, I knew that they had my name in the Soviet Union because of my anti-Communist activities in this country. And this was one of their stiff periods, they just arrested an American, put him in jail as a matter of fact. We knew it was a tough period.

It was impossible during those years to buy an English-language newspaper or to find any kind of outside non-Communist newspaper of any kind. So when we went to the embassy, we saw a copy of the Herald-Tribune and wanted to take it with us. The embassy people told us flatly that we should be careful, and when we were through with it we should tear it up and flush it down the toilet because they were looking for reasons to arrest people. There was that kind of apprehension. This was January, there weren't very many tourists in Russia. We knew very well that they knew who we were and we had to dodge them, in effect. We knew that the travel guide-- What's the name? I've forgotten the name.

Glaser: Intourist?

Raab: Yes. That he was a KGB agent who was very good in English and a student of American literature. We dodged him. We weren't supposed to go anyplace without them when we got on buses. We got some addresses. It was an interesting trip.

Glaser: Did you have a feeling of your room being bugged?

Raab: We were placed in one of the old grand but crumbling hotels in Moscow and we knew our rooms were bugged. There was no question about that. The embassy told us that.

It was interesting. At one point there was very little Yiddish activity permitted, but in 1967--this was before the war in the Middle East--things were a little creakily opened. We found a kind of vaudeville show coming to town, a musical revue which was in Yiddish. My wife went with me, we went to see it. It was interesting because as we came in, it was a small hall, maybe five hundred people, they were of course all Jews, and they recognized us right away. I mean they recognized us as American Jews right away, greeted us and grabbed for our hands and so forth. It was interesting.

My wife is much more of an expert in Yiddish than I am, so she understood the whole thing. There was one song in this revue which said, in effect, in Yiddish, how's a person supposed to make a living? And that was the song that brought down the house, because, you know, for the Jews in the Soviet Union it was often difficult to make a living, especially those with middle class backgrounds. We went to the synagogue in Moscow and were greeted and told to tell the people in America what the situation was. It was a dramatic visit.

### Jackson-Vanik Act: Government Action

Glaser: What was the JCRC's position on the Jackson-Vanik Act?

Raab: We were very much in favor of the Jackson-Vanik Act, whose purpose was to hold back certain economic benefits from the Soviet Union until they liberalized their immigration policy. The president was to be the the judge, of that. It was a pretty strong battle because it's the same battle that's occurred over and over again, as in the case of South Africa for example. Whether this sort of thing helps or hurts, we all felt that this could only help.

Glaser: But wasn't the JCRC against the secondary boycott of stores carrying Soviet goods?

Raab: There's always been a historic opposition by the organized Jewish community to secondary boycotts for the reason that it's always so often historically been a weapon against Jews. And we just thought it was a bad example. I don't think a secondary boycott against stores was part of the Jackson-Vanik Bill.

Glaser: No. I don't mean that.

Raab: So the question of putting pressure on a foreign government was on a different level than secondary boycotts in the community, which we felt could boomerang.

Glaser: Was there any backlash because of the federal government providing funds for settling Soviet Jews or the refuseniks in this country?

Raab: There was I might say surprisingly little backlash. I don't know whether the body of American Jews recognizes the extent to which the American government has contributed to the settlement of Jews from the Soviet Union, which they did also for the settlement of the Ethiopian Jews in Israel. They gave Israel money for settling the Soviet Jews, and, of course, they provided money for Soviet

Jews who came in as refugees to this country. That was not singularly a Jewish operation. The federal government generally had funds for helping to settle political and religious refugees, so this was part of it, although the Soviet Jews really took a large part of these funds.

In terms of the backlash that you talk about, there was none from the general American public, really, that could be noticed. There was some kind of backlash from other groups, eventually, which felt that perhaps the Jews were getting favorable treatment over the Vietnamese in terms of even higher amounts of grants.





## XXIV IMMIGRATION ISSUES

Immigration to U.S. versus Israel

Glaser: Would you discuss the controversy of helping *refuseniks* come to the United States rather than going to Israel?

Raab: Well, you remember that there was an original controversy over strategy as to whether the political slogan should be "Let them go" or the political slogan should be "Let them be free." And that one was fast settled in terms of "Let them go" for a lot of reasons. First of all, it was working, and secondly, there was no indication that they would be let free and left alone to pursue their Judaism freely.

The other controversy is the one that you mentioned, the strategic controversy. It was a very strenuous one because the American official establishment Jewry movement was very closely allied to the Israeli government, both in terms of ideology and sometimes in funds on the national level. The Israeli policy was that Jews from the Soviet Union should come to Israel. The battle was still on, if I can refer to it in those militaristic terms, between the alternative Soviet Jewry movement and the establishment Soviet Jewry movement.

The alternative Soviet Jewry movement was dedicated to the idea of letting them go wherever they could go and wherever they wanted to go, including America. This became, perhaps, the chief focus of controversy between Israel and the American establishment on the one hand and the Soviet Jewry movement on the other. Again, the San Francisco JCRC, because of its past history, was a little more sympathetic to the position of the alternative Soviet Jewry movement than many of the Jewish groups.

Syrian Jews

Glaser: What did the JCRC do in relation to Syrian Jews who wanted to leave the country? That was equally difficult, if not more so.

Raab: Oh, it was more so. In a way it reminded one of the activities of the San Francisco JCRC in the 1950s on behalf of Soviet Jews. It didn't make a dent because there was no possibility; the way you did it, finally, was by way of the American government putting pressure on another government. Our role was to get the American government to put that pressure on. That's how it was done. In the early days, of course, there was no way to put pressure on Stalin. For most of this period that we're talking about, there was no way to put pressure on the Syrian government, which was a beneficiary of the Soviet government. It was very frustrating from that point of view. There was very little leverage that the American government had on Syria, so that it was a very frustrating operation.

Every now and then, as a result of some kind international development, you got a few Syrian Jews out. But we tried to keep the pressure on in any case and keep it on the agenda of the American government. When the Soviet Jews started to come out in any number, the Soviet Union was not adverse to it being known that they were coming out; obviously, that was one of the things they wanted to do. The pressure had been put on them and they wanted to remove any possible penalties of having a restrictive emigration policy.

Glaser: Did you say Soviet Union?

Raab: Soviet Union. So they were willing to let it be known. But the Syrian government never wanted it to be known when they were allowing Jews out because that would not have stood them well in certain Arab countries. Even when some Syrian Jews came out, and they did on occasion here and there, it was on a very hush-hush basis.

Glaser: I think in some cases they had to go a very roundabout route to get out of the country. And then eventually wasn't there money that had to be paid per person to get them out?

Raab: That was one of the operations. But you see, all of those things remain very murky because Syria didn't want it known. Therefore, the world Jewish community couldn't let it be known either.

Glaser: Was there any involvement with Iranian Jews? I think the JCRC had to help some Iranian students here in the Bay Area.

Raab: I don't, at this point, remember a movement on behalf of the Jews in Iran who were here.

### Liberalization of Immigration Laws

Glaser: What is the JCRC position with regard to immigration? Of course it's in the forefront now; I don't know if it was also when you were the head of the JCRC.

Raab: Immigration was always, and must remain, at the top of the agenda for community relations. [pause]

Early on, starting in the 1950s, the Jewish community and this JCRC became very involved in liberalization of America's immigration laws. There was no question about the need to get involved because of the tragic restriction of Jewish refugees from entering this country in the 1930s. There was also the fact that the national origins quota system established in the 1920s was certainly racist, and essentially cut off Jewish immigration and emigration from southern Europe, eastern Europe to this country. That was still part of the law of the country.

So there were immigration revisions (I think they were in the 1950s) which the Jewish community was very much in the vanguard of. Much of it was in the vanguard of the civil rights movement, later joined by some of the same kinds of people. Not the black community so much, they hadn't come out then. But the Japanese were very much interested in part of that movement.

The liberal quarters of the Protestant and Catholic churches were with us, so that we used to gather often in the JCRC for the pressures from this area. Much as we would gather for civil rights in order to push that kind of liberalization with our representatives and senators. And soon we succeeded. The first kind of success that I saw after I came into the field was the ability of the Jewish community to join with others to influence policymakers.

Glaser: But in the recent years, it's become such a political issue and racist issue, even more so than the period you're talking about.

Raab: Well, of course then there were two things to get rid of: the national origins quota system, to raise the ceiling somewhat on

immigration in general, and very much to liberalize the political refugee system. In very recent years, the emphasis has been, and California has been at the vanguard of this, on illegal immigration. Although I think some people would like to see it, so far there's been very little attack on the political refugee system. The idea still stands that when political refugees want to come to this country that's something we have to do as a very center of American meaning.

### Illegal Immigration

Raab: But illegal immigration has come under severe attack; it's grown heavily. We're talking about mainly now from Mexico. There's very little that we've been able to do to stop it physically, and if you add up figures it is costly. The Jewish community has had some strain on its consciousness about this issue. The famous referendum in California a couple of years ago did restrict initially the ability of illegal immigrants to get public health services, and even more notably of children of illegal immigrants, themselves illegal immigrants, from getting free public education. The Jewish community voted heavily against this measure; more heavily, I might say, in northern California than in southern California, where the split was something like sixty-forty.

There has been that kind of strain. There are Jews, apparently a good number of them, who feel that in a time of economic tightness there has to be some kind of restraint or some kind of hindrance to unrestrained illegal immigration. It has slipped over a little bit to legal immigration. As you can see, as we speak here today, the proposed welfare bill, for example, would deny a lot of benefits to legal immigrants. I think that the Jewish community would be far from its historic experience in this country if it did not feel that it wanted to safeguard legal immigration, refugee immigration, to the fullest extent, even though there are some differences of opinion within the Jewish community.

### English-Only Controversy

Glaser: What is your personal feeling about the English-only issue?

Raab: You really get a split opinion from a lot of people about this. I think it's important and good for the various ethnic groups that



live in this country to have a sustaining relationship to their language--Spanish, Jewish, indeed. But integration has been important to this country. It's part of its central meaning and its central ability to hold together. As we can see, it's the first country of its kind in the world that has attempted to bring people together in the same way. In Europe, you can see Yugoslavia, you can see so many places where ethnic differences which are exacerbated by language differences means constant warfare, constant conflict. English is important to a universal understanding and skill.

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Raab: That universal skill is important in America for two reasons: one is to hold the country together, and secondly to enable immigrant groups to become successful in this country and integrated in this country. It's such an obvious point. It's not going to happen to the immigrant children unless they're proficient in English, and it can't happen. So that when you say, "How do I feel about English-only?", English first is perhaps a better term for me, and it should be the goal of the schools to make English first, although it should also be a goal of the schools to help young people retain whatever cultural language they may have. That's the first and main obligation of the family and that ethnic community. The first obligation of the schools is the teaching of English.

Controversies have developed around school programs, questions whether immigrant children should be taught in English or in the language which they speak at home. There've been two kinds of answers. One is to encourage them to speak their original language throughout their school career, which I think does interfere with the English first function of the schools to the detriment of the children and to the advantage only of those people in any particular ethnic community that have an institutional investment in such a public school program.

On the other hand, English as a second language is a program which the schools should pursue. In other words, for immigrant children who come in and who are only adept at their home language, they should be drawn into the English language through their own language so that it would be easier for them to adapt. Jews sometimes have a little difficulty with this concept because of the historical, not personal but historical, recollection now of how the Jews came over to this country in the latter part of the nineteenth century, early part of the twentieth, and flooded into the schools without a knowledge of English and came out of the schools with a great knowledge of English.



We're going to talk about the public schools and all, which is a big item on the Jewish community relations agenda.

Glaser: That's our next item.

Raab: It's a *segué*. I remember my growing up, part where I was in Virginia where was no ghetto, part of it was in New York where I for a few years lived in a Jewish ghetto, in Brownsville in an old tenement building. The kind that they had built for immigrants and which had aged considerably. It was across the street from a school, everything was cement, there were no trees, and the kids would play in the schoolyard. This was a Jewish neighborhood, this was a Jewish ghetto. I've already talked about this period.

We were all very poor, but among those at least in my circles we knew that we were going to get out of the ghetto. We knew that we had the American dream established. We were going to work hard, we were going to be smart, we were going to get out of the ghetto. Therefore, we were in a sense not ground down by this ghetto circumstance, which was worse in certain physical ways than most of the ghettos that you can find today.

But we have different cultural groups involved today. Some of them have no sense that many of the children are going to be able to get out of the ghetto as we did, because of different cultural expectations, because of different historical backgrounds. We were pushed to education because our families pushed us to education. In some groups that's not the case.

In America today, for example, it's obvious. You can see the Chinese immigrants are hopeful, and we were hopeful because some Jews were making it. We could see that it could be done. For a long time it was difficult for some immigrant groups in America. When you talk about the blacks, you can't exactly talk about an immigrant group. But the groups that were in the position of having to emerge, there were no role models out there.

Today, for example, the Chinese have role models. The Chinese have family pushing them to education, the Chinese have expectations, and the Chinese are doing extremely well. It's been somewhat disconcerting to some groups like African Americans that these new immigrant groups come to this country poverty-stricken, the South Vietnamese for example, and succeed swiftly in the schools and in life in general, in the economic life, more so than older groups like the African Americans.

One of the interesting kinds of demonstrations of this is what we call the Latin American community in this country, which is actually not a single community but a number of communities.

As you compare the Cubans, who are Latin Americans, in this country with the Mexican Americans in this country, statistically speaking the Cubans are like the Chinese: highly educated, very successful. The Mexican Americans not so. The Puerto Ricans not so, because again of cultural backgrounds, expectations and so forth. Of course, many of the Cubans in this country were middle class and had the cultural background, expectations, education, and so forth.

Glaser: What bothered me about this English-only business is that it seemed to be so discriminatory, so racist.

Raab: Well, you know the interesting thing is that the polls show that the majority of Latin Americans in this country (we're talking about the schools) are especially interested in a program of English first. Because they know very well, as with the Chinese, that that's the way their kids are going to grow in this country.

Glaser: But I'm talking about the California proposition, I think it was S.I. Hayakawa who was in the forefront of this, of making this an actual policy.

Raab: If you talk about English only in an absolute sense, I can't imagine it's something that the Jewish community could support. There have been accommodations made for immigrants, the older immigrants especially, who can't speak English. They can take certain tests in their own language. When they are in trouble in the courts, there are interpreters there for them and so forth. English only in any absolute sense would make those things impossible, and that's not going to happen in this country. It's ridiculous. There are still too many people with immigrant backgrounds who remember grandparents who couldn't speak when they came over, so it's not going to happen. But in terms of English first in the schools, I think that has support in the immigrant groups as well as in the mainstream.



## XXV PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Importance of Motivating Students

- Glaser: Well, let's talk about the JCRC and the schools, because as you say that was one of the more prominent positions and agendas that you had.
- Raab: There's a little twist there too because what we've always supported in the Jewish community are common public schools, with the image of schools that bring diverse people together so that they can become educated together, as well as the first thing being free public schools so that they can go to school free. Incidentally, a kind of affirmative action of a basic sort, which this society has always provided. [pause] Where was I?
- Glaser: This country has always provided the free public school.
- Raab: Oh, but the common public school, that's what I wanted to comment on, because it's also possible to remember that most Jews who came to this country went to segregated schools. There were schools mainly of Jews in New York.
- Glaser: Because of the residential pattern?
- Raab: Because of the residential pattern in New York City, there were mostly Jews. So that we've got to acknowledge that when we talk about the need for integration. I've talked about it so often I'm not sure whether we've talked about it or not. There was a time when the public schools' job was to provide education for motivated children. And the children who went to public school then (we're talking about high schools now, which was the important educational element) the students who went to and completed high school in those days around the turn of the last century were motivated children. They wanted to learn, so all the schools had to do was give them the equipment with which to learn and help them learn. The size of the schools and the size of the

classes, the primitive condition of the books, et cetera didn't make much difference, if any at all.

The schools since World War II essentially have had their function changed for them. No longer are they just to provide education for motivated children, but presumably they've been handed the function of motivating children. And this has been the failure of the public schools. They never had to do that before and they still haven't learned how to do that except for here and there. Still the schools do best where motivated children go.

There have been two big studies on what makes school successful for children in this country. One was around the time of the integration struggle out of Johns Hopkins University, and one was recently reported in a book, neither whose title nor author I recall without some struggle. But they did a study of twenty-five thousand children and their educational success or failure. It replicates what was found in the earlier study very strongly, that everything depends on the family--not the class size, not the physical plant in the schools.

Both of these are statistical studies and don't mean that it made a difference for children here and there. But in statistical terms it was the family and the family motivation, the family background, the family culture and push which makes the difference between a successful student and an unsuccessful student. So the point is again that in the early days the families were pushing, either out of their culture or out of their expectations, and the schools were able to handle that. Today where the families are not there pushing, the schools don't know how to handle it for the most part.

There was in Israel a little bit of experience of this when the Jews who had been living in Arab lands came, the so-called Sephardim. Their educational levels were low for reasons we talked about, because of their cultural background. The Israeli authorities were very anxious, never could do it fully. They thought maybe the *kibbutzim* could help but also boarding schools. In other terms, taking some of these children out of their home and putting them in a situation of greater motivation and expectation.

We haven't gotten very far on that, it doesn't seem to work in our milieu. When Gingrich suggested that--what did he call them? He didn't call them boarding schools, he called them orphanages, which was unfortunate. Didn't he?

Glaser: I don't recall that.



Raab: Well, he said one of the things we have to do is take children out of their homes when those homes are not providing nourishment and put them in boarding schools. Except he added a less favorable term than boarding school. A friend of mine who was one of the black leaders in the community and has been for many years a civil rights activist, has said that one of the projects he'd like most to see is taking hundreds of black kids out of their homes for a number of years and putting them in better situations. But that conflicts with other American values that are difficult to breach. The fact is that the schools have these kinds of problems which they didn't have one hundred years ago, or even seventy-five, sixty years ago.

### School Integration

Glaser: Has integration helped at all? Has busing helped?

Raab: See, the concept of integration developed first out of an obvious fact that black children in the South and in many places in the North were getting an inferior education. Inferior from any point of view--teachers who were not equipped, resources that were not there. So that one of the goals of integration was to repair that very primitive situation. But it soon developed into a more sophisticated theory that the only way to raise these levels of motivation and cultural expectation of black children, because of their background, was to mix them with peer groups which had higher expectations and more motivation. That was the theory and essentially it's a good theory. The two studies I talk about are things that indicate that's one of the things that can be helpful. Not as much as the family background but next to family background.

So it was a principle that had to be established and also a practical question. The principle continued to be important. In practice it helped I'm sure, but it became more difficult because in some cases--not more difficult than it had been but less felicitous than expected. Because in high schools, for example, where there were mixed groups there developed a tendency for self-segregation. And this was self-segregation not just imposed by whites but also adopted by blacks as a measure of psychic protection if nothing else. But of course, even so they were going to better schools. So there's that mixed picture of integration. It had to happen because of the principle of it; it had to happen.

Glaser: But I think in the San Francisco area the busing led to some flight to the suburbs or flight to private schools on the part of white middle class parents.

Raab: Yes, there was some of that. I'm not clear how widespread that was among Jews. There was some flight from the city--"Flight," if you want to use the term. Movement from the city to other areas by Jews for the same reasons that there always has been; a movement from cities to suburban areas as people, individuals and groups become more affluent. So that happened even before integration of the public school. I think the integration of public schools undoubtedly accelerated that.

We've done, as you know, a number of surveys over the years in this area to find out what's on the minds of people out there. We usually ask about public school matters. As recently as a couple of years ago, the overwhelming majority of Jews say that they want to send their children to the public schools. They want to send their children to public schools rather than private schools or private parochial schools. It's as high as 85, 90 percent. Eighty-five perhaps, because it's been sliced down a bit over the years. The apparent deterioration of public school education in San Francisco, in the inner cities everywhere, has frightened Jews because their highest order is of need and expectation that their children have a good education.

As a matter of fact, among Americans in general, and in the North especially, there's never been a pulling away of any significant form since World War II. There's never been any serious pulling-away from middle-class blacks. That's been true of the schools as well. But the middle-class blacks have educational motivation, and it's estimated that one third of blacks are now counted among the middle class in this country. They've become educated in postwar years and succeeded.

This isn't what bothers Jews any more than blacks in their suburban schools would bother them. But it's the image of ghetto blacks with their low educational achievement and expectation which bothers a lot of Jews and other whites, with some added sense and concern if there are problems of safety. My children went to public school in San Francisco and got a great education. This was some years ago.

Glaser: Would that be true today?

Quality of Education

Raab: There are schools where they can do that today. There's one other aspect to this that the JCRC got involved in actually, our concern with the quality of the schools, not just in San Francisco but in the Peninsula and in Marin. In the 1960s and early 1970s we were concerned about the deterioration of the quality of education in all of the schools, not just the inner-city schools. Besides involving ourselves with school boards and so forth, I remember we held one major kind of conference in San Francisco that the JCRC sponsored and I have to check the year. [flips paper] I have to check names too unless you can help me. The man who became the--

Glaser: Is that Fred Hechinger?

Raab: No, Fred Hechinger did come to a conference.

Glaser: Yes, you said--

Raab: From the New York Times?

Glaser: There was a conference on social indifference and prejudice in the schools. But you're talking about a different kind.

Raab: Yes, I think it was a different one. Who is the state superintendent of schools, Jewish, who left because of some problem [Bill Honig]. At this conference, he was still principal of a school in Marin I think. He was there. I remember the major speaker (I'm going to create another problem in a minute) was a Catholic sociologist priest--

Glaser: Andrew Greeley?

Raab: Andrew Greeley. It was an interfaith conference, in essence, about the quality of the public schools and we did some research beforehand. For example, the JCRC did some research to find out what the quality was in certain rough ways.

[tape interruption]

Glaser: I'm sorry, I interrupted you.

Raab: No. I'm glad you did. Oh yes, we were doing some research about quality. And we specifically, in one case, wanted to find out what they were teaching in American history at that time. Always there has been a provision in the state code, I think it is, the Educational Code, that all high school students have to take a course in American history. So just to see what the academic



level was, we were finding out what they were doing on that in the schools in this area. We found that they were doing very little.

The most outrageous case was a school in the Peninsula (it might have been in Marin) where the students in American history took trips around the city finding historic places in the city. That was their American history over the course of the year that they took it. It was dismal, because during that period--

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Raab: --the level of education was deteriorating in schools. And in universities as a matter of fact, but that wasn't so much our province, at least in San Francisco. We pushed for higher quality education, this was one of our concerns. I remember the JCRC had committees which met, we always had a public school committee, and every now and then they reassessed their position. At one of those reassessments during that period it was made clear by the committee, and then by the JCRC, that there had been a time when Jews had a great stake in the public schools because that was their entry into the American system. Therefore, we had a certain historical debt to the public schools, which we had a responsibility to uphold.

#### Education and Bigotry

Raab: But there was now more than that. We no longer had the need for the public schools in the same way in order to enter the American mainstream. The affirmative action program for us had been completed, but the public school was still of importance to American Jewish security and status in this country. The historical experience of Jews has been (and then this takes a fast footnote as soon as I say it) that the more educated the citizenry, the less bigoted the citizenry.

The fast footnote is that this is a statistical finding of huge proportion. But when you find an educated person who is bigoted, they're usually more dangerous than an uneducated person who's bigoted, because they're in a leadership position. However, when you look at anti-Semitism using modern techniques, opinion measurements and so forth, the one constant correlation is between education and lower levels of anti-Semitic attitudes. You can do it. It's been done a thousand times, and a thousand times it comes out that way, not just slight differences but huge differences statistically.

I remember I was involved with the Survey Research Center at Berkeley. We did a massive research job, and one of the books that I did with Marty [Seymour Martin Lipset] came out of that. We found that not only was there a tremendous correlation between education and low levels of anti-Semitism, not just between years of education and levels of anti-Semitism, but between quality of education and levels of anti-Semitism in terms of being able to identify certain literary books and so forth. So that the education is important even further than that.

Why is it important in terms of education? It's not just that education teaches people to like Jews, because it doesn't do that. It doesn't work that way. We're talking statistically here. Education when it works gives people the historical insight and an understanding of what their society needs in order for it to succeed and for them to succeed, and to understand the American society and what its basis is. That's what education does.

Just as the Jewish community relations field in general came early after World War II to the understanding that the security and status of American Jews depended not so much on whether people liked Jews or didn't like Jews but on whether there were certain constraints against bigotry they had been taught or learned, whether they like certain groups or not. That was the crucial thing. In other words, the constraints of democratic pluralism, the nature of a democratic pluralistic society, that was the protection of the American Jew. Therefore, education, which as it does when it's quality education, furthers an understanding of and a commitment to the nature of democratic pluralism and the American society as a protector of democratic pluralism. That is the education which is important to the Jews, whether the Jews needed to enter the mainstream themselves, which they don't anymore, or not. In short, that was our stake in the public schools. We were involved in that period in trying to raise levels of quality of education.

When Bill Honig, who was part of that particular conference which Greeley keynoted, moved into higher spheres and became state superintendent of schools shortly thereafter (an elected position in California), he was a proponent of quality education. I don't want to draw any direct relationship between his tenets and involvement in our conference and his positions. I think he always had that position.

But something was returning to the schools. When we held that conference, we and a lot of other people, the teachers and parents who came to conference, found that quality education was deteriorating and there was a backlash against that deterioration. We were a part of that political backlash against the



deterioration so that quality levels returned more to the schools than the situation which existed in that period.

This is something--it's a kind of sophisticated idea--which the Jewish community has accepted with some increasing problems that relate to church-state. It was for these reasons, for example, that the Jewish community as a whole and Jewish community relations has always opposed government aid to religious schools, because of its consequent weakening of the public schools, which we thought was so important for a democratic society and at least for the safety and security of Jews, therefore.

### Affirmative Action and Quotas

Glaser: Would you discuss the Bakke and the DeFumis cases?

Raab: [pause] I guess, you know, in a way the segue into that is the importance of the educational system and the ability for everybody to be able to access the educational system. Now we're talking about the university level, but it relates also to the aftermath or a new period in civil rights. Have we discussed affirmative action?

Glaser: Yes.

Raab: There are two places where affirmative action has seemed particularly outrageous to Jews. One is in the universities. As a matter of fact, I would say that's the main place that Jews have been bothered by affirmative action. I'm talking about excesses in affirmative action, I'm talking about quotas and preferential treatment. The fact of the matter is that quotas and preferential treatment have not seriously affected Jews in the employment field, in the business field, in the professional field. It has seemed to have affect them somewhat in the educational fields, which is so important to the Jews.

