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J. Kaplan

Robert J. Kaplan

After graduating *Cum Laude* from The Pennsylvania State University in 1975, Bob entered the insurance and financial planning profession.

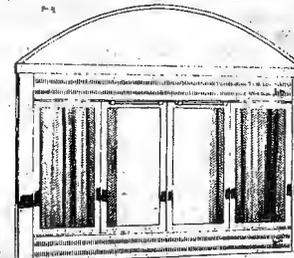
In 1980, pooling his talents and resources with some of his peers, Bob was a founding member of Creative Financial Planning Organization. That same year he qualified for the Million Dollar Round Table award and he has qualified each year thereafter. In 1984, Bob achieved the Round Table's "Top of the Table" status which denotes standing amongst the top 900 insurance producers in the world. The volume and quality of Bob's business has also earned him membership in The Travelers National Leadership Conference. In 1985, Bob qualified for The Travelers Honor Guard which is comprised of the top fifteen Travelers agents in the country (he finished 12th).

Bob is on the verge of achieving his Chartered Financial Consultant (ChFC) degree at American College as he continues to provide his clients with top level counseling in the insurance and financial planning areas.

Bob makes his home in Bryn Mawr. His greatest joys are his wife, Judy and son, Steven.

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Sanctuary

Refugees find safety in a local synagogue

By MARILYN SILVERSTEIN
Staff Writer

For one brief moment last week, Lucio, a refugee from El Salvador, stepped out of the shadows and into the light of the bimah at Congregation Beth Israel of Media.

In that moment, the congregation's Havurat Miklat L'Gerim — the Fellowship of Sanctuary for the Stranger — became the first and only Jewish body in the Delaware Valley — and one of only a handful of Jewish bodies among the nation's 300 sanctuary congregations — to give sanctuary to Central American refugees.

"We want bread, not bombs," Lucio told the congregation. "We want to live and not die. Our people are peaceful people. Don't close off the doors to peace. Don't open up the door to arms."

Working through the sanctuary underground, the havurah has offered shelter to Lucio, 26; his wife, Victoria; and their children, Herman, 4, and Suzannah, 2.

One hot summer night last week, with the synagogue overflowing with congregants and supporters, the havurah formally welcomed the activist and his family during an evening service filled with song, poetry and prayer in Hebrew, English and Spanish.

"This is indeed a holy moment," Rabbi Brian Walt told his congregation as the service began.

"*Shalom Aleichem!*" the congregation said as Lucio entered the sanctuary with several Central

American men, women and children who have found haven at five Philadelphia-area sanctuary churches. "Peace be unto you."

"*Que seas bendecido con paz,*" responded the bandanna-masked refugees. "May you also be blessed with peace."

"Exodus morality is the heart of Judaism," Walt told his congregation. "When a stranger resides with you in your land, you shall not wrong him," he quoted from Leviticus.

"The stranger who resides with you shall be as one of your citizens; you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt."

"It is this Exodus morality and the experience of our own people as refugees throughout history, and especially during the Holocaust, that has inspired us to be involved in sanctuary and brought us to this day," Walt said.

The call to receive the stranger is repeated more than 30 times in the Torah, Walt said. Two of those passages, from Deuteronomy, Chapters 23 and 24, formed the Torah reading for the evening.

As the Torah portions were chanted in Hebrew, Lucio, a straw hat and red bandanna masking all but his eyes, repeated the words in Spanish.

After his aliyah, Lucio faced the congregation and gave his testimony. His words were translated by Jonathan Conning, a research assistant at Swarthmore College who grew up

in Chile, where his father works as a United Nations demographer.

"I give thanks to Beth Israel for giving us a safe haven from which to escape the persecution in our country," Lucio said.

He spoke of his struggle to create a better life for workers in his country. He had participated in solidarity marches, in peaceful protests of election fraud and in his trade union's struggle for social justice and the freedom to organize, he told the congregation.

Over and over again, he said, he witnessed the massacre of peaceful protesters by El Salvador's National Guard.

Among those who were arrested, tortured and killed, he said, were his 15-year-old cousin and his 24-year-old brother.

Last year, he said, the National Guard came looking for him.

