

A CURRICULUM

Jewish and American Cultures

A Documentary History
Of Mutual Influences

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INTRODUCTION AND CURRICULUM RATIONALE

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For sometimes I have been thinking about the unique relationship that exists between Jewish and American cultures. In its 2000 years exile Judaism has never lived under a political system, either ancient or modern, that allowed Jews to practice their religion as they choose, without the interference of governmental authority. Jews can do so in America. The American government has never instituted a law or a rule, that in any way infringed on Jews' freedom of religion. I developed a hypothesis explains this unique phenomenon. Judaism and the United States share a foundational mythology at the center of which resides a passion for freedom. For Jews our national myth is exemplified by two Hebrew words, עבדים הינו the three English words, we were slaves. For America, it is the opening words of the Declaration of Independence declaring that all human beings possess "unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness". I decided to explore the mutual influences that each of these uniquely aligned cultures exercises on each other. Examples of these influences make up the essence of this curriculum.

This fully scripted curriculum's intent is to engage adult learners in an endeavor designed to raise their consciousness regarding the dynamic and ongoing exchange of values between Jewish and American cultures. It is the intent of the curriculum to encourage the learners to contemplate the possibility that the narrative of freedom, which is always at the center of this relationship, is a cautionary tale. I would like the learners to understand (enduring understanding) that there is a cultural line that if crossed may threaten the survivability of Progressive Judaism in America.

Each lesson has two components, one is called Talking Point and the other Handout. The Talking Point is a narrative, explaining the Handout's in historical context. The Handout is a source document. A teacher you can expand, contract or revise its elements. This is especially true in regard to the questions embedded in the handouts. The questions, and how you manage them, are of critical importance. Always keep in mind the enduring understanding when you ask them. There are of course no right answers. Take time studying the historical narrative before you scrutinize its associated handout(s). This will make you a much better guide.

Finally, at the end of Lesson 8 I included a Talking Point and a Handout listing 9 points that exemplify the uniqueness of Judaism and that illustrate stark and irreconcilable differences between the two cultures. Their intent is to "arm" adult learners with tools that will help them in their personal efforts to maintain Judaism's uniqueness.

The theoretical pedagogical basis for the methodology used in teaching the curriculum is the particular characteristics of adult learners.

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The primary teaching methodology used in designing the lessons is a modified Understanding by Design model based on the work of Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighee. However, the lessons' use essential questions in a very particular way. They are embedded in the source texts. This tactic has proven exceptionally successful in actual adult education courses that I have been teaching for a number of years.

I also found useful and practical teaching tactics in The Religious Education of Adults by Leon McKenzie and R. Michael Harton, and The Adult Jewish Education Handbook by Roberta Louis Goodman and Betsy Dolgin Katz

In summary, adult learners usually approach learning differently than younger learners:

- they are more self-guided in their learning
- they bring more, and expect to bring more, to a learning situation because of their wider experience - and can take more away
- they require learning "to make sense" - they will not perform a learning activity just because the instructor said to do it

Specifically adult learners:

Are self-directed; typically not dependent on others for direction or opinions – the curriculum's reliance on questions that solicit emotional and intellectual response.

Are often skeptical about new information; prefer to try it out before accepting it – the use of source documents is exceptionally effective in allaying skepticism.

Seek education that relates or applies directly to their perceived needs, that is timely and appropriate for their current lives – making the material relevant is dependent on how it is taught. Ask for personal experiences, ask for personal concerns, personalize the material and it will become relevant to adult learners.

The curriculum includes an extensive bibliography, some 58 books, articles, web pages and source documents that I found helpful in designing this curriculum are listed on the final page.

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OUTCOMES

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Goal for learners- raising their consciousness about the historically unique existential circumstance under which the American Jewish community lives.

Enduring Understanding:

- A. Because of their unique religious and cultural characteristics Jews successfully manage their relationship with the host (American) culture, having been both influenced by it and influencing it. By reading source documents that illustrate this ongoing dynamic cultural exchange learners' consciousness will be raised to appreciate this connection
- B. Learners will grow to appreciate the fact that the centrality of freedom, exemplifying this relationship, poses a threat to the historical uniqueness of Judaism and that American Judaism must watchfully cultivate its theological and ethical distinctiveness

Process utilized to engage learners- The "lecture" components of the classes are called "Talking Points". They place source documents in their historic context. The extensive use of source documents and their shared reading in the classes, can present a problem. If not managed properly the classes can become a series of drawn out narratives. In order to eliminate this possibility the way in which essential questions are traditionally used, in the Learning By Design model, has been changed. The essential questions, highlighted in a **bold red font**, are embedded in the source documents and are always preceded by the word "Stop". The teacher must actually use the word to stop the reading in order to ask an essential question. The questions is always open ended, one that cannot be answered by yes or no. And, the question must always be personal, "how do you feel", "What have your experiences been", are examples of good open ended phrases. The teacher may choose to change the question, but the new question MUST BE open ended. Because adult learners bring more to a learning situation, because of their wider experience, this methodology has been proven to be successful in adult education classes. The personal nature of the questions also allow for reflection, inquiry and meaning making.

Because of a high percentage of Jews are marrying non-Jews, Jewish adults are experiencing this phenomenon firsthand. They are anxious about the Jewish future of their children and grandchildren. This curriculum helps them understand why this phenomenon is so prevalent and to provide them with knowledge that they can use to explain it. In doing so they can highlight the uniqueness of Judaism and the importance of its survival in the uniquely friendly American culture.

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ENDURING UNDERSTANDING/BIG IDEA OF THIS COURSE-

- C. Because of their unique religious and cultural characteristics Jews successfully manage their relationship with the host (American) culture, having been both influenced by it and influencing it. By reading of source documents that illustrate this ongoing dynamic cultural exchange learners' consciousness will be raised to appreciate this connection
- D. Adult learners will grow to appreciate the fact that the centrality of freedom exemplifying this relationship, poses a threat to the historical uniqueness of Judaism and that Judaism must watchfully cultivate its theological and ethical distinctiveness

LESSON 1 – FOUNDATIONAL MYTHS- INTRODUCTION OF THE BIG IDEA AND THE COURSE'S OVERARCHING ESSENTIAL QUESTION- CAN JUDAISM RETAIN ITS UNIQUENESS IN SUCH A HOSPITABLE HOST CULTURE AS THE UNITED STATES'?

Talking points 1-A unique compatibility

Essential question: Has your life experience left you open to the possibility that there is a unique compatibility between Jewish and American cultures?

This curriculum explores the something that is taken for granted. why is it that the government of the United States, unlike all the authorities under which Jews lived during our more than 2,000 year exile, has never taken any action against its Jewish community.

It also examine two competing values that helped Judaism survive as a peoplehood while other empires and states were relegated to narratives in history books?

Jews value a universal fact that all human beings are created in God's image, and hence are entitled so be treated as sacred beings protected by social justice.

And yet, Jews also value their uniqueness, their Otherness their distinctive particular tribalism.

This particularism commits most Jews to survive as a unique community within the American culture.

I tried to understand the special relationship between American Jews and, what Larry Hoffman calls, its host culture I came up with a theory - a hypothesis.

Each Peoplehood, each nation has a foundational myth. I propose that our foundational myth is we were slaves עבדים היינו . Our national birth is unmistakably G-d's act that turned a tribe of slaves into a community of free men and I cannot think of any other culture or civilization or empire that values freedom as much as Judaism does until 1776.

So, In this course we will explore the mutual influences exercised by Jewish and American cultures, whose foundational myths are intimately tied to the transformation of subjugated peoples to free peoples.

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LESSON 1 HANDOUT AA Excerpts from President Barack Obama's speech to Israeli students in Jerusalem on March 21, 2013.

After enjoying Seders with family and friends in Chicago and on the campaign trail, I'm proud that I've now brought this tradition into the White House. I did so because I wanted my daughters to experience the Haggadah, and the story at the center of Passover that makes this time of year so powerful.

It's a story of centuries of slavery, and years of wandering in the desert; a story of perseverance amidst persecution, and faith in God and the Torah. It's a story about finding freedom in your own land. And for the Jewish people, this story is central to who you've become. But it's also a story that holds within it the universal human experience, with all of its suffering, but also all of its salvation.... And it's a story that's inspired communities across the globe, including me and my fellow Americans.

Stop. In your opinion what are the universal and particular values of Judaism?

In the United States -- a nation made up of people who crossed oceans to start anew -- we're naturally drawn to the idea of finding freedom in our land. To African Americans, the story of the Exodus was perhaps the central story, the most powerful image about emerging from the grip of bondage to reach for liberty and human dignity -- a tale that was carried from slavery through the Civil Rights Movement into today.

For the Jewish people, the journey to the promise of the State of Israel wound through countless generations. It involved centuries of suffering and exile, prejudice and pogroms and even genocide.

Through it all, the Jewish people sustained their *unique identity and traditions*. **Stop. How do you think this was achieved (explain that the theme of this course is to explore the shared influences of Jewish and American cultures, while keeping in mind the threat to Jewish unique identity that the relationship embodies) ?...** That's why I believe that Israel is rooted not just in history and tradition, but also in a simple and profound idea -- the idea that people deserve to be free in a land of their own.

This is the story of Israel. This is the work that has brought the dreams of so many generations to life. And every step of the way, Israel has built unbreakable bonds of friendship with my country, the United States of America.

America is a nation of immigrants. America is strengthened by diversity. America is enriched by faith. We are governed not simply by men and women, but by laws. We're fueled by entrepreneurship and innovation, and we are defined by a democratic discourse that allows each generation to reimagine and renew our union once more. So in Israel, we see values that we share, even as we recognize what makes us different. That is an essential part of our bond.

And as a man who's been inspired in my own life by that timeless calling within the Jewish experience -- tikkun olam -- I am hopeful that we can draw upon what's best in ourselves to meet the challenges that

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will come; to win the battles for peace in the wake of so much war; and to do the work of repairing this world. That's your job.

That's my job. That's the task of all of us.

May God bless you. May God bless Israel. May God bless the United States of America. Toda raba. Thank you.

END HANDOUT

Point out this one particular manifestation of the effect of freedom on the very early 18th Jewish communities in America pointed out by Jonathan Sarna.

Most revealingly of all, the congregants of Shearith Israel ceased to stand up for the prayer for the government. "The custom of sitting during this prayer," an oral tradition recalls, "was introduced to symbolize the American Revolution's abolition of subservience."²⁴

Never before had a major nation committed itself so definitively to the principles of freedom and democracy in general and to religious freedom in particular.

HANDOUT 1 LESSON 1 The American Jewish Experience the question of uniqueness by Jonathan D. Sarna and Jonathan Golden

A central question in American Jewish history concerns the relative influence of Old and New World patterns on American Jews, **STOP. THIS WILL BECOME CLEAR AS WE READ MORE DOCUMENTS** a debate that echoes the longstanding controversy over whether or not America itself is historically unique. **STOP. 2 UNIQUE CULTURES?**

The revolution, far from being just another turn in Jews' political wheel of fortune, represented instead a massive cultural transformation.

It challenged age-old traditions and demanded that revolutionary-era values be recognized within the synagogue's portals

The problem that Jews grappled with in the decades following the revolution was whether Judaism as they knew it could be reconciled with freedom and democracy. **STOP huge problem and at the core of the dilemma addressed in this course** Could the traditional synagogue-community structure that bound Jews together and promoted group survival also accommodate new political and cultural realities?

It marked a turning point not only in American Jewish history, but in modern history generally.

Never before had a major nation committed itself so definitively to the principles of freedom and democracy in general and to religious freedom in particular. Jews still had to fight for their rights on the state level, and they continued to face various forms of prejudice nationwide. However, many Jews benefited materially from the Revolution and interacted freely with their non-Jewish neighbors. Having shed blood for their country side by side with their Christian fellows, Jews as a group felt far more secure than they had in colonial days.

They asserted their rights openly and, if challenged, defended themselves both vigorously and self-confidently.

END HANDOUT

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LESSON 1 HANDOUT 1B JOHN PHILLIPS' LETTER 1787

IN THE summer of 1787, the Federal Convention assembled behind closed doors in the city of Philadelphia to draft the Constitution of the United States. Jonas Phillips, a German- Jewish merchant living in the city, sent a letter to the assembly, urging the framers to make sure the new nation granted equal rights to all its citizens. Phillips reminded the members of the convention that Philadelphia's Jews could not participate fully in civic life because the state constitution required office-holders to take an oath proclaiming faith in the New Testament.

Sires

With leave and submission I address myself To those in whom there is wisdom and understanding and knowledge, they are the honourable personages appointed and Made overseers of a part of the terrestrial globe of the Earth, Namely the 13 united states of America in Convention Assembled, the Lord preserve them amen—

I the subscriber being one of the people called Jews of the City of Philadelphia, a people scattered & dispersed among all nations do behold with Concern that among the Laws in the Constitution of Pennsylvania, there is a Clause Sect 10 to viz—I do believe in one God the Creator and governor of the universe and Rewarder of the good & the punisher of the wicked—and I do acknowledge the Scriptures of the old & New testament to be given by divine inspiration—BUT to swear & believe that the new testament was given by divine inspiration is absolutely against the Religious principle of a Jew, and is against his Conscience to take any such oath—**Stop. What does his ability to make such a public statement mean TO YOU! how is it compare with the political circumstance of Jews in Europe?** By the above law a Jew is deprived of holding any publick office or place of Government which is a Contradictory to the bill of Right Sect 2 viz

That all men have a natural & unalienable Right to worship almighty God according to the dictates of their own Conscience and understanding & that no man ought or of right can be compelled to attend any Religious Worship or Creed or support any place of worship or Maintain any minister contrary to or against his own free will and Consent, nor can any man who acknowledges the being of a God be Justly deprived or abridged of any Civil Right as a

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Citizen on account of his Religious sentiments or peculiar mode of Religious Worship, and that no authority can or ought to be vested in or assumed by any power whatever that shall in any case interfere or in any manner Controul the Right of Conscience in the free Exercise of Religious Worship—**STOP How much of this statement is derived from non-Jewish philosophy and what does it mean to your Judaism?** It is well known among all the Citizens of the 13 united states that the Jews have been true and faithful whigs, & during the late Contest with England they have been foremost in aiding and assisting the states with their lives & fortunes, they have supported the cause, have bravely fought and bled for liberty which they cannot Enjoy— Therefore if the honourable Convention shall in their Wisdom think fit and alter the said oath & leave out the words to viz—“and I do acknowledge the scripture of the new testament to be given by divine inspiration”, then the Israelites will think themself happy to live under a government where all Religious societies are on an Equal footing—I solicit this favour for myself my children & posterity, & for the benefit of all the Israelites through the 13 united states of America.

May God prolong his days among us in this land of Liberty—May he lead the armies against his enemies as he has done hereunto fore. May God Extend peace unto the united states— May they get up to the highest Prosperitys— May God Extend peace to them & their seed after them so long as the sun & moon endureth—and May the almighty God of our father Abraham Isaac & Jacob into this Noble Assembly with wisdom Judgment & unanimity in their Counsells & may they have the satisfaction to see that their present toil & labour for the wellfair of the united states may be approved of Through all the world & particular by the united, states of America, is the ardent prayer of Sires

Your Most devoted. Servant Jonas Phillips

PHILADELPHIA 24th Ellul 5541 or Sept. 7th 1787.

END HANDOUT

LESSON 1 HANDOUT 2A "TO BIGOTRY NO SANCTION" CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN GEORGE WASHINGTON AND THE JEWS OF NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND. 1790

After the inauguration of President George Washington, the congregations of Savannah, Charleston, Richmond, Philadelphia, New York, and Newport sent letters of congratulation to the new President, praising his leadership and commitment to religious toleration. The correspondence between George Washington and Newport's Jewish community contained

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the resounding promise from Washington that the United States would give "to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance."

Washington's Reply to the Hebrew Congregation in Newport, Rhode Island

Gentlemen,

While I received with much satisfaction your address replete with expressions of esteem, I rejoice in the opportunity of assuring you that I shall always retain grateful remembrance of the cordial welcome I experienced on my visit to Newport from all classes of citizens.

The reflection on the days of difficulty and danger which are past is rendered the more sweet from a consciousness that they are succeeded by days of uncommon prosperity ! and security.

If we have wisdom to make the best use of the advantages with which we are now favored, we cannot fail, under the just administration of a good government, to become a great and happy people.

The citizens of the United States of America have a right to applaud themselves for having given to mankind examples of an enlarged and liberal policy—a policy worthy of imitation. All possess alike liberty of conscience and immunities of citizenship.

It is now no more that toleration is spoken of as if it were the indulgence of one class of people that another enjoyed the exercise of their inherent natural rights, for, happily, the Government of the United States, which gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance, requires only that they who live under its protection should demean themselves as good citizens in giving it on all occasions their effectual support.