Glaser: But not seriously, surely?

Raab: Well, it has in individual cases. When you're looking for outrageous examples, you'll find them in the university field. Well, this has to do with Bakke, for example, who was not Jewish, but a person who was more qualified by the usual standards than some of the people who were finally accepted. You could find Jewish families who could cite the examples of where their particular child was qualified by tests and previous academic record more than some who were accepted. This happened. You

could always find dozens of such cases at the height of the situation. I can't imagine that there was any individual Jew who suffered long for this. In other words, if they didn't get in one school they got in another. But there were cases where this happened to them. Particularly bothersome were law schools and medical schools, and that's why there was interest in the Bakke case.

Rennie [Reynold] Colvin was then chairman of the JCRC and Reynold Colvin became the attorney. The Bakke case came out with an interesting formulation in which it outlawed quotas. In effect, it said (it said all kinds of things), in this case because the Supreme Court case is always pretty narrow, you could not place a person or accept a person into a professional school just because of his race or her race. However, it did say that race can be a factor in your evaluation of whether to bring a student in or not. So in a sense, because it ruled out the possibility that the decision could be made on race alone, it was considered a success to those who were opposed to quotas. Nevertheless, it left open a possibility that it could be used as one factor.

DeFumis I don't remember that clearly. I have to look it up.

Glaser: That was in Oregon or Washington, and I think he was a Jewish student. By the time it came to court--

Raab: --it was moot.

Glaser: Right.

Raab: Well, we've discussed affirmative action, so we don't have to go over that.

#### Holocaust Education Program

[Interview 9: July 31, 1996] ##

Glaser: Would you talk about the pioneering anti-Nazi program that was started in the schools? I think Naomi Lauter was the person who did that for the JCRC.

Raab: Naomi Lauter was very much involved, the person on the staff who did most of the school things when she was here. We provided materials; we used to hold luncheons for school administrators and

tell them about the materials. When we had the in-service training--the teachers took off some time to do some training--we had some sessions with them on the anti-Nazi material. I did a pamphlet for the ADL called "The Anatomy of Nazism," which was essentially done in order to bring to the high school students the nature of Nazism. Our concept was that to teach about Nazism was not just to teach about the Holocaust, although that became important itself, but to teach about the kinds of conditions which subvert democratic pluralism and lead to Nazi-like activities. So there was that emphasis.

After Naomi left Doug [Kahn] was part of the staff, he was involved in helping to set up. And that was in conjunction, incidentally, with the Holocaust Center of Northern California. We had a committee, a special Holocaust education committee, not just with our people but also with some people from out in the community and from other religious groups. I know Yori Wada was a member of the committee and the minister in Marin who has been so prominent in these matters, Doug Huneke. I'm pretty sure the Endowment Fund of the Federation helped support it. One of the things that Doug did, for several summers he had special sessions at the University of California of in-service training for teachers on the subject of Nazism and the Holocaust.

### Religious Holidays

Glaser: You got a law passed by the state legislature that students wouldn't be penalized for missing school on religious holidays.

Raab: The church-state issue has mainly been a schools-related issue for us and for the state legislature. It was one of those apparent contradictions or quandaries that the Jewish community got into because we did not want the State of California to be directly involved in saying which Jewish holidays or any other religious holidays were legitimate and which weren't. That we felt was an invasion of the church-state separation and none of their business, in effect. However, we also wanted to make sure, since this is a culturally Christian society, that Jewish children and teachers both had some opportunity to exercise their religious expression on religious holidays without punishment. So that was an interesting kind of strategy with respect to the state legislature, both with respect to the students and the teachers.

With respect to the students, for example, the law was established, both expressly and by the statement of legislative intent, that no children would be penalized because of taking off



time on their major religious holidays. The law as it was written indicated that meant that teachers should on those occasions be sensitive and alert to that and if necessary provide makeup on examinations.

With the teachers, it was even a little more complicated. That was a separate kind of strategic operation because, again, we didn't want the State of California to decide which religious holidays were legitimate enough for teachers to take off. So instead what we did was have a law passed which extended days of personal leave without penalty. The legislative intent, which is expressed as an exclusive matter in the material that goes with a law, indicated that this was meant to cover major religious holidays.

Glaser: Was there a financial aspect to that also since each school district gets paid so much per student's daily attendance?

Raab: I don't remember. As a matter of fact, I don't remember exactly how that was worked out. On the one hand, we felt that as far as the teachers were concerned it might well be a burden which Jews had to carry because it was their religion. So they didn't necessarily have to be paid; they just had to be able to get off and take the days off. This was an interesting point of discussion; and in our circles it was decided that at times, for the sake of their religion, Jews would have to take that burden. I just don't remember what happened with respect to the students though, because that was an important point, I know. I have to look it up.

#### Conference at Van Leer Institute in Israel, 1987

Glaser: Let me ask you about the conference in 1987 at the Van Leer Institute. There were discussions with your Israeli counterparts on strengthening democratic pluralism and a Jewish identity. What was the outcome of that?

Raab: It was an experiment. We took some Jewish teachers from this area (I think it was about ten days) to the Van Leer Institute in Israel. It had a double purpose. One was really very basic and perhaps a little bit on the side of community relations. We were thinking that our main mandate with respect to Israel has been for American political and public support for Israel. However, a concern developed that young American Jews, and this is a broad generalization, were becoming often less tied emotionally to the State of Israel. The thought was that one of the best ways to

combat that, and it was a concern which was genuinely felt within the Federation but also a community relations concern because, after all, the fate of the American Jews and the fate of Israel were closely bound together.

The thought was to combat this apparent loosening of emotional ties. It was not a loosening of support for Israel politically but a loosening of emotional ties to Israel because cultural differences and so forth. One of the best things to do was to have American Jews who were in a parallel position with Israelis meet together. This was one of the aspects of that. There have been some other efforts along those lines, this was one of the first. The idea was for American Jewish educators to meet with Israeli educators. And that in itself was good and successful. The other aspect of course was to examine, partly for the sake of the American Jewish educators and partly for the sake of the Israeli educators, the differences in the intergroup relations problems in Israel and in the United States. In Israel, part of it was still at that time intergroup relations between Ashkenazim and Sephardim, underlined by the much lower educational achievement of the children of the Sephardim.

But the main thrust was relationships between Israeli Arabs and Israeli Jews. It was interesting because the cultural differences between the two societies became very clear in the sense that: in America we were talking about integration. In Israel there was no possibility of talking about integration and nobody wanted it, neither the Jews nor the Arabs.

Glaser: Neither the Ashkenazim nor the Sephardim.

Raab: But at least the Ashkenazim and the Sephardim all were cemented together by a common history and by a common primary language-- Hebrew, ideally. But the Arabs in their schools wanted to study their history, that's proper. They wanted to have as their primary language Arabic. It was something that I think at the time was called contiguous pluralism, rather than integrated pluralism. That is to say equal rights. I guess it had some relationship to the negative term in America of separate but equal. But that was the culture of the Middle East, from the time of the Turks certainly and before that. The cultures existed side by side and there was no ideal of integration as there was in America.

Glaser: Was there a program that developed out of this conference?

Raab: There was a program the Van Leer Institute carried on with respect to Israeli teachers, yes.



Glaser: Did you and the other teachers bring back a program to the United States?

Raab: Not particularly. Some of the Jewish teachers came back feeling closer to Israel than when they left, and that was one of the ideas. The other was some educational stuff. They spoke to groups when they came back to spread a greater understanding of the differences between Israel and the United States on that educational level. A lot of American Jews didn't understand that. They thought maybe a solution for the whole thing was American integration and it just wasn't.



## XXVI JEWS, GOVERNMENTS, AND POLITICAL PARTIES

Necessity for Democratic Pluralism

Glaser: The democratic society seems to be an overarching concern for the program of the JCRC, preserving and furthering democracy in the United States. Please expand on the statement regarding national level issues, "Political freedom and the strength of democratic life is the major core of consensual concern of the Jewish community."

Raab: In a community relations sense, yes. This statement, in one language or another, has been the basis of the community relations field for fifty years. It wasn't before. There was a time in Western society when Jewish organizations in Germany and in the United States felt that the way to eliminate anti-Semitism was to educate the non-Jews and develop goodwill among them to get rid of the false myths and negative attitudes. There was a central German Jewish organization--I guess you might call it a community relations organization. They were all called defense groups then. The German Jewish operation started in the twenties and said, "This is what we've got to do; we've got to let the Germans know that we're as good citizens as they are," et cetera, et cetera.

And in America among the defense groups there was a tendency towards the same kind of thought. They were doing things that were necessary to do in any case, such as mute the stereotypes and vaudeville jokes, all that sort of thing. The Anti-Defamation League, which was the major organization doing this in the United States in the 1930s, said at the beginning of one of its major programs that this was the idea: to change the attitudes of American non-Jews, to understand the Jews better, and to get rid of the false stereotypes.

The problem was while it had to be done it didn't really work. That kind of pristine educational approach never worked. Anti-Semitism, because of political situations, grew rather than

diminished in America at the same time that they were spending more and more money on these programs. Into World War II, in the early 1940s, the surveys showed that anti-Semitism had increased and increased and increased in this country because of political situations. It didn't mask discontents, et cetera, et cetera, and it was really at a high point. At the end of the period we were spending less money on that kind of defense operation. As a result of that failure--and it obviously failed in Europe--and as a result of World War II itself, there was a kind of messianic-like renewal of faith in American democracy because of the defeat of the Nazis, and it was in those terms that we fought the war.

There was, since the late 1940s, a deliberate reversal of community relations philosophy. We've said that the strength of democratic pluralism is the heart of American Jewish security, and that's been the basis of this operation ever since. It was fortuitous historical situations. The civil rights era was an era in which this specific philosophy of Jewish community relations came to the fore. We were at the vanguard of civil rights, at least in the legislative phases.

Let me put it this way so as not to be offensive: we weren't in it just because of altruism with respect to the black population; we were in it also at least--and for many people, many Jews most heavily--because it was clear that civil rights laws were good for the Jews, directly good for the Jews as well as indirectly. And that was part of this whole concept of democratic pluralism. It had to apply to everybody; it couldn't just apply to the Jews. That philosophy developed and the civil rights period strengthened it.

Glaser: You wrote an article in 1980 entitled "Jews Adrift," about Jews in the Democratic party adrift because alienated from the Democratic party. I'll quote: "The atomic mass society is an inherently anti-pluralistic society. The new politics associated with the Democratic party have been creating elements of such a mass political society." In 1980, that would have been when Carter was president. What was going on that created new elements?

Raab: Well, I think it was an accumulation. I don't think it was just Carter. And it goes back maybe as far as (George) McGovern when some Jews began to feel worried on two counts. They were worried about McGovern's attitude towards Israel. But in addition to that, I guess my reference is to this understanding: mass societies, it's a peculiar term, governmental monopolies on life, have always been bad for Jews.

Glaser: Now what do you mean by governmental monopolies?

Raab: Talking about Nazism and talking about communism. When Lenin came to power, he--

Glaser: Oh, that's a code word for totalitarianism?

Raab: Yes. There are code phrases. When you take democratic pluralism and turn it on its head, it could be totalitarianism; more often it's political extremism. And when Lenin came to power, he did two things: he outlawed anti-Semitism and he also outlawed all Jewish organizations.

Throughout Jewish history, when you go back to the various statements by the rabbis early on, there is an ambiguous attitude towards government which has a community relations aspect. One aspect is one we of course know about, that generally speaking we support existing societies. This has always been a Jewish way; the rabbis made it clear. And that was because during certain historical periods Jews were saved by benevolent kings and so forth. And anarchy during the Middle Ages, for example, was the worst thing that could happen to Jews. Masses, impelled by this priest or that demagogue, without any controlling authority to arrest them for any reason, were dangerous to Jews. To put it another way, the rule of law was always important for Jews in those terms. When there wasn't any, the Jews suffered. When it was weak, the Jews suffered. And we say it in our prayers, in our services now, that we bow to the existing government; in America or in any place if it's reasonable to bow to an existing government.

#### Concern Regarding Governmental Power

Raab: On the other hand, and you used the term totalitarianism but it could be something slightly less than that. When a government wants to get rid of all intermediary groups, as Lenin did, it's because powerful governments don't want any intermediary groups interfering with them. They want to relate directly between themselves and the individual.

This was said as far back by revolutionaries like Jean Jacques Rousseau in the French Revolution, that the relationship must be directly between the government and the individual. Well, that of course is impossible for Jews to live with. Jews are a community. I don't want to get too far into this, but there always has been and should be, I think, a concern with a too-powerful government.



I don't remember the article, but it may have been reflected in that kind of piece, a concern with an all-powerful American government. Let me give you a couple of examples, or one example. There was one point when one of the issues we dealt with was Jewish homes for the aged and whether they should be all Jewish. There were government departments who said at certain points that they can't tolerate that. Homes for the aged get government money, certainly in terms of Social Security and other government money, therefore they have to be open to everybody.

This is dangerous to the kind of-- You know, we talk about integration, which is an overall ideal, but there are points of segregation that the Jews need, points of community. When the government starts to interfere with that in terms of a governmental necessity, then one become a little wary of that kind of power.

Glaser: But you have that same sort of thing when any Jewish organization takes funds from the Bay Area Crusade. For instance, a Jewish community center has to be open to everybody as long as it takes that money.

Raab: I think it's true. I think the difference is that there's the difference between a voluntary operation like the Crusade and the governmental operation which operates by laws with real power. There have been some that feel that Jewish agencies have depended too much, partly on the Crusade but also on welfare funds. Do you know that there are Jewish agencies half of whose budget comes from the federal or state government? The Jews don't realize it, but it's a tremendous amount. There's some feeling that that compromises the integrity of the Jewish institutions. It's too dependent.

Glaser: Well, given the financial situation, I think that's going to take care of itself, with the cutbacks on the part of the government.

Raab: That will take care of itself and the Jewish agencies will either have to reduce budgets or raise more money in the Jewish community. One or the other, there's no question.

Glaser: I think they're hurting right now; at least in the East Bay that's true.

Raab: Well, they're hurting everywhere.

The Republican Party and Welfare Reform

Glaser: You wrote a Bulletin article in 1944. The title was "The Influence of Jewish Republicans Can't Be All Bad." Do you feel that? Do you really feel that given what has happened in Congress to what I think you would call it the safety net, and with what's happening with the attempt to reform welfare, basically hitting out at the children who need the help?

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Raab: Let me put it starkly. There's a tendency for Jewish agencies to be directly tied to the Democratic party. This is a recent concern that I've had. When you come to voting in the booth, 80, 85 percent of the Jews still vote the Democratic party. Although many more of them say they're independent rather than Democratic party members. But when you start getting to certain kinds of social issues, you find that there are large numbers of Jews who have opinions about social issues which are not Democratic party line opinions.

Glaser: Do you want to give me an example?

Raab: Welfare is an example. You know, you talk about these issues of what to do about the welfare situation. Take the question of the current welfare proposal, which I heard on the radio this morning Clinton is going to sign. It includes some features which are extremely unfortunate like the legal immigrants. Let's take two common items here. One is a proposition that at the end of five years of welfare nobody should be on welfare. Of course there are exceptions and there are 20 percent exceptions, but that's a basic principle. The other basic principle that's up now is that if they don't work then after two years they're off of welfare, right? It also has some exceptions, but that's the basic rule, which apparently is going to be passed.

As many as 40 percent of the Jews agree with that. The liberal Democrats don't. Jews are still going to vote for Democrats because they're afraid of the Republicans, partly because of the whole Christian fundamentalism. But one-third to 40 percent agree with those propositions because those propositions go to issues which are hard for-- There's something that I've been calling-- This obviously needs to be edited.

Glaser: [laughs]

Raab: There's an old kind of joke in Jewish community relations circles. People get up and say, "Is this a Jewish issue?" You know, "Why

is this a Jewish issue?" And there are a lot of issues which are I think are clearly Jewish issues, including the impacted poverty of the black population. Values aside, they are important in terms of democratic pluralism and the future of the society and therefore the future of the Jews.

It's a Jewish issue but there is something which I've been calling a Jewish remedy. And a Jewish remedy is a proposal to remedy within that issue on the basis of Jewish expertise, Jewish experience, Jewish values. Now there are some issues, and these welfare issues are partly that, where there's no Jewish experience, no Jewish expertise, and not even Jewish values which tell you that one remedy is better than another.

Surveys have indicated, not only among the Jews, but among the general population, that people do not want to get rid of the welfare system. The bulk of Americans don't want to do that, and a large bulk of American Jews don't want to do that. However, they want a system which works better because all they've seen is failure.

During some periods like the seventies, sixties, when increasingly large amounts of money were being spent on welfare programs, the situation for many of the blacks was getting worse in the ghettos. Some escaped but the situation was getting worse, not better. So they're looking for ways to improve the situation rather than to eliminate it. And the question of how is not just a Jewish issue. It's not just a question of a clear Jewish remedy. You're moving into areas of economics which not even the economists understand. What was the original question that elicited all of this?

Glaser: About "The Influence of Jewish Republicans Can't Be All Bad."

Raab: Oh. I don't know what I had in mind there. This might be from the Bulletin?

Glaser: Yes.

Raab: Sometimes I just find it worthwhile to break up Jewish cliches.

Glaser: I thought that perhaps it was, in a roundabout way, a defense of your friend Irving Kristol, the neo-conservative.

Raab: I don't have to defend Irving. I don't agree with Irving in a lot of things. [Pause] No. There must have been something very specific. But one thing is clear. Look, the Americans are moving in a different direction, and now I think the Democrats are going



to come back, et cetera, et cetera. And the Republicans ruined themselves in many ways.

But the country is moving in a somewhat different direction, not just the Republicans but many Democrats, in terms of trying to find better solutions for things, trying to break up the ghettos in ways that have not been successful. Other ways have not been successful, so in that sense raising some of the questions has been good for the Republicans to do or for some of the Democrats to do. And I think we've got to look at it that way. Irving Kristol aside, I know enough Republicans to know that they're not all evil people. Not just in terms of who I know but the massive surveys that have been taken of the American people show that most of the desire to change some of these welfare things are not out of mean-spiritedness as much as out of a real sense of frustration that they have not worked.

Glaser: As a social scientist yourself, how do you feel about giving the welfare funds to the states to disperse rather than the federal government?

Raab: Well, there is such a thing as being too abstract about this, because on the abstract level giving it to the states rather than everything through the federal government might serve the Jewish wariness of the too powerful government. That's on the abstract level. In other words, it might be more democratic the other way. In the civil rights period, I felt strongly that the only way it could be done was through the federal government because of the different sets of attitudes among the different states. It had to be done. And I think that certain welfare operations have to be done that way. I'm glad that the food stamps are coming back to a federal guideline.

Glaser: But I worry about the poor in Mississippi, for instance.

Raab: Well, yes, and I'm not sure how it's coming out. But I feel that turning it back is one thing; turning it back without any guidelines could be a disaster. But if there are some national guidelines and you say, "Look, you administer it." They're giving waivers now, presumably, for all kinds of different state government operations and experiments.

Glaser: What do you mean by waivers? What kind of waivers?

Raab: I don't know whether it's Michigan, it may be one. They had a workfare thing, you have to work. And the federal government said, "Okay, try it. Do it." So it's happening all over.

Glaser: Oh, I see. I didn't understand what you meant by that.

Raab: As far as the Jews are concerned-- See, I'm not sure that the Jewish agencies as such know what the best thing to do about welfare is. They know and they should know and the Jewish community should know, that whatever experiments take place, we've got to make sure that the children don't suffer. But the solutions in order to make sure that the children don't suffer, because they're suffering now and they've been suffering for a while, is not clearly within the province of Jewish agency, knowledge, experience, or expertise. The value is there, you can't suffer. But what the solution is, obviously we're at a point where we have to experiment a bit.

Let me say one other thing. One of my concerns is, and this is community relations concerns, community concern: it's important for there to be a Jewish community. Our operations in public policy have been important, whether it was the way we helped change the immigration laws, involved in civil rights, to a lot of other things including the question of Jewish teachers and Jewish students. This depended upon there being a strong Jewish community as unified as possible. Jewish organizations can espouse anything they want, but when umbrella communal Jewish organizations start espousing programs and solutions with which four out of ten Jews disagree, that's not going to end up with anything but fragmentation unless we address it.



## XXVII JEWISH ATTITUDES REGARDING WAR AND PEACE

Vietnam War

Glaser: I want to ask you about the Jewish attitude toward anti-war and peace efforts. You were a member of the World Without War Council so I'm sure this was very important to you, especially during the Vietnam War but also with what was going on in Israel at that time. In the 1980s you wrote that: "Judaism has an intrinsic mission to inspire the passion for peace among Jews and to inspire active involvement of Jews in a variety of peace efforts."

Raab: Yes, I think it's true. I think it's true. Incidentally, relating to our past discussions, we have a mandate to inspire activism in all kinds of domestic issues as well. It doesn't mean you have to settle on one, but we have to inspire Jewish activism. The central thing with respect to war and peace, and Israel was an interesting thing. Jews in this country have tended to be pacifist.

There was one survey I loved, a national survey of Jews, where one of the questions was, "Do you think that the defense expenditures of the American government should be reduced drastically?" A large majority of Jews said yes. Another question, same people, "Do you think that the American government should more strongly support the military efforts and military supplies for Israel?" And the answer of the overwhelming majority was yes. That sort of thing has driven people in Washington, non-Jews, wild when it happened. Israel changed it somewhat. That was the beginning of its change.

World Without War is not a pacifist organization, it's a peace organization. That means that like the Catholic Church or the Jewish tradition--and Jewish tradition is strong in this--it recognizes the need for force as a background for peace. Very often, not always, but very often. This has been, of course, the center of much discussion in the country and of much discussion in

the Jewish community. Again, different circumstances. You know, there's Isaiah's quote that (and I won't get it right, I should) that we have to turn our swords into pruning hooks.

Glaser: Ploughshares.

Raab: And then there's another prophet, Amos, I'm not sure, who said that we have to turn our ploughshares into swords. There's both in the Jewish tradition. It depends on the circumstances. If the Jews are about to be swallowed up by opposing forces, they have to turn their ploughshares into swords. If there's a possibility of peace and there should be no imperialist desires on the part of the Jews, then you turn your weapons into ploughshares. There hasn't been time yet in Israel to do the latter.

The Vietnam War was very difficult for Jews. It was very difficult for Americans. I don't know if it was more difficult for Jews in a general sense, but in that context, the American people were very much afraid of the Soviet Empire and so forth. The Jews have always been very concerned, not always but the majority, with the Soviet Empire, its persecution of Jews among other things, and its general state of oppression. So there was this tendency to want to support the Vietnam War, which was advertised as part of that. It obviously came out that Russia wasn't so clearly part of that. There was China involved and Russia, and they were in antagonistic positions with each other and so forth. Also it was completely mismanaged. There was the statement I liked by Eugene McCarthy that the Vietnam War became immoral at the point where it became clear that we couldn't win it.

Glaser: That's very cynical.

Raab: It's cynical, yes, but it's also an indication that we were entering a new period; there was no way to fight the kind of war we fought in World War II. I think we could have won the Vietnam War by dropping bombs all over the place, but it was impossible to do it on the international scene. It was too dangerous to do it on the international scene, so we fought a losing war. And we couldn't drop the bombs obviously. That became a new period in American involvement in world affairs where we had to hold back because some of the alternatives were intolerable. The Vietnam War was a difficult one on those two accounts.

In the JCRC, all we could do was open up the discussion. The JCRC as such never took a position on the Vietnam War per se, but there were discussions. There were background policies issued and so forth, but not a position as such because the Jewish

community was as confused as the American community was on that war.

### Israel

Raab: On Israel, there's been a division in the Jewish community of interest with some pacifist sentiments, a minority sentiment that just related to Palestinian rights, which is another matter. But what took over, essentially, was an understanding that the Israelis bred, that only by an application or an appearance of force can peace ever be reached. This is kind of opposed to the idea that you can negotiate everything. And the Israelis, apparently most of them, learned that you can't negotiate with people who want to get rid of Israel altogether, which was the case once.

My wife and I were in Jerusalem the day that [Anwar] Sadat came to Jerusalem, and an exciting day and night that was. He came because it had become clear, as a result of certain things that happened, that a) Israel was not going to be defeated militarily, and b) the United States was not going to abandon Israel. Because of that, the existence of force, of strength, peace was possible with Egypt.

I think that kind of thought has become dominant in the American Jewish community, and it's still part of the debate and dialogue in Israel. It was clear that [Yitzak] Rabin believed in force and believed in the necessity of peace through strength, if you want to use a slogan. The Israelis were interested in following his peace and believed in his peace through strength. They didn't believe in [Shimon] Peres's peace through strength; they didn't think that the strength part of that formulation was strong enough for Peres. So they went where they've gone.



## XXVIII SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

Community's Attitude

Glaser: What is your personal attitude about legislation regarding domestic partnerships and same-sex marriages--since we're talking politics.

Raab: Well, it's got to be paired with what I think about what the JCRC should do for community relations, because personally I have no objection to same-sex alliances. If they call them marriages, fine. This doesn't bother me. I think it would be very peculiar for a total organized Jewish community, umbrella groups like the JCRC, to come out in favor of same-sex marriages at the same time that their major congregations and their major religious denominations won't do it and don't approve of it. Obviously, this is not a matter of consensus in the Jewish community. I have no trouble with it, but I think the organized Jewish community might.





## XXIX AUTHORSHIP

Books Written and Edited

Glaser: I want to have you talk about the books you have written. I think your first one was in 1962, American Race Relations Today: Studies of the Problems Beyond Desegregation.

Raab: I think my first one was a book I did called Social Problems.

Glaser: That was--

Raab: Was that later?

Glaser: I think that was two years later--Major Social Problems written with Gertrude Selznick.

Raab: Originally, yes. Yes, the Race Relations book, I edited that. It had a collection of different pieces, including one of mine, I think. But anyway, I was the editor of that American Race Relations.

Glaser: How did the whole authorship business come about?

Raab: I'm not sure. I'll tell you one thing that's clear is that I was very interested in working for the JCRC and, as I indicated to you, became increasingly interested in Jewish affairs per se. I also had to make more money, and one of the ways I had of making more money was to sign contracts to write books or edit books. So that was a motivation. I'm not sure exactly how it came about. I knew some people in New York in various publishing areas. This was Doubleday, I think.