Lucio condemned "the anti-democratic, repressive character" of the regime of Salvadoran President Jose Napoleon Duarte, and he called upon the congregation — and on all North American residents — to oppose U.S. military aid to El Salvador and Guatemala and to help change what he called the "illegal and immoral" policies of the Reagan administration.

He spoke, he said, "in the name of more than 66,000 dead, more than 6,000 disappeared, more than 900 political prisoners and more than 2 million refugees inside and outside El Salvador and hundreds of thousands of persecuted persons in El Salvador



Their identities disguised, Lucio (right) and a fellow Central American refugee join the service at Congregation Beth Israel in Media.

Photo by Frances Cox

and Guatemala."

The moment was punctuated by the recitation — in Hebrew, English and Spanish — of the "*Shehecheyanu*, the ancient Jewish celebratory prayer of thanks for the blessing of life.

The remainder of the service was a counterpoint of prayer and song — "A Song for Peace" in Hebrew, "The New Underground Railroad" in English and "Alabado" in Spanish.

Earlier, in an interview, Lucio remarked through his interpreter that he had never before met anyone who is Jewish.

He was grateful to the congregation for all the moments he had passed there, he said, and happy to

find a group truly interested in what is happening in his country.

He observed that "many of the people not involved in sanctuary can't even put El Salvador on the map. They don't understand the real effects of the policies of the Reagan administration."

Lucio likened the sanctuary movement here to his trade union in El Salvador, calling both support groups.

"Here, the government doesn't like the sanctuary movement," he said. "There, the government doesn't like the unions."

In a lighter vein, Lucio reported with a smile that "all day, I try learn more English," adding through his

(Continued on Page 16)

*Sanctuary
movement*

Max Green's assertion (in your August 1986 bulletin) that rabbis and lay Jews assisting Central American refugees have been naively manipulated by the Sanctuary Movement demeans the intelligence and integrity of people whose work embodies Judaism's highest values.

The Sanctuary Movement and its Jewish component differs from the picture painted by Green in five distinct ways.

First, he dismisses the movement's assertion that individuals in El Salvador and Guatemala face persistent human rights problems which endanger their security and even their lives. Green boasts of improvement in the human rights situation in El Salvador. However, though there has been progress in some areas, in others (e.g. the plight of political prisoners and military attacks on civilian targets in leftist controlled areas causing massive displacement) the situation continues to deteriorate. As Amnesty International reported: "Despite periodic fluctuations in the level of human rights violations [by the Salvadoran Security Forces] since President Duarte assumed power, the pattern of human rights violations has not dramatically changed." Green also ignores other Central American countries, whose refugees the Sanctuary Movement assists, such as Guatemala where, by all measurements, the human rights situation has dramatically deteriorated over the past several years.

Secondly, Green argues that those refugees who enter the U.S. legal process are given a fair hearing. In fact, the ideological filter of this administration, which treats these individuals as economic refugees and denies the existence of political or human rights problems in El Salvador, makes it virtually

impossible for refugees to win political asylum. In 1984-85, political asylum was granted to only 74 refugees out of the 2,373 who applied.

Most importantly, the systematic denial of asylum has prevented the vast majority of the estimated 600,000 Salvadoran refugees from taking the risk of applying for asylum. (In 1985-86, there were only 404 Salvadoran requests for asylum of which only 38 were granted.) Hundreds of thousands of men, women and children are left in an anguished twilight zone between legal status in the U.S. and the constant fear of deportation. Since it is impossible for them to turn to the government, they appeal to people of conscience to assist them in their struggle for safety and freedom.

Third, Green maintains that returning refugees face no danger. He cites the Intergovernmental Commission on Migration and the American Civil Liberties Union. Yet, the Commission itself did not draw the same broad conclusions from its study as did Green. It wrote that the findings cannot "be considered as a scientific data base upon which to construct definitive analyses." As to the ACLU, in 1985 Congressional testimony -- two years after Mr. Green's citation -- it identified 112 likely cases of governmental persecution of deported refugees, including 52 political murders, 47 disappearances and 13 unlawful arrests.

Fourth, Green condemns the use of the Holocaust analogy in the discussion about sanctuary. He seems to be arguing that because the Holocaust was a unique event, there are no lessons to be drawn from it that apply to non-Holocaust situations. Nothing could be further from the truth. His notion would denude the Holocaust of all contemporary meaning.