It would be inconsistent with the frankness of my character not to avow that I am pleased with your favorable opinion of my administration and fervent wishes for my felicity.

May the children of the stock of Abraham who dwell in this land continue to merit and enjoy the good will of the other inhabitants—while everyone shall sit in safety under his own vine and fig tree and there shall be none to make him afraid.

May the father of all mercies scatter light, and not darkness, upon our paths, and make us all in our several vocations useful here, and in His own due time and way everlastingly happy.

G. WASHINGTON

Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society 3 (1895), pp. 90-92.

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END HANDOUT

Talking points 2 Historical background

The character of the early Jewish community in North America

In 1654, 23 refugees: men, women and children arrived in New Amsterdam

These Jews had fled the Brazilian outpost of Recife when the Portuguese regained possession of it from the Dutch.

They were descendants of perhaps 5,000 **Stop. we do not know how many chose to remain in Recife Jews** who had been living in Recife, most of them secretly, since the mid-1500s.

When the Dutch captured portions of Brazil from the Portuguese in 1624, some new-Christians openly returned to the practice of their Jewish faith.

When Portugal recaptured Brazil in 1654, these Jews feared the introduction of the Inquisition and fled.

They were probably on their way back to Amsterdam when, after a stop in Jamaica, their ship was attacked by a Spanish privateer who stripped them of their valuables.

Returning to Amsterdam no longer an option. The refugees then made a deal with the ship's captain, Jacques de la Mothe, to take them to New Amsterdam, which they thought would be a hospitable destination.

Peter Stuyvesant (1592-1672), the Dutch colonial governor, seized the Jews' meager possessions and ordered them sold at auction.

When this failed to raise enough to meet their debts, he jailed two members of the group and wrote to the Dutch West India Company in Amsterdam, asking permission to expel the Jews.

Take note of the fact that Stuyvesant did not, in any way, represent religious authority.

LESSON 1 HANDOUT 2 PETER STUYVESANT'S LETTE TO THE DIRECTORS OF THE WEST INDIES COMPANY 1654.

The Jews who have arrived would nearly all like to remain here, but learning that they (with their customary usury and deceitful trading with the Christians. **STOP what kind of an argument he is using?** were very repugnant to the inferior magistrates, as also to the people having the most affection for you; the Deaconry also fearing that owing to their present indigence they might become a charge in the coming winter, we have, for the benefit of this weak and newly developing place and the land in general, deemed it useful to require them in a friendly way to depart; praying also most seriously in this connection, for ourselves as also for the general community of your worships, that the deceitful race—such hateful enemies and blasphemers of the name of Christ—be not allowed to further infect

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and trouble this new colony to the detraction of your worships and the dissatisfaction of your worships' most affectionate subjects. **Again what argument**

Reply to Stuyvesant's letter from the Directors of the Dutch West India Company in Amsterdam.

We would have liked to effectuate and fulfill your wishes and request that the new territories should no more be allowed to be infected by people of the Jewish nation, **STOP notice the biological argument early indication of the racial anti-Semitism of the 19th Century.** for we foresee therefrom the same difficulties which you fear, but after having further weighed and considered the matter, we observe that this would be somewhat unreasonable and unfair, especially because of the considerable loss sustained by this nation, with others, in the taking of Brazil, as also because of the large amount of capital which they still have invested in the shares of this company. Therefore after many deliberations we have finally decided and resolved to apostille [note] upon a certain petition presented by said Portuguese Jews that these people may travel and trade to and in New Netherland and live and remain there **Stop the response is influenced by what consideration?**, provided the poor among them shall not become a burden to the company or to the community, but be supported by their own nation. You will now govern yourself accordingly.

END HANDOUT

LESSON 2– COPING WITH FREEDOM

Talking Point 1 breaking the mold

Notwithstanding the small size of the Jewish community in early America, it is important to emphasize that American Jews of the 18th and 19th Centuries like their counterparts in the larger society, established patterns that subsequent generations carefully followed.

American Judaism, at this time became both voluntaristic and pluralistic. In America a Jew's faith was not registered with the state, as it was in most of Europe, and observance depended upon the individual. Hugely important difference that we take for granted

There were no rabbis or theologians among the early refugees from Recife- but since the only requirement for establishing a synagogue is a minyan, this presented no problem.

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The slow but continuous breaking up of the two-thousand-year-old religious attitudes and practices of European Jewry in the post-Napoleonic era was especially felt on the American continent,

Reason the Jews were diffused over a vast area,

Reason were lacking a compact and intensive group life that strengthens traditional mores and enforces conformity.

Reason- Were freely exposed to the divisive forces of a new environment. Free from the authoritative Jewish Kehilah which “ran” the Jewish communities in Europe by the authority of the ruler of the land. **Stop. Why would freedom threaten the cohesiveness of America’s Jewish communities?**

It was during this period that the homogeneity of the Jews of America, began to give way to the heterogeneity and heterodoxy so characteristic of modern American Jewry.

As the number of congregations multiplied they often balked at the imposition of an ecclesiastical authority which they considered a vestige of the old world from which they fled.

LESSON 2 HANDOUT 1 ANYONE CAN DO AS HE WANTS THE LETTER OF REBBECA SAMUEL 1791

THE FALLING AWAY of Jews from traditional religious practices in New York and Philadelphia was nothing compared to what was going on at this time in Petersburg, Virginia. The following extract is taken from two letters a Jewish wife and mother, Rebecca Samuel, wrote to her parents in Germany in 1791.

. . When the Jews of Philadelphia or New York hear the name Virginia, they get nasty. And they are not wrong! It won't do for a Jew. In the first place it is an unhealthful district, and we are only human. God forbid, if anything should happen to us, where would we be thrown? There is no cemetery in the whole of Virginia. In Richmond, which is twenty-two miles from here, there is a Jewish community consisting of two *minyanim*, [quorums] and the two cannot muster a quorum when needed.

You cannot imagine what kind of Jews they have here. They were all German itinerants who made a living by begging in Germany. They came to America during the war, as soldiers, and now they can't recognize themselves.

. . . Anyone can do as he wants. There is no rabbi in all of America to excommunicate anyone. . . Jew and Gentile are as one. There is no *galut* [exile] here. In New York and Philadelphia there

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is more *galut*. The reason is that there are too many German Gentiles and Jews there. The German Gentiles cannot forsake their anti-Jewish prejudice; and the German Jews cannot forsake their disgraceful conduct; and that's what makes the *galut*. **Stop. By her definition what should be the characteristics of galut of exile of diaspora. In your opinion how does the characteristics of exile effect the cohesiveness of Jewish communities?**

END HANDOUT

TALKING POINT THE PARADOX OF MINHAG AMERICA

2. What alteration of ancient Jewish traditions have you experienced, and how have they effected your Jewish identity.

On November 21, 1824 forty-seven lay members of Beth Elohim, S.C signed a petition requesting a number of reforms, including repeating Hebrew prayers in English, and English-language sermons.

How would you interpret their demand? What are they concerned with?

The petitioners were concerned about recent increases in Christian missionary activity towards Jews. They hoped these reforms would lead congregants to be more engaged with Judaism and less vulnerable to the missionaries.

When their request was rebuffed, the signatories formed the Reformed Society of Israelites.

They adopted a statement of principles based on Moses Maimonides's "Thirteen Articles of Faith", but with three major differences.

Do not provide these answers now- let learners unpack the Articles of Faith handout.

Resurrection of the dead was replaced with "immortality of the soul";

Restricted assertion of revelation: the Ten Commandments, rather than the entire Torah was affirmed as revealed;

Jewish messiah was replaced with an assertion that God alone was the only true Redeemer of the world.

LESSON 2 HANDOUT 2- ARTICLES OF FAITH ADOPTED BY REFORMED SOCIETY OF ISRAELITES FOUNDED IN CHARLESTON S.C. 1825

PREFACE.

As a proper introduction to those Prayers and Thanksgivings which a devout heart only should address to the Supreme Being, the following Articles of Faith are presented as the creed of "The Reformed Society of Israelites." Embracing as they do nothing doubtful or ceremonial, they consist simply of those religious axioms to which neither the bigot nor the latitudinarian can reasonably object, and which indeed cannot be rejected, without rejecting the divine origin of the moral law. They constitute all that is essential to faith in revealed religion. To believe them with a perfect conviction; to pursue that conduct through life to which they naturally lead, and which their spirit comprehends and enforces, is, we are persuaded, the only true path of life here on earth, and the only hope and prospect of happiness

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hereafter. It will be perceived in this part of the service which is respectfully submitted to the enlightened and pious Israelite, that the compilers have embraced only such portions of the prayers adopted by the Reformed Society as are deemed of immediate and pressing necessity. ...At a future period it is contemplated to present to the Israelites of the United States, a new and enlarged edition of the whole form of prayer, to include the service of Festivals, as well as such selections from the original Hebrew, as have been unavoidably omitted in the present work. Stop. Why the apology?

In laying down these Articles and this Form of Service, the compilers of the following Prayers for the Reformed Society of Israelites, do not presume to restrict the faith or conscience of any man. Let each one believe or reject what his heart and understanding (at once humbled and enlightened by Divine goodness) may rationally dictate to be believed or rejected. The compilers act only for themselves, for their children, and for all those who think the period has arrived, when the Jew should break in pieces the scepter of Rabbinical power, and assert his attribute as a free agent, obedient only to the laws of God, and responsible for his thoughts and actions to the merciful Creator alone.

ARTICLES OF FAITH.

I believe with a perfect faith, that God Almighty (blessed be his name!) is the Creator and Governor of all creation; and that he alone has made, does make, and will make all things.

I believe with a perfect faith, that the Creator, (blessed be his name! is only ONE IN UNITY; to which there is no resemblance; and that he alone has been, is, and will be God.

I believe with a perfect faith, that the Creator (blessed be his name!) is not corporeal, nor to be comprehended by any understanding capable of comprehending only what is corporeal; and that there is nothing like him in the universe.

I believe with a perfect faith, that the Creator (blessed be his name!) is the only true object of adoration, and that no other being whatsoever ought to be worshipped.

I believe with a perfect faith, that the soul of man is breathed into him by God, and is therefore immortal. (Changed from Maimonides)

I believe with a perfect faith, that the Creator (blessed be his name!) knows all things, and that he will reward those who observe his commands, and punish those who transgress them.

I believe with a perfect faith, that the laws of God, as delivered by Moses in the ten commandments, are the only true foundations of piety towards the Almighty and of morality among men. (Changed from Maimonides)

I believe with a perfect faith, that morality is essentially connected with religion, and that good faith towards all mankind, is among the most acceptable offerings to the Deity.

I believe with a perfect faith, that the love of God is the highest duty of his creatures, and that the pure and upright heart is the chosen temple of Jehovah.

I believe with a perfect faith, that the Creator (blessed be his name!) is the only true Redeemer of all his children, and that he will spread the worship of his name over the whole earth. (Changed from Maimonides)

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Maimonides Articles of Faith

God exists

God is one and unique

God is incorporeal

God is eternal

Prayer is to God only.

The prophets spoke truth.

Moses was the greatest of the prophets.

The Written and Oral Torah were given to Moses.

There will be no other Torah.

God knows the thoughts and deeds of men.

God will reward the good and punish the wicked.

The Messiah will come.

The dead will be resurrect

Stop. Why the changes? How do they reflect the new American Judaism? What alteration of ancient Jewish traditions have you experienced, and how have they effected your Jewish identity?

END HANDOUT

The Reformed Society of Israelites lasted about ten years before it dissolved; some members had moved away and others returned to Beth Elohim.

In the 1840s there was a major split in Congregation Beth Elohim, one which many historians of American Jewish history see as the beginning of the American Reform movement.

The conflict began after the introduction of an organ into the synagogue

The conflict between Reform and Traditionalist elements in Beth Elohim resulted in a complicated dispute between the President, who favored Reform, and the Board of Trustees, which was controlled by the Traditionalists.

The President refused to call the Board of Trustees to meet (as was required by the synagogue's constitution) because he knew they would admit new, traditionalist, members and obtain control of the congregation.

The Board ignored him and met on their own, a move which the Reformers challenged in court.

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The resulting case, *State v. Ancker*.

And while the court abstained from making its decision based on theological grounds, the remarks of the judge are of interest to us.

Essential question- What does this case “say” about the relationship between Judaism and our republic?

LESSON 2 HANDOUT 3 THE ORGAN CASE

Decision of the Court of Appeals in the Case of the State Ex Relatione

A. Ottolengui, vs. G. V. Ancker and Others.—Charleston, Feb. 1846.

Judge A. P. Butler.

delivering the opinion for the South Carolina Court of Appeals

Those who now, in the case before us, insist with most earnestness on a severe observance of ancient rites and forms, would hardly recognise or understand the same as they were practised by their remote ancestors who founded the Synagogue. The Minhag Sephardim was a ritual of Spanish origin, and although it may yet obtain, in different countries, yet how differently is it observed. If two Jewish congregations, one from Poland, and the other from Spain, were to be brought together, whilst professing to be governed by the same rituals, they would probably find themselves unable to understand each other in their observances of them. **Stop. As we read on think about what conditions made it acceptable for a non-Jewish judge to articulate, to analyze the practice of Judaism in America?**

As practised and observed in Charleston, in 1784, and for many years afterwards, exercises in Spanish were connected with it. They have been long since discontinued—long before the commencement of this controversy.

Religious rituals merely—not involving always essential principles of faith, will be modified to some extent by the influence of political institutions, of the countries in which they are practised. In a despotism where toleration is a sin to the prevailing religion, religious exercises will be conducted in secret, or in occult forms. Faith and doctrine may take refuge in these for safety.

On the contrary, in a country where toleration is not only allowed, but where perfect freedom of conscience is guaranteed by constitutional provisions, such devices will not be resorted to. Language itself is continually undergoing changes—clumsy expressions of rude language will give way to modern refinement. ...It is not surprising that those who have been accustomed to one form of expression, should have associations with it, that they could not have with another. And it is so of all religious forms and ceremonies.

The parties before us who are opposed to reform, contend that dangerous changes have been made in the form of their worship, particularly as it respects the introduction of instrumental music. It is not pretended but that the organ, the instrument complained of, was introduced by the constituted authorities; but the ground taken is, that this authority has been exercised to do that which is against the provisions of the charter, which guarantees that the Minhag Sephardim should be a ritual of the congregation, and that it did not allow of instrumental music as a part of it. The objection is to the mere form in which music is used and practised in this congregation.

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I suppose it might be admitted, that, in its origin, such a ritual was practised without the aid of instrumental accompaniment;—but to suppose that the exact kind of music that was to be used in all future time had been fixed and agreed upon by the Jewish worshippers who obtained this charter, would be to attribute to them an impracticable undertaking.

That such music was not used, is certain;—but that it might not, in the progress of human events, be adopted, would be an attempt to anticipate the decision of posterity on matters that must be affected by the progress of art, and the general tone of society—and which could not be controlled by arbitrary limitation.

...These questions respect the resignation of twenty-two of the Respondents, and the readmission, or election, of themselves and twenty-three others. Twenty-two had been members of the congregation, and had a right to all the privileges and immunities of the Corporation.

END OF HANDOUT

LESSON 3 – A NEW WORLD PART 1

Talking Points 1 Westward Ho

There were No rabbis who lived or worked regularly in the United States until 1840, so for almost 200 years, congregations relied entirely on lay leadership. And even after 1840 many Jewish communities worshipped without a rabbi.

LESSON 3 HANDOUT 1A LETTER TO THE AMERICAN ISRAELITES EUREKA NEVADA AUGUST 20, 1875:

We had one of those self-styled "Rabbis" up here last year—a sleek Pollack, utterly ignorant of the German language, and speaking but a miserable English. This man advertised as follows in our local paper:

"The Rev. Dr. will deliver a lecture on the first day of Rosh Hashanah."

The Christian public were respectfully invited **Stop. What was it about America that triggered this invitation?** Of course such a thing being a novelty in our town, the place of Jewish worship, the Masonic Hall, was attended by several Christian ministers, lawyers and the editor of the *Eureka Sentinel*, in anticipation of listening to perhaps the first Jewish religious lecture they ever heard. I sincerely hope it may be the last; for such a rhapsody of unintelligible English, intermixed with Polish-German (Yiddish) and Hebrew sentences, never before assailed human understanding.

Well, sir, the Jews were utterly confounded with shame, and we were exceedingly glad when the Christian portion of our audience left the room—in disgust. The pretenders to the

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sacred title of "Rabbi" are generally also "Chazans," Shochets," and "Mohels," in fact, "Jack of all trades," and in nine cases out of ten perfect frauds in every one of these sacred callings.