Glaser: You've had a long relationship writing things together with Seymour Martin Lipset. I don't have the year for it, but one is The Politics of Unreason.

Raab: That was a big one. It was an analysis of extremism, particularly right-wing extremism from 1790 to 1970. The first edition was done by-- Who did the first edition? Some major publisher [Harper-Row]. They did another edition and another edition, and the last edition was done by the University of Chicago Press. And it was a combination of a huge national survey of the American people done in conjunction with the ADL which commissioned it. I worked through the research center in Berkeley to find out a lot about how people felt about extremism and the history of it. It was an analysis of the data surveyed plus a history of extremism in America. I've been thinking about the need to bring it up to date today.

Glaser: Then in 1990, it wasn't what you wrote but what was written for you. It was a *Festschrift*, American Pluralism and the Jewish Community. Professor Lipset edited that.

Raab: He put that together, yes. After Race Relations (it sounds like the songwriters who say, "And then I wrote") After American Race Relations I did American Religious Relations for Doubleday. Again, another collection I edited.

Glaser: Your latest, also with Professor Lipset, is Jews and the New American Scene. You might talk about the contradictions that you write about.

Raab: Well, my original title for the book was The American Tribal Dilemma: In the Case of the Jews. Harvard University Press thought that it would confuse people because they would think that it was about American Indians. So they changed the title, unfortunately, I think. The tribal dilemma is what the book is essentially, partly about. At its core it has to do with the kind of qualitatively different freedom which the Jews have been able to enjoy in America related to the democratic pluralism that we've talked about. And at the same time the down side of that, which is the absence of oppression. Parallel with the absence of oppression is the integration. That is to say, if you're working with non-Jews and you go to school with non-Jews, you marry non-Jews. The book used the data from the 1990 National Jewish Population Study, which showed that over 50 percent of Jews were intermarried.

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Raab: The Jews had both this apparent paradise and at the same time the threat of dissolution. One way to put the conclusion is that there are two streams in the American Jewish community on this score. There is a body of Jews, and of young Jews, who are seeking to intensify their Jewish identity in ways that we hadn't

seen for many decades. At the same time a somewhat larger body of Jews are drifting away. So that we're not really talking about the dissolution of the American Jewish community because that increasing push to identity is there. There will be a core of Jews who are more knowledgeable than the Jews have tended to be, but it will be a smaller group.

### Articles

Glaser: Among the articles that you've written, there's one in 1986, a seventeen page article entitled, "American Blacks and Israel," published by the Institute of Jewish Affairs in London. Why would an institute in London be interested in this topic?

Raab: I was in London for a conference then. That institute is interested in the state of Jews throughout the world. So they put out books on the state of Jews throughout the world. They were intrigued, perhaps over intrigued, by the apparent conflicts between blacks and Jews in this country. One piece that I wrote that got a lot of attention was one in Commentary in 1970, I guess, called "The Black Revolution and the Jewish Question." That was one that rather early on raised some of the problems between the Jews and the blacks in this country. As I've told you, at that point I was on the Human Rights Commission. I was vice chairman of the Human Rights Commission and they asked me to be the chairman. And the head of the committee who asked me was a black lady from San Francisco. I said I don't think I should be, some complications might arise. I showed her this piece and she agreed with me [laughs].

Glaser: What was the sense of the piece?

Raab: The sense of the piece was that there were rising among black leadership some demagogues who were using some of the same kind of formulae that classic anti-Semitic demagogues have used in the past. They hadn't captured the black population yet, but unless something were done about improving the condition of the black population, they were liable to.

Glaser: This sounds like an article you wrote entitled "The Real Farrakhan Factor," where you talked about the poisoned good inflicting the rest.

Raab: I remember that piece because I wrote it specifically, and I think of it at times now, because of a specific kind of formulation that kept rising that said Farrakhan, Andrew Young, and other black

leaders--Jesse Jackson has said it on occasion about Farrakhan: "He has said some bad things but after all he does some good things." And that always bothered me, more than bothered me. That I consider the poisoned good.

I was teaching at San Francisco State College once and there was a Nazi propaganda film that was being shown in town as a kind of exhibit. I asked the students whether they had seen it and one girl said she had. I said, "What did you gather from it?" This was a [Leni] Riefenstahl film. And she said, "Well, what I got from it was that we have to watch out for propaganda. Hitler did a lot of good for his people: he gave them dignity and improved their economy." That was a long time ago. It destroyed me on the spot then. That's the poisoned good and we're still talking about it. We still talk about Farrakhan in terms of that, that he does these good things. But it's impossible to combine that kind of good with that kind of bad and end up with anything but bad.

Glaser: You wrote a sixteen-page article, "Religion and Politics: Real and Phantom Concerns." In it you say, "I think Jews constantly live in the way of harm. Jews are especially vulnerable to failures in modern society." The article suggests that the evangelical right is nothing to worry about, that they have little effect on political and economic issues. I think you must have changed your attitude about that.

Raab: I have been writing about that off and on for a long time, including a piece in Commentary in one of the elections.

[Interview 10: August 6, 1996] ##

Glaser: The last time we met, I referred to an article you wrote and asked you about whether you still believe that we have nothing to fear from the evangelical right.

Raab: Yes. I'd like to divide that question into two parts, American Jews, Jews in general, American Jews in particular, have the image that evangelical Christians, fundamentalists (there's some difference between fundamentalists and evangelicals) but that fundamentalist Christians are more anti-Semitic than other Americans. There's no survey that shows that today. The single greatest correlation between population characteristic and anti-Semitism is of course educational level. It's a statistical thing, and it's very striking. There was a time when fundamentalist Christians could be found much more statistically in the undereducated, and therefore anti-Semitism was higher. But it's hard to find now.



In the last comprehensive survey of the American population done for the ADL, the 1990, which is a thorough national survey, indicated that fundamentalist Christians were no more anti-Semitic than others. However, there are spokesmen of the fundamentalist movement who are clearly anti-Semitic, who are dangerous on other grounds, and there is a legitimate concern by Jews about those people. And as I've suggested to you, the apparent Republican love affair with such spokesmen (I'm talking about [Pat] Buchanan, but not just Buchanan) the Republican party association with these people has kept even conservative Jews from becoming Republicans. That's the main thing. So there is good reason to be concerned about Buchanan. Well, of course he's clearly engaged in anti-Semitic statements and sentiments as even [William] Buckley has suggested. Buckley has suggested that Buchanan has been anti-Semitic and has castigated him for that.

But even those who are not explicitly anti-Semitic are of concern to the Jews when they are ardently evangelistic. That is to say when they feel that only Christians can go to heaven and everybody else goes to hell, as some heads of the Baptist organizations have said in the past and who believe that the American state should therefore be a reflection of Christian thought along those lines. Those people are dangerous to Jewish security even if they don't say anything which is specifically anti-Semitic.

Glaser: Just a technical point: as a Catholic, is Pat Buchanan considered an evangelical?

Raab: No, he's not an evangelical, he's a fundamentalist however. The fundamentalist is one who at least employs a kind of literalist interpretation of the Bible and applies it. The evangelical is a person who feels that everybody has to be converted to Christianity. And while there are many who are both, there are some who are just fundamentalist and not evangelical.

Glaser: Another article I want to ask you about: this was in the February 1983 issue of Midstream, "Anti-Semitism in the 1980s." You said, among other things, "...the need to understand that anti-Semitism is a commodity, useful to those out of control or disaffected and a form of intimidation to inhibit Jewish political action." Would you explain your use of the word commodity there?

Raab: Well, it's a device, it's a commodity in the sense that it's a product which is created and used by some demagogues in order to further their own purposes. I think that's what I meant.

Glaser: That makes sense if you think of it as a product, which is what a commodity means, right?

Raab: Yes.

Glaser: Part of that article stated the need to effectively interpret Israel's importance for America.

Raab: Yes.

Glaser: You wrote: "The most important protection for American Jewry is the integrity of the constitutional law." And I think that you've talked about this many times. On June 27, 1984, you presented a paper, "The Second Agenda," at the annual meeting of the Conference of Jewish Communal Service in Los Angeles. You discussed the need for a Jewish identity to be better integrated with American identity. Part of this is the American-Israeli relationship. Would you expand on that?

Raab: What year was that?

Glaser: Nineteen eighty-four.

Raab: It's hard to go back twelve years.

Glaser: Want to scrub that?

Raab: No, there's something-- This is a question of American identity and Jewish identity. I think I've mentioned the book that I did with [Seymour Martin] Lipset last year has a lot in it about that. American Jews do not want to return for the most part, and are not going to return, to a segregated situation in this country. They want to be integrated into the economy, in much social life, in the political life, and so forth. In that sense, they want to-- and this is the test always, this is a constant test. It was the test of San Francisco Jews, it's the test of American Jews, which is how we can deal with the question of identity.

God knows we're not talking about dual loyalty, because that has all sorts of conspiratorial things involved. But we are talking about dual identity, and the ability of the Jews to balance their Jewish identity with their American identity is central to their continuity. One of the ways that they do that is by recognizing the congruence between American values and Jewish public affairs values. But that balance is essential. Other ethnic groups have lost that balance and they've lost their ethnic identity. The Jews have an advantage because the Jewish identity, I must say, has a stronger potential than strictly national or ethnic identity because of its religious component.

Glaser: I believe we've talked about that.

I want to ask you about the columns you have been doing for the Jewish Community Bulletin. That's been going on for a long time, and I noticed that they were syndicated starting in 1979. Are they still syndicated?

Raab: Oh, they're sent out and picked up by various Jewish papers, yes.

Glaser: When did you start the columns?

Raab: I think the columns are probably thirty-five, forty years old.

Glaser: How did that get started?

Raab: I always felt that it was an important mechanism for educating about community relations issues, and so I started writing them and the Bulletin published them. They are about seven hundred, seven hundred fifty words, so that they're always less subtle than they might be. I consider this an educational role. And just as I can walk into one audience and not say something that conflicts with something I would say to another audience, nevertheless, the emphasis is different because I think in judging one audience that they would be more interested in or more stimulated or need one kind of emphasis. Another audience needs another kind of emphasis. And the columns often work that way, depending on what was going on in the minds of the Jewish community I was pushing one way or another. And very often, therefore, the columns did not represent my total point of view. But that's the hazard of seven hundred and fifty word columns.

Glaser: Does writing come easy to you?

Raab: Writing is easy, yes, I enjoy it. I don't enjoy speaking, I enjoy writing.

Glaser: [laughs] You've made that clear. I hope this hasn't been too much of a burden.

Raab: I've enjoyed it, largely because of you.



## XXX MORE ON PROJECTS OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL

Interagency Mass Media Project

- Glaser: Two more questions I have about the JCRC structure. In the 1980s there was an interagency mass media project composed of the Federation, the Board of Rabbis, and the JCRC to meet the special needs of these three sectors. It was a pilot project. Did it continue and did it achieve what it wanted to?
- Raab: It has really continued. The JCRC itself has always been involved in maintaining communication with the leaders and people in the media, interpreting and so forth. That's part of the ongoing JCRC job. The idea here was doing special half-hour programs of various kinds. And that was what the project was about, not general interpretation but putting on specific programs. From the time of the creation it was a joint project, but it was administered here and operated by the JCRC. We had a special person, Sydnee Guyer, who was the staff person in charge. We've put on several programs on mainstream stations, although often on Sunday morning.
- Glaser: These were radio programs?
- Raab: These were radio and TV programs. When I came to the JCRC, one of the questions Gene Block asked me is, "Have you ever done any radio work?" And I, just out of the army, said, "Of course." That was a weekly KSFO program which was being done at the time. We've done a lot of that. I remember there was one that I did, a thirteen-week program on civil rights, civil liberties, and communism, which I did interviewing thirteen different political or labor figures, whatever. So we've always done that sort of thing.

The point of these were special projects. The point of this was especially to do television and to do some ongoing series about Jewish life. That's why the Board of Rabbis and the



Federation were involved as well as the JCRC. They did programs, Sydnee did programs on KRON, at times on KPIX, a series of programs on Jewish life and public affairs problems as well.

### Relations with Other Organizations

Glaser: I want to ask you about some of the JCRC coalitions: a black-Jewish clergy association, a Latino project, a social-urban affairs project, labor project, San Francisco organizing project. Would you talk about these? I don't think we've covered them in the past.

Raab: Well, one of the ongoing functions of the JCRC is to establish some ongoing relationships with other organized groups in the community. Not dialogues, I've never been big on dialogues which just discuss things in general, but associations around specific common goals. It was obvious in the civil rights period when we had common goals with the black community and the incipient Latino community, the Protestant clergy and the Catholic clergy.

One of the basic functions of the JCRC was to keep those relationships ongoing because when you need that relationship you don't develop it overnight; it's something that's the result of years of preparation. In terms of emergencies, there was an emergency, which I mentioned with respect to Israel, that within twenty-four hours we were able to bring together the heads of every group in San Francisco--labor, public officials, and the ethnic and racial groups. When that neo-Nazi group lifted its head, we were able within twenty-four hours to put on counter programs which included the Protestant leadership, Catholic leadership, ethnic leadership, labor, and so forth. Those are the coalitions which we talk about, and they need to be nurtured constantly. They just can't be developed over a subject in twenty-four hours.

Glaser: You had a middle-class project. What was that all about?

Raab: There was an ad hoc committee concerned with certain proposals for middle-class housing. But later, and continuing into the present, there have been JCC efforts to deepen relationships with other groups, beyond the professionals, in other words develop these relationships with Jewish leadership and black leadership, for example, and Latino leadership. The most effective way to do that was to establish relationships with middle-class blacks, middle-class Latinos and so forth. The idea being that these were rising

groups within these other ethnic groups, and they were groups with which the Jewish middle class could easily associate and identify.



## XXXI ACTIVITIES IN RETIREMENT YEARS

Retirement from the Jewish Community Relations Council

Glaser: Why did you retire in 1987? It seems to me you could have gone on doing what you were doing for a long, long time.

Raab: I had my own instincts on this, but Sam Ladar, who was my mentor in Jewish life, said don't wait too long. Because if there are things you want to do after you retire, you don't want to be too old when you retire so that you don't have any chance to do everything you want to do. I thought that was good advice.

Glaser: Tell me about your retirement dinner, the community-wide retirement dinner in September of that year.

Raab: It was kind of an overwhelming experience. I knew that people wanted to do something. I would feel easier if there was a roomful of fifty people who knew me best and so forth. But it expanded and there were, I don't know, over four hundred people there, I guess. It was very nice. There's not much to say about it except that I enjoyed it very much and it was an expression from a lot of people that I appreciated.

Glaser: Your friend Irving Kristol came out from New York and told tales of your youth.

Raab: Yes, that was Rita's idea. He came out and told a few tales. That was fun.

Glaser: That must have been very, very satisfying.

Raab: Yes.

Glaser: But after retirement, you stayed on as a special consultant.

Raab: Yes, what was it? For four years, I think.

Glaser: You were an official consultant for two-fifths of the time or so.

Raab: Yes. I don't know what that was. It was--

Glaser: You served as a consultant on the issue of affirmative action, to help devise policy and prepare a background piece on its history.

Raab: Yes. And as I told you, first Rita became the director for two years and then Doug Kahn took over. Rita knew very well and Doug knew, I told them, that anything I could do I would do. The consultantship was a way to give me a little bit of money for four years as a kind of bridge, I guess, because I would have done it anyway. But then the Brandeis thing came along.

Glaser: How did that come along? How did that happen?

Director, Nathan Perlmutter Institute for Jewish Advocacy,  
Brandeis University

Raab: I got a call from the head of the program at Brandeis that trains professionals, from Bernard Reisman there, whom I had never met. He said that they wanted to set up an institute in the name of [Nathan] Perlmutter to train Jewish community relations professionals and he wanted to offer me the job. He said that the idea was to come out and join the faculty and be a regular member of the Brandeis faculty. I said no. I liked Boston all right, but I didn't want to move away from San Francisco permanently at this point in my life, given the fact that I had all my grandchildren around here. So I said no.

Mentioning my grandchildren reminds me that because we have been so properly preoccupied with my professional career, I have made no personal note of the role of my family in that career. I've been around so long that I naturally received some offers over the years to go to New York to work for one of the national agencies. These were always pretty good jobs, but I never budged, largely because my family and I were so pleased to be here.

My wife, Kassie, aside from all her other attributes, was a great support in my work, most dramatically during the earlier years when I was putting in so many hours, both for the JCRC and for other work I had to undertake to supplement my salary. Our children, Earl Benjamin and Elizabeth Jenny, were also a great support and found ways to spend time with me.



They were happy in public school here, and then there have been my grandchildren: Louis, Morris, Devorah, Miriam, and Marguerite, who have been going to school in San Francisco suburbs. Kassie and I could never envision being a continent away from them--and I could never have done whatever I did without them.

Reisman called me back again and said, "Well, is there anything we can work out?" And I said, "The only thing we can work out is perhaps for a few years to get the program started." I said four years, finally. To get the program started, I would come out for a few months each year. So he said okay, let's do that. And that's how he made me the director of this new outfit.

We were able to do it because since I was only coming out part-time there was a young member of the faculty who helped me, who filled in when I wasn't there. Of course it turned out to be a little more than four years, but for those years I went back every fall, Kassie and I did. I taught in the fall semester, and of course became especially interested in using the institute to affect the field in general, not just new people coming in but the community relations field which I felt needed some new directions.

Glaser: You were able to do all this in just several months a year?

Raab: Well, no. I taught several months a year and then the other things including a textbook I wrote for the class and other materials which were distributed around the community relations field. That I did at home with my computer and my fax machine. The fellow [Larry Sternberg] who was filling in when I wasn't there and who eventually took over, we were in touch every week by phone.

Glaser: Are you now taking part in Gary Tobin's Institute for Community and Religion?

Koret Institute for Policy Studies, Stanford University's Jewish Studies Program

Raab: Oh, he's designated me a fellow of that operation but I haven't done anything actively, really, with Tobin's outfit. There is something new that I've become involved in. The Jewish Studies Program at Stanford under Steven Zipperstein, which has become one of the strongest Jewish Studies programs in the country, has just set up an institute for policy studies called the Koret Institute because they got some money from Koret to do it. They established

six fellows who would be actively involved in this, and they asked me to be one of those. I just got notice of it this week. So for a couple of years I'll be working with him at Stanford. And of course I still have things I do from Brandeis.

Glaser: What will your function be with Zipperstein?

Raab: They're going to hold three conferences a year and I'll be writing a paper for at least one of them. I will be involved more actively in between in helping to establish the nature of the institute.

Glaser: They have a strong faculty down there.

Raab: Very strong faculty. Aside from Zipperstein, Arnie [Arnold] Eisen, I think, is the strongest mind in Jewish studies west of the Rockies.

Glaser: I've heard both of those men speak and they're very impressive.

Raab: And Arnie has written some very good stuff. So that will keep me occupied for a little longer, I guess.

Glaser: And more writing coming up.

### Writing

Raab: And more writing, yes. I'm doing something for Brandeis now which is a culmination of my thoughts about what has to happen in the community relations field, so I'm working on that now.

Glaser: Is this going to be part of the curriculum or is this going to be a separate book altogether?

Raab: It won't be a book. It will be a good-sized pamphlet, I guess, which will be used for the students. But from my point of view, even more significantly, it will have some distribution in the field generally among professionals to start with and among lay people as well.

##

Raab: The working title is "The Graying of the JCRCs," and it's a call for a fifty-year checkup. Actually, my career in this field began shortly after or has paralleled the change in the community relations field fifty years ago. What we're talking about is

right after World War II. Before that the understanding had been in Jewish defense agencies and operations that we had to change the minds of people so that they felt better about the Jews. And in this modern period, starting about fifty years ago, we developed what I have referred to, the understanding that it's the external political and cultural situation which will guarantee the security of Jews more than how people think about it.

In other words, there's a mountain of research that shows how people feel about Jews, whether people like Jews or not, is a product of the kind of political society we're in in the first place. It doesn't create that society; it's a product of that society. So that's how things changed, and it's time for another kind of change, and that's what I'm working on now.



## XXXII SUMMING UP

The Question of Minorities

Glaser: This leads to another question I wanted to ask you. In the summing up I think it will fit in here. One of your major concerns has been with protection of the rights of minorities, and you see this specifically in a democratic society having this need.

Raab: Yes, and in the context of the JCRC I kind of put it this way: as an individual person, I've always been interested in everybody's rights and the rights of minorities. I was involved in that from college on. But in terms of the JCRC, I think it's important for the context to be that the JCRC is mainly concerned with the self-protection of the Jews, and the self-protection of the Jews depends upon the strength of rights in general for minority groups. Therefore, our interest as a JCRC is a very practical interest.

Glaser: But what is your concept of the relationship between a majority and a minority in America?

Raab: [sighs]

Glaser: Somebody has termed it a majoritarian democracy.

Raab: Well, of course it's not. The thing about America that is exceptional--that's the term that's used which means that there's no place else that's been like it, from at least the ideas at the inception. You look at the first ten amendments, they haven't to do with the majority, they have to do with minorities, with protecting minority rights. The concept in America is that in general majority rules, but only to the point where it does not oppress minority rights. And that's a difficult thing to maintain. But I think we've done it, that's the importance of our Constitution.



### Financial Pressures

Glaser: You've mentioned in passing the lectureships that you had at UC Berkeley and San Francisco State. Would you tell me more about that?

Raab: Some of the things I did in the early years related partly to the need for me to make more money than I was making at the JCRC in order to support my family. So when I taught at San Francisco State years ago, I was teaching in the language arts department. Outside of relationships established generally, I suppose, it didn't bear much relationship to the JCRC. It bore a lot of relationship to my paycheck.

There was time when (this was one of those junctures) I was the chief consultant to the California State Social Welfare Board at one point for several years when Pat Brown was the governor. In that role I wrote something on the pattern of poverty in California which was rather widely used and distributed at the time. And this helped me establish some relationships with Sacramento and so forth, but it was also something that helped my family live. There were a few years there where it was pretty hectic. I was working easily eighty hours a week. I don't know how it broke down, but at some point sixty hours may have been JCRC and twenty hours were on some of these other things that I was doing.

When I lectured at the University of California, it was the School of Social Work. It was as a result of my work as the chief consultant for the state social welfare board. And then sometimes when I needed money I would sign a contract for a book to get an advance and then hope to write the book.

Glaser: Well, these were all very prestigious things that you were doing.

Raab: Well, they were things I needed to do.

### Honors Received

Glaser: I'd like you to mention the honors that you've received. And if you need some help, I'll recite them for you. In 1969, you received the San Francisco Foundation Award for "consistent and outstanding courage in contributing to the improvement of human relations."

Raab: That, you know, it was very nice. I think also it provided a five hundred dollar reward. But I'm not sure why I got it instead of somebody else.

Glaser: I think there's something different here that refers to outstanding courage.

Raab: Again, I'm not sure that-- I've wondered at times about it. It didn't take much courage in San Francisco.

Glaser: Would it have taken more courage elsewhere?

Raab: Oh, I suppose in Mississippi it would have taken more courage.

Glaser: [laughs] We're kind of going far afield.

Raab: It's just that I was very active. There were some of those awards that I felt a little fraudulent about because in some cases, I got them for doing things that I was supposed to be doing anyway for the JCRC.

Glaser: Well, in 1970 you received Gunnar Myrdal Award for a major contribution to the study of man. I think that was the result of a book you wrote.

Raab: That was the book with Lipset, Politics of Unreason in the History of Extremism in America Since 1790, an ambitious book that was used in the universities a great deal.

Glaser: And then in 1977, the Smolar Award for Excellence in Journalism.

Raab: That presumably was for one or more of the columns I wrote for the Jewish Bulletin.

Glaser: Are there some that I've missed?

Raab: Oh, there are maybe a couple and then there are end of life awards.

Glaser: Would you explain that please? It doesn't sound very optimistic. [laughs]

Raab: No, and I had this feeling about them, the so-called lifetime awards, awards for lifetime activity. NCRAC gave me one a couple of years ago and then the Koret Foundation, as you know, gave me one last year, both of them for lifetime achievements. Well, getting an award for a lifetime achievement seems to be sending a signal that says goodbye Charlie.

Glaser: [laughs] That's why you call it end of life?

Raab: Yes, some awards I got because of longevity.

Glaser: Oh, I think you're being too modest.

Raab: Well, but that's the way it works also. I attribute some of my longevity to the pacific quality of smoking cigars, which brought me through many years. When I retired I said, because I had figured it out, that I had at luncheon meetings, especially luncheon meetings for the JCRC, I had eaten enough tuna fish sandwiches to cover a football field. I figured that out mathematically. But also as I attended all of these many conferences (and I don't know what would happen today where I couldn't do it), throughout all those years the image that people had of me for many of these conferences was striding up and down at the back of the hall smoking a cigar. I don't think you can survive that many conferences unless you have something like that to divert you and to keep your nerves in order.

Glaser: The tuna fish sandwiches for lunch, were they the equivalent of the rubber chicken dinners?

Raab: That's right, that's right.

#### How San Francisco Has Changed

Glaser: Would you reflect on the changes you've seen in the San Francisco community?

Raab: In one way it's extremely startling if you were here in 1950 and come back suddenly at the end of the century. It's a short enough period. The intensity of Jewish life, it's a split picture. It's got to be explained this way because it's the same for America.

One way I've been putting it, in order to repeat myself, is that if you want to make this comparison between 1950 and the year 2000, the Jewish community of San Francisco has become much more like the national Jewish community in some ways. And in some ways the national Jewish community has become more like San Francisco's Jewish community in the sense that the intensity of Jewish life has increased tremendously in this city in terms of facilities for Jewish education, Jewish studies programs in the area which did not exist before, and general feelings. Even the ability to put up a menorah in a public square. That's a sign of Jewish identity.

Jewish clubs in high schools, which were established in San Francisco when there were students in San Francisco high schools. Jewish students were wearing their Mogen David as they walked around the school. That sort of thing was impossible fifty years ago. And you have to move out into the suburbs outside of San Francisco to see much of this because so many of the Jewish teenagers live outside of San Francisco now. And you see confirmation classes going to Israel every year. Large numbers. Israel was taken for granted, somewhat, by American Jewry, but certainly by San Francisco Jewry fifty years ago.

So all those things have happened and we've come closer to what the temper of the national Jewish community is than we did fifty years ago. We were this way in San Francisco--I say we although I was a newcomer--we were this way in San Francisco because of a high rate of integration in San Francisco. The rest of the country became more like San Francisco in the sense that the Jews became considerably more integrated in economic life, political life, etcetera, which they were here.