One can believe that El Salvador is infinitely different from Nazi Germany and still believe that the Holocaust teaches us that we may not stand idly by while

people are sent off by our government to danger and possibly to their deaths. As Noble Peace Prize winner Elie Wiesel has taught us: "indifference always helps the oppressor and never the victim."

Until the issue of the safety of the refugees is resolved, the Jewish community will likely play an active role in the Sanctuary Movement. I am proud that the organized Jewish community actively supported the DeConcini-Moakley legislation to suspend deportations to El Salvador and Guatemala until the plight of returning refugees could be carefully studied and their safety secured. It is a shame that the National Jewish Coalition did not use its political influence to work with the rest of the Jewish community to ensure that the U.S. not return refugees to countries where they will be endangered.

Finally, Green maintains that the rabbis involved in the Sanctuary Movement are "naifs," manipulated by the Chicago Religious Task Force into an anti-administration posture. No one familiar with the Sanctuary Movement could agree. The movement is complex and varied. No group "pulls the strings." Many rabbis and sanctuary congregations engage only in legal activities; others engage in activities which violate the INS' current interpretation of the law. Some speak out on US policy in Central America; others do not.

Those rabbis who work in the Sanctuary Movement have done so primarily because of their direct encounter with Salvadoran or Guatemalan refugees. They responded to people in need with compassion and concern because they felt religiously bound to help the stranger and the alien. The notion that they became involved because of a slick media campaign is deeply offensive to them and to the Biblical tradition we share.

And if out of that encounter with refugees, some rabbis have also opposed U.S. policy, it is not because of manipulation by some conspiratorial group but

because of the stories that they have been told, the anguish they they have encountered and the testimony they have heard of attacks not only by the left but primarily by the government forces, supplied with US guns, planes, helicopters and bombs, which all too frequently target civilian populations.

My own organization, the UAHC, has long taken the position that reducing the Central American dispute solely to the question of militarily rebuffing Communist/Soviet expansionism -- as the administration would do -- is to fundamentally misperceive the nature of the Central American conflict. What is at stake are hundred year old struggles for land reform, for the right to organize, for the right of political participation and for political freedom. Only when the United States provides in the minds of those people a persuasive alternative to communism for economic and political reform will we deter the expansion of Soviet influence. To ignore the basic nature of the dispute is to play into the hands of the Soviets and allow them to manipulate the frustration and the despair of Central Americans for their own purposes.

But whatever our political disagreements, I would hope that Green agrees that those rabbis who have helped needy Salvadoran refugees, in the face of great personal risk, deserve respect and praise. Their deeds demonstrate an acceptance of our tradition which commands us to care for the stranger and to heed the cries of the refugees.

"If we are only for ourselves, what are we?"

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Sanctuary
movement

Speeches by leaders of the Sanctuary movement to synagogues and churches are replete with references to the Holocaust. Implicit and explicit comparisons are drawn between Nazis and right wing death squads and between Jews and Salvadoran refugees. Indeed, speakers often define the movement's purpose as saving Central American refugees from the fate of the Six Million.

But, away from the houses of worship, they reveal their real purpose: To defeat what the movement's leaders variously call the "facist" or "imperialist" United States intervention in Central America, by which they mean, U.S. support for the democratically elected governments of El Salvador (and to a much lesser extent Guatemala.) To the naifs who have joined the movement because they bought its humanitarian line, the Chicago Religious Task Force, the coordinating body for the movement as a whole, has this to say: "Some churches have declared themselves sanctuaries and have done almost nothing to oppose United States military aid to Central America. We wonder whether this is adequate-what is the value of a sanctuary church that continues its support (by silence, by vote or whatever) for U.S. policies in Central America. (Our emphasis)

The radical objective of the movement explains otherwise unaccountable policies and practices. It explains why the movement has not a word of criticism for the left in Central America, for the terroristic FMLN in EL Salvador or for the Marxist- Lennisnt Sandanistas in Nicaragua. It also explains why it

refuses to help Nicaraguan refugees or even refugees from EL Salvador unless and until they first agree to publicly denounce U.S. policy in Central America.

The movement arose at a time when right wing death squads roamed EL Salvador almost at will. But the political landscape of the country has changed since Duarte's election. In 1981, there were 9000 violent civilian deaths , many of them attributable if not quite traceable to far right para- military units. But in 1984, to the year of Duarte's election the number declined to 774 and it dwindled to half that in 1985.