Our last year's reverend fraud struck a perfect bonanza in our town. Mr. G. had four sons upon whom the rite of circumcision had never been performed, Mr. L. had one boy in the same fix, and Mr. K.—his first born was just a few days old, so that besides the handsome sum—far beyond his merits—which the man received from the Jewish community, he officiated as Mohel in the several cases named, and received in gold from Mr. G. \$100, from Mr. L. \$25 and from Mr. K. \$25.

But this pious extortionist was not content, especially in the case of Mr. G's children, and exacted \$25 more, which Mr. G. paid just to get rid of him. The job was a slovenly one, as the children suffered great pain for nearly two months after the operation and every one of these children— though not really injured—are more or less disfigured.

Such then are many of the guides and teachers in Israel. ...

A Regular Reader

END HANDOUT

But, in virtually every sizeable community, Jews built a mikveh (ritual bath), established the means to obtain kosher meat through a shochet (ritual slaughterer), and created synagogues as soon as they had the ability to do so.

The non-conformity of the individual Jew since the American Revolution, resulted in increasing intermarriages, frequent violations of the Sabbath, and laxity in the strict observance of the dietary laws



In line with the standard method employed by synagogues in Europe local synagogue leaders insisted on the right to tax all Jewish residents in the area, and then to impose penalties on all who failed to pay.

But, unlike in Europe where authority over Jewish communities was sanctioned and authorized by the state In America authority applied only to a specific synagogue. **Stop How do you feel about this reality, which still prevails in the non-ultra Orthodox *haredi* Jewish world today?**

Any Jew who disregarded Jewish law would be expelled of membership, including burial in the cemetery.

Jews that disagreed a particular synagogue's rules could leave and establish their own synagogue. Or they could shoot it out.

LESSON 3 HANDOUT 2 JEWS IN THE WILD WEST 1880

The Daily Standard of Portland, Oregon,

PASTORAL RELATIONS

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How Rabbi May And Brother Waldman Serve The Lord.

Friday morning at 9:30 the hilarious pop of the little pistol was heard on Front Street. People who rushed in that direction saw the Rev. Rabbi [M.] May and Mr. [A.] Waldman, of Beck & Waldman, engaged in a melee which resulted something in this style: The Rabbi shot twice at Waldman, and tore a piece out of his coat, and came near killing an honest man, and Mr. Waldman put a pair of beautiful rings about the Rabbi's eyes....

It seems that while Rabbi May and [a] Mr. May, of Hexter & May, were standing on the street engaged in a close conversation. Mr. Waldman walked up to them, unnoticed by either and, grabbing the Rabbi by the coat collar, struck him two severe blows in the face, smashing his spectacles and injuring him severely. The Rabbi then dived for this temporal ammunition and fired at Waldman twice ... He was then knocked down by Mr. Morris Isaacs, and he voluntarily threw his pistol into the store of Hexter & May. Waldman then bounced [pounced] on his adversary and administered a severe castigation before they could be separated....

Waldman ... a well known and highly respected citizen ... was arrested in the afternoon by Constable Sprague and taken before Judge Bybee and fined for assault, but, as far as can be learned, Rabbi May was not molested.

A reporter of the Daily Standard visited both parties and obtained their statements.

Waldman said "that for a long time trouble had been brewing in the congregation over the doings of the Rabbi, who was not only deficient mentally, but also morally, and who would have long ago been kicked out of his charge but for the sympathy which was expressed for his family . . ." He added: "It is reported, though I cannot vouch for its truth, that the Rabbi fired at his wife one day, indeed, the marks of the bullet can be seen in his own house . . ."

May told the reporter that "he was called a liar by Mr. Waldman ... received an anonymous letter threatening that he would be killed with the same pistol which an evil and false report said he had once fired at his own wife He added: "In religious matters Waldman annoyed him continually, interfering with him and wishing to teach the religion of Waldman instead of that of Moses [May?], and because he did not, has been trying to ruin him by setting adrift reports about the moral standing, which the Rabbi characterized as false, shameful, and hollow."

Concerning the altercation, May said that while engaged in conversation with a friend he was grabbed roughly from behind and received two terrible blows in his eyes. His glasses were smashed. Not knowing who assailed him, he drew his pistol and dazed and blinded, fired in the direction of the blows.

I would have killed if I could," said the Rabbi, "and would have done so to even my father or brother had they treated me as this man Waldman did...."

END HANDOUT

This freedom was not available to dissenters in Europe where governments mandated and recognized an official Jewish community to regulate all Jewish affairs.

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Two examples of the Uniquely American relationship of the Jewish Community with its non-Jewish neighbors follows. A. is a letter written in the 19th Century by Jews of Hendersonville North Carolina. It reflects the centrality that houses of worship played in defining the American culture and the effort of Jews to join this culture. Even more interesting is an article printed in the New York Herald, July 22, 1872

LESSON 3 HANDOUT 3 HANDOUT 3 AGUDATH ISRAEL N.C LOOKING FOR SPPORT TO HIRE RABBI

Agudath Israel Congregation

Hendersonville , North Carolina

Dear Friend:

We are making an effort to erect a synagogue in the City of Hendersonville and for that purpose the residents of Jewish Faith have given to their utmost ability; tut, inasmuch as the Jewish community is small, we have been unable to realize an amount sufficient to meet the cost of "buying the site and" erecting thereon a synagogue.

The majority of the non-Jews in this community are under the impression that we have no religion of any kind owing to the fact that we have no permanent place in which to worship, and we have "been unable to reply satisfactorily to the question constantly asked, by them with reference to our religion. This situation is very embarrassing to us, and in order to hold the esteem of the non-Jews of the community, we must have a suitable edifice for religious worship, and we are therefore reluctantly appealing to our friends, regardless of their religion whether Jew or Gentile, to assist us by their contributions in erecting a synagogue, which in itself will establish our place in the community. **Stop. What changed? why wouldn't this letter be written today?**

We have acquired, by purchase a splendid lot, and it is for the purpose of erecting a synagogue that we appeal to you for assistance, and we want to assure you that it was as a last resort, after fully realizing that without outside help we could not bring this to a successful conclusion, that we determined upon this step.

We sincerely trust that our appeal will meet with your prompt and earnest approval; and we assure you that your contribution will be highly appreciated and will be given due credit upon our records.

Very sincerely yours,

A. LEWIS, of Lewis' Department Store, H. PATTERSON, of Patterson's Department Store, A. KANTROWITZ, of The Hub Shoe Store, LOUIS SHERMAN, of Sherman's Sporting Goods Store, N. BRENNER, of Erenner-Penny' s Department Store.

P. S.--Donations may be sent to any member of the above firms.

END HANDOUT

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LESSON 3 HANDOUT 4 RABBINIC EDUCATION, NEW YORK HERALD 1872

ON RABBINICAL EDUCATION

Editorial, "Hebrew Rabbinical Education,"

The New York Herald, July 22, 1872

The herald some time ago was the first to call the attention of the Israelites of this city and of the country to their great need of English speaking rabbis and preachers. The Jewish press took some notice of our article at the time and commented upon it—some favorably and some otherwise.² The editors and their patrons thought they were pretty well off because three of their largest and finest synagogues and most wealthy and flourishing congregations in this city were supplied with English preaching. They rested there, and though more than a year has elapsed nothing has been done and no effort has been made to supply this want any further. But the leaven has been working ever since, and now, when an emergency has arrived, the Jewish press re-echoes our cry of need, and the *Messenger* for last week has a couple of doleful articles on the subject. The two leading synagogues of the city, and indeed of the country, are liable to be, and one is certain to be, deprived of English preaching after the end of this year. The Rev. Dr. Gutheim has resigned his position as English preacher in the Temple Emanuel, Fifth avenue, and has re-engaged with the congregation whom he served in New Orleans before he came to New York.⁴ The Temple congregation have been advertising for a successor for a couple of months past; but, as yet, have not found one. And now the Congregation B'nai Jeshurun in Thirty-fourth street, second only to the Temple in size, numbers and influence, are looking for a preacher to succeed the eloquent Dr. Vidaver. And where are those congregations to look for the men they need? Not to America, for they are not here. The Jewish Messenger utters the sad lamentation that "there is not a single Jewish pulpit in America occupied by a minister instructed on our soil." And should Dr. Vidaver leave the city there would then be but one English speaking rabbi left among us—namely, Rev. S. M. Isaacs, of Forty-fourth street synagogue.

Nor can the congregations look to England for the supply which they so greatly need, since the Messenger, which ought to be good authority, asserts that "there is no seminary in Europe which can furnish ministers capable of supplying the American Jewish pulpit." And yet the Israelites of this country have known, or they might have known these many years, that just such a time as the present would come upon them, but they made comparatively no provision against it. A few years ago, it is true, they established the Maimonides College in Philadelphia; but it has never received any support worthy of the cause or of American Hebrew wealth, and to-day it is reported in a languishing condition, with just three students in it.⁷ And the extremity becomes more alarming when we consider that this is the only Jewish rabbinical college in the country.

Looking away from our own metropolis, which can command at best but three English speaking rabbis, how many do we find elsewhere in the United States? In Cincinnati there are Drs. [Isaac Mayer] Wise and [Max] Lilienthal, radical reformers; in Philadelphia there is Rev. Mr. Jacobs, and in New Orleans his brother, Canadians, and consequently speaking English fluently enough;⁸ and in Evansville, Ind., Rev.

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George Brown, who has given up the professions of law and medicine and taken to the pulpit. These, so far as we can ascertain, are all the English speaking rabbis in the United States. But what are they among so many? The difficulty hitherto has been in supposing that American Jews would remain forever content to study Hebrew and German for the sake of worshipping God in those languages. It was a great mistake, and its fruits are but just appearing. Far easier would it have been to have educated one hundred ministers in English than one hundred thousand people in German and Hebrew. Israelites born on American soil cannot be expected to have as much sympathy as their fathers with those languages, nor with European nationalities and ideas; and to maintain Judaism in America something more than a mere recitation of prayers in Hebrew and German is necessary. The people now are much more intelligent than they were a century or half a century ago, and any religious system that keeps not up with the progressive spirit of the age must expect to meet just such crises as this in which the Jewish Church in America now finds itself. **Stop. How would this play out today given the increasing number of interfaith marriages? This dilemma is a quintessential example of Judaism's conflicting values- the espousal of progressive/liberal universal values and the preservation of Judaism's unique distinction from other people/nations. What is your reaction to the sentence Far easier would it have been to have educated one hundred ministers in English than one hundred thousand people in German and Hebrew ?** The rising generations demand a form of religion which their hearts can appreciate and hold fast to, though they ask for no change in the true spirit of religion at all; and it is the attempt to confine them within the iron bands of the systems of bygone ages that has produced that result which the Hebrew press so generally and so frequently lament—namely, that the young Israelites do not manifest that love for the synagogue which their fathers and forefathers showed. Rightly understood this very religious indisposition is a sign of progress which calls loudly and earnestly on the Jewish Church to furnish such spiritual food as young American souls can digest. Give them religious as well as secular instruction in their vernacular, and there will not be much cause to complain of empty pews and neglected synagogues. We make no such mistakes anywhere as in religion, and nowhere so frequently as there; and yet there is nothing so important for a people or a nation as religious instruction brought within their comprehension, and designed in its precepts and practice to ennoble and elevate them. The synagogues of this city that have the largest and best congregations at all times are those that have English preaching. In the matter of architecture the Jews are leading all other religionists here, but in ritual, and in religious instruction in English they have not kept equal pace with others. It would be a great loss to New York if Drs. Gutheim and Vidaver should both leave us. Their ministrations, * as we have shown, cannot be easily supplied, and their services should be correspondingly appreciated.

END HANDOUT

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Talking Point 2 the end of denominational homogeneity

The basic denominational homogeneity of the American Jewish community did not last.

Increasingly in late 18th and into the 19th Centuries it was the German Jews that defined Jewish religious practice in America.

They were of higher income levels and tended to identify themselves as Germans.

They also brought with them a desire to practice Judaism as they did in Germany.

A modernized Jewish worship style that was already in conflict with traditional Judaism

LESSON 4 A NEW WORLD PART 2

Handouts 5, 6, 7 and 8 bring into sharp focus the tension that exists between a Jewish religion that is increasingly seeking to accommodate the host American culture and a traditional religion that seeks to maintain a sharp distinction between Jewish and American cultures. .

LESSON 4 HANDOUT 1 REFORM AGAINST ORTHODOX 1885 - ..

ORTHODOXY AND REFORM

THE CONTROVERSY BETWEEN RABBIS KOHUT AND KOHLER.

WHAT THE TWO GENTLEMEN HAVE TO SAY

REGARDING THE NEW AND OLD IDEAS OF JUDAISM.

The controversy between Dr. Alexander Kohut successor to the late Dr. Huebsch, of the Congregation Ahavath Chesed, who is a strong advocate of orthodox Judaism, and Rabbi Kohler, of Temple Beth-El, who is a warm supporter of the Reform doctrine of the ancient religion, continues highly spirited. Dr. Kohler's remarks in his last discourse were responded to yesterday by Dr. Kohut (Orthodox) at the temple, Lexington Avenue and Fifty-fifth-street. "We cannot all be authorities" remarked Rabbi Kohut yesterday. "No one is privileged to say for himself I am the authority and I alone. Our ancient believers had some very great and prominent men, and should we not, in this nineteenth century, follow the doctrines which they laid down for us in the Talmud? Rabbi Gottheil, an advocate of Orthodox Judaism, wrote to a weekly paper that "now that Dr. Huebsch is dead he is already forgotten, and the congregation over which Dr. Kohut presides is depreciated. "This," remarked Dr. Kohut, indignantly "is not at all nice of a brother Rabbi. The story appeared not only against me, but against my congregation. Dr. Gotthoil is undoubtedly ignorant of my knowledge. Why don't my distinguished colleague attend to his own why does he interfere with me? While I have the highest regard for him I think it is improper to write about me in such a manner. But I warned my congregation to look at him pleasantly, as I believed he only wanted to remind me of my duty, for which I have no ill feelings toward him."

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The Rev. Dr. Kohler (Reform) said yesterday that Dr. Kohut came here with the name of an excellent scholar and a successor to the late Dr. Huebsch." the people" said Dr. Kohler, "did not know what position he would take. whether of Reform or Orthodoxy. The adherents of the Congregation Ahavath Chesed trumpeted the name and learning of Dr. Kohut to an extent that everyone was anxious to hear what position he would take. Dr. Huebsch took an intermediate and conciliatory standpoint. Coming from a country where Reform is barely known and orthodoxy has a still greater antagonist in a kind of superstitious orthodoxy (Hasidim), Clinging more to the mystics, he felt that he was advanced enough in simply discarding the excrescences of the 'mystics, While all the more clinging to the tenets and practices of rabbinical Judaism. He then declared from the pulpit, and it was repeated in the press, that anyone who on principle discards and disregards any ordinance of Mosaic rabbinical Judaism has ceased to be a Jew.

"Of course this was a challenge to reform," continued the reverend gentleman Rabbi Kohler, "and I felt that my own right or existence was jeopardized by this declaration. While on the one hand, I am a personal friend of Dr. Kohut's, honoring and admiring him as a scholar, and as a sincere and honest representative of conservative Judaism, I still felt that I could not keep silent at this kind of anathema, and had he been my own brother I would not have been silent. So I delivered a series of discourses on the question whether we shall go backward or forward, in which I dwelt on the right of reform, and what reform did for modern Judaism in this age, and especially in this country. In these discourses I defended my view, and Dr. Kohut responded each time from the pulpit at his temple each with mutual recognition of the views and personal qualities of his opponent." Can you explain what are the chief difference between orthodoxy and reform? Dr. Kohler was asked. "Orthodoxy," he replied, "simply observes all the laws as they are written down in the Pentateuch' (five books of Moses) on diet, purity, and others. While those laws which refer to the sacrifice, temple, priesthood, and Holy Land are simply considered as suspended until the time comes when the messiah, or Jewish King, shall take possession of the land. So orthodoxy expects restoration of the whole law. Besides, Rabbinical Judaism has added a great many new restrictions and laws, as for example the adding of an extra day to each festival. It has also made the Sabbath day a time when one should not be allowed to write, nor even to eat newly bought food, because it might have been plucked that same day. Now Reform says that these laws of Moses, as far as they are of a mere ceremonial character and not moral and perpetual statutes, are subject to change. They have only a temporary character. As regards the 'Messiah,' we don't believe in a personal 'messiah, but in a Messianic time of human brotherhood. Nor do we believe in any of the Levitical laws. We believe in the worship of one God all over the world. "As in regard dietary laws" the rabbi continued "they were given at an age when priests of different nations, heathens principally, thought they could abstain from certain meat as being unclean. The origin can be traced back to the belief of the signs of each tribe declaring a certain animal forbidden. These laws have no more significance for us and we dropped them, as they interfered with us in our intercourse and social duties in general. Pork and oysters are forbidden in orthodoxy as unclean. I do not think that to eat oysters or pork is a sin that can in any way compare with lying or cheating. I plead for pork and oysters and I don't see any religion either in eating them or abstaining from eating them. **Stop. This is a critical question. In your mind where is the boundary that if crossed puts the survival of American Judaism at risk?**

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I hold that orthodox people do bold moral laws supreme, even if orthodoxy as a system lays more stress on ritualism. Furthermore, if such notions are expressed in old Talmudic literature we had better own these shortcomings and drop erroneous conceptions. honoring all the more the past for the truth it has bequeathed to us."