Fifty years ago here, both the police commission and the board of education were appointed boards, and it was a strict formula that there were as many Jews as Protestants. There were a specific number of Jews, Protestants, and Catholics on each, as many Jews as there were Protestants and Catholics. A reflection of the idea that there were three major religions in the country and they were equally divided in terms of potency. Of course, the population was quite different. That didn't happen elsewhere in the country. So the rest of the country became more like San Francisco that way.

All of that has got to be qualified by the fact, which is true nationally and true in San Francisco as well, that this increased intensity of Jewish identity does not affect all of the Jews in the city. There are two streams of Jews: there are Jews who are seeking an intensity of their Jewish identity, incredibly more so than they did fifty years ago. At the same time there's another stream which is continuing to move away from Jewish identity. So it's a kind of race between the two streams, but I think it's clear what will eventuate. At least in the early part of the next millennium there will be fewer Jews, but they'll be a strong central core of Jews. And what happens after that will happen. I never liked the term "Jewish continuity" because somehow it carried the indication that there might be a discontinuity, that somehow Jews would cease to exist. That won't happen. But there will be smaller numbers.

Glaser: Well, I think we've come to the end. Is there anything that you would like to add, things that I've not covered with you.

Raab: I don't think so. If I look at what you write and if I have any thoughts, I'll let you know. Is that all right?



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Commentary, October 1950

## FROM THE AMERICAN SCENE

### "THERE'S NO CITY LIKE SAN FRANCISCO"

#### *Profile of a Jewish Community*

EARL RAAB

“THERE is no city like San Francisco,” the Jews of the Golden Gate say with some conviction. But they say it in two different ways. Some say it happily, with an expansive smile. Others say it drily, and sadly shake their heads. As is usually the case in such matters, both are probably right.

The almost universal experience of any visitor to San Francisco is nostalgia-at-first-sight. This is normally the kind of reaction reserved for small villages tucked away on some by-road in a farming country with an ancient pitcher pump in the square, an ambling populace of about five hundred, an atmosphere of more or less live-witted serenity—and a single national origin and cultural heredity. San Francisco's population is three quarters of a million. It is the commercial and banking center of the West. It is a polyglot city that has been heavily infiltrated by a dozen nationalities. Withal, there is no mistaking its village air of friendly order and homogeneity.

There is the pitcher pump, deliberately, in the form of the rheumatic old cable cars. There is the serenity, in good measure: side-

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When EARL RAAB found that he would have to leave his Maine farm and become an urban dweller once again, he needed little time to reflect before deciding that of all the cities he knew, San Francisco was the one in which he wanted to live. In this article—one of COMMENTARY'S series of portraits of American Jewish communities—Mr. Raab reports on the quality and nature of Jewish life in the Golden Gate city. Mr. Raab wrote “In Promised Dixieland” in the May 1948 COMMENTARY and “Report from the Farm” in the December 1949 issue.

walks that are wide and fit the people loosely; greens and flower banks, and little flower vends on every third corner; streets that dip and bob like a merry carnival coaster; and a population that rushes only when it has some place to go.

Of course San Francisco considers itself a sophisticated and gaily flavored town (“Bagdad on the Bay”), but there are few physical evidences of upstart vulgarity and self-conscious bohemianism such as mark many modern American metropolises. Thomas Mann (in concert with others) has called San Francisco the most continental city in the country.

San Francisco is a genteel city. San Francisco is a poised city. San Francisco knows where it's been and where it's going.

Confronted with it, what East-weary mortal can resist nostalgia?

And what Jew will not sigh just a little longer than the rest?

THERE are fifty-five thousand Jews in San Francisco, and not even the historic traces of a ghetto. There is a Jewish community that has been called, with reason, the wealthiest, per capita, in the country. There is at the same time a startling poverty of anti-Semitic tradition. San Francisco, for cities of its size, is the nation's “white spot” of anti-Jewish prejudice.

In near-top-level social and country clubs there is Jewish membership and even charter membership. Gentlemen's agreements are quite uncommon in its quality residential sections, old or new. In filling public and quasi-public posts, there seems to be no trace of a policy of exclusion or “quota” or even discriminatory hesitation. At times Jewish citizens have concurrently held the presidencies



of the Chamber of Commerce, the Community Chest, the Board of Education, Art, Fire, and Harbor Commissions, and many other appointive and elective posts; it is a situation that cannot be duplicated in any other city with a 6 per cent Jewish concentration.

Of course, "anti-Semitism" is not a word without meaning in San Francisco. The Jewish Survey and B'nai B'rith Community Committee handles anti-defamation matters, and across its desk every day the usual reports pass in light but steady flow. An employment agency whose cards are marked parenthetically "No J's," or "Blonds only." Private cooperative housing ventures that won't include Jews. A sidewalk altercation where someone turns out to be not only a "damned —" but a "damned Jewish —."

Under the impact of Hitler, a Nazi Bund was formed in the city, and a "Friends of Germany." In the large Italian population there was a backwash of admiration for Mussolini's Fascism. While these organizations have disappeared without even an underground trace, the people that joined them, it must be assumed, are still around. So are upwards of a hundred thousand newcomers from the Midwest and the South who came to the city to work and live during the last war.

There is, then, a steady incidence of employment discrimination and of petty uglinesses, but they are relatively infrequent and without pervasive quality; a pattern more of scattered anti-Semitism than of any policies, regulations, or encased habit. Professional anti-Semitism has never been a paying proposition in San Francisco. Efforts in that direction have always been short-lived. The tip-off is that the latrine-wall type of anti-Semitic literature that has turned up in San Francisco has been date-lined Chicago and Los Angeles, and mailed in.

So far as the city and its institutions are concerned, the Jew is a first-class citizen. It may well be that he can live in San Francisco with a greater degree of personal dignity than in any other large city in the country.

**T**HE attractive face of San Francisco, and the attractive status of the Jewish community within it, have common causes. The histories of the city and of its Jewish community have developed together along a shared course.

In 1848, of course, San Francisco was a mule-stop. When gold was cried and the West exploded, and San Francisco became the center of new wealth and of wealth-seekers, Jews were there with the first wave. They were, in the main, immigrants from Germany, although there were many from England, France, and Alsace-Lorraine. The second surge of Jewish pioneers in the early 50's contained some East Europeans. They came the hard ways, the only ways, across the hazardous continent or over the Isthmus. During the High Holy Days of 1849, services were held in a tent on the old Embarcadero near the waterfront.

While the mass of the forty-niners went scabbling into the hills for gold, there were surer fortunes to be made in the city. One Jewish immigrant landed with his baggage in '49 and immediately invested a hundred dollars in stationery, which he sold in front of a hotel at 500 per cent profit. After a short interlude of playing a piano in a honky-tonk for an ounce of gold and a "grab" (literally a handful) of silver, he bought a store and began buying up trunks from gold speculators anxious to get into the hills. Selling these again, he made five or six thousands in seven or eight weeks. Soon, dozens of boxlike little stores were set up by his fellow Jews along the sprawling streets, heaped with hard-to-get clothing and merchandise shipped by friends and relatives in the East.

Other Jews played a part in the creation of the financial institutions on which San Francisco's economy was to rest. They turned banker, money broker, exchange dealer. Names like Davidson, Priest, Dyer, Glazier, and Wormser were identified with the giant financial transactions that became necessary with Europe and with the East. The London, Paris, and American bank was founded by the Lazards. The Seligmans helped create the Anglo-American bank. The directorates of a half-dozen other mushrooming banks bore Jewish names. Jews became leading realty brokers, founders of engineering enterprises, and manipulators of the grain exchange. They were in on the ground floor of a speculative venture that swelled to fantastic and permanent proportions, and they made fantastic and permanent fortunes in the process. They also helped construct the basic economy of the new community of San Francisco. One of the differences between a

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"Shylock" and a "financial genius" is, after all, the size of his enterprise.

Further than that, some of these Jewish immigrants had brought with them uncommon strains of culture and education and qualities of leadership, and many of them plunged immediately into civic life. Samuel Marx was made United States Appraiser of the Port of San Francisco in 1851 and Joseph Shannon was County Treasurer in the same year. In 1852, Elkan Heydenfeldt and Isaac Cardozo were members of the state legislature, and Heydenfeldt was also Chief Justice of the state Supreme Court from 1852 to 1857.

The San Francisco *Herald* in 1851 struck the note of respect that was to be characteristic in generations to follow: "The Israelites constitute a numerous and intelligent class of our citizens and conduct themselves with great propriety and decorum. They are industrious and enterprising and make worthy members of our community."

From the beginning, the Jews were conspicuous for their sense of community. The first two welfare organizations in San Francisco were set up by Jews. In 1850 the Eureka Benevolent Society was organized to help the needy, and it still exists as the Jewish Family Service. As the little clothing stands turned into large department stores, and the money counters into financial empires, the Jews—feeling an understandable kinship with the city—began to make large financial contributions to the general community life.

This tradition, as well as the tradition of civic participation, has persisted until today. A startling number of the pools, parks, libraries, museums, and halls that are available to the public at large, bear familiar Jewish names, aside from the many institutions that are administered under Jewish agency auspices but are non-sectarian in character (such as the very new and splendid Maimonides Hospital for chronic ailments, which serves a specific community need). Even the more private support of the cultural institutions of the city by the Jews has been too frequent to escape public attention—the music critic of the *Chronicle* recently reported that he had been informed that about 40 per cent of the deficit of the San Francisco symphony orchestra is written off by three Jewish families.

THE fact is that the Jews in San Francisco have never been cast in the role of "intruder." This was historically impossible. There was no aristocracy in California in 1849. There was only a rag-tail gang of money-hungry pioneers, of heterogeneous origins, welded together into a "frontier brotherhood" community. As the "first families" became incrustated, they became incrustated necessarily in amalgam with the "first families" of the Jewish community.

The Jews aside, San Francisco has maintained a degree of tolerance for minority groups that has not obtained in other cities along the coast. (Notoriously: Los Angeles.) One is prompted to speculate on the reasons for this, not only partially to explain the relationship between San Francisco and its Jewish community, but also to explain something of the nature of the Jewish community itself.

San Francisco boomed in 1849 and it has not had a really serious boom since. It was built on California gold and Nevada silver, and settled down as a financial and commercial center. It has never changed its basic character. The recent great industrial eruptions in the West—with their accompanying invasions of "barbarian hordes" from the East and the Midwest and the South, and their extensions of eastern power and influence—which have boomed and burst cities like Los Angeles and Oakland, in the main by-passed San Francisco, and were reflected only in its increased prosperity as a financial center. Indeed, San Francisco is physically not capable of much expansion along industrial or population lines. It is a compact city, bounded on three sides by water, and on the other by a number of small communities jealous of their identity. It has been estimated that, just by virtue of physical limitations, San Francisco's top population would be around a million. As a matter of fact, the artificial surge in population which San Francisco experienced as a result of wartime activity has in large part already been dissipated. (At the end of the recent census, policemen and firemen were dispatched by frantic city officials to ring doorbells in an attempt to find untalented citizens and bring the census figure somewhere near the special 1945 figure. But, alas, almost a hundred thousand estimated people had flown the coop.)

San Francisco is thus a middle-class, white-collar city. (It has the highest average per-



centage of office-building occupancy and the greatest telephone density in the country.) It is also a city whose top social and economic layers have remained fairly well preserved. As a result it has a conservative cast, with accompanying overtones of unblurred tradition and general *noblesse oblige*. (To be sure, it has also had a rather violent labor history—notably the general strike of 1934. But since San Francisco is not, like Detroit, a city of industries with a large industrial working class, its labor history has had surprisingly little effect upon the “tone” of living.)

All this has worked, of course, to preserve undisturbed the status of the Jew in the community. It has also worked to preserve the internal structure and character of the Jewish community itself. The Jewish population has increased, along with the general population, not by spectacular leaps, but by normal accretion. And the Jews attracted to San Francisco have generally been those who would not tend to disrupt the community's basic character. There have never been in San Francisco, for instance, the job opportunities that would encourage a mass influx of Eastern Europeans of the first generation. (The garment industry is small-sized with about an 8 per cent concentration of Jewish workers. There is no other Jewish “proletariat” to speak of.)

THERE are many who claim, however, that the favorable position of the Jew in San Francisco is not just a derivative of the history and nature of the city, but also of the “historical position” and “astute leadership” of the old Jewish families who have maintained their identity and influence over several generations. This claim certainly has some truth. On the other hand, it is also true that out of this “historical position” and “astute leadership” by the older Jewish families there has developed a deep-rooted set of conflicts and a Jewish community on the verge of schism.

This schism is not so notable for its actual violence or disruptive effect, or for the number of people involved, as it is for its symptomatic quality and its implications for American Jewry in general. The history of the conflict is not just a petty scrap for power (which it sometimes has all the earmarks of being), or a local fight for “democracy,” or an ideological dispute on this or that specific;

but it seems ultimately a reflection of sharp differences in approaching the fundamental problems of Jewish identity in America.

It is only recently that San Francisco has seen the dramatic enactment of this conflict. But there have long been people who felt privately or semi-privately that the Jewish community was “moribund,” that Jewish life as such was “marginal,” that the organs of Jewish expression in the city were muffled and misdirected, that Jewish community organizations were not representative, that leadership needed changing.

When these critics talk about the “leadership,” they know exactly whom they mean: certain members of the old and influential families who have firmly held their rein on community organizational life, and particularly on such agencies as the Survey Committee which long served as the *de facto* public relations body for the Jewish community. But when they talk about “autocracy,” they are not always clear as to exactly why, if the dissidents were in large number, no remedial action was ever effectively attempted. The explanations run variously that: the leadership was entrenched; the leadership had the money and the facilities; the atmosphere was “such as to smother” any creative activity; the body of the community was mired in a long tradition of uninterest in Jewish matters; they themselves had developed no effective leadership. Always, however, for a full explanation, it seemed necessary to add a mysterious ingredient, sometimes referred to as the San Francisco “x” factor. (Someone postulated that if a half dozen Jews of similar background, Jewish intensity, and ideology, were settled three in Los Angeles and three in San Francisco, they would be found to be very different groups in outlook and activity after five years.)

The fact is that it took nothing less than the catalysts of Hitler and the State of Israel to bring the latent elements to a boil.

IN 1943, when the extraordinary horrors of Nazi genocide in Eastern Europe reached a publicity peak, mass meetings were conducted everywhere in this country. In San Francisco, preliminary deliberations stretched over two months. A modest conference was at first suggested and it became clear that the “traditional leadership” as such was reluctant to sponsor a mass political meeting of an ob-

trusively Jewish nature that had no precedent in the city's history. A provisional committee was formed and a call was sent out for representatives. A reported fifty-three organizations responded. A prominent section of the traditional leadership, including the Survey Committee, refused to participate, personally or organizationally. On June 17, 1943, at the Civic Auditorium, more than ten thousand people packed the hall to hear Thomas Mann, Eddie Cantor, and others.

Shortly afterwards, two prominent Russian Jews, Solomon Michoels and Itzik Fefter (the latter has since been "liquidated"), were sent to this country by the Soviet Union, then our "staunch ally," to "bind up the American Jews into one anti-fascist bloc in common with the Russian Jews." They were received by public dignitaries and by Jewish communities at large meetings throughout the nation. Again, and with the Soviet stigma lending them added conviction, the "traditional leadership" declined to lend support to a mass San Francisco reception. Under the same sponsorship as the previous meeting, the Civic Auditorium was again filled to capacity on August 31, this time for the two Russians.

The impact of these successes, and the emergence of some earnest young men of leadership caliber, led to a round of discussions and conferences on the possibility of reconstituting organizational life in the community. A United Council was formed by the "new coalition" of organizations to provide some channel for "representative community expression." This left the community in deep breach. A number of dismayed individuals immediately pressed for a compromise between the two camps. Several of the United Council groups were thrown into turmoil and there ensued a brief period of labyrinthine political activity out of which the United Council emerged an abortion. One of their larger groups had seceded; conciliation was the apparent order of the day, the United Council was ditched, and the compromise Association of Jewish Organizations (AJO) was formed, in full convention, to include all the elements of the community.

But, lo and legerdemain, when the smoke cleared, the AJO was revealed as an organ of traditional policy and of traditional leadership, and the cries of "aristocracy" and "no representation" were undiminished in vigor.

There is a lot of political over-the-fencing about if and why and how the AJO is "undemocratic by constitution and intent." (Example: Should the Welfare Fund have representation, as it now does, for every one hundred twenty-five members, giving it a balance of power, although there is no voting constituency and the delegates are appointed "from the top"; if not, what about the people who would not otherwise be represented and, "Where would you get a hall big enough to hold a vote of the Fund membership anyway?")

And there is some question of how the "opposition," claiming to represent the "popular" sentiment, having been a coalition of fifty-three separate groups, and having pulled in audiences of ten thousand people at the occasion of their mass meetings, could not exercise enough control in open convention to scotch the "undemocratic" provisions of the AJO in the first place. Answers of "sinister influence," "inequality of leadership," discouragement at the demise of the United Council, probably must be supplemented by some consideration of the San Francisco "x" factor.

But the central fact was that against the first major attempt to unseat them, the Old Guard firmly maintained their role as the community leadership.

**I**N 1948 a picket line was set up in front of the British consulate to protest the British refusal to allow refugees to debark in Palestine. The Survey Committee promptly dispatched a letter of apology to the consulate, disavowing the demonstration. A representative of the irate picketers wrote a letter to the public press, disavowing the apology.

In the fall of 1949, several "Where Do You Stand" and "You Are Not in Exile" anti-Zionist advertisements were paid for by the American Council for Judaism and were run in the press. The Survey Committee tried to dissuade the Council from this step, offering to publish, in lieu of the ads, a brief statement of policy under the name of the Survey Committee. The Council, however, felt that their ads should run, which they did. The Survey Committee published its own statement, anyway, "in the interests of Jewish public relations in San Francisco." This statement embodied an attack on Ben Gurion and the late Daniel Frisch for remarks that



they had made concerning the responsibilities of American Jews to Israel.

This incident again brought to a boil those people who felt that the Survey Committee was: (1) in effect, acting as the public voice for the entire community, (2) in this capacity misrepresenting the community to itself and to the world at large. (The Survey Committee calls itself "the duly organized and recognized agency for public relations in the community.")

Out of this latest occurrence, delegates from forty-odd organizations in the community elected a working committee of about a dozen to discuss again the problem of community organizational life. This committee is currently functioning, although not in what might be called a violently activist atmosphere. (Remember the "x" factor.) Recently, in support of its claim of being neutral in ideological questions, the Survey Committee made a balancing statement about the disruptive character of the Council ads, but this has not had any visible ameliorative effects.

**W**HATEVER the various merits or demerits of the contending parties in the present situation, partisan polemic should not be allowed to obscure the Jewish concern of the Old Guard. The leadership, as such, has an earnest sense of its patrician responsibilities to the Jewish community, in which it has great pride. It wears with firm dignity the mantle of authority that has been handed down and feels that, as against "outsiders" and "newcomers," it understands the traditions and peculiar necessities of the local scene.

To say, as many do, that its component members are fearful of anti-Semitism, is to say merely that they are Jews. To say that out of this fearfulness they would not be averse to a withering away of the Jewish community as such, is simply untrue: they have spent too much time, money, and sincerity on the preservation of that community. To say that they subscribe to the "craven" theory that "Jews out of sight are Jews out of mind" is untenable: they have not followed the logic of that pattern. The Bernsteins reported of the Richmond Jews (COMMENTARY, December 1949) that "they hardly ever ran for public office, and frowned on other Jews who did. They just didn't think a Jew should put himself forward." In San Francisco they do run for office, and they do

put themselves forward prominently as citizens of the city.

"The leadership," one of its spokesmen says (and rather piqued about having to say it), "has never acted out of fear or truckling. Quite on the contrary, it has always shown particular courage of conviction in following a line of thought . . ." That line of thought is really a kind of political philosophy for special groups in an American community: they should not unnecessarily duplicate civic functions, nor intrude on the community with their internal problems, nor, for their own sake, engage in public relations activities which will unnecessarily offend the general community.

Of course, the leadership's definition of "good public relations" has always been shaded by their general political complexion, which is naturally conservative and often strongly Republican. "Mass meetings and mass pressure," they insist, "can serve no useful function in San Francisco, and can only militate against the group that uses them."

The leadership points to its successful technique in handling anti-Semitic incidents as a blueprint for proper public relations behavior: "Once we have the facts, we contact the offender in man-to-man fashion—the American way. We explain the danger of prejudice, the unfairness of indicting a whole group, the harm it can do to a free American society."

Several years ago a local radio station was broadcasting the program of a well-known anti-Semite. There was a movement afoot to prevail on all the Jewish clients of the station to cancel their advertising. The Survey Committee quelled this movement, and instead called on the proprietor of the radio station who, after discussion, canceled the contract.

"I'm canceling this program," the station owner said, "because you came to me in a decent way and presented a decent argument. Had you moved in by threatening my business, I'd have fought you all the way."

When a bus driver used offensive language, the Committee called quietly on the personnel manager; when the temples were smeared with Columbian slogans, and the culprit's membership in a local church was traced by a private detective, they approached the priest; when a real estate concern acted out a discriminatory policy, they met with the owners in conferences lasting more than a



year before convincing them, in all logic, of the error of their way.

There can be no question but that this kind of diplomatic approach to anti-Semitism in-the-fact has worked effectively to date in San Francisco.

AS FOR the internal life of the Jewish community, the leadership thinks of it largely in institutional terms and is proud of its accomplishments. Certainly, in the general, there is no look of impoverishment. The orphans' home, equipped with cottages and "mothers," is a showpiece, generously endowed. The residence home for Jewish working girls is complete with all the extra-curricular facilities that might be desired. There is a home for the aged that is described as a "veritable hotel." The Community Center is huge, thriving, and unstintingly equipped.

Critics (some of whom grew up in the East) certainly have no quarrel with these activities so far as they go—but they don't think they go far enough. They feel that the leadership (and community thinking) has been too exclusively concerned with considerations of a public relations policy, on the one hand, and of a welfare community on the other. They feel that there has been too much "local Jewish community" in the thinking and not enough Judaism. They feel that the leadership has dispatched its responsibilities as far as it's seen them, but that it has a minimal concept of a Jewish community life. Finally, many of them believe that this minimal concept, no matter how sumptuously attended, will inevitably lead to the self-annihilation of the Jewish community.

These critics point to the disparity between the tremendous sums that are generally spent on philanthropic projects and the almost negligible amounts that are allotted to such projects as Jewish education. They also deplore the paucity of activity directed towards underlining the historical mission of Judaism and the historico-mystical ties that bind Jewry to Jewry everywhere.

What they are in fact pointing up and objecting to and being frightened by, is the apparent trend of a large (and the particularly "San Franciscan") section of the community, and its leadership, to slip away from the traditional moorings of Jewish life, to loosen its Jewish roots, and in the process eventually to blur and devitalize Judaism itself.

This kind of trend, insofar as it is a by-product of Americanization, has its evidences all over the country, but nowhere else does it involve such a large portion of the Jewish population or have such a dominating influence. Nowhere has it had such a fertile field to develop in its "laboratory" form. Nowhere has it kept such clearly defined lines or been less obscured by "recent generation" leavening. Indeed, such leavening has served, more than anything else in recent years, to point up "the trend."

IN DEFINING the various segments of the Jewish community, the synagogues serve as the most convenient and the most accurate (though always approximate) focuses. Temple Emanu-El and Sherith Israel have the largest congregations in the city, a combined total of about twenty-five hundred members. They are the Reform temples, and both had their origins in the pioneer year of 1849. (There is some disagreement about which was first.)

In these congregations all the lay leaders and the famed "leadership" of the community are found (when they can be found in any congregation). Temple Emanu-El has the preponderant number of first-family and wealthy-family names in the community. Its social character has remained more stable, having acquired less of the foreign (to San Francisco) element, and fewer of the "nouveaux." Symptomatically, almost all of the local members of the American Council for Judaism are affiliated with Emanu-El, almost none with Sherith Israel. One rabbi has said: "Just as America will be the last citadel of capitalism, so Temple Emanu-El will be the last citadel of the kind of thing that Isaac M. Wise and Elka Cohen and Voorsanger stood for."

In general, the diminution of ceremonial intensity in religious life that has characterized the Jew (and the Christian) in America, is particularly noticeable in San Francisco. And there has been a general (not official) stretching of the Reform philosophy at its most radical points. Some of the city's religious leaders feel that many of those who have maintained their affiliations with the temple could very well be happy in a church of different proportions. A church that would be named, say, the American Mosaic (or Monotheistic) church where people who

believed in Moses' One God could convene to make their simple devotions, renew their faith in the moral tone of life, and where their children could attend Sunday school.

"Sunday school" is, indeed, a problem. Parents who have lived apart from any formal religious affiliation all their adult life (and, of course, in San Francisco, in a "mixed" neighborhood) are suddenly faced with growing children who desire to attend the neighborhood Sunday school (Baptist or whatever) along with the other children. Parents are continually approaching their rabbi with this problem, and even where long traveling distances are involved, are anxious to have their children receive a Jewish Sunday school education. An interest in the drama of religion inevitably captures some of the children, and there is the recurrent spectacle of children demanding of flabbergasted parents that candles be lit on Friday night.

Culturally, this segment of the population has lost its basic contact with the historical language and literature of Judaism. Hebrew education is barely existent. And the European accent is, of course, completely gone. One of the more prominent members of the community tells this story: At a private affair he was attending in Los Angeles, a number of men around the table burst into strange song. "What in the world are they singing?" he asked. He was astonished to hear that they were singing Yiddish songs. That sort of thing, he said (by way of describing the temper of the city) could never have happened in San Francisco, or at least in that large part with which he was acquainted. It says a great deal that shortly after the American Council for Judaism was formed in 1943, fourteen hundred of its twenty-five hundred national members were San Franciscans. (The local membership has dwindled since.)

The rate of intermarriage is probably greater in San Francisco than any place else in the country. This is an inevitable result of the relative freedom of social movement. One old-timer named, offhand, children of five rabbis who have intermarried in the past. It is only necessary to read the social pages of the press over the months to get a comparative index. However, it is widely believed that intermarriage has passed its peak, and that the rate will not appreciably increase.