Acknowledging the human rights progress that has been made in EL Salvador would put the Sanctuary movement out of business. So it continues writing and speaking as if 1986 were 1980 and Napoleon Duarte were Roberto D'aubissan.

Today, though, it focuses more on the fate that lies in store for El Salvadorans who are deported from the United States. Deporting them one leader alleges is just like putting " Jews on boxcars bound for Dachua:"Results of studies are to the contrary. The international organization responsible for monitoring such things, the Intergovernmental Commission on Migration has not reported a single case of a deportee coming to harm. In the much worse days of 1983 the American Civil Liberties Union failed to identify beyond doubt even a single deportee who had suffered a human rights violation. And State Department found only one deportee who was the victim of a human rights violation and that was a case of mistaken

identity.

The movement also charges the United States government with mercilessly violating the rights of Salvadoran illegals. The facts belie this allegation as well. There are a total of 500,000 Salvadoran illegals in the United States of whom a total of ----- will be returned to their home country this year. The relatively few that the understaffed INS catches up with many request political asylum, which is granted if they can demonstrate a "well founded fear of persecution if forced to return home." As Assistant Secretary of State Elliott Abrams has explained : " under our laws generalized conditions of poverty and civil unrest do not entitle people to leave their homeland and settle home. If this were our test one half of the one hundred million people living between the Rio Grand and the Panama Canal would meet it as would hundreds of million more people in other pants of the Earth." As it is the United States takes in more legal immigrants and refugees (the fourth highest number from El Salvador) than the rest of the world combined.

As the threat of persecution in EL Salvador declines, a lower percentage of Salvadorans will meet the political asylum test. (Conversely, as the human rights situation in Nicaragua gets worse, a higher percentage of its refugees will qualify) This is why fully 70% of Salvadorans caught by the INS return as "voluntary deportees" rather than under "deportation orders." and why the majority of the remaining 30% do not list the danger of political persecution as a reason for being allowed to stay.

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the administrative appeals procedure by civil service professionals. Denials, can be further appealed to our independent federal judiciary . There is thus no lack of due process.

The truth of the situation in El Salvador and in the United States is apparently of no matter to leaders of the Sanctuary movement. To wit: the Rabbi of the first synagogue to declare itself a sanctuary has said that " the evil that generated the Holocaust is the same evil now oppressing these people." He was referring primarily to Salvaodarans which he described as " today's Jews."

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Sanctuary

1. I do not know about Amnesty International but I consider a more than 95% reduction in violent civilian deaths in five years a very dramatic change. As far as Guatemala is concerned, the House Appropriations Committee has reported in its Foreign Aid Conference Report that "President Cerezo (democratically elected) is doing his utmost to bring violence and common crime under control." And, moreover, he is succeeding; the State Department reports, for example, that "paramilitary groups and so-called death squads are inactive in Guatemala now."
2. As I explained, the reason why a small percentage of Salvadoran refugees are granted political asylum is that very few are political refugees.
3. An ACLU representative testified in federal court that the organization had "abandoned (its) study" because it had no particulars on any deportee. On the other hand, the Intergovernmental Commission on Migration does have the particulars on 70% of those returned between December 1, 1984 and December 1, 1985, and has found that none of them has met a violent political death. In fact, it has been four years since any organization has named even one deportee who has been assassinated upon his return to El Salvador!
4. If the holocaust is "infinitely" different, as I believe it is, from the situation in El Salvador then it is obscene to discuss the two as if they are analogous as is the wont of the Sanctuary leaders. Those who continue to utter those obscenities certainly do not deserve our respect.

Behind the Sanctuary Movement

Max Green

Amidst extensive coverage in the Jewish press, rabbis belonging to the Sanctuary Movement have been touring the country's synagogues. Already, members of Reform Jewry's Union of American Hebrew Congregations and the Central Conference of American Rabbis, as well as the Conservative Rabbinical Assembly of America, have passed resolutions in support of the Movement. Now, the rabbis are hoping to persuade the nation's synagogues to declare themselves "sanctuaries" for illegal aliens from Central America.