Stop. Why do you think the NYT choose to publish this article? What does it say of the influence this American icon is trying to exert on its Jewish readers and why?

The New York Times Published: June 28, 1885

END HANDOUT

In America where Jews were seen by and large as fellow citizens they felt that they required a new kind of rabbi. A rabbi willing to view the Diaspora, America, as a blessing, not a curse. For many of them Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise was just such a rabbi. He instituted some minor changes in ritual and established a mixed synagogue choir. He was not a rigorous ideologue, he advocated a moderate version of Reform Judaism. His aim was to create a unified American Jewish community.

In 1857, he published Minhag Amerika, a prayer book designed to create a common liturgy for Jews across the country. For the first time the Reform prayer book included hymns specifically intended to convey a reverence to America

LESSON 4 HANDOUT 3 ISAAC MAYER WISE

The Jew must be Americanized, I said to myself, for every German book, every German word reminds him of the old disgrace. If he continues under German influences as they are now in this country, he must become either a bigot an atheist, or a tyrant. He will never be aroused to self-consciousness or to independent thought. The Jew must become an American, in order to gain the proud self-consciousness of the free-born man. From that hour I began to Americanize with all my might, and was as enthusiastic for this as I was for reform. We must be not only American citizens, but become Americans through and through outside of the synagogue. **Stop. How influential has Wise's philosophy been on your self-consciousness of American Judaism today?**

This was my cry then and many years thereafter. This, too, increased the hatred of my opponents considerably. "But, if I succeed in Americanizing my co-religionists, will not Judaism disappear in Americanism," I asked myself. This must be counteracted by a better knowledge of Jewish history and Jewish sources. My conviction was that a Jewish patriotism, a pride in being a Jew, must be aroused; for this it was that the Jew had lost in the ages of oppression. The all-important question now forced itself—how? The means to Americanize were easy to find and apply; the means to Judaize were, however, not so apparent. I was convinced that I had to emphasize strongly the historical mission of Israel in all my speeches and writings, in order to arouse a consecrated self-consciousness. To arouse in them Jewish patriotism, for there could be no doubt that they would Americanize themselves.

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END HANDOUT

LESSON 4 HANDOUT 3 SPACIOUS SKY

SABBATH SONGS CONGREGATIONAL SINGING

ADAPTED FROM THE UNION HYMNAL (Central Conference of American Rabbis)

O BEAUTIFUL FOR SPACIOUS SKIES (No. 262)

O beautiful for spacious skies, For amber waves of grain, For purple mountain majesties Above the fruited plain! America! America!

God shed his grace on thee,

And crown thy good with brotherhood

From sea to shining sea.

O beautiful for pilgrim feet, Whose stern, impassioned stress, A thoroughfare for freedom beat Across the wilderness! America! America!

God mend thine ev'ry flaw, Confirm thy soul in self-control, Thy liberty in law!

O beautiful for patriot dream That sees beyond the years, Thine alabaster cities gleam, Undimmed by human tears! America! America!

God shed his grace on thee,

And crown thy good with brotherhood

From sea to shining sea.

END HANDOUT

Mordechai Kaplan is emblematic of the complex relationship between Jewish and American cultures and how it effects the practice of Judaism in our time.

I think that he is the quintessential example of the uniqueness of American Judaism, **operating under the influence of American cultural values and norms!** The question always is "Is this good for the Jews?"

Some biographical facts- Mordecai Menahem Kaplan (June 11, 1881 – November 8, 1983), was a rabbi, essayist and Jewish educator and the co-founder of Reconstructionist Judaism. Reconstructionist Judaism is centered on the "concept of Judaism as a civilization". Kaplan's conception of God is naturalistic, no supernatural acts no miracles - a radically new perception of God by a Jewish theologian This was not acceptable at JTS (Jewish Theological Seminary which trains conservative Rabbis). Where Kaplan was a prominent teacher. In 1945 the Union of Orthodox Rabbis formally assembled to excommunicate from Judaism what it deemed to be the community's most heretical voice. The herem (excommunication) epitomized the ideals of the Old World. It was used it as an attempt to regain control of New York's Jews by a centralized rabbinic authority To illustrate that the European system still worked quite well in America. But in America, there was no court of Jewish law to which all Jews turned, There was no way

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even to enforce the decree. Kaplan composed a siddur called *The Sabbath Prayer Book* because he felt that Jews did not feel at peace in a traditional prayer setting and were alienated by the service. He created what he believed to be a means to bring people to the synagogue. The siddur eliminated references to several doctrines: Jews as the chosen people, the personal Messiah, a supernatural God who has a role in daily life, divine retribution, and the restoration of the Temple sacrificial cult.

In the Siddur Kaplan emphasized the American experience of prayer, including prayers and entire services for holidays such as Memorial Day, Independence Day, and Thanksgiving.

He promoted his vision for living as "cultural hyphenates"—to be an American Jew was to live both as a citizen of the American civilization and the Jewish civilization.

LESSON 4 HANDOUT 4 KAPLAN'S THE SABBATH HANDBOOK FOR INDEPENDENCE DAY

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

On the fourth of July, in the year 1776, a new nation was born, the United States of America, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. The faith and vision of the Founding Fathers are expressed in a solemn Declaration of Independence. That Declaration set forth the principles which moved them to establish the former British colonies as an independent union of states.

It is well that on the anniversary of this event we be reminded of the spiritual foundations of our Republic, and that we renew from year to year our allegiance to them. Let us then rise and listen to the words of that epoch-making Declaration:

The Congregation rise.

"We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. . . .

The Congregation are seated.

THAT AMERICA FULFILL THE PROMISE OF ITS FOUNDING

O God, who art Liberator and Redeemer, Lawgiver and Judge, who rulest over all mankind and presidest over the destinies of nations, we invoke Thy continued blessing on our Republic, which Thy grace called into being, and Thy love has sustained to this day.

May America remain loyal to the principles of the Declaration of Independence, and extend their application to ever widening areas of life.

Keep out of our life all manner of oppression, persecution, and unjust discrimination; save us from religious, racial and class conflicts; may our country be a haven of refuge to the victims of injustice and misrule.

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Instruct us in the art of living together, of reconciling differences of opinion and averting clashes of interest, of helping one another to achieve a harmonious and abundant life.

Give us the wisdom to elect to leadership capable, conscientious men, men of integrity who will govern our people according to Thy law of righteousness.

Bless Thou the enterprise of the American people, that they may utilize the natural resources of the land for the highest good of all men. May America be ever hospitable to new revelations of truth in science and philosophy, ever sensitive to the appeal of beauty in nature and art, ever responsive to the call of duty and the spirit of religious consecration and worship;

And may Americans so love their country that they shall withhold no sacrifice required to safeguard its life and to fulfill its promise;

That the Star-Spangled Banner, the symbol of our American democracy, may ever wave o'er the land of the free and the home of the brave. **Stop. How do you feel when you read this prayer? How would you feel if your synagogue adapted this worship service and why would you feel that way?**

The Congregation rise and sing the National Anthem.

Talking point 3 Tikkun Olam

There is a Jewish religious phenomenon called Tikkun Olam. It represents a recent example of how American culture/religion influenced Judaism, and more specifically Reform Judaism.

The concept of tikkun olam, repairing the world, originated in the early rabbinic period.

It is used in the Mishnah to indicate that a practice should be followed not because it is required by Biblical law, but because it helps avoid social disharmony.

Lurianic Kabbalah, re-defined tikkun olam in the 16th Century. Very Briefly, Rabbi Luria (Ha'Ari Ha'Kadosh) believed that prayer and ritual action can direct and control spiritual forces including tikkun olam, the restore of the presence of Divine light.

Today the term enjoys wide circulation in the American Jewish world

Especially in the Reform denomination that equates tikkun olam with social justice.

It came into use during a period of great religious renewal at the beginning of the 20th Century.

A movement, for which the Protestant social justice movement served as the template.

Christian preachers, men like Walter Rauschenbusch preached that the true mission of Christianity is the humanization of society.

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He stated that, "The church is not ;primarily an instrument to insure the afterlife salvation of the individual, but must focus on the correction of social abuses and the amelioration of social ills".

The pronouncements of the Social Gospel influenced many Reform rabbis to proclaim a similar mission which they called tikkun olam. The re-defining of Reform Judaism was also prompted by the tidal wave of East European Jewish immigrants which began after 1881, inundated the Jewish community.

It transformed the confident Reform majority into a defensive minority. The movement felt compelled to recreate itself in a manner that would energize its congregants and foster a Reform enthusiasm intimately linked to the promotion of social justice. The Rabbi most responsible for introducing the concept of tikkun olam to Judaism was the Emil Gustav Hirsch (1880-1923). Hirsch insisted that Judaism upholds an aggressive ethical ideal, completely opposed to the traditional Christian ideal of non-resistance to evil. Hirsch insisted that the special mission of the Jews is tikkun olam. And the mission is an entirely naturalistic one. Israel, he expounded, serves to prick the conscience of humanity.

LESSON 4 HANOUT 5 EMIL HIRSCH NY TIMES DEC. 10, 1900

Judaism has never been a religion of dogma. The Jew has the right to think out the highest themes of life in terms of his own. His religion has the elements of the un-dogmatic religion for which the world is craving, the focus of which is not solely the next life, but this life in which we are now living. It is the religion that bridges the social chasm between man and man; it is the one that goes to the outcast and brings him consolation. The storm center of religious activity is no longer theology, but sociology, which means that religion shall not only be a bridge from this life to the next, but a bridge from the heights to the lowliness's of the present life. **Stop. Knowing the Hirsch was under the influence of the Christian Social Gospel how do you feel about this statement. Once again Judaism is reacting to the influence of American culture – what is your reaction?**

Judaism is this religion and always has been. Look through your old Bible. Is not the sense of responsibility placed on this life rather than on a future state? Some say that this very thing is the weakness of our sect but I say that it is our strength. Judaism never separated the secular from the sacred; everything is sacred. Judaism was never a religion of sighing, singing, emotions. bowed heads, and sad faces.. nor is it a religion of yearnings for God, as though He were an awaited bridegroom for whom a woman has been on the look-out through many years.

In the Middle Ages every center of our people was a center of social responsibilities and nobody had to teach us that man should care for his brother. But altruism may be carried to extremes. There is a middle ground between the extreme love of others and of self, and Judaism is this middle ground. **Stop. How do you understand this statement?**

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He is the loyal Jew who strives to make righteousness real in all the relations of man to man.

The Pittsburgh Platform 1885.

Eighth: In full accordance with the spirit of Mosaic legislation which strives to regulate the relation between rich and poor, we deem it our duty to participate in the great task of modern times, to solve on the basis of justice and righteousness the problems presented by the contrasts and evils of the present organization of society

END HANDOUT

LESSON 5 THE PHENOMENON OF THE JEWISH GANGSTER

Talking Point 1 Embarrassing the uptown crowd

There are two business enterprise that are particularly American and with which Jews have been and are now associated. Their involvement in gangsterism and in the Hollywood movie industry sparked the imagination of Americans. The Jewish villains and heroes are subjects of books and films.

Without doubt the Jews were both influenced by and have influenced these legal and illegal enterprises.

The business of gangsterism was pervasive in the culture of Eastern Jews that arrived in America between 1881 and 1924. The Jewish criminal was both an embarrassment and a threat to the well-established American German and Sephardic Jews.

The incidence of crime and vice down there had gotten out of hand, had indeed reached scandalous dimensions. The crisis demanded an extreme response.

In August 1912 a group of influential New York City German-American Jews hired Abe Schonfeld to undertake an important and highly confidential assignment. They wanted him to head a team of private investigators who would check out and report on the criminals and vice lords of the city's great Jewish quarter, the Lower East Side.

Schonfeld sent to his employers a list of the "habitués" of Segal's Cafe.

LESSON 5 HANDOUT 1 ABE SCHONFELD REPORT

Patsy Keegan—gun pipe fiend—mack (pimp).

Sadie Chink—ex-prostitute—owner disorderly house.

Aaron Horlig alias *Big Aleck*—50% owner.

Louis Segal alias *Little Segal*—50% owner.

Charlie Auerbach—mack—strike breaker—life taker.

Little Carl—right name *Carl Hudis* alias *Harry Cohen*—gun-mack. *Bockso*—gun.

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Charles Pearlstein alias *Kopki*—mack—strike breaker—door- man.

Keever alias *Little Keever*—mack-gun—gunman-strong-arm. *McKinley*—gun and mack.

Mendel—gun. *Lhulki*—gun.

Whitey Lewis —indicted and convicted—Rosenthal Affair.

Lefty Louis—indicted and convicted—Rosenthal Affair.

Jack Zelig—recently murdered.

Dopey Benny—guerilla—life taker.

Benny—guerilla—life taker.

Valinsky—gun—brother to Harry Vallon of Rosenthal Fame.

Little Mikie Newman—gangster.

Louis Cruller— alias *Little Cruller*— *gun and mack*.

Candy Kid Phil—gun.

Sam Boston—gambler—owner—former fagin—fence—commission better. His wife a pickpocket. *Meyer Boston*—same as his brother *Sam*—their right names are *Meyer & Sam Solomon*.

Crazy Jake—gun.

Bennie Greenie—gun.

Harry Goldberg—gun.

Markey English—gun.

Bobby Mendelsohn—mack.

Little Natie—(not the one from Broome St.)—gun. Right family name is Lubin being related to Lubin the Philadelphia Moving Film Company.

Charlie Whitey—mack and strike breaker.

Dinah Hudis—prostitute. Her mack is *Little Carl*.

Jennie Morris alias *Jennie The Factory*—former prostitute and at present disorderly house owner. Her mack is *Harry Morris*. Owner 249 Broome Street.

Bessie London—right name is *Mrs. Meyer Solomon*—her husband is *Meyer Boston*—best gun-mol in the world.

Tillie Gold—right name *Mrs. Sam Solomon*—her husband is Sam Boston—a *gun-mol* from Bessie London's School.

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Tillie Finkelstein—gun-mol from Bessie London's School married to *Candy Kid Phil*—do not know his family name.

Birdie Pomerantz—gun-mol—married to *Philly Furst*, a gun, now out of town working the rattlers and shorts and towns out west. ^

END HANDOUT

What had brought about such a deep-rooted and pervasive underworld culture was poverty and the societal stress that accompanies it. What is different about the Jewish criminal culture in the Lower East Side and in other American cities where Jews lived in poverty is that unlike the circumstance in the old world where poor Jewish communities lived in isolation and apart from their host societies in America Jews were bound up with—rather than distinguished from— the community in general!

In America Jews could become one with a multi-national community. This is a uniquely American phenomenon exerting influence on a Jewish culture. It is a product of an American culture whose greatest values are freedom, equality and the separation of Church and state. **Stop, what do you think of this explanation?** The Jewish American gangsters, in spite of the damage they inflicted on the Jewish community, became a Jewish mythological figure.

The Jewish gangsters and boxers in the pre-World War II era were seen as tougher, more aggressive role models, which freed Jews from the dominant stereotypes of cowardice, pacifism, intellectualism and professional legitimacy.

The stigma of defenselessness and powerlessness associated with Jews, compared with the physical aggressiveness and lawlessness more associated with the Irish and Italian immigrants, began to disappear. **Stop. Was this in fact the case. How would you describe your "relationship" to the American Jewish mobster. Once again, what was it about American culture that fostered this mythology?**

Talking point 2 The Mafia as an equal opportunity employer

Jews and Italians willingly entered a consortium that embraced the principle of a rational sense of community, of enlightened self-interest. They placed their ambition ahead of ethnocentrism or any other kind of insular loyalty. **Stop What other circumstances in the world can benefit from this**

ideology? Lucky Luciano summed it up best when he said "To me, the whole thing was a matter of organizin' a business." This new syndicated gangsterism produced tensions and conflicts of its own.

This was especially so in the Italian community where traditional values, rural and semi-feudal in origin, were slow to yield to the forces of modernity. Lucky Luciano and Frank Costello support of multi-ethnic criminal alliances encountered bitter opposition for consorting with Jews.

It came from the older generation of gangsters. As the younger generation, or rather its avant-garde (Luciano and Costello being archetypes here), came into its own, it adopted a rational businesslike approach to crime, developing the sense of community it looked upon the older generation with contempt and disdain. it became necessary to remove the old Italian mobsters.