THE really significant fact about all these various aspects of Jewish life in San Francisco is by and large the naturalness and matter-of-factness of their development. They are not marked by evidences of self-hatred, Jewish anti-Semitism, fear, hysteria, or other minority neuroses. This is emphasized rather than confuted by the few cases of individuals in the community who follow the more obvious and self-betraying pattern of overvehement and over-emotional "150 per cent Americanism." It is the normal temper of San Francisco's old-line Jews, however deviant their behavior from old Jewish patterns, to accept their Jewishness, their deviations, and their Americanism as matters of course, without conscious design, without a special sense of urgency, without schizoid complications. This is underlined by the way they go about their business, by the way they go about engaging in civic affairs, by the way they conduct their social affairs, by the way they talk about their Jewishness. However it may be elsewhere, and whatever its implications for Judaism, it is necessary to recognize that in San Francisco, by and large, the features of the Jewish community are those of an adjusted Jewry, not of a mal-adjusted Jewry full of jitters and tensions. To many, this "adjustment" threatens much that lies near to the heart of traditional Judaism. And there is a real problem here—the problem of best integrating the old into the new. Perhaps San Francisco does not represent the ideal integration. But who, in the glass houses of other American Jewish communities, will cast the first stone?

And it is worth remembering that so far as it concerns the majority of San Francisco's older Jewish families, the most remarkable fact of San Francisco is not the vanishing (or shrinking) Jew, but on the contrary, the insistent Jew—the Jew who insists on being a San Francisco Jew despite the historical distance (and geographical distance) from his ethnic origins, the thorough Americanization, the complete lack of ghettoization, the social mobility, the freedom of wealth, the mutations in religious thought, and the relative isolation and absence of pressures.

There are a few sensational pioneer family names that have lost their Jewish identity entirely, but they are not significant either in number or in the indication of any permanent trend. The pattern has been rather that



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parents, no matter how amorphous their own religious conceptions, or how distant their connections, have invariably sent their children to a Jewish Sunday school, helping them to obtain a sense, however vague, of their Jewish heritage. Families that are intermarried have, much more often than not, continued their active identification with and participation in the Jewish community. Even those who have disaffiliated, formally or effectively, from religious congregations, or are strictly "High Holiday men," insist vehemently on their Jewish identity and engage in the active leadership of the Jewish community.

This may seem strange in an area where the sentiment is strong that "Jews are members of a religion and nothing more." But one man said: "Of course I'm a Jew. I'm a Jew by religion. Is a Jew not religious because he doesn't go to temple every Friday night?" There is an overwhelming emphasis on the ethical texture, which men like this feel is unique to, and inherent in, the Jewish religion: *rachmnes* or a deep-felt (not just formal or ideological) compassion for fellow men. This, along with a personal devotion to One God, they feel, is the essence of the Jewish religion, and they know they are Jews because they feel it and live by it and believe in it. It is on this level that they explain emotional generousities and philanthropies and the liberal activities so often out of character with a politically conservative cast.

It is not generally accepted in these quarters that Judaism is "religion, plus . . ." as it has sometimes been defined, that the American Jew has more of a historical identity as Jew than as American. Yet on the occasion of Israel's fight for independence and its constitution as a nation, many of San Francisco's anti-Zionists were profoundly affected, and the tone of the whole community shifted perceptibly. "What happened there," one of the old stalwarts of the American Council for Judaism said, "must affect the feelings of Jews everywhere."

Other Jews were stirred by roots they never thought they had. As a matter of fact there has been recently in the "integrated circles" an intensification of religious life, as there has been in the rest of the country. This has been reflected in temple attendance and activity. And of the recently installed rabbi at Temple Emanu-El, one of the Con-

servative-Orthodox rabbis in town said: "He is, if anything, a more intense Jew than I am."

THE religious structure of the Jewish community has in the past reflected the Americanized tendencies of the leadership of the older families, and the Reform temples are the most important. But there are also two fair-sized Conservative congregations in town—one of which can still understand an address in Yiddish—and a scattering of Orthodoxy. Influenced by the same historical circumstances as the older settlers, but on a smaller scale, these people generally consider themselves integrated civically and socially into San Francisco. There is little evidence of intermarriage in their ranks, but there is a tendency for them, with the accumulation of time of residence, position, and influence, to move over to Sherith Israel, the next step on the ladder to Emanu-El. And some of those who maintain their affiliation elsewhere have liked to send their children to temple Sunday school so that, as one rabbi said, "little Sarah might grow up with and catch the eye of some little San Francisco scion."

There is, community-wide, a relatively small synagogue attendance and—compared with other large cities—a relatively light preoccupation with Jewish affairs at large. (Although, again in pattern, the Welfare Fund in San Francisco has had the reputation of having a higher percentage of contributors in relation to the population than any city but Boston. In recent years, however, a number of the more wealthy donors have withheld their contributions because they felt that too much of it was going to Israel. Last year the local president of the Fund estimated that a quarter of a million dollars had been lost among large donors because of an "undercurrent of ideological differences." This tendency is diminishing.)

One member of the community seriously offered as a partial explanation of the generally limited amount of synagogue activity the fact that San Francisco had such fine weather that people weren't so disposed to go to meetings or services. But considering the climate of Palestine, or at the very least Los Angeles, it would seem that the predisposition to apathy (after all, the San Francisco "x" factor) owes less to the temperature of the air than to the tone of the community.

The vocal critics of the present leadership of San Francisco's Jewish community are centered mainly around several hundred people who feel strongly about traditional Judaism and world Jewish affairs. They aren't interested in excommunicating those whose personal Judaism has taken a different turn ("They are mostly good men. They have done fine things here. But because of their background they are out of step with Jewish life. A Jewish community cannot flourish without its traditions, its historical and cultural references . . .") so much as they are interested in making their own influence felt, sponsoring activity along more traditionally religious and more Zionist lines. They feel that a different leadership would give a different, "more specifically Jewish," complexion to the community, and this is what they hope to achieve.

The "Old Guard," for its part, is not anxious to relinquish any more of the office of leadership than it has to. It believes that it is properly restraining these newer elements whose activities might be alien to the traditions of the city and deteriorative of the good public relations they have so meticulously set up. Although they are not so articulate about their own conceptions of Judaism, it is clear that they feel that it is not they who are "out of step" but their critics, who fail to recognize that Jewish life must mean something different to third-generation American Jews from what it did to their ancestors cooped up in the ghettos of Europe and rejected by the world.

"Majority" is cried on both sides but there has been no counting of noses. (In any case, most of the noses of the community wouldn't be twitching excitedly in any direction.) At this point, "unity of expression" does not seem possible or, by any democratic standards, desirable. There is some sentiment in the committee that is sporadically working on the problem to set up a parallel body to the Survey Committee that can, whenever necessary, sponsor programs or make statements

that will reflect an independent viewpoint on specific Jewish matters. It does not seem that, under the circumstances, such a body would seriously give aid to anti-Semitism in the city—if indeed that is a valid consideration at all—or that, on the other hand, it would seriously change the basic character of the local community.

WHATEVER happens on that level, it seems that in certain areas the disputants are becoming more amenable to cooperation. In 1948 the AJO held a meeting to greet Reuven Dafni, West Coast consul of Israel, and everybody came. Dafni wrote a letter to the AJO stating that he was gratified in the understanding that it was the "first time" that all the elements of San Francisco had so gathered. Recently all the groups have been working cooperatively in opposition to the Mundt-Nixon bill.

A prominent "both camps" man in town said: "Give us five or ten years more and all this hickering will have been reconciled." He is probably over-optimistic, but the gap in general is not so great as it was ten years ago. San Francisco is less isolated. No matter how neat its own back yard may be, it is no longer so easy as it once was to ignore the untidiness of the outside world, or to resist its pressures. The younger generation, in all classes, has teethed on Hitler and Israel and modern war. It is less certain of the righteousness of the *status quo*; it is more perplexed about things in general, and more consciously interested in its Jewishness in particular, than were its fathers and grandfathers.

The over-all character of San Francisco's community seems to be in for some "pendulum" change, however slight and however temporary. But come what may, the bulk of the Jews of San Francisco, neither vanished nor concerned with themselves as laboratory specimens, will merely thank the Lord that in whatever fashion they find it necessary to practice their Judaism, they are doing it in San Francisco.

AMERICAN RACE RELATIONS TODAY: STUDIES OF THE  
PROBLEMS BEYOND DESEGREGATION

By  
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Reviewed by  
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*Reprinted from the Yale Law Journal  
Volume 72, Number 5, April 1963*



AMERICAN RACE RELATIONS TODAY: STUDIES OF THE PROBLEMS BEYOND DESEGREGATION. By Earl Raab, ed. New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1962. Pp. 195. \$.95.

MOST sociologists, like cubist painters, represent life in a manner accessible only to their own kind. They crossbreed themselves into intellectual malnutrition and loneliness. The potential reader retreats in the face of semantic barbed-wire and terminological mazes unaware of the insights and unexposed to enlightenment. The ignorant fringe reacts with sporadic hysteria to cases of "block busting" or "de facto integration." Inbetween crises, the bland are leading the bland.

Sociological opera have their rare exceptions: witness a slim volume with the forbidding name: *American Race Relations Today* edited and partly written by Earl Raab. Says Raab:

. . . the problems of race relations are broader than the problems of discrimination which they include. It is now clear that the social objective all along was not just equal opportunity and desegregation but equal achievement and integration; and it is also clear that the former will not automatically—or perhaps swiftly enough—lead to the latter. Indeed the formula may have to be reversed under certain circumstances: extended individual opportunity may depend finally upon group achievement.

This is, hypothetically, the new frontier of race relations: to deal with those factors *other than discrimination* which seriously deter equal group achievement and integration.<sup>1</sup>

Even professional anti-professionals are unlikely to close the book at this point. And rightly so. For the book, in its thirteen essays, opens rare vistas and initiates ferment. There are no books like it on our scene for succinctness, challenge and that razor strop quality for alert minds.

In the first essay, *Ending the Past*,<sup>2</sup> Raab points out that the process of learning does not appear to cause a decline in bigotry among the students of southern colleges.<sup>3</sup> Nonetheless, there is an indirect impact of education on racism as learning expands the range of students' interests. The newly acquired interest in education (or law and order, or economic development) may prevail over the interest in segregated living, when alternatives are framed in exclusive terms of integrated education or lawlessness, integrated employment or no government contracts.<sup>4</sup> Obviously, these "countervailing perspectives" do not "counter-vail" until the margins for evasion are removed. Gradualism stiffens resistance.

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1. Pp. 19-20.

2. Pp. 27

Margins for evasion *can* be removed. In the essay entitled *The Prejudiced Society*,<sup>5</sup> we read that Southern whites inducted into the army accept integration with cold morning showers, as the "army way."<sup>6</sup> Their situation as inductees is unfamiliar to them and new situations admit new patterns of conduct and foster new attitudes. Significantly, the "army way" was instituted by executive order some years ago. In pragmatic terms which oversimplify the portent of the essay, executive order and legislation could accomplish similar results in other areas—by conditioning the availability of housing, schooling, employment or public accommodations on a policy of non-discrimination, and by utilizing the "newness" of new situations.

Margins for evasion *will* be removed, we are told in the third essay, *The Sit-Ins and the New Negro Student*.<sup>7</sup> The new Negro in the South discovered the power of passive resistance and economic boycott. He mobilizes allies and appeals to public opinion. He is no longer alone. And he is no longer patient.

The three essays abstracted above are 5, 26 and 7 pages long. They represent cubic miles of sociological research. Conclusory in presentation, laden with bare minima of supporting evidence, they are as stimulating in their content as they are pleasing in their form. Their only flaw, if flaw they have, is shortness. Consider, for instance, the dimension that could have been added to the book with the inclusion of the following restatement of Raab's views that the point of greatest instability in race relations occurs not when conditions are worst, but at some point in the scale of their improvement.

The desire for equality and status accelerates as these goals become more attainable. . . . Caught in the surge, traditional leaders and organizations step up their own pace, sometimes in sheer defense . . . dramatic protest . . . and slight case of anarchy . . . lead inevitably to actions and demands which appear as "excesses". . . .<sup>8</sup>

It follows that the white liberal and the NAACP lose ground. New leadership emerges and at times it is less than stable. Collaboration becomes difficult where heads are used as battering rams. Bigots, in search of rationalization for their free floating hatred, focus on "excesses" of the New Leadership. Turning his back on patterns of weakness and gradualism characterizing his elders, the New Negro seeks his self image for his new role. This search, psychologically unexplored, yet so apparent in modern Negro literature and so reminiscent of the need of many minorities to act more than equal in order to feel equality with others, looms large over any discussion of legal and sociological solutions to racial tensions. It provides a significant transitional bridge between the first part of this collection called *Ending the Past*<sup>9</sup> and the second part entitled *Beginning the Future*.<sup>10</sup>

5. P. 29.

6. Pp. 43-45.

7. P. 69.

8. Raab. *The Point of Greatest Instability*. San Francisco Newsletter of the Council

That "future" is set in the urban areas of the North and West where "the gap between equal opportunity and equal achievement has been most striking. . . ."<sup>11</sup> Residential patterns determine educational patterns, which determine economic patterns, which determine residential patterns. Our metropolitan areas bifurcate into cities which are increasingly Negro and suburbs of exclusive Whiteness. Politically, socially and economically, race relations permeate our whole existence. Elections, city planning, taxation, education, labor relations, law enforcement problems, all are inextricably interwoven with race relations. They are the increasingly explosive ingredient of our economy, society and government, un-defused only at gravest peril.

In the area of education, this is nowhere made clearer than in Nathan Glazer's statement that while "Southern segregation has to be abolished *independently* of its import on education; Northern school concentration becomes a problem that demands action primarily *because* it may lead to inferior education for Negro children."<sup>12</sup> The statement, as indeed the volume itself, emphasizes and assumes an agreement on the lowest common denominator: abolition of discriminatory legislation. Hence, abolition of southern segregation. But from there, the debate shifts into the new frontiers: from equal treatment under the law to equal opportunity for the deprived, even if it calls for inequality favoring the Negro. Earl Raab, Morton Grodzins, Dan Dodson, Nathan Glazer and James Conant elaborate on the inadequacy of the "color blind" doctrine, on the practice of selecting a lonely "exhibit A" Negro to mask continued segregation in universities, on the "tipping point" phenomenon, disintegrating integration and "benign quotas." While the discussion is not ideally balanced (Will Maslow's point of view<sup>13</sup> is nowhere in evidence even though future legal battles may well be fought in the area delineated by him), it drives explosive lucidity through much factual material.

Since contingency requires eschewing details, let us limit ourselves to one part of James Conant's sub-section on *de facto* segregation.<sup>14</sup> Vide Conant in a nutshell: The real issue is not racial integration but socio-economic integration. By *reductio ad absurdum* Conant sneers that if a child's self-respect requires integration on racial lines, economic integration may be equally necessary, and white slum children should be transported into schools in high income residential districts.<sup>15</sup> To Conant, *de facto* integration is at best a slogan and more likely to be a hindrance by diverting energies from real solutions: ". . . I think it would be far better for those who are agitating for the deliberate mixing of children to accept *de facto* segregated schools as a consequence of a present housing situation and to work for the improvement of slum schools whether Negro or white."<sup>16</sup> The "real" solution, Conant states, is "through the existence of at

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11. *Ibid.*

12. P. 138.

13. Maslow, *De Facto Public School Segregation*, 6 VILL. L. REV. 353 (1961).

14. P. 159.

15. P. 162.

16. P. 162.



least some mixed schools, integrated teaching staffs, and increased expenditures in slum schools. . . ."<sup>17</sup>

Conant's views are contained in four pages—and bulky tomes could be written in rebuttal. Even granting *arguendo* that Conant is right, how wise is it to underestimate slogans at a time when an underprivileged people pulls itself by its bootstraps into a new society? Considering the psychological reality of the Negro quest today, is it too much to ask that in the beginning be The Word? Is it really so evident that *de facto* integration and the solutions urged by Conant, are mutually exclusive? Moreover, if Conant acknowledges that the existence of "some mixed schools" is important in stemming inferiority feelings of the Negro children, has he not admitted the place of the *de facto* integration battle in the total scheme of things? Hence, cities attempting to integrate are not "on the wrong track"; they merely refuse to accept the status quo, as Conant does; having accepted the value of integrated schools they have proceeded logically to implement and extend integration. In short, Conant seems to err by elevating his complementary remedy into exclusiveness. Civil rights people seldom fight for integration without stressing remedial classes, integrated teaching staffs and employment opportunity. And Conant's argument—of the absurdity of equalizing education for rich suburbs with that available in poor slums by creating heterogeneous school districts through bussing or zoning—far from being absurd, lends added support to open enrollment plans.

Above all one senses a confusion in Conant's terms between "slum children" and "Negro children." Naturally, not all slum children are Negro and not all Negroes are slum dwellers. The solution of the slum issue rests in remedial classes, higher horizons programs, playgrounds, home betterment, counselling, placement, training programs and housing anti-discrimination laws. This should not be confused with the solution of the Negro "problem." Hurt people, struggling for self respect and a self image in the encircling world of whites need stronger solutions. They must know that wherever possible (and no one demands more than that) boundaries will be drawn to alleviate *ghettoization*; whenever possible, new sites for schools will be chosen to eliminate, not to perpetuate, the housing moats. We must end the horror of racially constricted horizons. It is the least we can do, still leaving the undone vast. Conant's piece should be approached with enthusiasm heightened by disagreement. For such is the nature of dialogues that a thought begets a thought and an argument breeds counter arguments.

In conclusion Raab articulates major premises and presents us with a framework for facing big issues.<sup>18</sup> This he does with grace and power and, above all, with wisdom befitting one of our great sociologists. If this little volume suc-

17. *Ibid.*

18. The last three essays in the volume, on American Mexicans, or Puerto Ricans and on Black Muslims, are in a lesser category altogether. One . . .

ceeds in wedging several large questions in a hopefully significant number of bellies, it would have accomplished a significantly hopeful bit of intellectual integration of its own.

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# JEWISH COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL

OF SAN FRANCISCO, MARIN AND THE PENINSULA

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## The Fight Against Anti-Semitism: 1981

There is not one anti-semitism; there are *three* anti-semitisms. There are *three* fronts on which the fight against anti-semitism must take place. They are different phenomena. They have different symptoms. They have somewhat different causes. They call for different remedies. They are not directly connected with each other, in a causative sense.

### A. DEFINITIONS: WHAT ARE THE ANTI-SEMITISMS?

1) Covert acts of anti-semitism. Physical acts of anti-semitism which are covertly done and are illegal in one form or another. Thus: arson, defacement, vandalism.

2) Anti-semitic attitudes. The prevalence of negative, hostile and prejudicial feelings and beliefs towards Jews. Notably: the belief that Jews have too much power; that Jews try to control everything; that Jews cause the nation's problems; that Jews are interested only in money; that Jews are more dishonest than others.

3) Organized anti-semitic political movements. Movements which are organized in the public arena to take political power, with a built-in and public anti-semitic platform. Thus: Nazism, Ku Klux Klan. This is the ultimate concern of the Jews.

---3A: Public expression of anti-semitic attitudes.

Literature, leaflets, public statements and public meetings which express negative, hostile and prejudicial beliefs towards Jews.

These are most often the product and instrument of organized anti-semitic political movements. But sometimes, these are expressions which seep out of the reservoir of anti-semitic attitudes, uttered by a public figure such as General George Brcwn, or in private insult. Sometimes, they are anonymous -- a covert phenomenon, but differing from other covert acts of anti-semitism in not being physical nor, under present law, illegal.

*(Note: The term "overt anti-semitism" is often used, and presumably includes categories 1, 3 and 3A above -- but it is too broad a term to be remedially useful.)*

## B. PERPETRATORS: WHO COMMITS THESE ANTI-SEMITISMS?

1) Ideological anti-semites. These are people who believe in a package of the anti-semitic attitudes described above. They may or may not commit anti-semitic acts or join anti-semitic movements.

2) Situational anti-semites. These are people who commit anti-semitic acts, or join anti-semitic movements, even though they do *not* hold significant anti-semitic beliefs or attitudes.

Example: When the American people were asked whether they would support a Congressional candidate running on an anti-Jewish platform, the overwhelming majority said "no." But about a third of all Americans said it "wouldn't make any difference." In other words, if the candidate promised them better jobs or lower taxes, or whatever, they would go along with his anti-semitism. These people are not committed to anti-semitic belief; it is just that they are not committed *against* anti-semitism.

## C. WHAT IS THE CURRENT STATE OF THESE ANTI-SEMITISMS?

### INCIDENCE, CAUSES, CONNECTIONS, EVALUATIONS

#### 1) Covert acts of anti-semitism.

Incidence: There are clearly more physical acts of anti-semitism being committed in America today than in the 1950s; and more, according to the ADL, than in the past few years. Thus, while considerably fewer physical acts of anti-semitism are being committed than in the 1930s -- a "high" point in American anti-semitism -- the current *direction* is towards more frequency.

Causes: Organized anti-semitic political groups do not normally commit covert acts of anti-semitism. They desire recognition, credit and political advantage for what they do. Covert acts of anti-semitism are normally committed by disconnected individuals or disconnected non-political groups.

Such disconnected individuals or groups can be either ideological anti-semites or situational anti-semites (see above). But in either case, they are individuals or groups without constraints in engaging in violent or illegal behavior.

*The increase in covert acts of anti-semitism would indicate that there are either more anti-semites, or there is more license for ideological and situational anti-semites.* Since the prevalence of attitudinal anti-semitism is down rather than up (see below), the indication is that increased covert anti-semitism results from more license for anti-semites, and for those who are willing to use anti-semitism, rather than from an increased number of ideological anti-semites.

That increase in *license* has two causative aspects: a) Generally decreasing constraint with respect to violence and illegal behavior. For one thing, there is a constant percentage of the population which is emotionally disordered in a way that can lead to unconstrained behavior. As populations get larger, and become

compacted, there is an increasing number of such people in evidence. For another thing, a general climate of unconstrained behavior tends to become contagious.

b) Generally decreasing constraint with respect to expressing anti-semitism publicly. For almost two decades after World War II, anti-semitic beliefs were largely unfashionable and underground. They have come out of the closet. This is a form of license, too.

Evaluation: Those who commit acts of covert anti-semitism are not often those who form or even become significant members of organized anti-semitic political movements. But covert acts of anti-semitism have a *significance of their own* which requires utmost attention:

- . They are evidence of a license to violence which is *in itself* dangerous, and contagious.
- . They are also evidence of a license to act out anti-semitism, which is *in itself* dangerous and contagious.
- . *In themselves*, they frighten and endanger Jews, who are entitled to society's best protection.

## 2) Anti-semitic attitudes.

Incidence: The prevalence of negative and hostile beliefs about Jews has considerably diminished since the 1930s and *has continued to diminish* since the 1950s. *Fewer* Americans believe that Jews have too much power in comparison with other American groups. (In American public opinion, Jews are now ranked *behind* evangelical Protestants, Catholics and Blacks, among others, in having "too much power.") *Fewer* Americans believe that the Jews are the cause of our national troubles, or that Jews are more dishonest than others. In short, at this particular time, there seem to be fewer ideological anti-semites than in either the remote or recent past.



Causes: There is a constant reservoir of anti-semitic beliefs because they have been culturally transmitted in the West for so long. In the United States, in the 1930s, almost half of the American population held some package of anti-semitic beliefs which qualified them as "anti-semitic." In the 1950s, about a third of the American population held such a package of beliefs. In more recent years, less than a quarter of the American population held such beliefs.

However, because of the "cultural reservoir" of anti-semitism, that figure could go up or down, depending upon its stimulation. The rise of organized anti-semitic political movements is usually the *cause* of a higher prevalent level of anti-semitic attitudes, rather than the result (see below).

Evaluation: The bulk of the membership of organized anti-semitic political movements are not ideological anti-semites. Most ideological anti-semites do not act out their anti-semitism, unless the political climate stimulates them and gives them full license. Covert acts of anti-semitism are committed by both ideological and situational anti-semites.

Hundreds of programs and tens of millions of dollars have been spent trying to reduce the prevalent levels of anti-semitism. Success is slow, and reversible. Nevertheless, it is obviously necessary to maintain a constant effort to diminish the reservoir of anti-semitic attitudes at any given time. While that prevalence of anti-semitic attitudes does not *cause* covert acts of anti-semitism, or organized anti-semitic political movements — it does make their existence easier.

### 3) Organized anti-semitic political movements.

Incidence: There has been no major anti-semitic political movement in America since the 1930s, when the Coughlinite movement had millions of followers. There is still none. The KKK is the closest candidate today, but is overwhelmingly rejected by the American people.



While embryonic organized political anti-semitic movements are fragmented, and have not significantly gained in membership, they are clearly more vocal and demonstrative than several years ago. This would seem to follow the patterns described above: *not* that there are *more* ideological anti-semites, or more ideological anti-semitic movements, but that there is *more license* for both, and for those willing to engage in anti-semitism. That is not a matter for comfort, but to note in terms of perspective and remedial program.

Causes: The mass base of anti-semitic political movements is not primarily composed of ideological anti-semites. Most of them are situational anti-semites; people who go along with anti-semitism because it serves their other purposes, and they don't care about anti-semitism one way or another.

Example: The members of the Coughlinite movement, the largest anti-semitic political movement in American history, were -- by actual count -- not significantly more ideologically anti-semitic than the rest of the population. They joined the movement for other reasons, and went along with the anti-semitism.

Evaluation: Organized anti-semitic political movements are effective and gather a mass base, only when the conditions are ripe for political extremism. Such conditions include a general breakdown of law and order in society; a breakdown of the economic order; a bitterly divided society, where some groups feel that they are hopelessly left out, and other groups are fearful that they are going to lose what they had; where political life becomes fragmented, non-coalitional and fractional.

While there is currently no major anti-semitic political movement, that is no reason for complacency as long as the conditions for political extremism remain possible, and a significant segment of the population remains "indifferent" about the political use of anti-semitism.

**SUMMARY:**

Of the three anti-semitisms, covert acts of anti-semitism are on the increase, prevalent levels of anti-semitic attitudes are slightly on the decrease; and there are no major anti-semitic political movements, embryonic groups such as the KKK and neo-Nazis being fragmented and without broad support, although they are more vehement than they have been in recent years.

The lower levels of prevalent anti-semitism -- of ideological anti-semites -- are not inconsistent with higher levels of covert anti-semitic acts; nor would it be inconsistent with a future growth of anti-semitic political movements. Neither covert acts of anti-semitism, nor organized anti-semitic political movements depend on ideological anti-semites.

While the three anti-semitisms are not causatively connected, they each deserve deep concern in their own right. Covert acts of anti-semitism are abhorrent and dangerous in themselves. Organized anti-semitic political movements can spring up virtually overnight, if conditions are right.

Since each of the anti-semitisms is a serious but somewhat different phenomenon than the others, each requires a somewhat different remedial program (see appended Action Checklist). We would do a disservice by too glibly connecting the three anti-semitisms, and not distinguishing among them, giving each its remedial due.

January, 1981



## The Second Agenda\*

EARL RAAB

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*. . . (the) active relationship between America and the Jew is, for us, the practical point at which our particularistic survival and our universalistic mission come together, critically for both. But at this moment, we are not engaged nearly enough at that point. Indeed, we may be moving away from it.*

EACH of us in the field of Jewish service presumably has two jobs. One involves the particular profession we practice. The other is the Jewish agenda we all have in common—if we can define it.

If we dive immediately into a sea of universalistic rhetoric, then we will have missed any significant definition of that common Jewish job. "Helping people," "doing justice," "building a better world"—those are not just Jewish jobs, they are everybody's job. And, besides, those are not jobs that can be done directly by anyone without some intervening definitions.

Nor will we get a significant definition of the common Jewish job by swimming in particularistic rhetoric. "Ensuring Jewish survival," "enriching Jewish lives," "making better Jews." Those are also forms of reductionism which cannot be advanced without some intervening definitions.

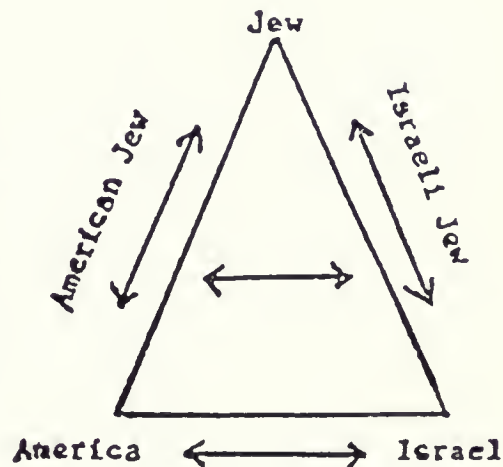
Of course, there is always the possibility that we would be better off just to do our professional jobs well in the reasonable hope that larger Jewish values will thereby be served. Jews do have a tendency to over-define. One of Mort Sahl's early jokes was really a kind of Jewish joke. A bank robber gives a note to the teller, saying "Hand over all your money at once or there

will be trouble" and the teller writes back, "Please define your terms."

Perhaps we can't help ourselves. Zangwill once wrote: "The Jewish mind runs to unity by an instinct as harmonious as the Greek's sense of art. It is always impelled to a synthetic perception of the whole."

However, if we stay away from the grand, reductionist definitions, and look for some working definitions in this time and this place which unify our Jewish functions, the search itself can be useful.

The main body of world Jewry sits astride a unified triangle of relationships at whose apex is the Jew, and at whose base points are Israel and the United States of America.



\* Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Conference of Jewish Communal Service, Los Angeles, June 27, 1984.

In other words, there are four sets of relationships to be examined, four sets of relationships which define the major body of Jewry in the free world. One is the relationship between Jew and America. On that slope lives the American Jew. The second is the relationship between Jew and Israel. On that slope lives the Israeli Jew. The third relationship, across the middle of the triangle, is the relationship between the American Jew and the Israeli Jew. And the fourth relationship, at the base, is between America and Israel.

The security and the identity of the modern Jew depend largely upon the soundness of those three points of the triangle—Jew, Israel and America—and of those four relationships. And within this triangle lies the *tachliss* of the relationship between the "universal" and the "particular" as it affects our lives and our jobs.

One of the more easily understood aspects of that integrated triangle is the interdependence of America and Israel. For the foreseeable future, the survival of Israel depends upon the support of America. And it is clear to many of us that the survival of Israel as an expression of the dwindling association of free, democratic societies is critically important to the U.S.

By the same token, the security of the Jew at the apex depends upon the seamlessness of that triangle. The security of the American Jew, living on the slope between "Jew" and "America," depends upon the democratic nature of the American society. And in certain practical ways, it depends on the relationship between America and Israel. As an example, the evidence indicates strongly that any serious anti-Semitism in America in the foreseeable future will flow from ruptured relations between Israel and America, rather than the other way around. For that matter, the security of Soviet Jews and

French Jews, also depends heavily on that triangular relationship.

However, in our common agenda, we are not just concerned with the physical security of the Jews, but with the survival of Jews as Jews, with Jewish identity. There is reason to believe that the spiritual identity crisis of Israeli Jews is created by discontinuities between Jewish identity and Israeli identity and will continue until those two identities have been better integrated. That matter has been much discussed. Less discussed is the possibility that the spiritual identity crisis of American Jews is created by discontinuities between Jewish identity and American identity, and will continue unless those two identities are better integrated.

But for American Jews, there is another possible discontinuity. American Jews need also to integrate into their American Jewish identity their relationship to Israel as a place of residence for Israeli Jews, as well as a place of spiritual reference. However, it is possible that they will never be able to do that successfully, until they establish themselves firmly as authentic American Jews, if they can.

To say that is almost to say the unthinkable. The term "authentic American Jew" has evil connotations for those who believe that all Jews either are or should be alien anyplace but in Israel and who believe that the term is redolent of earlier German Jewish delusions about being "authentic Germans."

But the reality is that most American Jews will remain residentially in America, unless, as the theory goes, American changes character malevolently. And the reality *there* is that, if such a malevolent change takes place, it will be an extremely dangerous future for Israel itself. And therein the line of special relationship between America



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and Israel completes the magical triangle.

Some would say that the authenticity of American Jewry might be built around its political responsibility to maintain that bottom line of the magical triangle, the relationship between Israel and America. But, however stimulating the fulfillment of that responsibility has been to Jewish identity in America, it will not indefinitely sustain that identity.

Conversely, some would say that an American-Jewish authenticity is not required (much less possible), but only a *Jewish authenticity in America*. That is, a Jewish authenticity and an American authenticity could exist side by side, not touching, one of the idealistic visions of a pluralistic America. But it won't work, according to most evidence, not in modern structured society. Too often, the two identities, not functionally integrated, are at war. As a result, one or the other is diminished, and it has usually been the Jewish identity. And therein lies the spectre of a pathological and disappearing American Jewish community. The emergence of the State of Israel, mainly, has seemed to replenish the Jewish identity in America. But that identity is destined to become based exclusively on the bottom line of the triangle, and leaves American Jews somewhat uneasy.

One dimension of the uneasiness has to do with what being an American Jew means to American Jews, the relationship between being Jewish and being American.

Perhaps American Jews never fully understood the nature of that relationship, and probably they miscalculated it. It is not that the Jews have achieved a tripartite power status in America. They have not. It is not that they have totally overcome their marginal status in America. They have not.

It is not that they are especially loved by other Americans. They are not. It is not that the possibility of anti-Semitism has been rooted out in America. It has not been. It is not because America has provided a safe and free haven for many Jews, which it has. Most significantly, America has provided a major locus and a major vision of a world society which is consonant with Jewish existence and with Jewish values. The kind of political freedom for which America erratically but uniquely stands—and for which European liberalism never stood—has to do not only with religious freedom in the narrower sense, but provides the only possibility of human and spiritual fulfillment in the modern political world.

And America has provided a vision of a society which can be open to change without being certain of its destination—open to history, open to both the past and the future.

If a common denominator of Jewish identity is an identification with Jewish history, then it necessarily entails a certain Jewish stance toward history itself, toward being active in history and toward history being actionable. Arthur Cohen once posed a fundamental *Jewish* question: "How does my faith enable me to survive not *in spite* of history but *in and through* history?" America may have provided Jews an opportunity to take such a stance, to be active *in* history, and to help shape a human society in which history is actionable.

If all this—or something like it—is true, then we are provided with some guidelines towards the fulfillment of our common Jewish job, our second Jewish agenda.

In general, as far as *our* job as American Jewish agencies is concerned, three of these relationships fall within the purview of our job as American Jewish agencies: one is the relationship between America and Israel, but that is

a job which we are well conscious of and preoccupied with, however well we are doing it. The other two relationships, I would suggest, need a great deal of repair: that between the American Jew and America; and that between the American Jew and the Israeli Jew.

To begin with, what does it mean to be an American Jew, an *authentic American Jew*, beyond being an educated and committed Jew in general? On the surface, it means participating fully and influentially in shaping the nature of American society, or, more explicitly, helping to move the American society in certain desirable directions. Those directions have very much to do with the extension of political and human freedom within the American society itself.

Further than that, it means recognizing America's unique role as the ideological and physical standard-bearer of human freedom in the world, and leader of the free world. It means recognizing the critical importance of that unique American role in the dangerous modern world now beset by an aggressive totalitarianism and an increasingly aggressive Muslim fundamentalism. And it means not just recognition but active support for that American role in the world.

Such a deep involvement in American affairs is a vital *Jewish* job, so much so that it must be a *Jewish community* job. Only such an America can sustain a free and flourishing Jewish life in America. Only such an America can maintain the survival of Israel—and perhaps other sectors of world Jewry—for the foreseeable future.

However, it is not just a matter of Jewish security. It is also a matter of American Jewish authenticity to participate "in and through history." Within the unique locus of America, on behalf of spiritual and political free-

dom, and within the context of Jewish meaning, we can help shape a society and a world in which history is actionable for the better.

The other changing job we have in order to fulfill ourselves and survive as American Jews is to relate strongly and intimately as authentic American Jews with Israel and Israelis. That once seemed easy. We gave financial support, we gave political support, we visited, we *quelled*, we fraternized, we participated to various degrees in Israeli Hebrew culture, the modern-day cultural equivalent of Yiddishkeit.

Partly, it was easy because, over and above our commitment to the security of Israel, a commitment which will never flag, we never had any questions about the nature of Israeli authenticity. But on the triangle's slope between Jew and Israel, there have been emerging some questions, which are fully recognized by Israelis.

Israel has been changing culturally. To put it more concretely, in terms of American Jews, we can less and less easily see Israel as some idealized European Labor Zionist dream come true. Israel is a *real nation*, with its own political and social problems and realities. It is a great nation with a great people, but it is not a summer camp or museum for starry-eyed American Jews. Israel is its own country, and will go its own way.

For one thing, these changes will make it even more difficult for American Jews to base valid American Jewish life primarily on the existence of Israel. On the other hand, of course, neither can an American Jewish existence be contemplated without a special and close relationship to Israel and Israelis, beyond politics and money.

The point is that such a relationship must be based on the realities of Israel, not on a made-in-America vision, and must cut through the bureaucratic cur-

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tain which lies between most American Jews and Israeli Jews, as constructed by national and international Jewish agencies with their own special agendas.

In sum, the common Jewish job we all have is to strengthen the structural and seamless nature of this triangle—to do what we can, beyond our immediate jobs, to integrate all these relationships on which depend a durable Jewish identity in America, and more. But what can we do as professionals, as agencies organized as Jewish communities, to accomplish this?

The advanced consciousness of this model of integrated Jewish needs among American Jews is itself important, and will have consequences. But, more specifically, our institutions, the educational agencies, the Centers, the Federation entities, and so forth, should with all deliberateness include all these elements and these relationships in their programs. They should be conscious vehicles of American Jewish authenticity. That is a matter of *educational* import, and it is also a matter of Jewish involvement in common areas of general community action. Such Jewish involvements have been decreasing in recent years.

Our agencies and institutions also need to rethink and make more profound, their activities with respect to Israel and Israelis. We need to be at once more honest and more intimate with respect to Israel. This applies to work projects as well as to educational programs. In these projects, we need to puncture the bureaucratic curtain as much as possible, which means more direct, and more local, contact. Project Renewal could be seen as a move in that direction, although it is too often vulnerable to a lady-bountiful touch. This more direct approach could be extended to other areas.

In order to move in such directions, logic calls for our agencies and institutions themselves to become more cohesive, so that they are not themselves isolated from each other and from that second Jewish agenda. Each community should have an active council of Jewish agencies and institutions whose explicit job is not just administrative arrangements, or mutual show-and-tell, but the development of and the dealing with the larger common Jewish agenda, of which the triangle is one possible model.

Now, such direction and such activity may come hard for agencies and institutions which are hard-pressed for time and energy, and properly have their eyes out for the successful accomplishment of their narrowly mandated functions. But, unless we can mend the functional fragmentation of Jewish institutions, we are not doing our part in preventing the further isolation of Jews from America, Jews from Israel, Jews from Jewish identity. And here is where the leadership role of the professionals can be potent, because we are ourselves often the bureaucratic problem.

There is another hazard: that we will relegate this search for integration to national organizations, headquarters and think-tanks. There is an important stimulating and fructifying role for such, but, unless this effort is vibrant and active at local levels, with local program and local initiative, it will just be lost again in a bureaucratic maze.

After all, this triangle is not just an abstract shape. It is the real, living shape of the Jewish community in the world today, and that which was said Talmudically by a rabbi over sixteen centuries ago is again critically applicable: "The community is Israel's rampart." The reintegration of that community in modern circumstances is our second agenda.



One of the things that triangle tells us is that the particularistic Jew will neither thrive nor survive in the modern world without some active relationship to the world around us. And the nature of that relationship is defined in the triangle. It is somewhat different for American Jews and for Israeli Jews—but, for both of them, in somewhat different ways, the nature of America is vital. And here we are, as

American Jews and American Jewish agencies, at this historic center. This active relationship between America and the Jew is, for us, the practical point at which our particularistic survival and our universalistic mission come together, critically for both. But, at this moment, we are not engaged nearly enough at that point. Indeed, we may be moving away from it.

#### Twenty-five years ago in this Journal

The tendency on the part of some social group workers to operate on the basis of a set of fictions at variance with the reality of practice has picked up alarming momentum in recent years. It is time for the profession to halt—however momentarily—its search for professional status and to look realistically at its goals, the means of achieving them, and at the community needs that await the attention of the leadership of the field. Problems of volunteer-professional relationships are not new to social work. One only needs to review the records of social work conferences during the first two decades of the Twentieth Century to see that casework underwent a similar struggle. The writings of Mary Richmond have acute relevance to the problem of our time. She indicated her own displeasure at the fact that "some social agencies use volunteers in a very wasteful way, keeping them at clerical tasks when they could easily be made ready for

more responsible work." and she urged that "the world is not a stage upon which we professional workers are to exercise our talents, while the volunteers do nothing but furnish the gate receipts and an open-mouthed admiration of our performances. Social work is a larger thing than that."<sup>30</sup>

In a paper given at the National Conference of Charities and Correction in 1907, she further declared:

We hear much about trained paid workers in these days, but the supreme test of a trained worker is the ability to turn to good account the services of the relatively untrained.<sup>31</sup>

Let us meet this test with conviction and with the confidence that this is indeed the crucial task of a social group worker.

Daniel Thursz  
on: "The Volunteer in Social  
Group Work"

DECEMBER 11, 1987

THE NORTHERN CALIFORNIA JEWISH BULLETIN

## S.F. educators explore Jewish identity program

By FERN ALLEN  
Bulletin Israel Correspondent

JERUSALEM — San Francisco and Israeli educational experts recently exchanged ideas here on how to strengthen democratic pluralism and Jewish identity in their respective communities.

"We found that this can develop into a two-way process. Israel can benefit from the American experience of developing common norms of civility," noted Alouph Hareven, associate director of the Van Leer Institute, which hosted a delegation of six San Francisco representatives who attended the five-day seminar late last month.

During the seminar, the delegation met with Israeli Education Minister Yitzhak Navon, as well as with other Education Ministry officials.

The San Francisco representatives included Earl Raab, former executive director of the Jewish Community Relations Council of San Fran-

cisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties; Seymour Martin Lipset, professor of sociology at Stanford University's Hoover Institution; George Karonsky, a retired teacher and administrator in the San Francisco public school system; Eleanor Blumenberg, an intercultural education expert; Noah Kaplowitz, a political scientist at the University of California; and Claude Fisher, an urban sociologist at the University of California.

According to Raab, the San Francisco delegation examined the possibility of adapting the Van Leer Institute's "12 Israeli Families Project" to Jewish schools in the San Francisco Bay Area.

The project in Israel entails meeting three generations of 12 different Israeli families from diverse backgrounds. Iraqi, Ethiopian, secular, religious, and Arab Israelis are among the families used in the project, which has successfully helped to break down stereotypes in Israel.

But in San Francisco, the project would instead explore four different types of American Jewish families, Raab said. "This would give Israelis a chance to understand American Jewry," he noted.

He stressed, however, that adapting such a project to the San Francisco Jewish community still is in its initial planning stages. "Everything



Earl Raab  
...strengthening pluralism

is open right now," he said.

Raab added that while such a project would be instituted in the Jewish schools in San Francisco, a video of the project also might be made — so that pupils in the public school system could learn about American Jewry as well.

Hareven pointed out that young American Jews can enhance their Jewish identity through such educational exchanges between San Francisco and Israel. "And we can strengthen democratic pluralism for ourselves," he said.

Funding for the seminar was provided by the San Francisco Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties, according to Raab.

### Deadline for copy

Friday noon is the deadline for all copy to be submitted for the following week's *Jewish Bulletin*. For information or assistance, call 957-9340.





# Brandeis picks Raab to head Jewish

By D.C. EINSTEIN  
Of the Bulletin Staff

Chalk one up for the West Coast. Brandeis University in Waltham, Mass., has reached all the way across the country and tabbed San Franciscan Earl Raab as the director for its new Nathan Perlmutter Institute for Jewish Advocacy.

The 70-year-old Raab, who made a national name for himself in Jewish public affairs during 36 years as head of the San Francisco-based Jewish Community Relations Council, was the obvious choice for the post, according to Brandeis officials. The only question was whether he would forsake the city by the bay for the suburbs of Boston.

"As I called and asked knowledgeable folks around the country, invariably one name that either topped the list or was right up there was Earl Raab," said Bernard Reisman, who put together the program for the institute.

After going over the resumes he had, Reisman realized none of the candidates could compare to Raab, whose resume he did not have, "as a great figure in the field."

So on impulse, he picked up the phone. As expected, Raab was reluctant to leave San Francisco. But Reisman persisted, and a deal was struck: Raab will teach at Brandeis during the fall semester, returning home in the spring. Periodically, though, in both spring and summer, Raab will fly east for consultation, Reisman said.

The arrangement will last for two years, after which Raab and the university will decide whether to extend it.

In addition to keeping him home for half the year, the arrangement will allow Raab to continue in his role as consultant to the JCRC, from which he retired as executive director in 1987.

"I was anxious not to be separated from San Francisco, but once we worked out a way I wouldn't have to leave, I didn't have any trouble making up my mind," he said.

He also has had no trouble diving into his new position. He already has begun working out a curriculum, and his efforts have impressed Reisman, director of Brandeis' Hornstein Program in Jewish Communal Service, which will host the institute.

"The materials that this guy has put together — course outlines, position papers, case studies — are going," Reisman said. "I wrote him a letter saying I would be delighted if the rest of my faculty would pre-



Earl Raab  
...accepts Brandeis offer

pare their course materials as articulately and quickly as he has."

As envisioned by Raab and Reisman, the institute will serve two functions: A graduate program for the development of professionals, and a program for ongoing education of professionals already in the field.

The graduate program, which will be populated this fall by eight students, will concentrate on "what we sometimes call Jewish community relations," Raab said. "That means an exercise of Jewish power and influence in the fight against anti-Semitism, in all those public affairs which affect Jews."

The curriculum will comprise three main aspects, Raab said. "There is a body of academic knowledge to be learned related to political science. There is a second body of knowledge relating to experience in community organizations, and how to do things in the field.

"And third, there is the understanding of the mission, which is to guarantee the security of the Jew in America and elsewhere."

Raab said he thinks the time is right for such an institute — the first of its kind in the United States. Its namesake, the late Nathan Perlmutter, was the longtime national director of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith.

"It's a good time to look at the professional field because the job of the professional is getting more complicated," Raab said.

For instance, he elaborated, it's tougher these days to sell Israel to America — both Jewish and non-Jewish. "Some techniques have to be developed which will avoid the apologetic approach — which never works — and the over-defensive

## relations institute

position, which never works."

What is needed instead, he said, is a strategy "persuasive to the center of the American population."

There also is a need to combat increasingly effective public relations on behalf of the Arab states and the Palestinians, Raab said.

"Certainly one of the concerns of Jewish professionals around the country is the fact that the Arab-

American lobby, following the Jewish model, has become more effective and in some cases has distorted the picture," he said.

All those issues also will be studied by lay leaders enrolled in a continuing education program, which the institute will offer beginning next summer. Raab will play a leading role in that program, Reisman said.

Meanwhile, Raab's duties at Brandeis will not prevent him from finishing work on a book about the Jew in America, which is tentatively scheduled to be published next year. And he is continuing unabated on his work for the JCRC, which currently includes analyzing data from the agency's study on Jewish attitudes in public affairs, a study that is conducted every 18 months.





OCTOBER 12, 1990

THE NORTHERN CALIFORNIA JEWISH BULLETIN

## ENTERTAINMENT/THE ARTS

# Essays in book confront tough issues facing

## U.S. Jewry

By JOHN ROTHMANN  
Bulletin Correspondent

*American Pluralism and the Jewish Community*, edited by Seymour Martin Lipset, may not make the best-seller list but it is nevertheless a fascinating collection of essays providing an interesting view of the American Jewish community.

Authored by some of the most distinguished scholars, thinkers and writers in the Jewish world, the essays explore such difficult issues as Jewish identity, the relationship with Israel, assimilation, intermarriage, the Jewish experience, American pluralism and other issues facing our community.

But first, the dedication of the 281-page book "to a special man," in the words of Lipset, should pique the interest of the Jews of San Francisco.

That man is Earl Raab, executive director emeritus of the Jewish Community Relations Council in San Francisco and a columnist for the *Jewish Bulletin*.

Lipset sums up Raab's perspective this way: Raab "played a major role in the affairs of that city in areas that went far afield from the interests of the Jews, particularly in civil rights and mental health. But his primary concern has been for the security of Jews in the city, the nation and the world."



Seymour Martin Lipset

In the preface, Lipset writes, "I would like to acknowledge a deep personal debt to Earl Raab. We have been friends and collaborators for over four decades. During that time, we have written books and articles, and worked together in various communal activities both within the Jewish arena and beyond."

"I have learned much from him about society; but more importantly, he has taught me about people. His life has illustrated an old Jewish adage, that to be able to help yourself, you must be willing to give priority to helping others."

The book is a fitting tribute to Raab, for it touches on many of



Earl Raab

the themes to which he has dedicated his life.

The volume, by Transaction Publishers, is divided into four sections, the first of which explores "Jewry in North America," including a fascinating comparison of American and Canadian Jewish communities.

Each of the three essays in the second section, "Politics," is packed with intriguing information. Of particular interest this election year is the essay by Alan M. Fisher titled "The Jewish Electorate: California 1980-86," in which Fisher breaks down how California Jews have voted and felt about individuals and issues in the last decade.

"The Community," the third section, examines in considerable depth how we feel about our synagogues, federations, public affairs committees and charity.

Three works are contained in the book's final section, "San Francisco and Earl Raab," including a reprint of Raab's classic 1950 essay "There's No City Like San Francisco," which makes for great reading 40 years later.

Another essay in the last section is by Berkeley scholar David Biale and Fred Rosenbaum. "The Pope Comes to San Francisco: An Anatomy of Jewish Communal Response to a Political Crisis" is a superb analysis of Pope John Paul II's trip to the city in September 1987.

Biale and Rosenbaum describe the reactions and interactions of the JCRC, the Holocaust Center of Northern California, Michael Lerner of *Tikkun* magazine, and Bay Area rabbis.

Biale and Rosenbaum name names, describe situations, and reveal with candor and integrity the issues raised by the pontiff's visit. While there may be those who will differ with some of their thoughtful analysis and





# Jews achieve because of drive, not high IQ or genes

Jews tend to believe that they are a pretty smart lot — but are uneasy about others saying so. The “smart Jew” has too often been tied to images of Jewish trickery.

But now the cat is out of the bag. A couple of scholars, Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray, have created a furor with *The Bell Curve*, their book about human intelligence. In the course of their comments, they say that as groups, whites are smarter than blacks, Asians are smarter than whites, and “Ashkenazi Jews” are smarter than anybody. Run for the hills!

Actually, the Herrnstein-Murray study does not spend much time on group differences. Its main point is that, among every group, there are many people with a relatively low intelligence, and they will have less of a chance to “make it” as our economy becomes increasingly technological, demanding intellectually trained workers.

However, most critics have concentrated on the more sensational group statistics. And the way that the “Ashkenazi Jews” have been singled out may throw some light on those statistics. There was a time, for example, when many American Jewish immigrants from the Lithuanian area insisted that as “Litvaks,” they were much smarter than “Galizianers,” those Jews from the Galician areas of the Hapsburg empire who were supposed to have more heart than head.

These feelings were carried over from centuries-old stereotypes among European Jews, and it was not always a playful debate. But it rather quickly became a joke in America as those former European Jewish groups began

to merge into the generic “Ashkenazi Jew” whose intelligence Murray has celebrated.

Furthermore, the belief that there is an “intelligence divide” between superior Ashkenazim and inferior Sephardim would come as a surprise to those who know about the early intellectual accomplishments of the Sephardim in southern

Europe. As one historian noted, they “looked down from on high upon the poor little Jew from the north. The Ashkenazi, in turn, did not contest the Sephardi’s superiority but regarded him with distrust.” And, of course, the Sephardi immigrants to America have been distinguished by their intellectual accomplishments, before and after Benjamin Cardozo.

Perhaps the “Sephardic” reference is to those who came to Israel from Arab lands. Many observers were worried by the sharp difference in educational attainment between them and the European Israelis. But the

Yemenite Jews, for example, had lived for generations under highly oppressed conditions, cut off from the world culture. As they have become integrated into Israeli and Western culture, the supposed intelligence gap between Ashkenazi and Sephardi Israelis has narrowed considerably.

The Jews are a prime example of how, over many generations, cultural environment and history will shape group statistics on intellectual capacity. There’s no evidence that in the beginning, God gave the Jews a better gene pool. But even if He did, when the people of Israel left Egypt, according to Exodus, they absorbed into the tribe the “mixed multitude” that left with them.