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This burgeoning conflict between generations of Italian gangsters was not a family affair: it certainly involved Jews. And it involved them as active and violent participants. As far as the Jewish underworld was concerned the triumph of the old world Mustache Petes, as they were called, would be a disaster. All the attempts to form a community of interests between like-minded, rationally disposed gang/syndicates would be for stopped. They had an investment in keeping Luciano and the other young Italian Turks alive and well. Meyer Lansky and Bugsy Siegel, who were especially close to Luciano and they worked out a plan of attack. They hand-picked six of the best Jewish gunsels in the business, chief among them one Samuel "Red" Levine, a Toledo-born professional (he was strictly Orthodox: wore a skullcap and never slaughtered on the Sabbath if he could help it), none of whom were known to Maranzano, the mafia boss that was firm in his opposition to do business with Jews. And to his bodyguards. The killers were well coached about the layout of the killing site. On the afternoon of September 10, 1931, five men knocked on the door of Maranzano's midtown New York office. The men showed their "badges", it seemed to be a routine raid by federal alcohol agents. They were led to Maranzano who was surrounded by his bodyguards. When the bogus agents ordered the gangsters to raise their hands and face the wall.. Maranzano stepped forward and protested his innocence, claiming he had no contraband and challenging the agents to search the premises. He led a few of them into his inner office. There he was slain after putting up a fierce struggle. His bodyguards, who were still being covered, were unable to help him. The killers ran down the stairs and leaped into waiting cars and disappeared.

LESSON 5 HANDOUT 2 THE MARANZANO MURDER VERSION 1

GANGSTER KILLING

**Man Held for Questioning In
Maranzano Case Offers New
Version of Murder.**

HIS STORY IS ATTACKED

Two Others Are Freed-Federal

James F. Alascia, 31 years old, of 335 East Twentieth Street, who Admitted he was present at the shooting of Maranzano, a suspected member of a smuggling ring smuggling, was remanded to the house of detention under \$5,000 bail as a material witness. Two others, Stefano S. Rennelli, 29, of , 335 East Twentieth Street, and Felix Mule, 20, of 171 East Fifty-second Street, Brooklyn, were released by the local authorities When questioning disclosed they had' no knowledge of the murder.

According to the prosecutor Alascia said there were Twelve men in the room at the time of the shooting. Alascia was president of the Eagle Building Corporation in whose offices Maranzano was shot. Alascia was described as often taking care of Maranzano's alcohol business. Alascia said that when he arrive at the Park Avenue office he found Maranzano and others lined up with their faces to the wall. He asserted that he too, was told to face the wall and the

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murder was committed while his back was turned. Alascia's story was characterized as evasive and he was arraigned before Judge William Allen in General Sessions who set bail at \$5,000. Renelli said that after the shooting Alascia, with whom he lived, told him about it. The two then moved to Brooklyn to the home of Alascia's sister. He said he did not know her name or address.

At police headquarters it was said Alascia was sentenced to the Atlanta Penitentiary. In 1923, for violation of the narcotic laws.

New York Times
Published September 26, 1931

END HANDOUT

LESSON 5 HANDOUT 3 MARANZANO MURDER VERSION 2

Informer Tells More BY EMANUEL PERLIUTTER

Valachi testified at length about the Masseria (the boss of bosses) and Maranzano murders. He said that Luciano, Vito Genovese and Ciro Terranova, Masseria's aides, had lured their chief to the restaurant, where they killed him. After Masseria's death, Valachi went on, Maranzano informed him that he planned to murder a dozen of his late rival's supporters. Maranzano listed Luciano, Genovese, Frank Costello, Dutch Schultz and Al Capone (then in Chicago) among his intended victims. The witness said. Maranzano, a Masseria associate, invited Luciano and Genovese to his office at Park Avenue and 46th Street, where he planned to have them killed by Vincent (Mad Dog) Coli. According to Valachi. The assassination, he said, did not occur because "four Jews who posed as cops got there first and killed Maranzano." He identified the four as gunmen who had worked for Meyer Lansky, a racketeer and gangster. Among them, Valachi said, was Samuel (Red) Levine, who is still alive. Six years later, he said, Levine told him of his participation in the murder. As Coli entered the building where Maranzano was killed, Valachi said, the four assassins told him to flee because there had been a shooting and the police were expected. Coli, involved in many gangland murders during the Prohibition era, was shot to death on Feb. 8, 1932, in the phone booth of a drug store at 314 West 23d Street, near Eighth Avenue. He was 23 years old. On the day his chief was killed, Valachi told the Senators, "four or five" others were slain. He did not explain why. He identified one as a Jimmy Marino and referred to a "couple more in New Jersey."

Special to The New York Times
WASHINGTON, Oct. 2, 1962

Talking point 3 Meyer Lansky a Yiddisher kop in league with the Mafia

Meyer Lansky was a central figure in the criminal syndicate of Italians and Jews that he was instrumental in founding.. The website Jewish Mag has an extensive entry about Lansky. It introduces him as follows:

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LESSON 5 HANDOUT 4 MEYER LANSKY A GOOD JEW

He sleeps silently in the Mt. Nebo Jewish cemetery in West Miami, Florida awaiting the coming of the Messiah. To the end, he declared himself a Jew, though not a religious one. Meyer shares his gravesite with his oldest son Buddy under the flight path of El Al jets arriving from Israel into nearby Miami International airport. A large pink colored memorial stone carved with the single un-telling name, Lanksy, and an eternal light to one side is at his head. His footstone reads modestly, "Meyer Lansky 1902 -1983", a Star of David serves as the dash between the dates. "Forever in our Hearts" is carved on the bottom row.

Meyer Lansky's life, on one level, was a simple story. An immigrant child, he struggled hard to improve himself. He attended *cheder* and carried the Shabbat *cholent* to the baker for after Shabbat service meals with his family. He never went past the 8th grade. He chose to work in the rough and tumble of business. He married and had three children. His first wife suffered from severe mental illness. His oldest son was cursed with Cerebral Palsy. Quiet, not flamboyant, he was a life-long Zionist and ardent supporter of Jewish charities. Because of a poor choice of friends he was misunderstood and denied his Jewish dream of living his last years in Israel. He died in Miami Beach, Florida having lived his last years very modestly financially; another elderly, sickly Jewish man shuffling along Collins Avenue, sipping a cup of coffee with friends at Wolfie's Rascal House. His funeral was hardly attended. Yet, he had another life. It was a life of allegations, suppositions, presumptions and very little established in a court of law. It was a life of long time associations made on the tough streets of New York. He had a computer like mind, able to sift through complicated situations and numbers to derive the best probable outcome for money placed at risk. He exhibited extraordinary organizational ability. He was a fearless tough in his youth who did not hesitate to use lead pipes on the heads of Jewish strikebreakers, or try and turn Jewish girls into whores for his control as a pimp. His friends eventually became the most notorious, vicious gangsters in America between 1920 and 1960. Men such as Bugsy Siegel¹ and Lucky Luciano² were among his closest associates. His money skills were legendary. He used his natural abilities to develop gambling and money laundering, from Las Vegas to Cuba, to a skill that the government could never track. His interpersonal management skills brought disparate groups of criminal mobs into national, centralized criminal organized structures. **Stop. Assuming that you all heard of Lansky. What do you think of him after reading his description as the quintessential American success story and a villain?.**

He was reputed to be known as the "Chairman of the Board" of "Murder Incorporated" with a personal net worth of over \$300,000,000.00. He was accused of many major crimes and indicted many times. He was found innocent of everything except once, only once. He was convicted of a very minor crime; running a gambling facility in 1950, for which he served a six month sentence. Meyer was arrested and convicted even though the patrons of his casino were the legal, judicial and law enforcement leaders of the community. It was an age of duplicitous hypocrisy, in many ways not unlike contemporary society. Meyer's crime normally would have been a misdemeanor; it was technically classified as a felony.

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Subpoenaed, he appeared before the famous Kefauver U.S. Senate committee hearing on organized crime. Refusing to place himself in a potentially compromised position he refused to answer questions about his associations by taking the "fifth."

END HANDOUT

A Google search of Meyer Lansky's name returns 582,000 results. Rabbi Stephen Wise, who was at his most powerful self during the time that Lansky was becoming a notorious Jewish gangster, garnered only about 23,200 results. A video of Lansky being interviewed on Israeli television garnered some 300,000 viewers. The following quotes are attributed to Lansky:

"We wanted to teach them a lesson," Lansky said. "We wanted to show them that Jews would not always sit back and accept insults." "We attacked them in the hall and threw some of them out the windows. There were fistfights all over the place. Most of the Nazis panicked and ran out. We chased them and beat them up, and some of them were out of action for months" "They wanted the Nazis taken care of but were afraid to do the job themselves," he said. "I did it for them. And when it was over they called me a gangster. No one ever called me a gangster until Rabbi Wise (Stephen Wise) and the Jewish leaders called me that." **Stop. How do the quotes make you feel ?**

It was in the East Side neighborhood that Meyer met a boy named Charles "Lucky" Luciano, who tried to shake Meyer down for protection money. When Meyer refused to pay Luciano any money, a brawl started and he put up a good fight. Luciano was impressed with Meyer's fighting abilities and the two ended up becoming good friends.

In 1920, Meyer met Ben "Bugsy" Siegel, who joined with Meyer and Luciano to form the Five Points Gang. Meyer was the perfect partner to Luciano, providing brains to go along with Luciano's guts. In 1931, Meyer helped Luciano to kill Salvatore Maranzano. Luciano went on to form the National Crime Syndicate, with a board of directors that included Meyer. In the 1940s Bugsy Siegel came to him seeking money to build a casino in Las Vegas. Meyer invested large amounts of money and managed to convince other wealthy criminals to do the same. It was a conscious effort on their part to better their brethren's invention of Hollywood. When the casino went over budget, several meetings were called to debate killing Siegel who was killed in 1947. Las Vegas, as we all know, grew into a quintessential American business success story. **Stop. Why does the story of Las Vegas represent a specifically American Jewish story.**

During the 50s Meyer developed and oversaw the Cosa Nostra's Cuban Empire, turning the islands into a veritable Mafia colony until the ouster of the mob by Castro in 1959. Lansky's control of Cuba was one of the primary reasons Mafia boss Albert Anastasia was assassinated on October 25, 1957.

He was assassinated because Meyer Lansky and his compatriots in the Mafia, worried about Anastasia's attempts to muscle in on their Havana casino operations. His murder was sanctioned by the Mafia Commission. Anastasia's murder was the primary reason for a meeting of Mafia leaders in Apalachin, NY, in November of 1957, which was raided by state and local police.

The Mafioso met to work out the division of Anastasia's assets, and to discuss the distribution of "profits" from the Cuban criminal empire, under the directorship of Meyer Lansky. conspicuous was the absence of three prominent national crime bosses: "Lucky" Luciano, Frank Costello, and Meyer Lansky.

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In fact none of high-ranking Jewish bosses, including Stacher, Abner "Longy" Zwillman, Philip Kastel and Morris "Moe" Dalitz were present either The Apalachin meeting may have been a setup designed to serve the interest of these national crime bosses. The outcome of the meeting fell mostly in favor of Costello's and Luciano's and Lansky's agenda.

LESSON 5 HANDOUT 5 LANSKY AND ANASTASIA MURDER

LANSKY SUBPONAED IN GANGLAND INQUIRY

Meyer Lansky, who was questioned by the police Tuesday night about the murder of Albert Anastasia, has been called to tell his story to the state watchdog Committee too. In Week-End Court yesterday, his difficulties were compounded when Magistrate Peter M. Horn refused a plea by the gambler for an immediate hearing on a vagrancy Charge and set trial for Feb. 21. Lansky was freed on \$1,000 bail. As he left the court, the gambler was served with a subpoena by the State Joint Legislative Committee on Government Operations. He is scheduled to testify at 10 A. M. Feb. 20 at 217 Broadway. The watchdog committee will question Lansky about the gangland meeting in Apalachin N. Y., in November and its relation, if any, to the slaying of Anastasia in October. Lansky was booked on the vagrancy charge -Tuesday night after he had arrived by plane from Miami, Fla. He gave his age as 55. The police said that Lansky was "not helpful" in their questioning.

END HANDOUT

When Meyer learned that he would be prosecuted for tax evasion he fled to Israel, where he claimed citizenship and the right of any Jew to do so.

After a long battle in court he was forced to return to the United States in 1972. The government failed to convict Lansky who died of lung cancer in 1983. **Stop.. There is a similarity between the assassination of Anastasia and that of Maranzano and the role that Jews played in them. Overall what does the Lansky saga tell us about Judaism's place in American popular culture?**

LESSON 6 FROM LOWER EAST SIDE TO HOLLYWOOD

Talking points 1 the genesis of Jewish influence on American popular culture

We no longer live in the era of mainstream (or elite) anti-Semitism But the charge of "Jewish influence on the media" has never really disappeared. The outcry that Hollywood is corrupting America's youth and the persistent imposition of various sort of puritanical (in its historical sense) censorship is still with us. It is the manifestation of rage against supposed Jewish media liberalism and libertinism.

Jews have been accused of purportedly directing a conspiracy to corrupt white Christian youngsters by exposing them to "jungle music". **Stop. When or where were you exposed to this kind of anti-**

Jewish Rhetoric? It is undeniable that the representation of Jews in the various medias of communication in the U.S is way out of proportion to the percentage of Jewish citizens in America, 2%.

Where did it all this influence come from, and what does it mean? **Stop. Please share your**

thoughts about this phenomenon. Paul Buhle, in his book From the Lowe East Side to Hollywood,

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whose ideas I am sharing with you states that the Jewishness at that roots of American popular culture is not found in in the Jewish religion. It had its American genesis in the Jewish culture that thrived in the Lower East Side and it continues to wield its influence today. Many years after the Jews left the Lower East Side Woody Allen's *Annie Hall* or Neil Simon's *Neil Simon's Brighton Beach Memoirs* were charming Americans with a Jewish ambiance representing places with no tenements, no pushcarts, no Yiddish theaters or Hassids. But the essence of the Jewish ambiance that they were pouring on America's popular culture was incubated in the Lower East Side. It would be simplistic to argue that Jewish influence on American culture can be attributed to location. That Jews garnered influence because their population center was New York, the epicenter of American popular culture. But the better argument to be made is that New York radiated American popular culture BECAUSE so many Jews lived there. The best argument is that the ultimate source of Jews' influence is the Yiddish language and its usage as the lingua franca of Judaism's recent individualistic, and subversive history. In the 19th century the centuries-old solidity of the Jewish community, suddenly gave way. The rich and connected Jewish elites were deciding what Jews should be sent into the Russian army — often a death sentence. These Jewish authorities sent the defenseless and poor. Rabbinical students as well as children from the better-off classes were exempted from service. Discontent increasingly showed itself in breakaway synagogues. Cultural and religious societies founded independently in a measured defiance of the regular civic and spiritual authorities. The cultural associations sometimes operated as embryo labor unions, bringing common Jews together against the proto-capitalist (Jewish) masters. Independent religious institutions, almost invariably more democratic than the ones that they abandoned, formulated their own codes of religious dress and behavior. All these breakaways were already taking steps toward a popular culture. Class and cultural tensions assumed forms strikingly different, however, from those in surrounding Gentile communities Young Jews alienated from ritual and from religious centers of community power drank in the writings of East European literary rebels. The climate of rebellion and discontent offered an indefinable something Something that was undermining and substituting the religion and other traditional structures of authority This climate of discontent and a craving for a better future were baby steps toward a new Jewish popular culture A culture that already in Europe fostered an overrepresentation of Jews in and around the rapidly advancing radical Yiddish media, be it communist propaganda, socialist labor unionism, dozens of literary publications, theater, or charismatic orators. This Yiddish language, accustomed to adaptability from one linguistic climate to another was crossing the Atlantic with hundreds of thousands of Jews. its speakers and writers "translated" their evolving Jewish culture into new forms, according to the possibilities at hand. Sholem Aleichem, the literary genius who wrote in Yiddish and who died in the Bronx, began one of his best short stories with the phrase, "It seems to me that there is no better thing in the world than a strike," likening it to the pleasure of his walking out on an especially nasty and abusive Hebrew kheder (school) teacher. That says it all! Rebellion was in the life's blood of creative purpose Jews were famous for their massive parades and rallies in which great

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orators Poets as persuasive as Pindar of antiquity, would beseech the workers to continue their sacrifices down to starvation rather than accept the indignity of crawling back on their empty bellies. At some of the same rallies, more so after the turn of the century, vaudevillian-style comics would warm up the audience for the serious oratory. In the midst of this process, New York area Jews passed from cultural object to cultural subject. In time the throbbing, disrupting city energy was exported by Jews to booming suburbs and exurbs. And the Jewish artists applying their people's pathos as source material engaged in a crucial transformation of American culture. More often than not Jewish writers and comedians used typically Jewish humor to wield influence on America's popular culture. The Jewish shtetl dweller even one or two steps removed understood the human search for something that promised escape and more. America offered the bearers of the Yiddish language the opportunity to do so at great cultural advantage. Even when it seems to vanish this rebellious creative force can be unexpectedly discovered. For example, Larry Gelbart, creator of the most popular (and antiwar) sitcom of all time, *M*A*S*H*, revealed that until the age of four he spoke only Yiddish. The next handout best explains this act of translation from the Yiddish to Anglo.