But even if 40 to 60 percent of intelligence is inherited, as most studies suggest, there are other factors that can provide the margin for success. Again, Jewish history provides some perspective. Several researchers have found that the American Jews have had a measurably higher “achievement drive” than any other immigrant group. Major elements of that drive include aspiration, a sense of possibilities, tribal support and the need to succeed in a hostile world — all heavily created by Jewish history, culture and religion.

Many Ashkenazi Jews of dubious intelligence have achieved much success in business and professions because of “achievement drive.” The fact is that both the achievement drive and the IQ measurement are interchangeable, and changeable by circumstances, over periods of time within all human groups. In the next century or so, Ashkenazi Jews had better look to their laurels.



**Earl Raab**

GUEST COLUMN

*The writer is director of Brandeis University's Nathan Perlmutter Institute for Jewish Advocacy. He is executive director emeritus of the S.F.-based Jewish Community Relations Council.*



# Influence of Jewish Republicans can't be all bad

Around dinner tables, reference to someone as "a Jewish Republican" often created a little hush, if not a gasp or two. But the recent Republican election sweep has created new interest in conservative Jewish Republicans. It has often been predicted that Jews in this country would become more Republican as they became more affluent. But even though Jews are among the richest groups in America, they continue to vote overwhelmingly Democratic, unlike other groups that have become affluent.

Although the Jewish Democratic vote has gone up and down in the same directions as the rest of America, it has usually been about 20 percentage points more Democratic than that of the general public. In the last election, six out of 10 white Californians voted for Gov. Pete Wilson. However, only about four out of 10 Jews voted for the governor — again, about a 20 percentage point difference.

But while Jewish voters have remained doggedly Democratic, there has been a growing Jewish presence in Republican leadership circles. Most successful Jewish businessmen continue to contribute heavily to Democratic candidates but an increasing number have contributed to Republicans.

More dramatically, up until a few decades ago, few Jewish intellectuals — writers, professors and the like, have supported Republicans or conservatism. It is true that "money is the mother's milk of politics," but it is wrong to underestimate the influence of well-articulated ideology.

Several decades ago, neo-conservatism emerged as a

loose movement, led by mostly Jewish intellectuals, such as Irving Kristol. Leaders were held together mainly by anti-communist and pro-Israel views. In addition, they shared a strong strain of opposition to big government and a revulsion at declining cultural values in America — both of these feelings were strongly reflected in the last election.

The neo-conservatives did not create those feelings, but their writings provided the intellectual ammunition to support them, influencing some leading Republicans.

Significantly, the new generational crop is no longer known as *neo-conservative*; they are just *conservative*. They are now in the mainstream of Republican conservatism, more closely entwined with Republican politics. In fact, President Clinton has publicly commented that the ideas of William Kristol, Irving's son and a leading young Jewish conservative, have damaged the Democratic cause.

With anti-communism no longer relevant, these

young Jewish conservatives are mainly driven by their cultural values: strong family, personal responsibility and civility. These are "middle-class" values, and this last election has been called a "middle-class revolution." Yet they are also "traditional values," of the kind that Jews launched in the Western world.

Many Jews worry that a more conservative agenda will leave some other traditional values unmet, notably compassionate attention to the inner cities and to black ghettos. Of course, there are different opinions about which approach to urban problems would work best. And it should be noted that there are more young black conservatives now, including two black Republican congressmen. But it is a bit unsettling to many that the problem of the underclass has not even been mentioned recently.

Also disturbing to many Jews — but not to all Jews — is the friendly attitude of these young Jewish conservatives to the Christian fundamentalists. Flowing from their concern about traditional values, these same Jews have supported such causes as nonsectarian prayers in the school. However, major breaches of church-state separation will not so easily translate into national legislation. Almost half of the candidates supported by the Christian Coalition lost, and most of those they supported would have won without them.

A more pragmatic consideration is that, in terms of ideology, many of these young Jewish conservatives are now more influential in modern Republican circles than Jews ever were. In this political season, that can't be all bad.



**Earl Raab**

## CANDID COMMENTS

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# Jews should beware of affirmative action backlash

A couple of fellows have been preparing a state initiative on affirmative action, which will soon be presented for signatures. Here we go again in California, on a subject of particular interest to Jews.

Initiatives often serve to hinder democracy. Two men in a back room are devising a law with fixed language, to which we can only say "yes" or "no." There is no chance to negotiate or amend provisions, as in a proper legislative process.

Initiative petitions are not legislation, they're emotional lightning rods. On Proposition 187 of recent memory - which about half of California's Jews supported - many were afraid that if they voted against the measure because of some offensive provision, it would send the signal that they were not outraged by the extent of illegal immigration.

The subject of affirmative action is even more complicated.

Thirty years ago, it was found that automobile dealers in San Francisco did not hire African American mechanics, although in the South, blacks worked regularly as mechanics, and many of them were now in San Francisco. Automobile dealers said blacks did not apply - but they did not apply because of a long histo-

ry of not being hired here. Automobile dealers were then required to advertise that they were equal opportunity employers and the situation changed. That is affirmative action.

It was also found that there were no African Americans working on the floors of the city's department stores. There were plenty of qualified blacks for those jobs, and the owners said they would hire some, but the unions wouldn't let them. The unions said they would send black workers, but the stores wouldn't accept them.

In the face of this whipsaw, the state law prohibiting employment discrimination obviously wasn't enough. Owners and unions were told that they must measurably improve the situation within a reasonable period, or they would be penalized. That is affirmative action, the nudge without which equal

opportunity would just not have happened.

Jewish organizations support affirmative action - especially for African Americans and Native Americans whose disabilities had been imposed on them in centuries of severe oppression by this society.

Excesses certainly exist, especially in the form of fixed quotas, which are not part of - but instead destroy - affirmative action, whose goal is to help every individual reach his or her potential. Quotas are explicitly against the law. But efforts to reach goals, especially among political and public institutions and some large employers, often lead to violations of individual equal opportunity.

Reynold Colvin was one of the leadership giants of the Jewish community and the lawyer who took the famous Bakke

case to the Supreme Court in the 1970s. Allan Bakke had been refused admission to the U.C. Davis medical school, which had set aside a specific number of admissions for minority students. Bakke's qualifications were clearly higher than some of those admitted.

The Supreme Court ruled that Bakke had been illegally rejected because the quota system of U.C. Davis was unconstitutional. But the Court also indicated that race could sometimes be taken into account. Under certain circumstances, if one black and one white applicant were equally qualified, affirmative action might allow an employer to give the edge to the black.

Thus, repairing the negative effects of the past is not easy. Excesses have developed, which need to be remedied. But they should be remedied by a legislature that can negotiate arguments and subtleties - not by a privately written initiative that will force voters to make choices they don't really want to make. Instead of curbing excesses, such a general anti-affirmative-action expression could reverse proper civil rights directions, while sending divisive and inflammatory signals.

Beware the petitioner bearing sweet-sounding initiatives.



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# Minute of silence in public schools makes Jews uneasy

A majority of Americans say they would favor the proposed Constitutional Amendment to allow prayers in the public schools. But neither we nor Congress should jump to conclusions about what they mean by that. To begin with, we should not conclude that the public wants to officially Christianize America or its schools.

Seven out of 10 Americans say they favor prayer in public schools, but fewer than two out of 10 say that the prayer should be said aloud. The seven out of 10 who say that no

prayer should be said aloud believe that "there should be a minute of silence each day so that students could pray silently, meditate or do nothing if they prefer."

In short, most Americans would like to see more expression of religion in public life, but they do *not* want a denominational preference.

That is an old story in American life. Partly, it is a result of the great religious diversity among American Christian groups. None of



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them wants to see another denomination take precedence. Their religious emphases, even many of their prayers, differ.

On a practical level, American Christian leaders have often said that they did not want Judaism to be given second-class status because it would be the precedent for some Christian denomination to be given the same negative treatment. Worse, America could break up into dozens of warring religious factions.

But most Christians also think of Judaism as part of their "religious family." Our forefathers are their religious forefathers; our prophets are their prophets. Many are not happy about us not "progressing" into Christianity, but they still

feel connected.

In America, even most of the religious right commonly refer to the "Judeo-Christian" heritage. When eight out of 10 Americans said that a Christian nativity scene should be allowed on city property, only one out of those eight said so because "Christianity takes precedence." And the same eight out of 10 said Jewish religious celebration should also be allowed on city property.

For a number of reasons, American Christians do not have the same "family" sense about Islam as they do about Judaism. That is not likely to change very soon, and many Jews feel that it is just as well to leave it at that. However, the same old pragmatic consideration operates: If the principle of equal treatment does not apply to all, someday it might not apply to you.

But if most Americans are opposed to prayers being said aloud in the schools, why are they so interested in having a discernible minute of silence? After all, there is no law, nor could there be, preventing a child from praying silently in school. As someone said, as long as there are math tests,

there will be silent prayer in the schools. So why do we have to legalize something that is already legal?

Many think that the schools are now in effect *anti-religious*. They believe that the passage of a law permitting silent prayer would be an important gesture to affirm freedom of religious expression and to signal that it is okay to be religious if you so desire. Besides, they say, like chicken soup, silent prayer can't hurt; it's not like second-hand smoke.

Most Jewish organizations do not agree. Obviously they do not believe that a minute of silence is unconstitutional, but as an organized activity, it makes them uneasy. Sectarian remarks might slip from the lips of some teachers.

House Speaker Newt Gingrich is playing a shell game with the religious right when he proposes a constitutional amendment to permit school prayer. If the amendment restricts itself to "silent minutes," it is just a silly dish of lukewarm chicken soup. If the amendment calls for vocal prayer or is dangerously vague, it will probably not be ratified, although it nevertheless deserves our opposition.





# 'Liberal' stands for liberty, compassion and equality

"Liberal is as liberal does — in affirmative action, too. I want to be fair, but a man should be hanged whose any less liberal than I?"

Those lines by F.P. Adams were brought to mind by a recent *New York Times* story, which reported that California Assembly Speaker Willie Brown and Congressman Kweisi Mfume (D-Md.), both prominent African American leaders, endorsed a critical review of affirmative action.

This, the story commented, shows "how far to the right the debate on affirmative action has shifted."

That shows again how muddled have become the labels "right," "left," "liberal" and "conservative." These days, the Jews also have trouble with those terms.

Once it was easy. Since the French Revolution, it became a tradition in European parliaments for the more liberal parties to sit on the left of the house. "Liberal" and "left" thus became linked.

And the more liberal parties were those most inclined to grant emancipation to the Jews. When an Orthodox rabbi took his seat on the left of the Austrian parliament a century and a half ago, he explained, with a double meaning, that "*Juden haben keine Rechte*" (Jews have no rights).

In modern days, that link between left and liberal has not been so easy for the Jews. One example among many was the Soviet Union, which was known as "left" but certainly was not "liberal" in any sensible meaning of the term.

But the link is still being ignorantly used, as in *The New York Times* reference to the proposed review of affirmative action as moving "toward the right," meaning "away from the liberal."

However, a review of affirmative action is intended to weed out *illiberal* abuses. That is the intent of Brown and Mfume not to mention Bill Clinton. They say special efforts are still needed to help some disadvantaged groups. But they also say that some practices in the name of affirmative action have probably broken out of liberal bounds.

Equal opportunity to compete in the marketplace is certainly a liberal idea. But there are groups whose competitive abilities have been badly eroded by generations of deliberate exclusion. Special efforts to raise their ability to compete are, therefore, liberal goals.

But quotas for hiring or awarding government contracts — and the use of preferences to bypass competition — are usually anti-liberal, subverting equal opportunity. Thus, it is not a "move to the right" to try to modify such abuses.

The liberals — and the Democrats — should have moved to such a modification long ago.

The problem is that the initiatives and legislation now being proposed to modify affirmative action are of the shotgun variety. They will mortally wound both the liberal and illiberal aspects of affirmative action.

Let us not kid ourselves that liberal affirmative action is no longer necessary. Thomas Jefferson said that "indeed I tremble for my country" when he contemplated the future consequences of slavery. At least a third of the African American population has escaped from the grinding poverty of the ghetto largely because of liberal affirmative action. But many are still stuck there, and we can indeed tremble for our country if we don't continue special — and acceptable — efforts to help more of them get out.

We seem to be in a season of meat-cleaver approaches, and such an approach is now being proposed for affirmative action. Needed instead is the surgical knife to separate the bad from the good in affirmative action. And it is simply wrong-headed to call such liberal surgery a "movement to the right."

It would be good if we could occasionally draw back from grubby political denominations and remind ourselves that the focal word "liberal" basically has two meanings: liberty and compassion. Using those meanings, we could abandon the stereotypes and simply reduce the definitions of any given person or action to the words of the prophet Isaiah: "The liberal [is one who] devises liberal things."



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# Local authors Lipset, Raab probe future of U.S. Jewry

JOHN F. ROTHMANN  
Bulletin Correspondent

"American Jews enjoy much more opportunity and freedom than ever before, and yet American Jewry is beset by great uncertainty about its future in the new millennium."

With these words, Seymour Martin Lipset and Earl Raab set the theme for their latest engaging work, *Jews and the New American Scene*. This timely volume appears as Jews in America discuss what the future holds for continuity and survival.

The authors of this superb work are well-known to this community. Lipset, a senior fellow of the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, is also a professor of public policy at George Mason University and a senior scholar of the Wilstein Institute for Jewish Policy Research.

Raab, who served for 35 years as the executive director of the S.F.-based Jewish Community Relations Council, is director emeritus of the Pearlmutter Institute for Jewish Advocacy at Brandeis University and has been a columnist for the *Jewish Bulletin* for many years.

Lipset and Raab present a portrait of

## book review

the exceptional condition of Jews in America from the very beginning. With insight and clear analysis, they describe the tremendous promise of what they term "double freedom."

Jews in America have had the freedom to be Jews and to be Americans. With that "double freedom," they write, Jews must also confront what the authors describe as "that identity crisis, brought on by the pressure to assimilate — also a function of exceptional America — [which] is today more threatening than ever to Jews."

Describing what they term as "the downside of exceptionalism," the authors point out that with all of the discussion



Earl Raab

about continuity, "the evidence suggests that such a Jewish core will survive better than most other ethnic groups because of the religion-connected dimension of Jewish Life."

They point out that even as religious identity weakens, it is "defensiveness which keeps...a large segment of Jews involved."

Their overview of anti-Semitism is stunning. Employing surveys, history and analysis, Lipset and Raab deal with hatred of the Jews historically, as well as the current questions involving black-Jewish relations.

Despite tensions and problems within society, the authors contend that "America today remains the unprecedentedly safe and hospitable environment for Jews that it has been, particularly since the end of World War II."

They also say that "the large sector of American Jews who are primarily 'defensive' in their group identity will tend to melt away, to leave the community."





Seymour Martin Lipset

Israel, they say, is the "X factor" among American Jews. While most say, "If Israel were destroyed, I would feel as if I had suffered one of the greatest tragedies of my life," there is an ambivalence to that relationship.

Israel, they assert, "is a cause that could conceivably place a strain on relations between Jews and other Americans; it is a country whose vulnerability to attack reminds American Jews of their own vestigial sense of insecurity."

The authors also recount the history of the evolution of American feelings towards the creation of Israel. Drawing on their own San Francisco connection, they point out that "San Francisco had been at the center of an anti-Zionist movement known as the American Council for Judaism."

In all, Lipset and Raab offer a superb summary of American-Israeli relations. Their discussion of American politics and the Jews is also outstanding. Pointing to the basic liberalism of Jews in America,

they trace attitudes and voting patterns in recent elections with great skill.

The authors conclude with their view of what they term "the fragile remnant." They believe that "if there are not big historical surprises, the cohesive body of Jews will not only be a smaller portion of the American population by the middle of the next century, it will be smaller in absolute numbers."

But, they add, "the remnant — both the more devout and the fellow-travelers — will tend to be those who feel somehow connected to the religious core of their tribal identity."

Lipset and Raab have raised tough questions, provided powerful insights and offered fascinating conclusions that should be the basis for further discussions on continuity.

This book should be read by every Jew who is concerned about the future of Jewry in America. This is an important, powerful book. In purely American terms, Lipset and Raab have hit a home run.

▶ *Jews and the New American Scene* by Seymour Martin Lipset and Earl Raab (239 pages, Harvard University Press, \$22.95).

## Reception for Raab will be held in S.F.

A reception, discussion and book-signing with Earl Raab will be held at 5:30 p.m. Monday, April 24 in the 2nd floor board room of the Jewish Community Federation, 121 Steuart St., S.F.

Raab, executive director emeritus of the S.F.-based Jewish Community Relations Council, is co-author with Seymour Martin Lipset of *Jews and the New American Scene*. The topic of Monday's event will be assimilation and what can be done about it. For information, call (415) 957-1551.



# Ultimate weapon of terrorists: fear

"I'm frightened and really angry at the American government," said a woman at a Safeway check-stand line the day after the Oklahoma City explosion. "We have too many foreign involvements that are not our business."

She was thinking of the Israeli-Arab conflict, the image of the World Trade Center in her mind. A day later, the focus turned from "foreign involvements" to domestic racists. Either way, the tragic event in Oklahoma City has a special edge for Jews, and the woman's remark suggests one answer to the question: "What do terrorists hope to gain?"



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has a base of sympathy in this country. The American people are more sympathetic to the Israelis than to the hard-line Arabs by a ratio of about 9-to-1, and have basically remained that way since 1967.

Law enforcement agencies say total membership of such domestic groups as the Nazis and the Aryan Nations — which actively hate African Americans, Hispanics, Asians, Jews and assorted foreigners, as well as the U.S. government — numbers about 25,000, or one-tenth of 1 percent of the

In most cases, they want to frighten so many people that the government will change its course in some way. Such terrorist acts are not new in this country. In 1920, a horse-drawn wagon filled with explosives was detonated on Wall Street, killing 80 people and injuring hundreds. There have been a number of other such terrorist bombings here. They have had no policy impact.

Whether terrorist acts are committed by Muslim zealots or racist extremists, neither cause

population.

Such groups have not grown over recent decades, although they have become more violent in keeping with the temper of the times. Some of the active bigots join militia groups, whose thousands of members like to play with guns. But almost all Americans, even the more prejudiced, view these groups — and their violence — with horror.

Even so, can terrorist acts frighten so many people that they will cause policy changes? In the case of domestic terrorism, the answer is a flat "no." However, in the case of terrorism inspired by American support for Israel, the possibility can't be dismissed, as the reaction of the woman in the Safeway check-stand line suggests.

The Arab oil embargo protesting American support of Israel during the 1973 Yom Kippur War caused long and exasperating gas station lines, and didn't achieve its intended results. Americans reacted against the Arabs, not against Israel. However, the situation might be different if there were a string of seemingly unending terrorist acts on this score — on the scale of the IRA attacks on England.

Such an unceasing domestic terrorist campaign is not likely to happen. But the increased possibility of any such acts

should cause just enough fear to spur the U.S. government to take more precautions against political terrorism. Policy aside, the loss of life and of civilized standards are intolerable.

Such precautions can alter our democratic society if carried too far, but there is still plenty of room left. We are more protected than most countries because we are between two oceans, but more attention must be paid to those who fly into our country. Furthermore, the capabilities of our intelligence operations must be expanded. And we must take a closer look at domestic as well as foreign groups.

We weakened the ability of our intelligence agencies to infiltrate groups in America because we felt groups were being targeted solely because of their dissident opinions. Now, using congressional oversight, we must expand infiltration on groups judged to have a potential for violence.

You might want to urge the administration and members of Congress to work in these directions. But it is also necessary that we not panic or exaggerate the danger. Beyond taking necessary precautions, we must not let terrorists seriously modify our behavior. Remember: The planting of constant and infectious fear is what these groups have in mind.



# Distributing condoms in schools can weaken families

Marin County has just been shaken by a controversy that has affected most high school districts around the country: the distribution of condoms to students. As a public policy matter, this debate may have less to do with sex, or even morality, than with the struggle to keep our society together.

It is not an easy policy for school officials to handle.

On the one hand, there are serious health issues. On the other hand, condom distribution can exacerbate problems of diminishing family control and of unraveling communities, matters in which Jews have a special interest.

Studies of suburban high schools show that the majority of seniors are sexually active. The rate of sexually transmitted diseases among those high school students is already alarmingly high and rising. At the same time, the number of unmarried high school-age mothers has been rising, a considerable social problem in itself.

The "condom-availability" programs are a response to these problems. While studies show that many, if not most, teenagers will not use these birth-control and disease-control devices even if they are available, some will.

But — dare one say it? — the most effective birth control and venereal-disease-control devices are the values transmitted by strong families from one generation to another. That is as scientific a fact as you will find, proven in the laboratory of recorded human history.

Edward Shils, one of the brightest students of human history, put it this way:

"A family which incorporates into itself little of the past and, of that which it does incorporate, little of high quality, deadens its offspring; it leaves them with a scanty set of beliefs...the offspring are left to define their own standards; this means the acceptance of the norms of their most imposing coevals."

When the school tries to substitute for the family as the shaper of personal values, it weakens the authority of the family. If the school weakens the family, it will contribute more to the increase of venereal disease and unwedded motherhood among teenagers than it can counteract by distributing condoms.

Of course, the damage could be even greater. If, for example, the school weakens the authority of the family — by, among other things, a condom-distribution program that suggests that indiscriminate sexual activity is OK — it creates more violence among teenagers than it can counter-

act by installing metal detectors at all entrances.

But the dilemma the school officials face is that so many families are already weak. The real villains are not the schools but parents who are so indifferent or ineffective that they would rather let the schools do it. If the schools refuse to take measures — such as establishing a sex-counseling and condom-distribution program — the alternative is a dangerous vacuum.

So what are the public policy options? The schools cannot refurbish the families; the most they can do is avoid hurting them. If some sex-counseling and condom-distribution programs seem imperative, the schools must write directly to all parents — as one Marin high school is doing — and say that the school's preference is to have the students not use that program but to have the parents handle the problem instead.

Schools would express the hope that the parents would return the enclosed card saying that they, the parents, would handle such matters and that the program should not be extended to their child. Such an exclusion by parents should be scrupulously honored.

There are risks in such a reluctant public policy, but fewer than in a gleeful, wide-open school program of sex-counseling and condom distribution. Of course, this issue is only one small piece of the weak-family syndrome in America. But whatever the issue, the prescription for the schools is never to do anything that further harms the authority of families.



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# Conspiracy theorists still spreading lies to target Jews

JEWISH BULLETIN ■ JUNE 16, 1995 25

The militias, evangelist Pat Robertson and Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan share a common characteristic: They all thrive on painting evil conspiracies in high places.

The current details vary — from Jewish doctors planting AIDS in the African American population to the American government itself blowing up the Oklahoma federal building. But neither the basic political conspiracy theory nor its causes have changed much throughout the ages.



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lovers ever since.

Some Federalists charged presidential candidate Thomas Jefferson with being a member of that hidden organization, which they said "spread infidelity, impiety and immorality." Timothy Dwight, the president of Yale no less, made a speech in 1798 in which he asked, "Shall our daughters become the concubines of the Illuminati?"

In the next century, one conspiracy theorist, William Carr, stretched the plot all the way back to the Crucifixion: "It was the Illuminati who hatched the plot by which Christ would be executed by the Roman soldiers. It was they who supplied the 30 pieces of silver used to bribe Judas."

In the 1920s, both Henry Ford and the Christian Science Monitor connected the Illuminati with "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion." Father Charles Edward Coughlin did the same in the 1930s. In the 1960s, "Illuminati insiders" were tied to the civil rights movement by the John Birch Society. And now, Robertson is continuing this tradition.

Robertson demonstrated the agelessness of conspiracy theories when he cited the Illuminati plot in his 1994 book, "The Secret Kingdom." In 1776, a Bavarian professor formed a secret Masonic society, called the Illuminati to oppose the Jesuits. It ceased to exist a few years later, but had a nice ring to it and has served conspiracy

The Illuminati has been a good image for conspiracies, suggesting an exotic, hidden center of power that manipulates everyone's life. When people feel under siege and powerless, they are often pleased to be given a simple, evil target against which to direct their anger.

Conspiracy theories always require the complicity of some exotic group, such as the Jews or "international bankers" who, when named, turn out to be Rothschilds, Loeb's and Lehman's. But it has not always been the Jews. In 19th century America, the Vatican was more often cited as the center of conspiracy. Catholic buildings were burned down, and Catholic homes searched for

*Continued on next page*

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arms in order to forestall the "Papist plot."

The current militias have named the U.S. government as the central conspirator. Americans have always been wary of big government — except during deep economic depressions or war. Absent those conditions, the distrust has risen again. Sometimes this is healthy. But government bureaucracy is usually more capable of creating confusion than conspiracy. As a result, a good conspiracy theory usually requires more precise targets, such as ethnic groups engaged in secretly manipulating their government.

While Jewish plots took center stage in the first half of this century, they are less often invoked in the United States today. Of course, Farrakhan and his ilk are still trying to keep the image alive. But perhaps American Jews have lost

some of their conspiracy-usefulness because they have become too well-known and well-placed in an integrated nation. Even when Robertson raises the image of the Illuminati and of international bankers, he carefully avoids mentioning Jews.

However, the genius of conspiracy theory is the idea that the hidden evil force does not play by the rules; therefore, those who are rooting out such an evil aren't required to play by the rules either. Anything goes, including revoking democratic procedures and engaging in terrorism. That is why, as the conspiracy birds gather, we need the anti-terrorism laws now proposed by — yes — our government. And that is why Jews, whose security is so closely tied to the democratic process, must continue to distrust any man or militia offering a conspiracy theory to society's ills — even if the Jews are not yet mentioned.



# Public expression of religion OK — with safeguards

Most Jews were still nursing their bruises from the Supreme Court's latest decisions on church-state matters when President Bill Clinton kicked them in the ribs again with his subsequent comments on the subject.

He said, you will recall, that "nothing in the First Amendment converts our schools into religion-free zones or requires all religious expression to be left behind at the schoolhouse door."

The president clearly supports the Supreme Court decision that a public school may finance a student religious newspaper if it finances other student activities. He also applauded the Supreme Court decision to allow religious expression in public places. Clinton said, "Religion has a proper place in public because the public square belongs to all Americans."

Jews have always split down the middle on allowing religious expression in public parks and such. But a large majority of Jews have opposed religious expression in schools, even time for silent prayers, a practice that Clinton supported in his remarks.

So, are we seeing the Christianizing of America? Or just the religionizing of America? If you equate those, then we are indeed in trouble. But both the president and the Supreme Court have explicitly said that while public religionizing is usually OK, public Christianizing is not.