LESSON 6 HANDOUT 1 THE TWO THOUSAN YEAR OLD MAN

THE GENESIS OF the 2,000 Year Old Man is interesting because I had seen a program called "We the People Speak." And it was a news program that was dramatized news. It was Dan Seymour saying, "Last week in Russia, somebody heard Stalin say, a plumber in the toilet... overheard, 'Going to blow up the world Thursday.'" And I came into the *Show of Shows* office and I said, "Hey, here's a great thing to do." And they say, "Oh, yeah, it's a funny idea," but they couldn't find a way to work it. But I thought it was so good, I turned to Mel [Brooks], "Here's a man who was actually at the scene of the crucifixion 2000 years ago. Isn't that true, sir?"

And Mel said, "Oh boy."

"You were there, yes."

And from that moment on, I realized I had a live one because for the next twenty minutes I interviewed him about Jesus and about who he was. "A thin lad, right, who always wore sandals? Walked with 12 other guys? Came into the store, never bought anything?" He [Mel Brooks] was so quick. And I kept interviewing for years and years, mainly for years and years at parties, in the office, because we were needing some time to be entertained; we were so ... tired. I would just start, "You know, Cleopatra," whatever it is. He would come up with something. He never knew what I was going to ask him, and I never knew what he was going to say. And there was born the 2000 Year Old [Man], FROM 1950 TO 1960, we never did it any place but at parties. I remember a couple of big... dinner parties, people [would] say, "Get up, get up." I took a tape recorder along so I'd have a record of this brilliance that Mel was doing. And the reason we didn't do it anyplace, records started [be]coming hot in 1958, '59, '60. And everyone [said], "You got to do it. You got to put it on a record." And we said, "No, this is for Jews. This is for old friends. It's Jews and our non-anti-Semitic Christian friends. They'll understand." Because the Jewish accent—remember, [the] war had been only over for five years.

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1950—it's five years ago that Hitler was using everything to denigrate Jews. And we were going to denigrate ourselves by making fun of our own accent? Jews will understand the Jewish accent. So we never did it anyplace but for friends.

And then one time in Hollywood... there was a party. Joe Fields... was a producer. Joe Fields did *On the Town*; He made these royal performances. He [would] invite us to dinner and have everybody in the world there, in Hollywood. And now in Hollywood we did the same thing because Mel came out for a visit and he said, "Oh, we got to get together." [At the party], he had all these ... A-list people. And after we had finished it, ... it was two Jews who came up to us. One was George Burns. He says, "Fellows, is that on an album? You got an album of that?" We said no. He says, "Better put it on an album. Going to steal it."

Steve Allen, a *sheygetz* [a non-Jew], who came up and said, "Hey fellows, you got to make an album out of this." And we said, "No, no. It's really for friends." And he says, "No, look. I'll tell you what. I'll rent a studio, you make the album ... and it's yours". He didn't want to be our partner. He was one of these guys who liked to get fun out there. He did that on his show. He always had comedians on. He wanted to present and he was so excited. He rented a studio at New World Pacific. ... We got 200 people together and for two hours and twenty minutes or so, I interviewed Mel—never repeated stuff that we ever did before. Any time I asked him the same question, you get different answers. We cut it down to 47 minutes. And we listened to it and we said, "Well, you know. I don't know." We put it out and it became a hit.

YOUR SHOW OF SHOWS came about because television needed a variety show. Max Liebman, who had worked in the Poconos, in Tamiment, being the producer- director of musical variety shows, knew how to do it. He would do three in a row, three different ones [shows] in a row. Then audience would change, he can do them again. ... [Television came and they said, "Want to do [it]?" He was ready. He didn't know he could do thirty-nine [shows]. He knew he [could] do three. But if you get enough writers, and remember, the good writers—he was a very good selector. Max Liebman was the reason that the show worked. He knew how to select writers and he collected them.

Because he collected the greatest talent, every writer of note wanted to write for that bunch. When he got Sid Caesar and Imogene Coca, he started with Mel Tolkin, Lucille Kallen, and later Mel Brooks and Joe Stein and, oh, dozens and dozens of other wonderful writers, and one wonderful goy, Tony Webster, who was as brilliant and funny as any of these guys.... You weren't asked if you were Jewish. You didn't have to be Jewish, but the Jews are the ones who liked this kind of thing and got experience doing these kind of things in the mountains [the Catskills]. So they were brought in to write the sketches....

[W]e knew we're not working for Jews; we're working for an amalgam of races and religions, so we had to translate something that might have been Jewish and make it universal. I do remember Mel talking, saying one of the funniest things ever. Kidding around in the office, he would be the head writer.... One of his jobs was to get everybody back on track. "Gentlemen, gendemen! Do you realize Jews all over America will be tuned in on Sunday? Hundreds of them." He was joking around that the Jews will be

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tuned, but we weren't writing for just Jews. But that was his joke. Everything that might have a Jewish tinge to it had to be translated for everybody else. It was interesting. Most of these people were second generation Europeans, and so it wasn't hard for them to think in terms of America rather than Jewish America, because they went to school [here, and] we were a melting pot. Yiddish words, we used. But we were very responsible. If a Yiddish word would get a laugh from people in the audience and somebody said, "What are they laughing at," there would [also] be a joke or a physical action. We're very careful about that, not to just contact our friends and say, "Here, we're making you laugh—nobody [else]." Every time there was a Jewish laugh, there was something covering in that. [All] people would laugh **Stop: What do you remember of these times? What do you think of this notion of translating Jewish humor to Universal sensibilities translating for the goyesh kop?**

Carl Reiner, interview by David Grubin, June 22, 2006.

END HANDOUT

Talking point 2 the Jews invention of Hollywood

The most widely accepted notion about the enormous influence Jews have on America's popular culture is that Jews own Hollywood. The Jewish influence on the production of films and TV shows is way out of proportion to their numbers among Americans.

This is true.

But the reason it is so is not because there is a Jewish conspiracy to control American minds. It is so because of a Jewish mindset that that reached America's shores in the early 20th century was particularly suited to invent Hollywood. The 1905ers who had personally lived through (or heard plenty about) the Russian pogroms amid the national humiliation and political uprisings of the Russo-Japanese war, had also lived through an intensification of Yiddish culture unthinkable a decade earlier. Jews who came after the turn of the century were more urban and urbane, more in touch with working-class life, Gentile or Jewish, than their predecessors, more politicized and in many subtle ways also more self-consciously Jewish. They provided the main audience for large competing dailies in New York - easily the most circulated of any Jewish publications in the world. The Hollywood Jews, at least the first generation that built the industry, were a remarkably homogeneous group with remarkably similar childhood experiences. They grew up in extreme poverty and privation. They came from a Jewish community immersed in messianic ISMS Communism, Socialism, Anarchism. A world seeking fantastical utopias, a society seeking to escape itself through whatever entertainment available in their impoverished immigrant neighborhoods. Yiddish film, not only as produced in the US but in Europe, previewed the spin on heroic resistance to authority, the angst of the immigrant. The majority of the eastern European Jews who found success in business at the turn-of-the century United States, did so in the garment industry. Most of the Hollywood Jews worked in the retail fashion industry, they had an understanding of public taste. They knew their audience – because they were the audience. In its onset the Movie industry's , opening theaters and producing movies did not require a large capital investment.

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The few that left the East for the hills of Hollywood to enhance the fabric of life by weaving into the American universe a world of fantasy and illusion. They marketed films as commodities as well as entertainment. They would become the Hollywood Moguls. And they hid their Jewishness both from themselves and from the world. In order to escape their traumatic poverty, the pogroms and humiliation of their people they rejected old-home customs, language, accent and tradition. There was to be no trace of this past that would in any way impinge on the creation of the great illusion they were creating a new kind of 'ism'. This utopian vision, born out of Jewish suffering, that exerted enormous influence on America's culture. To escape their tradition, they espoused a new style -- an America style. Louis B. Mayer went so far as to claim America's independence day, the Fourth of July, as his birth date. In his book *An Empire of Their Own: How the Jews Invented Hollywood* Neal Gabler writes, "Within the studios and on the screen the Jews could simply create a new country--an empire of their own, so to speak--one where they would not only be admitted, but would govern as well. They would fabricate their empire in the image of America as they would fabricate themselves in the image of prosperous Americans. They would create its values and myths its traditions and archetypes. It would be an America where fathers were strong, families stable, people attractive, resilient, resourceful, and decent. This was their America, and its invention may be their most enduring legacy."

LESSON 6 HANDOUT 2 JACK WARNER HOLLYWOOD MOGUL

BORN IN 1892 to immigrant Jewish parents from Poland, Jack Warner was the youngest of the four brothers who made the Warner Brothers Studio a leader in film production in the twentieth century. Beginning their business by distributing and exhibiting films, the brothers expanded to film production in the 1910s and finally opened the Warner Brothers Studio in the 1920s. Their first great success came with the production of The Jazz Singer in 1927, a film that brought sound to the big screen and signaled the end of the silent film era.

In its heyday, the Warner Brothers Studio produced scores of successful Hollywood films and secured the contracts of many of the leading stars of the era, including Errol Flynn, Humphrey Bogart, Bette Davis, and John Garfield, just to name a few. In his autobiography Jack Warner describes the studio's first success in producing the Jazz Singer.

Hollywood was full of good-looking young Jewish singers who could get in by the part, but none of them could put the tears in their voice. As Cantor Rabinowitz pleads in the play *[The Jazz Singer]*: "You must sing it with a sigh, like you are crying out to your God." Wait a minute. What about AL Jolson? His father had been a cantor in Russia, and in Washington, too. And Jolson had the sob in his voice. I hustled around and tracked Jolie down in Denver, where Jolson was playing in *Big Boy* for one of the Shubert companies. I phoned Morrie Saifer, one of our New York executives, who by coincidence was in Denver, too. I told him to grab a taxi, go to the theater, and ask Jolson cold turkey how much he wanted to do *The Jazz Singer*. Saifer called back in an hour and, as we say these days, he was shook up. "Jolson wants a flat seventy-five thousand," he said. "One third down—in cash. The rest at \$6,250 a week, until it's paid."

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"Get back there and tell him he's got a deal," I said. **Stop. The *Jazz Singer*, a story of a cantor's son who becomes a jazz singer, aside from being the first talkie, was also a Jewish story. A story whose plotline is quintessentially Jewish but that also resonates with American ethos,/ what are these plot elements?**

Jolson signed the contract, and we dug up the scratch for him. For a good many years—and Jolie himself was the culprit—the story persisted that we paid him with Warner Brothers stock. Even Hedda Hopper sanctified the myth in her first book, and the so-called insiders always believed that Jolson's considerable wealth piled up when our stock soared from \$9 to \$135 a share. But it was never true, and I can't imagine why Jolie spread that talk unless there was a tax angle involved.

It is ironic, I think, that *The Jazz Singer* qualified as a talking picture only because of a freak accident. Sam was supervising the song recording when Jolson, in a burst of exuberance, cried out; "You ain't heard nothin' yet, folks. Listen to this."

Jolson had often used these words on the Broadway stage as a sort of trademark, and when Sam listened to the phrase on the playback he realized that the singer's speaking voice could have a shattering wallop.

He had AL Cohn write a soliloquy in which Jolson stops singing after the first chorus of "Blue Skies" and talks to his mother, saying: "Did you like that, Mama? I'm glad. I'd rather please you than anybody I know of." The monologue went on for some 250 words, and then Jolson sang another verse of "Blue Skies."

It is intriguing to note that for all these years the Hollywood biographers have mentioned Jolson's ad lib "You ain't heard nothin' yet" as being the bomb that would blast the entertainment world. No one ever denied this romantic legend, but it never happened. The so-called historic phrase was not in the picture....

With AL Jolson actually talking to the audience from the screen—and people were not prepared for that emotional surprise—the critical response was overwhelming. The picture set off a chain reaction, with these early results; Movie theater attendance soared to 95,000,000 a week, almost double the previous total. There had been only a hundred theaters wired for sound, but by the end of 1928 there were more than one thousand. One year after that, four thousand theaters were showing talking pictures, and Western Electric's income from these installations totaled more than \$37,000,000.

Interview with Dean Jennings, *My First Hundred Years in Hollywood*.

Lesson 7 –Political & Social Activism- slavery and the Civil War

Talking Point 1 where did it start?

As we near the end of this course we come full circle to be reminded that Judaism's foundational myth is based on two Hebrew words or three English ones - We were slaves עבדים היינו Freedom as the ultimate value of Judaism and the temporal manifestation of social justice was reinforced by the words of our prophets. Words that were universally appropriated but are ultimately Jewish.

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LESSON 7 HANDOUT 1 ISAIAH 11:1-12 AND GEORGE STEINER ON THE UNIQUENESS OF JUDAISM

A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse;
from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.

² The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him—
the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and of might,
the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the LORD—

³ and he will delight in the fear of the LORD.

He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes,
or decide by what he hears with his ears;

⁴ but with righteousness he will judge the needy,
with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth.

He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth;
with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked.

⁵ Righteousness will be his belt
and faithfulness the sash around his waist.

⁶ The wolf will live with the lamb,
the leopard will lie down with the goat,
the calf and the lion and the yearling^[a] together;
and a little child will lead them.

⁷ The cow will feed with the bear,
their young will lie down together,
and the lion will eat straw like the ox.

⁸ The infant will play near the cobra's den,
and the young child will put its hand into the viper's nest.

⁹ They will neither harm nor destroy
on all my holy mountain,
for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the LORD
as the waters cover the sea.

¹⁰ In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his resting place will be glorious. ¹¹ In that day the Lord will reach out his hand a second time to reclaim the surviving remnant of his people from Assyria, from Lower Egypt, from Upper Egypt, from Cush, from Elam, from Babylonia from Hamath and from the islands of the Mediterranean.

¹² He will raise a banner for the nations
and gather the exiles of Israel;
he will assemble the scattered people

STEINER

Historians of religion tell us that the emergence of the concept of the Mosaic God is a unique fact in human experience, that a genuinely comparable notion sprang up at no other place or time.

The abruptness of the Mosaic revelation, the finality of the creed at Sinai, tore up the human psyche by its most ancient roots. The break has never really knit.

the Jew became, as it were, the "bad conscience" of Western history. In him the abandonment of spiritual and moral perfection, the hypocrisies of an established, mundane religiosity, the Absences of a disappointed, potentially vengeful God, were kept alive and visible.

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The Books of the Prophets ...constitute an unequaled act of moral demand. Because the words are so familiar, yet too great for ready use, we tend to forget or merely conventionalize the extremity of their call.

END HANDOUT

Over and over Jews played and are still playing a central role being the vanguard in movements that struggle for freedom and justice. American Jews focus on remembering our past adversities; while supporting campaigns for freedom and justice at home and abroad. These movements play an important role in shaping American Jewish identity. But also And in shaping America's identity. It is in this are that the influence of Jewish culture on American culture is most unmistakably felt!. Preserving equality and social justice in America functions as a virtual Jewish creed, leading to Jewish overrepresentation in some of the pivotal political movements of the 1960s. Postwar Jews were vocal participants in the campaigns for Civil Rights and women's rights, bringing Jewish values and a liberal agenda to the American political arena. But, at times, admittedly rarely, there has been a reversal of influence. The source documents that follow are representative of this American Jewish history. **Stop. Why is it that Jews a tiny minority in the United States have always been and still are represented in movements broadly defined as radical or progressive? Why is it that Jews a tiny minority in the United States have always been and still are represented in movements broadly defined as radical or progressive?**

Talking point 2 Slavery and the Civil War

John Brown (1800-1859) Not well known is that three immigrant Jews were among Brown's small band of anti-slavery fighters in Kansas: Theodore Wiener, from Poland; Jacob Benjamin, from Bohemia; and August Bondi (1833-1907)

August Bondi left the most significant mark on history.

Bondi's family emigrated to St. Louis in 1848, in the year when Europe was experiencing convulsions brought on by proletariat revolutions by the working class demanding for more participation in government and democracy. Jews played a prominent role in these revolutions. Jews stood shoulder to shoulder with non-Jews in their fight for emancipation.

Bondi had been a member of the student revolutionary movement in Vienna, and his idealism carded over to his adopted country. In 1855, he emigrated to Kansas to help establish the Free State movement there.

Bondi's account of a raid on the Federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia, in 1859.

LESSON 7 HANDOUT 2 JOHN BROWN AND AUGUST BONDI

Bondi's account of the raid on Harper's Ferry 1859

We walked with bent backs, nearly crawled, that the tall dead grass of the year before might somewhat hide us from the Border Ruffian marksmen, yet the bullets kept whistling... Wiener puffed like a steamboat, hurrying behind me. I called out to him, "Nu, was meinen Sie jetzt" Now, what do you think

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of this?). His answer, "Sof adam mavet" (a Hebrew phrase meaning "the end of man is death," or in modern phraseology, "I guess we're up against it").

We were united as a band of brothers by the love and affection toward the man who, with tender words and wise counsel prepared a handful of young men for the work of laying the foundation of a free Commonwealth. He expressed himself to us that we should never allow ourselves to be tempted by any consideration, to acknowledge laws and institutions to exist as of right, if our conscience and reason condemn them. **Stop. How does this story make you feel. What, if any value have you ever felt so passionate about that you would be willing to fight for it.**

END HANDOUT

Ernestine Louise Rose (January 13, 1810 – August 4, 1892) was an atheist feminist, individualist feminist, and abolitionist. She was one of the major intellectual forces behind the women's rights movement in nineteenth-century America. She was born on January 13, 1810, in Piotrków Trybunalski, Russia-Poland, as Ernestine Louise Polowsky. Her father was a wealthy rabbi and her mother the daughter of a wealthy businessman. By the age of fourteen, she had completely rejected the idea of female inferiority and the religious texts that supported that idea. In May 1836, at the age of 26, the Roses emigrated to the United States alone. She began lecturing in support of abolition and women rights.

LESSON 7 HANDOUT 3 ERNESTINE ROSE ON ABOLITION OF SLAVERY AND WOMEN RIGHTS

Quotes on Abolition of Slavery, Freedom and Human Rights

Who that has human blood flowing in his veins, who that ever felt the warm gush of affection thrill his being, can hesitate whether to throw his weight into the balance of life and freedom, or that of chains, oppression or death?...to him who fears only your opposition...silence is consent. And silence where life and liberty is at stake, where by a timely protest we could stay the destroyer's hand, and do not do so, is as criminal as giving actual aid to the oppressor, for it answers his purpose..." - *At the Thomas Paine anniversary celebration, New York, Jan. 29, 1852* **Stop. How do her words, spoken 162 years ago make you feel, and why? What do these feelings have to do with your American Jewishness?**

"....In comparison to the liberation of 800,000 slaves (in 1834 in the British West Indies), the Declaration of Independence falls into utter insignificance. It falls short, just as theory falls short of practice. There is almost an immeasurable distance between the two. The one was an utterance of a great truth; the other was a practical application of it. How different the results! The Declaration of Independence - has it yet abolished slavery?....Nature has not created masters and slaves; nature has created man free as the air of heaven. The black man and the white man are equally the children of nature. Slavery deprives us of ourselves. The slave has no power to say, 'I will go here, or I will go yonder.' The slave cannot say, 'My wife, my husband, or my child.'...This is the great abomination of slavery, that it deprives a man of the common rights of humanity, stamped upon him by his Maker." - *On the occasion of the anniversary of the West Indian emancipation, New York, 1853.*

"Human rights include the rights of all, not only man, but woman, not only white but black; wherever there is a being called human, his rights are as full and expressive as his existence, and ought to be without limits or distinction of sex, country, or color...and only ignorance, superstition, and tyranny - both

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the basis and the influence of the Bible - deprive him of it." - *Hartford Bible Convention, Hartford, Conn., 1853.*

Ernestine Rose's speech at the Women's Rights Convention Worcester, Massachusetts in

October 15, 1851

Excerpt:

"From the cradle to the grave [woman] is subject to the power and control of man. Father, guardian, or husband, one conveys her like some piece of merchandise over to the other.

At marriage she loses her entire identity, and her being is said to have become merged in her husband. Has nature thus merged it? Has she ceased to exist and feel pleasure and pain?...What an inconsistency that from the moment she enters the compact in which she assumes the high responsibility of wife and mother, she ceases legally to exist and becomes a purely submissive being. Blind submission in women is considered a virtue, while submission to wrong is itself wrong, and resistance to wrong is virtue alike in women as in man. **Stop. I'd like to ask the women is class what are your feelings about these words? Why are you feeling this way about them even today?** But it will be said that the husband provides for the wife, or in other words, he feeds, clothes and shelters her! I wish I had the power to make every one before me fully realize the degradation contained in that idea. Yes! He keeps her, and so he does a favorite horse; by law they are both considered his property. Both may, when the cruelty of the owner compels them to run away, be brought back by the strong arm of the law and according to a still extant law in England, both may be led by the halter to the market place and sold. This is humiliating indeed but nevertheless true, and the sooner these things are known and understood, the better for humanity. Let married women have the same right to property that their husbands have; for whatever the difference in their respective occupations, the duties of the wife are as indispensable and far more arduous than her husband's. Why then, should the wife, at the death of her husband, not be his heir to the same extent that he is heir to her? In this inequality there is involved another wrong. When the wife dies, the husband is left in the undisturbed possession of there is, and the children are left with him; no change is made, no stranger intrudes on his home and his affliction. But when the husband dies, the widow at best receives a mere pittance, while strangers assume authority denied to the wife. The sanctuary of affliction must be desecrated by executors; everything must be ransacked and assessed, lest she should steal something out of her own house: and to cap the climax, the children must be placed under guardians. When the husband dies poor, to be sure no guardian is required, and the children are left for the mother to care and toil for, as best she may. But when anything is left for their maintenance, then it must be placed in the hands of strangers for safekeeping! The bringing up and safety of the children are left with the mother, and safe they are in her hands. But a few hundred or thousand dollars cannot be intrusted with her! **Stop. Why would you change any words in her speech?**

END HANDOUT

The next document is a prime example of American culture imposing its influence on America Judaism

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LESSON 7 HANDOUT 4 THE BIBLE VIEW OF SLAVERY BY: RABBI DR. M.J. RAPHALL, CONGREGATION B'NAI JESHURUN, NY JAN. 15TH 1861.

There can be no doubt, my friends, that however much of personal ambition, selfishness, pride, and obstinacy, there may enter into the present unhappy quarrel between the two great sections of the Commonwealth—I say it is certain that the origin of the quarrel itself is the difference of opinion respecting slave-holding, which the one section denounces as sinful—aye, as the most heinous of sins—while the other section upholds it as perfectly lawful.... the question whether slave-holding is a sin before G-d, is one that belongs to the theologian. I have been requested by prominent citizens of other denominations, that I should on this day examine the Bible view of slavery, as the religious mind of the country requires to be enlightened on the subject. In compliance with that request, and after humbly praying that the Father of Truth and of Mercy may enlighten my mind, and direct my words for good, I am about to solicit your earnest attention, my friends, to this serious subject. Among the many prophecies contained in the Bible and having reference to particular times, persons, and events, there are three singular predictions referring to three distinct races or peoples, which seem to be intended for all times, and accordingly remain in full force to this day. The first of these is the doom of Ham's descendants, the African race, pronounced upwards of 4,000 years ago. The second is the character of the descendants of Ishmael, the Arabs, pronounced nearly 4,000 years ago; and the third and last is the promise of continued and indestructible nationality promised to us, Israelites, full 2500 years ago.

...We may be sure that the fetish-serving benighted African has no knowledge of Noah's prediction; which, however, is nowhere more fully or more atrociously carried out than in the native home of the African. Witness the horrid fact, that the King of Dahomey is, at this very time, filling a large and deep trench with human blood, sufficient to float a good-sized boat; that the victims are innocent men, murdered to satisfy some freak of what he calls his religion; and that this monstrous and most fiendish act has met with no opposition, either from the pious indignation of Great Britain, or from the zealous humanity of our country.

... Noah, on the occasion in question, bestows on his son Shem a spiritual blessing: "Blessed be the L-rd, the G-d of Shem," and to this day it remains a fact which cannot be denied, that whatever knowledge of G-d and of religious truth is possessed by the human race, has been promulgated by the descendants of Shem. Noah bestows on his son Japheth a blessing, chiefly temporal, but partaking also of spiritual good. "May G-d enlarge Japheth, and may he dwell in the tents of Shem," and to this day it remains a fact which cannot be denied, that the descendants of Japheth (Europeans and their offspring) have been enlarged so that they possess dominion in every part of the earth; while, at the same time, they share in that knowledge of religious truth which the descendants of Shem were the first to promulgate. Noah did not bestow any blessing on his son Ham, but uttered a bitter curse against his descendants, and to this day it remains a fact which cannot be gainsaid that in his own native home, and generally throughout the world, the unfortunate negro is indeed the meanest of slaves.

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Having thus, on the authority of the sacred Scripture, traced slavery back to the remotest period, I next request your attention to the question, "Is slaveholding condemned as a sin in sacred Scripture?" How this question can at all arise in the mind of any man that has received a religious education, and is acquainted with the history of the Bible, is a phenomenon I cannot explain to myself, and which fifty years ago no man dreamed of. **Stop. What does this Rabbi's say about Judaism? How do you explain his theology as a Jew?** Even on that most solemn and most holy occasion, slaveholding is not only recognized and sanctioned as an integral part of the social structure, when it is commanded that the Sabbath of the Lord is to bring rest to Avdecha ve'Amatecha, "Thy male slave and thy female slave" (Exod. xx. 10; Deut. v. 14). But the property in slaves is placed under the same protection as any other species of lawful property, when it is said, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, or his field, or his male slave, or his female slave, or his ox, or his ass, or aught that belongeth to thy neighbor" (Ibid. xx. 17; v.21). That the male slave and the female slave here spoken of do not designate the Hebrew bondman, but the heathen slave, I shall presently show you. That the Ten Commandments are the word of G-d, and as such, of the very highest authority, is acknowledged by Christians as well as by Jews. I would therefore ask the reverend gentleman of Brooklyn and his compeers—How dare you, in the face of the sanction and protection afforded to slave property in the Ten Commandments—how dare you denounce slaveholding as a sin?

When we remember the mischief which this inventing a new sin, not known in the Bible, is causing; how it has exasperated the feelings of the South, and alarmed the conscience of the North, to a degree that men who should be brothers are on the point of imbruing their hands in each other's blood, are we not entitled to ask the reverend preacher of Brooklyn, "What right have you to insult and exasperate thousands of G-d-fearing, law-abiding citizens, whose moral worth and patriotism, whose purity of conscience and of life, are fully equal to your own?"

My friends, I find, and I am sorry to find, that I am delivering a pro-slavery discourse. I am no friend to slavery in the abstract, and still less friendly to the practical working of slavery. But I stand here as a teacher in Israel; not to place before you my own feelings and opinions, but to propound to you the word of G-d, the Bible view of slavery. With a due sense of my responsibility, I must state to you the truth and nothing but the truth.

...There were, however, slaves among the Hebrews, whose general condition was analogous to that of their Southern fellow sufferers. That was the heathen slave, who was to be bought "from the heathens that were round about the land of Israel, or from the heathen strangers that sojourned in the land; they should be a possession, to be bequeathed as an inheritance to the owner's children, after his death, forever" (Levit. xxv. 44-46.) Over these heathen slaves the owner's property was absolute; he could put them to hard labor, to the utmost extent of their physical strength; he could inflict on them any degree of chastisement short of injury to life and limb. If his heathen slave ran away or strayed from home, every Israelite was bound to bring or send him back, as he would have to do with any other portion of his

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neighbor's property that had been lost or strayed. (Deut. xxii. 3.). **Stop. What behavior of the Jewish people have you as an American Jew you found reprehensible?**

END HANDOUT

The Jewish Messenger was the only Jewish periodical that wholeheartedly supported the Union.

LESSON 7 HANDOUT 5 STANDING BY THE UNION EDITORIAL IN THE JEWISH MESSENGER

NY APRIL 26, 1861

It is almost a work of supererogation for us to call upon our readers to be loyal to the Union, which protects them. It is needless for us to say anything, to induce them to proclaim their devotion to the land in which they live. But we desire our voice, too, to be heard at this time, joining in the hearty and spontaneous shout ascending from the whole American people, to stand by the stars and stripes! Already we hear of many of our young friends taking up arms in defense of their country, pledging themselves to assist in maintaining inviolate its integrity, and ready to respond, if need be, with their lives, to the call of the constituted authorities, in the cause of law and order.

The time is past for forbearance and temporizing. We are now to *act*, and sure we are, that those whom these words may reach, will not be backward in realizing the duty that is incumbent upon them—to rally as one man for the *Union* and the *Constitution*. The Union— which binds together, by so many sacred ties, millions of freemen— which extends its hearty invitation to the oppressed of all nations, to come and be sheltered beneath its protecting wings—shall it be severed, destroyed, or even impaired? Shall those, whom we once called our brethren, be permitted to overthrow the fabric reared by the noble patriots of the revolution, and cemented with their blood?

And the Constitution—guaranteeing to all, the free exercise of their religious opinions—extending to all, liberty, justice, and equality—the pride of Americans, the admiration of the world—shall that Constitution be subverted, and anarchy usurp the place of a sound, safe, and stable government, deriving its authority from the consent of the American people?

The voice of millions yet unborn, cries out, "forbid it, Heaven" The voice of the American people declares, in tones not to be misunderstood, "it shall not be!"

Then stand by the flag! What death can be so glorious as that of the patriot, surrendering up life in defense of his country,—pouring forth his blood on the battlefield—to live forever in the hearts of a grateful people? Stand by the flag! Whether native or foreign born, Christian or Israelite, stand by it, and you are doing your duty, and acting well your part on the side of liberty and justice! **Stop. Why do you think it was that the Messenger was a solitary cry by the Jewish press of the time to support the Union?**

END HANDOUT

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Lesson 8—Political & Social Activism From the Triangle Fire to Abbie Hoffman

Talking Point 1 The ISMS of an emerging labor movement

As early as 1890, German Jews owned more than 90 percent of garment factories on the Lower East Side. Before the century came to a close, three-quarters of workers in the garment industry were Jewish. The ILGWU (International Ladies Garment Workers Union) was founded in 1900 in New York City. The union grew rapidly in the next few years but began to stagnate as the conservative leadership favored the interests of skilled workers, such as cutters. This did not sit well with the majority of immigrant workers, particularly Jewish workers with a background in Bundist and in Socialism activities in Tsarist Russia. By 1909 55% of the workers in the shirtwaist and dress trades were Jewish.

Employers opened their arms to Italian workers because they perceived them not only as cheaper workers but also less susceptible to the virus of unionism than Jewish workers. But the Jewish workers who were organized and politicized, and not under the influence of religious authorities (the Catholic Church that viewed unions as Communism on the rise) were going growing creating the union that in 1920 the Yiddish newspaper the Forverts(founded in 1897), noted, stands now in the foremost ranks of the American labor movement, both materially and spiritually. It is one of the most important unions in the country. It has won for its members such conditions that very few of the real [sic] American unions may compare with it. Spiritually it is in every respect one of the most progressive. It responds to every movement for justice, for light. It is always prepared to help the workers in other trades in their struggles to help the oppressed and the suffering.

In 1911, more than 140 young immigrant women were killed in a devastating fire in the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory. Trapped in the fire, in part because owners had locked the shop doors, many women jumped to their deaths. The tragedy came to symbolize the abuses of manufacturers and the exploitation of workers, further galvanizing the Jewish labor movement.

LESSON 8 HANDOUT 1 ROSE SCHNEIDERMAN THE SPEECH ABOUT THE 1911 TRIANGLE FIRE APRIL 8, 1911

I would be a traitor to these poor burned bodies if I came here to talk good fellowship. We have tried you good people of the public and we have found you wanting. The old Inquisition had its rack and its thumbscrews and its instruments of torture with iron teeth. We know what these things are today; the iron teeth are our necessities, the thumbscrews the high-powered and swift machinery close to which we must work, and the rack is here in the firetrap structures that will destroy us the minute they catch on fire.

This is not the first time girls have been burned alive in the city. Every week I must learn of the untimely death of one of my sister workers. Every year thousands of us are maimed. The life of men and women is so cheap and property is so sacred. There are so many of us for one job it matters little if 143 of us are burned to death.

We have tried you citizens; we are trying you now, and you have a couple of dollars for the sorrowing mothers and brothers and sisters by way of a charity gift. But every time the workers come out in the

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only way they know to protest against conditions which are unbearable the strong hand of the law is allowed to press down heavily upon us.