Even the main religious-right organizations are not calling for official Christianization, perhaps partly because they know they cannot get it. There are just too many

Christian sects in this country to make that politically possible. In early America, many public figures objected to policies disadvantaging Jews on the grounds that such policies would set a precedent for disadvantaging one Christian sect or another.

The question is, will removing obstacles to public religion unofficially create a kind of Christian dominance in public life? A little naively, the president said, "Teachers and school administrators should ensure that no student is in any way coerced to participate in religious activity." But in the lower grades particularly, children are in a naturally coercive situation because of the

influence of peers as well as school authorities. That creates risks for sectarian abuse.

The larger reality, however, is that we are in the midst of a religious revival nationally — and there is a kind of cul-

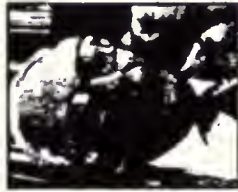
tural war being waged between that revival and the continuing strength of secularism. The same thing is happening within Jewish life: While a large number of Jews are slipping away, a large number are intensifying their religious identity.

The organized Jewish community should not just dig in its heels, opposing every move toward public religious expression. The role of the Jews should be to help nurture the general religious revival in America. First of all, it cannot be separated from the efforts at revival among American Jews themselves. For the sake of the new spirit, it is also necessary for Jews to celebrate their religion in the public square and for Jewish students to do so in the public schools they attend.

Would that become hazardous at times? Yes. Jews must support the religious spirit — which is their genius and which, after all, they invented in its modern form — while at the same time strenuously opposing sectarian abuse.

That will require active and creative vigilance, rather than just passive and knee-jerk resistance. Why not silent prayers, with safeguards? Why not religious expression in public parks, or by religious clubs in schools, with safeguards? At least these ideas call for more discussion in Jewish circles.

The key is in the limits expressed by both the Supreme Court and President Clinton: no official preference for one religion over another. The saving mantra is: One religion, no! All religions, yes!



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# COMMENTARY

Jewish Bulletin,  
September 8, 1995

## Jews shouldn't involve Congress in anti-peace efforts

The new battle among American Jews about Israel has become so bitter because it has spilled over into the Congress.

Not many years ago, there was an axiom among American Jews: Criticize Israel to the Israelis, or to other Jews, but never, never to the American public, and certainly not to American policy-makers.



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Those days have gone forever. Today, a well-organized group of American Jews, who once believed in never publicly criticizing the Israeli government, has launched a strong lobbying effort to organize members of Congress against the peace process.

Thomas Friedman of The New York Times has described it this way: "A loose coalition of some Jewish groups, conservative lawmakers and Israel's Likud Party are

currently spearheading a drive to push through Congress three initiatives that have a real potential to undermine the Israeli-Syrian and Israeli-Palestinian negotiations — which is exactly what the activists want."

The worst way American Jews could handle this internal struggle is by labeling each other as "traitors" to Israel. Nei-

ther side is a traitor, but one is wrong in its strategy for Israel's future security.

Both sides have in common a distrust of the Palestine Liberation Organization, Yasser Arafat and the Syrians. But the pro-Rabin Jews believe that most Palestinians — and eventually most Syrians — will come around to the understanding that brought Egypt and Jordan to make a peace agreement: Israel is here to stay, and the only way for the Arabs to get on with their lives is to hold their noses and make some peace arrangement.

American Jews have a right to oppose the Israeli government's peace policies. Only history will tell us for sure whether they are right or wrong. But we can't wait for history. And at the moment, for most American Jews, the Israeli government strategy seems far more persuasive than the likely alternative: continued war, the greater domination of Hamas and the like among frustrated Palestinians, and an

increase in terrorism.

However, with the active support of a sector of American Jews, Congress could put roadblocks in the way of that peace process. One has to do with moving the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem, where it belongs, of course. But the question is, when?

At the request of some American Jews, Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole introduced a bill that would set an early, inflexible date for the embassy move. Martin Indyk, U.S. ambassador to Israel (and formerly of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee in Washington, D.C.), has said this bill "would explode the peace process and put us out of business as a facilitator." Both the Israeli government and AIPAC disliked the Dole version, but finally did not oppose it for political reasons.

There is also an initiative to ban U.S. participation in a

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Golan Heights peacekeeping force that would monitor the region in the event of an Israel-Syria peace treaty. A

U.S. force may indeed be problematic, but to pass such a ban prematurely, before the Syrian talks really get going, is just another effort to stall the peace process.

However, the most immediate controversy has to do with the 1994 Middle East Peace Facilitation Act (MEPFA), which Congress passed to enable the United States to participate in the peace process and, at Israel's request, to provide development funds for the Palestinian Authority. In September, that law has to be renewed. The Helms-Pell proposal, a bill by Sens. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.) and Claiborne Pell (D-R.I.), strength-

ens the criteria for PLO compliance, and is supported by most American Jewish organizations and by the Israeli government.

But the American Jewish opposition to the peace process has generated alternative bills with such demands as a four-to-six-month deadline for Arafat to completely disarm Hamas and other undercover militants and extradite them to Israel. Such short-term objectives would be impossible to meet even if Arafat donned a yarmulke and converted to Zionism. They are designed simply to scuttle the peace process.

The passage of the Helms-Pell version will be an important test of America's support for the peace process. Members of Congress would like to hear from you.





# Anti-Semitism is not primary threat of strong Christian right

A funny thing happened on the way to the annual convention of the Christian Coalition last week. Two rabbis were invited to speak, and they accepted. Some Jews were scandalized, but exactly why are so many Jews so troubled by the Christian Coalition?

Many Jews are unhappy with the coalition's politically conservative agenda. But on many issues, such as crime and welfare, at least three or four out of 10 Jews hold views that are compatible with those of the Christian Coalition. The organization's politically conservative agenda is not the main threat to Jews.



**Earl  
Raab**

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tion has never espoused anti-Semitism, and neither has Ralph Reed, its leader. Certainly the Christian Coalition has been a staunch supporter of Israel, as has Pat Robertson himself.

The invitation to rabbis to speak before the convention might be seen as a sign of the group's absence of bigotry. It

Instead, many are threatened because they believe the Christian Coalition is anti-Semitic. And, indeed, some past remarks of the organization's founder, Pat Robertson, have been suspect. But the Christian Coalition as an organiza-

could just be a token gesture to take away any taint of anti-Semitism. Still, no real anti-Semitic organization would do such a thing.

Jews who always place Christian fundamentalists at the top of groups by which they feel threatened — even though all studies and surveys show that the fundamentalists are no more or less anti-Semitic than other Americans. However, it is not really the coalition's anti-Semitism that most directly troubles Jews.

What most threatens Jews is something else, something more insoluble. It is the Christian fundamentalist belief, protected by the First Amendment, that their religious precepts are the only ones that will save everyone else. In all good conscience then, would it not be ill-willed of them not to want the political state to pass laws that their religion says are necessary for everyone's salvation?

If the Christian fundamentalists were a large majority in this country and gained political control, they would have to do just that — not because they are evil or anti-Semitic, but because of their integrity. Muslim fundamentalists believe all Muslims should live in a state run by a strict Muslim regime, for the good of all Muslims. Many Jewish fundamentalists also believe other Jews should live according to *halachah* (Jewish law), which they say benefits all Jews.

American Jews should have something in common with

the 2 million members of the Christian Coalition. Fewer than one out of 10 Christian Coalition members say either the budget deficit, taxes or abortion are the most important issues facing the country; about two-thirds name "moral decline" as the most pressing issue.

It is an issue with which the Jewish community should be more concerned. But it would be impossible for Jews to join with extreme fundamentalists, who, to reverse moral decline, would want Christianity to become the official religion of the country, with denominational Christian prayers in the schools and so forth — all out of the best will for Jews and others.

Fortunately, most American Christians are not that evangelical or fundamentalist. If they care at all, they follow the declarations of the recent popes and the mainstream Protestant churches, which say explicitly that Judaism is legitimate and inviolable in its own right. They also worry that their own denominations will be dominated by the fundamentalists, and it does not seem at all likely that they will let that happen.

However, it is understandable that Jews are concerned if a fundamentalist group appears to be gaining political power, even if it seems to be friendly. It's fine for rabbis and other Jews to talk with the Christian Coalition, as long as the rabbis will not dismiss Jewish concerns about the real fundamentalist danger.





# Keep schools religion-neutral — but not religion-free

That season is coming up again. Some Jewish parents will complain about Christmas carols in the schools. Some Christian parents will complain about Chanukah songs in the schools. Some parents will complain about both.

In the meantime, heralding the season, the Los Altos school board sparked a huge controversy by initially banning Halloween ceremonies on grounds of church-state separation. The school board eventually reversed itself, but the interim dialogue was both entertaining and instructive.

Some parents said it was offensive to Christians to have their children engage in Halloween celebrations, which are pagan. Others opposed such celebrations because they deprecate the religious significance of Halloween, and would offend the 15,000 to 20,000 witches in the Bay Area.

There is also the strong rumor that some parents instigated the ban on Halloween in order to make fun of and scuttle the previous decision of the school board to make all school activities during this season "completely secular, with no tinge of a religious point of view," as the San Francisco Chronicle reported.

If that was the stratagem, it worked. In

reversing its ban against Halloween, the school board also reversed its ban against any religious reference. Halloween was just a stalking broom.

Sure, Halloween has a religious origin, dating back to the Druidism of pre-Christian Celtic populations. The occasion marked the calling together of certain wicked souls by Saman, the lord of death. Thus we see all the ghost and witch costumes. But how many of the children wearing them are going to be converted to Druidism?

By the same token, Jewish children will not be converted to Christianity because they see Christmas trees or listen to traditional Christmas carols. However, conversion is not the point. The point is that Jewish students should not feel alien and sec-

ond-class because they are surrounded in their school by Christian symbols.

That should not be allowed to happen. Thirty years ago, Jewish agencies firmly opposed any "religiously tainted" expres-

sion in the schools, including that of Chanukah. But later, the agencies were flattened by the mad rush of Jewish parents to bring Chanukah to the schools. No one thought singing Chanukah songs or spinning the dreidels was a major religious exercise, but parents felt it was a chance for their children to stand up and say: We are Jewish, we are a proud part of America's religious quilt, and, culturally speaking, if you show us yours, we'll show you ours.

"Culturally" is the key word. The public school should never allow itself to be mistaken for a church. Religious crosses hanging in the hallways would appear an official endorsement by the school, and

would be oppressive to non-Christian students. "Jingle Bells" would not be oppressive, nor would traditional and well-known Christmas carols in a quiltwork musical program.

Of course, such carols could be seen as "religiously tainted," as is, indeed, the story of Chanukah. But there is no longer, any need in America to protect children from the realization that there are many legitimate religious cultures in America, and that religion is a major player in American society.

Chief Justice William Rehnquist apparently tried to make the Supreme Court a religiously antiseptic place when he wanted to hold a court session on a Jewish High Holy Day, but the session was canceled when Justice Stephen Breyer, raised in a Jewish atmosphere in San Francisco, said he would not attend. It is at least as important that the public school, an educational institution, not be made antiseptic.

In the Christmas season, as in the Halloween season, it is necessary to be vigilant against any appearance of religious indoctrination or exclusive sectarian dominance. But it is also necessary to realize that religion-neutral does not mean religion-free.



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# Reject Farrakhan while supporting black aspirations

There is a side to the African American community that we tend to overlook. The dramatic plight and mass of the black under-class preoccupies us, properly enough. But upwards of four out of 10 African Americans qualify as middle class.

To begin with, that means they have professional, white-collar or skilled blue-collar occupations. But it also identifies some of their values and aspirations.

It is of particular importance for Jews to understand this phenomenon. Louis Farrakhan's march on Washington, for example, largely consisted of middle-class men. That is both ominous and encouraging.

After all, Jews have learned the hard way about the principle of the "poisoned good," sometimes known as the "rat-poison" rule for measuring leaders. It is well known that rat poison can consist of about 90 percent good corn and 10 percent strychnine. But no one says that because rat poison contains mostly good things, we should therefore ignore the small amount of bad. To do so would be fatal at the dinner table, and it is fatal in politics.

Not all rascals or wrong-minded politicians qualify under the rat-poison rule, but when they do, their leadership has to be 100 percent rejected despite their 90 percent good statements or deeds. For that reason, although agreeing with much they had to say, mainstream Republican leaders totally rejected David Duke and mainstream Jewish leaders totally rejected Meir Kahane.

Both men crossed a line of malevolence: They attempted to reduce the humanity of other groups and whip up

hatred against those groups as a whole. Overt racism is one line in the human sand that we cannot allow a political leader to cross. There are special evil and destructive consequences. Louis Farrakhan has clearly crossed that line.

On the other hand, to a large extent, the African American men who gathered in Washington, D.C., were middle class or middle-class oriented. They want to succeed. They want to be independent of government aid. They want to fight drug-infested neighborhoods and the dissolution of the family.

In fact, most of those displaying that middle-class consciousness want to be integrated, that old civil rights word. They know that is the only way they can make it. But they want to help each other toward that goal by dealing with each other, buying from each other, helping each other's businesses. That is one way they can help their whole community rise, including those less fortunate than themselves. And that is the way all large



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immigrant groups have operated in America, including Jews.

That is the good in Farrakhan's message, without the poison.

However, his message is laced with poison, and for that reason, he must be 100 percent rejected and shunned, lest his strychnine becomes mixed with everyone's corn. But we cannot stop at that rejection.

The solid aspirations of the African American middle class, which has grown so substantially since the civil rights revolution, and was expressed by so many in Washington, must be encouraged. When the Latino and Asian American middle class make it, they tend to fit into mainstream America. But the black middle class is still more segregated and self-segregated because of the uniquely tragic and perverse history between them and America. And they are still weighed down by the continuing misery in the ghettos that they escaped.

Few middle class blacks have yet swallowed Farrakhan's poison, but they could someday if the reasons for their alienation are not lightened. More of them could swallow that poison if we smear them all prematurely with the tar of Farrakhanism or, conversely, if we become afraid to insist on the reasons for rejecting Farrakhan 100 percent.

That is why many Jewish agencies have supported most of the aspirations of the marchers while simultaneously rejecting the march's founder. The stability of the African American middle class is so important to the American future that we must walk that difficult tightrope.





# Pat Buchanan's anti-Semitism: an American tradition?

Pat Buchanan's political trail is worth watching.

He is not a conservative. He has staked out a territory where edges of the left wing and the right wing meet. But a young American priest, Father Charles Coughlin — to whom Buchanan bears some resemblance — pioneered that turf.

Those of you not yet on social security might not know that in the 1930s, Coughlin led the largest anti-Semitic movement in American history. Of course the 1990s is not the 1930s, and Buchanan is not Coughlin. But it is worthwhile to compare the two men's trails as Buchanan's presidential forays continue and after he's won two minor GOP primaries.

As a professed working-class champion, Coughlin denounced rich Easterners who embodied, in his words, "the luxury of Park Avenue, Wall Street attorneys, the erudition of Harvard, of Yale." This philosophy was in the classic populist tradition, which

Buchanan upholds with his attacks on big business, high finance, the elite and the intellectual class, purportedly on the workers' behalf.

Coughlin was an isolationist, attacking the League of Nations and our entry in World War Two. Since the end of the Cold War, Buchanan has also been an isolationist, attacking the United Nations and our involvement overseas. He says President Franklin Roosevelt acted "unconstitutionally" by supporting England and "plotting" to get us into the war against Hitler before Pearl Harbor.

In his early years, Coughlin's anti-Semitism was of the indirect, vaguely obscure, name-dropping

variety. He snidely referred to Alexander Hamilton, "whose original name was Alexander Levine." Attacking the "international bankers," he cited

"the Rothschilds and the Lazards Freres, the Morgans, the Kuhns and the Loeb's." Later, he attacked the Jews directly, stating that "Jews as Oriental Freemasons are the powers behind the throne of darkness."

Buchanan remarked in 1990 that "there are only two groups beating the drums for war in the Middle East: the Israeli Defense Ministry and its amen corner in the United States." This is exactly the kind of covertly anti-Semitic comment the



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## Raab: Buchanan's familiar tactics

*Continued from previous page*

Ronald Reagan, wrote a memo that the president was "succumbing to the pressure of the Jews," he was roundly attacked in the media, and soon was eased out of the administration. By no means was anti-Semitism such a bugaboo in the 1930s — a time when American anti-Jewish sentiments were at high tide.

However, research showed that

most of Coughlin's millions of followers were not particularly anti-Semitic in their attitudes. The majority were attracted to Coughlin because of his political views on this country's economic and social breakdown — and they went along with him on his anti-Semitism.

The "underclass" represented a different sector of the population in the 1930s than it does in the

younger Coughlin was likely to make. It was not the kind of explicit attack on the Jews that the priest made in his later years, and on which an anti-Semitic movement such as Coughlin's is built.

Whether Buchanan moves into a later stage of explicit and unapologetic public anti-Semitism remains a question, and we should beware. But it is instructive to note the difference between our era and Coughlin's, and to watch how Buchanan's Coughlinesque tendencies are curbed in modern America.

On the face of it, there is a pervasive mainstream sensitivity and opposition even to hooded anti-Semitism in the 1990s; such resistance did not exist 60 years ago. The godfather of American conservative thought, William F. Buckley, wrote, "I find it impossible to defend Pat Buchanan against the charge" of anti-Semitism.

When Buchanan, as an aide to President

*Continued on next page*

1990s. But if a large proportion of today's white Americans were to grow frustrated enough to adopt Buchanan's extreme views, they could also conceivably "go along" with a more upfront brand of bigotry, which is what happened in Coughlin's time.

We are scarcely at such a danger point right now. But if we keep Coughlin in mind, then Buchanan's trail is worth watching.





# George Shultz at Koret event: Assad 'totally murderous'

**TERESA STRASSER**  
Bulletin Staff

Former Secretary of State George P. Shultz said Israel shouldn't "crawl around to Damascus" to negotiate peace in Lebanon, but has "got to be tough" with Syrian president Hafez Assad.

"I've met him," Shultz said of Assad. "He's bright, smart, totally murderous. But he's there" in power, and Israel should be "laying down markers" to pressure Syria into reining in Hezbollah.

Shultz's tough talk about Syria hit home at an otherwise lighthearted luncheon honoring this year's Koret Israel Prize winners at the Ritz-Carlton San Francisco. Shultz was there to accept the Koret Prize for Contribution to Economic Reform and Development in Israel.

When Shultz spoke, people listened. Forks ceased poking into fillets of sea bass and wineglasses stopped in midair. The din of luncheon shmoozing fell silent.

Shultz recalled the funeral of slain Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, which drew leaders from 84 nations, but which Assad did not attend. Shultz believes that "moving" memorial to Rabin may be partly behind Syria's failure to rein in the radical Hezbollah.

"Mr. Assad is feeling isolated and striking back," he said.

Two other Koret Prizes were awarded at the ceremony Wednesday of last week. Also, six Koret Israel Fellows were named: As part of the prize, they will visit the Jewish state together on an educational



Photos — Larry Rosenberg

**Koret Prize winners Earl Raab (above, left) and George P. Shultz chat at award ceremony. In photo right, former Koret Fellow Michael Krasny (left) celebrates with one of this year's winners, author Ethan Canin.**

mission. The prizes and fellowships are given for outstanding professional achievements and leadership or potential leadership in the Jewish community.

Shultz took the opportunity not only to remember Rabin, but to encourage the development of a free market economy in Israel — long a mission of the S.F.-based Koret Foundation, which sponsors the awards along with the S.F.-based Jewish Community Federation.

A bust of Shultz, now a Hoover Institution Fellow and Stanford University professor, will be placed at the Mount Scopus campus of Hebrew University in honor of the award.



Earl Raab, nationally known Jewish scholar and Jewish Bulletin columnist, collected the Koret Prize for Exemplary Contribution to the Jewish community. Tad Taube, president of the Koret Foundation, presented Raab with a set of oil lamps from the Byzantine era. "Antiques for the antique," joked Raab, 77, who has worked in the Jewish community for half a century.

Fellowships were awarded to author Ethan Canin; Janette Gitler, KRON director of local programming; Robert C. Post, professor at Boalt Hall College of the Law; Dean Ornish, physician and author; John G. Adler, chairman of Adaptec, a Milpitas

computer parts manufacturer; and Aaron Betsky, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art curator of architecture.

Past winners include American Conservatory Theater's Carey Perloff (1994), artist Stanley Saitowitz (1991), football player Harris Barton of the 49ers (1992) and developer I. Donald Turner (1990). Turner, who died in a plane crash last month with Commerce Secretary Ron Brown, was remembered at the luncheon.

Corner offices at Jewish agencies were emptied for the afternoon as leaders from almost every community organization and board came to the Ritz-Carlton. Attendees included Anita Friedman, executive director of the S.F.-based Jewish Family and Children's Services; Nimrod Barkan, Israeli Consul General for the Pacific Northwest; and Alan Rothenberg, incoming president of the JCF.

Mayor Willie Brown did not attend but sent a letter of congratulations to the winners.

Each year, a Koret Leadership Prize goes to the previously awarded Koret Fellow who returns from Israel and "most notably fulfills Jewish leadership potential." This time, the award went to high-tech investor James A. Katzman, now on the board of the Jewish Studies program at Stanford University.

Koret Israel Fellowship selection committee member Ron Berman wished the winners good luck on their 10-day trip to Israel and remarked to the audience, "We're like Hallmark. We care enough to send the very best."





# The fraying of America as superpower threatens Israel

Israel's security depends on America maintaining its status as a superpower. That is the bottom line, not the peace process with the Palestinian Arabs.

The Palestinian peace process is important in itself for Israel. But the desire of Iraq, Iran and Syria to destroy Israel has nothing to do with the Palestinians, in whom they have little interest.

A recent survey found that, by a two-to-one ratio, more Israelis identify Iran than the Palestinians as "the most dangerous enemy facing Israel today."

The Iraqi crisis has further demonstrated an axiom that Israelis know well: The larger and more aggressive regimes in the Middle East neighborhood are the real danger to Israel. American Jews had better pay attention.

One conventional scenario is that, as of today, Israel could protect itself against Iraq and Syria — even perhaps Iran — if other regimes such as Egypt stay out of the melee. But if they gang up, if there is an extended conflict and no outside intervention, the existence of Israel would be threatened.

Only America's deterrent force stands in the way of that scenario. There is no present

sign that America's resolve to protect Israel is faltering — but America's ability to do so may be fading.

Israel's defense establishment is now worried that the crisis with Iraq could move Syria closer to Saddam Hussein. The border between Syria and Iraq was reopened earlier this year, and diplomatic relations re-established. But, more than that, some of the other Arab nations showed signs of waffling — mainly because America's supreme dominance seems to be fraying.

America cannot be the single policeman in the world, but as the globe's economic and military superpower, it must act forcefully as the chief sheriff. No one else will.

Modern technology makes it possible for rogue nations to create general havoc in the world if unchecked. Israel's would probably

be the first but not the last population to be affected by Iraq's disease-bearing missiles, if Saddam could get away with it.

Saddam, who is a crazy fox, is betting that America's ability to act as good sheriff is slipping away. He may be right. For one thing, America's military strength is not what it was during the Gulf War. American Jews should think long and hard about that. A higher percentage of Jews than of other Americans has always expressed itself as favoring defense cuts.

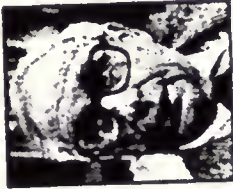
Along with America's military strength, our ability to hold the larger nations together to enforce civilized standards may also be faltering. Saddam has demonstrated the efficacy of the Good Thug syndrome. You know, the thug engages in some violent criminal activity, and then gets a

reward by promising not to do it again — until the next time.

The modern world has shown that it is susceptible to the Good Thug syndrome, especially if some profit is threatened. France — not a paragon of positive human values within living memory — has now demonstrated its interest in breaking civilized discipline in order to deal commercially with the dangerous regimes of Iraq and Iran.

In short, Saddam's dubious contribution is to continually test the ability of America to maintain its superpower status and keep the world on a civilized course. Israel could be the first and most tragic victim if we fail that test.

The American Jewish community has been intent on the immediate matter of rallying American support for Israel, especially in its conflict with the Palestinians. But American Jewry has not paid enough organized attention to whether America is losing its ability — its military dominance, resolve and strength of values — to act as an effective deterrent force against the larger enemies of Israel, and of world order.



**Earl Raab**

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June 1998

COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF ORAL HISTORIES WITH MEMBERS OF THE  
JEWISH COMMUNITY OF THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA

Jewish Community Federation Leadership Oral Histories

The Jewish Community Federation Leadership Oral History Project was initiated in 1990 with the sponsorship of the Jewish Community Endowment Fund to record the recent history of the Jewish Community Federation. Through oral histories with living past presidents and executive directors of the Federation, the project documents Jewish philanthropy in the West Bay as spearheaded by the Federation during the past half-century.

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- Heller, Douglas M. (b. 1931), President, Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties, 1994-1996. In process.
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California Jewish Community Oral History Series  
of the Judah L. Magnes Memorial Museum

The California Jewish Community Series is a collection of oral history interviews with persons who have contributed significantly to the Jewish life of the San Francisco Bay Area, as well as to their professions and the wider community. Sponsored by the Western Jewish History Center of the Judah L. Magnes Museum, the interviews are produced by the Regional Oral History Office of The Bancroft Library.

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- Fleishhacker, Mortimer (1907-1976), and Janet Choynski Fleishhacker, Family, Business, and the San Francisco Community. 1975
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#### Other Interviews Related to the Jewish Community

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Eleanor K. Glaser

Raised and educated in the Middle West. During World War II, spent two years in the U.S. Marine Corps Women's Reserve.

Senior year of college was taken in New Zealand, consequently A.B. degree in sociology from University of Michigan was granted in absentia. Study in New Zealand was followed by a year in Sydney, Australia, working for Caltex Oil Company.

Work experience includes such non-profit organizations as Community Service Society, New York City; National Society for Crippled Children and Adults and National Congress of Parents and Teachers in Chicago.

After moving to California in 1966, joined the staff of a local weekly newspaper, did volunteer publicity for the Judah Magnes Museum and the Moraga Historical Society, and was the Bay Area correspondent for a national weekly newspaper. Also served as a history docent for the Oakland Museum.

Additional travel includes Great Britain, Europe, Israel, Mexico, and the Far East.











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