Public officials have only words of warning to us— warning that we must be intensely orderly and must be intensely peaceable, and they have the workhouse just back of all their warnings. The strong hand of the law beats us back, when we rise, into the conditions that make life unbearable.

I can't talk fellowship to you who are gathered here. Too much blood has been spilled. I know from my experience it is up to the working people to save themselves. The only way they can save themselves is by a strong working class movement. **Stop. What have you heard about the Triangle Fire. How has it affected you, how has it affected the American Labor movement?**

END HANDOUT

Talking point 2 the 1950s tests of loyalty

For American Jews, the Rosenberg trial brought particular challenges. All five of the defendants involved in the Rosenberg affair were Jewish. The federal prosecutor and presiding judge were also Jewish, making the trial very much a Jewish concern,' deepened further by the long history of Jewish leftist politics. Jewish opinions about the trial, conviction, and death sentence varied widely.

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LESSON 8 HANDOUT 2 THE ROSENBERG CASE

Lucy Dawidowicz, "The Rosenberg Case: 'Hate America' Weapon," The New Leader, December 22, 1952.

Communist organizations all over the world are directing protests to President Truman on behalf of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg, convicted on March 30, 1951, and sentenced to death for participating in an espionage ring that passed atomic secrets to Russia. After the failure of several appeals, their execution has been scheduled for the week of January 12, 1953... .

The Communists demand the Rosenberg's "liberation." They insist on "equal justice" for their "innocent" clients. They charge that anti-Semitism and race prejudice dominated the court proceedings. The trial is a "judicial outrage," an "uncivilized action" and a "blot on American justice...."

The irrelevance of such slogans to the facts is incredible. The fact that the Rosenbergs received a fair trial was confirmed by the Supreme Court and by the American Civil Liberties Union, an organization that has been quite frank on many other occasions in criticizing U.S. courts. The evidence presented at the trial was so cumulative that additional testimony by more prosecution witnesses was rendered superfluous. The defendants were proven guilty beyond the slightest doubt of being spies for Soviet Russia. And, finally, the Rosenbergs' legal counsel has *never* pressed *any* of the fantastic charges of the Rosenberg propaganda apparatus....And let us remember that the purpose of a death penalty is to serve as a deterrent to the future commission of a serious crime.

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Editorial, The Reconstructionist, January 9, 1953

The conviction and sentencing of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg have aroused even greater interest than their dramatic trial and the acts of espionage which led to their conviction....

The argument about the anti-Semitic prejudice is most unusual. It cites the fact that the Judge was a Jew as evidence of bias. Fundamentally no other evidence to support this charge is offered save perhaps the fact that a government prosecutor once indicated reservations about his own Jewish identification. This argument makes it appear as if trial by a Jewish judge of a fellow Jew is *prima facie* evidence of bias. But just imagine that a non-Jew had presided; would the Communists not have charged the judge with a more "classic" form of anti-Semitism? It might also be asked, why, if Judge Kaufman were such a Jewish anti-Semite, did he not sentence to death other Jews involved in the case. Why, for example, was the Jew Greenglass given only thirty years, if, as is alleged, the Judge wanted to kill Jews to absolve himself of identification with other Jews of unsavory reputations? The charge of anti-Semitism is preposterous.

None of the foregoing discussion, however, should be construed as meaning that we are opposed to a commutation of [the] sentence on grounds of clemency. Our purpose was merely to free a plea of clemency of all extraneous and fallacious arguments. On grounds of humanity, the right to impose a death sentence for any crime is questioned by many ethical thinkers. And, admitting the guilt of the Rosenbergs, it is hard to see wherein their moral culpability exceeded that of others involved in the espionage to a degree that would warrant the death sentence. True, they did not cooperate with the Government, but are we prepared to say that such non-cooperation should spell the difference between life and death? Would it not be wiser to permit mercy to temper justice? Might not the execution of the Rosenbergs enable the Communists to make martyrs of them? Might it not keep alive the agitation against the court and give plausibility to the lying charges against the justice of American democracy? The final decision is up to the President. We believe that he would not be making a mistake if he listened to the promptings of humane sentiment not only to the letter of the penal code. **Stop. What are your thoughts about the Rosenberg case and about these 2 diametrically opposed American Jewish points of view? In your opinion what influence did this case have on American culture? What followed closely on its heels?**

END HANDOUT

The Rosenberg case was quickly followed by the witch hunt conducted by the House Un-American activities Committee. Was the Committee after Communists or really after Jews?

LESSON 8 HANDOUT 3 THE HOLLYWOOD TEN LOSD ANGELES TIMES ARTICLE OCTOBER 19, 1997

Fifty years ago, Congress began its hearings into communist influence in the movies; in their wake, careers were ruined, friendships were lost and studio films were changed forever. The hearings of HUAC ended abruptly on Oct. 30, 1947, with the committee quizzing only 10 of the original 19 people it had

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subpoenaed. Politics gave way to pandemonium. The unfriendly witnesses refused to answer any questions, even ones about their Writers Guild membership, citing the 1st Amendment. Their attempts at impassioned oratory were silenced by Thomas, the committee's gavel-pounding chairman. To save face, Thomas said the hearings had been halted to prevent communists from staging a massive Washington rally. On Nov. 17, the Screen Actors Guild voted to make its officers take a non-communist pledge. 20th Century Fox chief Darryl Zanuck had assured his writers that he wouldn't fire them unless ordered to by his board of directors. On Nov. 21, the board met and gave the order. On Nov. 25, the House voted overwhelmingly to cite the Hollywood 10 for contempt of Congress. Anti-communism gave way to thinly veiled anti-Semitism. Saying his committee was there to protect the "Christian people of America," HUAC member John Rankin read a list of Hollywood 10 supporters, saying "Another one was Danny Kaye, we found out his real name was David Daniel Kaminsky. One calls himself Edward G. Robinson. His real name is Emmanuel Goldenberg. Another one here calls himself Melvyn Douglas, whose real name is Melvyn Hesselberg." (Douglas' wife, California congresswoman Helen Gahagan Douglas, was one of only 17 House members to vote against the contempt citations.) News of the citations came as 50 industry leaders met behind closed doors at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York. All the legendary moguls were there: Louis B. Mayer, Loews' Nicholas Schenck, Jack Warner, Samuel Goldwyn, RKO's Dore Schary, Paramount's Barney Balaban, 20th Century Fox's Joe Schenck. Also on hand, significantly, was the Motion Picture Assn. of America's new special counsel, former Secretary of State James Byrnes, who assured the studio brass that the government wouldn't stand in their way if they fired the 10. Six of the Hollywood 10 — John Howard Lawson, Alvah Bessie, Herbert Biberman, Lester Cole, Albert Maltz and Samuel Ornitz — were Jews. **Stop. What about the behavior of the Jewish Moguls. How do you feel about this story. What culture is influencing here? And in the long run what culture's values do you think prevailed?**

Talking point 3 The radical 60's

in 1963, imploring members to work for universal civil rights as part of their responsibilities as Jews. In one of the most iconic photographs of the Civil Rights era, Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel of the Jewish Theological Seminary appears walking arm-in-arm with Martin Luther King Jr. and other black activists during a march in Selma, Alabama—an act he described as eliciting "a sense of the Holy. On a grassroots level, beyond the proclamations of organizations and the activities of prominent leaders, Jewish Americans were heavily represented in the rank and file of the Civil Rights Movement. Jews constituted somewhere between half and three-quarters of those who contributed to Civil Rights organizations, and more than half of the white volunteers who headed South during the Mississippi Freedom Summer in 1964.

LESSON 8 HANDOUT 4 SEYMOUR SIEGAL (1927 - 1988), EULOGY FOR DR> MARTIN LUTHER KING APRIL 5, 1968

The only way we can really achieve freedom is somehow to conquer the fear of death. If a man has not discovered something he will die for, he is not fit to live. The quality, not the length of one's life, is

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important. If you go down in a movement to save the soul of a nation, there is no death more redemptive." These are the words of Martin Luther King. He set out to achieve nothing less than to save the soul of our country. Anyone's death is a tragedy. The death of a man like Doctor Martin Luther King is a catastrophe. He has gone up to Heaven in a chariot of fire in the midst of a storm. We can best honor him by converting the storm into a cleansing rain which brings new life and reconciliation. There should now roll across this land an irresistible wave of readiness and determination to right the wrongs we have done, a dedication to justice, generosity and boldness of spirit. Doctor King dared to dream the dream that this might take place. But, as he so prophetically said just a few days ago, he had only seen the Promised Land from afar: from the top of the mountain. Perhaps, with God's help, his sacrifice will break the hardness of heart with which we are afflicted, so that his people will finally inherit the land of promise. Is there any greater tribute, is there any greater meaning, than that his death should bring us all closer to life? The light has been extinguished, the voice has been stilled, but the memory is here among us. When—because of it—we draw the strength and gain the wisdom to do what is right, then indeed—as the Bible assures us—the memory of the righteous will be for a blessing.

LESSON 8 HANDOUT 5 FOLLOWING MY FATHER'S FOOTSTEPS: SELMA 40 YEARS LATER BY SUSANNAH HESCHEL

When my father went to Selma, we were all nervous. John Lewis, who was then head of SNCC, had tried two weeks earlier to lead a march across the Pettus Bridge, and the Alabama state troopers had rioted against the demonstrators, beating Lewis and others severely. That day came to be known as "Bloody Sunday."

I vividly recall when my father left home two weeks later for Selma, kissing him goodbye, watching him get into a taxi to go to the airport and wondering if I would ever see him again. The next few days were tense, and when my father returned from the march, I was relieved and proud. The march itself had not been without violence -one of the march volunteers, Viola Liuzzo, a white Detroit housewife, was shot and killed by four Ku Klux Klan members while driving marchers to the Montgomery airport. And the anger of whites was expressed, my father described, not only in the epithets they screamed at the marchers, but even at the Alabama airport, where he was treated with deliberate rudeness. For my father, though, the march was not simply a political demonstration, but a religious occasion. He saw it as a revival of prophetic Judaism's political activism and also of the traditions of Hasidism, a Jewish pietistic revival movement that arose in the late eighteenth century, according to which walking could be a spiritual experience. He said it reminded him of the message of the prophets, whose primary concern was social injustice, and of his Hasidic forebears, for whom compassion for the suffering of other people defined a religious person.

When he came home from Selma in 1965, my father wrote, "For many of us the march from Selma to Montgomery was about protest and prayer. Legs are not lips and walking is not kneeling. And yet our legs uttered songs. Even without words, our march was worship. I felt my legs were praying."

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Stop. Having lived through the struggle for civil rights and the active involvement of Jews with Martin Luther King's fight on behalf of black equality what are your thoughts about this period? How did Jewish values influence the ethos of the civil rights movement. What changed about the relationship between Jews and Blacks after the assassination of Dr. King and why?

END HANDOUT

Jack Wertheimer writes about the impact of the antiwar movement of the 1960s. At the forefront of Jewish activists were the official leaders of the Reform movement, who defined social justice as central to their agenda. Reform rabbis were also in the vanguard of Jewish antiwar activities. Addressing the General Assembly of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations in 1965, Eisendrath declared: "We transgress every tenet of our faith when we fight on another's soil, scorch the earth of another's beloved homeland, slay multitudes of innocent villagers." The assembly passed a resolution urging a cease-fire and negotiated peace in Vietnam, a position that in 1965 was not yet popular with either the American public or American Jewry. Even the Reform movement, however, was not spared the divisiveness that characterized American life during the Vietnam War. When Eisendrath published an open letter to President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1967 comparing the president to Antiochus Epiphanes, the tyrant of the Chanukah account, twenty-five Reform congregations joined with New York's Temple Emanu-El to secede from the UAHC for more than a year in protest over Eisendrath's extreme position.

LESSON 8 HANDOUT 6 TO STEAL A BOOK BY ABBIE HOFFMAN

It's perhaps fitting that I write this introduction in jail. Here, you learn the only rehabilitation possible-hatred of oppression. Steal This Book is, in a way, a manual of survival in the prison that is Amerika. It preaches jailbreak. It shows you where exactly how to place the dynamite that will destroy the walls. The first section-SURVIVE!-lays out a potential action program for our new Nation. The chapter headings spell out the demands for a free society. It calls on the Robin Hoods of Santa Barbara Forest to steal from the robber barons who own the castles of capitalism. It implies that the reader already is "ideologically set," in that he understands corporate feudalism as the only robbery worthy of being called "crime," for it is committed against the people as a whole. Whether the ways it describes to rip-off shit are legal or illegal is irrelevant. The dictionary of law is written by the bosses of order. To steal from a brother or sister is evil. To not steal from the institutions that are the pillars of the Pig Empire is equally immoral.

We cannot survive without learning to fight and that is the lesson in the second section.

FIGHT! separates revolutionaries from outlaws. The purpose of part two is not to fuck the system, but destroy it. The weapons are carefully chosen. They are "home-made," in that they are designed for use in our unique electronic jungle. Here the uptown reviewer will find ample proof of our "violent" nature. Murder in a uniform is heroic, in a costume it is a crime. False advertisements win awards, forgers end up in jail. Inflated prices guarantee large profits while shoplifters are punished. Politicians conspire to create police riots and the victims are convicted in the courts. Students are gunned down and then indicted by

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suburban grand juries as the trouble-makers. A modern, highly mechanized army travels 9,000 miles to commit genocide against a small nation of great vision and then accuses its people of aggression. Slumlords allow rats to maim children and then complain of violence in the streets. Everything is topsy-turvy. If we internalize the language and imagery of the pigs, we will forever be fucked. When we conclude that bank robbers rather than bankers should be the trustees of the universities, then we begin to think clearly. When we see the Army Mathematics Research and Development Center and the Bank of Amerika as cesspools of violence, filling the minds of our young with hatred, turning one against another, then we begin to think revolutionary.

Revolution is not about suicide, it is about life. With your fingers probe the holiness of your body and see that it was meant to live. Become an internationalist and learn to respect all life. Smoking dope and hanging up Che's picture is no more a commitment than drinking milk and collecting postage stamps. Wide-spread dissemination of the information is the crux of the matter.

Watch for a special edition called Steal This White House, complete with blueprints of underground December, 1970 Cook County Jail Chicago. **Stop. Abbie Hoffman became somewhat of a mythical figure for certain elements of the left in the United States, and the devil incarnate for the right. What are your feelings about him and the role that Judaism may have played in shaping his ethos (keep in mind he graduated from Brandeis)?**

Talking point 4 How we differ

In this course we explore the way in which Jewish and America cultures influenced each other. In our discussions of the source documents we shared our thoughts about the boundary that if crossed can lead to the extinction of our kind of Judaism in America. The document before you lists 9 points that if taught in our religious schools and adult education classes can ensure the survivability of American Judaism.

LESSON 8 HANDOUT 7 -HOW WE DIFFER

LEVITICUS 18: 1-5

¹ The Lord spoke to Moses, saying:

² Speak to the Israelite people and say to them: I the LORD am your God.

³ You shall not copy the practices of the land of Egypt where you dwell, or of the land of Canaan to which I am taking you; nor shall you follow their laws.

⁴ My rules alone shall you observe, and faithfully follow My laws: I the LORD am your God.

⁵ You shall keep My laws and My rules, by the pursuit of which man shall live: I am the Lord.

"We begin with an affirmation of our particularism, of our unique destiny.

This may seem anomalous, but of course it is not. The first step of Outreach, and the single most important step, is to have a clear sense of who we are".

Rabbi Eric Yoffie, president URJ, CCAR Journal, Spring, 06

"The purpose of Jewish education is to encourage and promote Jewish continuity. Jewish journey should be articulated as different from other faith journeys. Toward that end Jewish education at Larchmont Temple should highlight Judaism's unique and distinguishable religious and cultural characteristics.

Larchmont Temple Education Transformation Retreat

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1. Judaism's initiation of the ideas of Monotheism, the creation of humanity in the image of God and anchored by our peoples' covenantal relationship with God; Ideas that usher forth humanism, spirituality and Jewish communal responsibility.
2. Judaism's tradition of mitzvot, predicated on Judaism's affirmation of God's presence in our daily lives and manifested in our relationships with others.
3. Judaism's articulation of the prophetic challenge, one imbued with Jewish moral and Ethical imperatives that compels Jews to struggle for tikkun olam through social justice.
4. Judaism's rich and varied contributions to literature, music, art , cinema and the theater.
5. Judaism's unique and inseparable bond with the land of Israel.
6. Judaism's deep religious and cultural link to Hebrew, the world's oldest living language.
7. . Judaism's history of exile and forced wandering, resulting in our community's experience as the world's "other", and consequentially in our abiding empathy for the stranger and the downtrodden.
8. Judaism's unique 5,000 year old historical journey, bringing the past to life in the present.
9. Judaism's communal legacy, a reality that characterizes Judaism's unique religious, national and cultural heritage.

END HANDOUT

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