Leaders of the Sanctuary Movement, both Jewish and non-Jewish, carry a seemingly-powerful message. Their speeches to synagogues and churches are replete with references to the Holocaust, including comparisons between Nazis and right-wing death-squads, and between Jews and Salvadoran refugees. Indeed, speakers often define the Movement's purpose as saving Central American refugees from the fate of the Six Million Jews.

But, away from the houses of worship, these leaders reveal a more far-reaching goal: the defeat of what they refer to as the "fascist" or "imperialist" U.S. intervention in Central America. By this they mean American support for the region's democratically-elected governments, particularly that of El Salvador.

To the naifs attracted to the Movement by its declared humanitarian goal, the Chicago Religious Task Force, the coordinating body for the Movement as a whole, has this to say: "Some churches have declared themselves sanctuaries and have done almost nothing to oppose U.S. military aid to Central America. We wonder whether this is adequate. What is the value of a sanctuary church that continues its support (by *silence*, by vote or whatever) for U.S. policies in Central America." (*emphasis added*)

The Movement's radical objective explains its leaders' blindness to both the decline in human-rights abuses in the

Max Green is associate director of the White House Office of Public Liaison.

Central American democracies, and the increased brutality of Nicaragua's Sandinista government and the anti-government rebel group in El Salvador. It also explains why it refuses to help refugees from Nicaragua, or even those from El Salvador, unless they first agree to denounce U.S. policy in Central America.

The Sanctuary Movement arose at a time when right-wing death-squads roamed almost at will in El Salvador. But the political landscape of the country has changed since Jose Napoleon Duarte's election to the presidency. In 1981, there were 9000 violent civilian deaths, many attributable to far-right para-military units. But in 1984, the year of Duarte's

The Movement's radical goals blind it to the decline in human-rights abuses in El Salvador.

election, the number declined to 774, and to half that in 1985.

Acknowledging the progress made by the Salvadoran government in the area of human rights would put the Sanctuary Movement out of business. So, instead, it continues to behave as if 1986 were 1980 and Napoleon Duarte were Roberto D'Aubisson, the right-wing politician often closely linked to the death-squads.

The Movement also focuses increasingly on the fate that awaits Salvadorans who are deported from the United States. Such deportations, one leader alleges, is just like putting "Jews on boxcars bound for Dachau." Numerous studies, however, indicate that such hyperbole is all but

baseless. The Intergovernmental Commission on Migration, which monitors such matters, has not reported a single case of a deportee coming to harm. Even in the much-worse days of 1983, the American Civil Liberties Union failed to identify conclusively a single deportee who had suffered a human-rights violation.

The Movement also charges the United States government with mercilessly violating the rights of Salvadoran illegals. The facts belie this allegation as well. There are a total of 500,000 Salvadoran illegals in the United States of whom fewer than 3,000 will be returned to their home country this year. Of the relatively few that immigration authorities catch up with, many request political asylum, which is granted if they can demonstrate a "well-founded fear of persecution if forced to return home." But, as Assistant Secretary of State, Elliott Abrams, has explained, "under our laws, generalized conditions of poverty and civil unrest do not entitle people to leave their homeland and settle here. If this were our test, one half of the one hundred million people living between the Rio Grand and the Panama Canal would meet it..." As it is, the United States takes in more legal immigrants and refugees (of whom the fourth-largest group is Salvadoran) than the rest of the world combined.

As the threat of persecution in El Salvador recedes, fewer Salvadorans are meeting the political-asylum test. As a result, fully 70 percent of Salvadorans caught by the INS return voluntarily, rather than under "deportation orders," while the majority of the remaining 30 percent do not list fear of political persecution as a reason for being allowed to stay. Moreover, those who are deported have had every opportunity to appeal to administrative panels and the federal courts, guaranteeing due process of law.

The facts relating to the situation in El Salvador and to illegal Salvadoran immigrants to the United States appear to have passed the Sanctuary Movement by. Nevertheless, the Movement's leaders continue to raise the specter of the Holocaust as they speak of "horrors" being committed with U.S. acquiescence.

This parallel between the Holocaust and the rapidly-improving human-rights situation in El Salvador does more than merely insult the memory of the six million Jews who perished under Hitler's tyranny. It reveals a lack of concern for the truth, both past and present, that deserves our strongest rebuke.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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Sanctuary

Synagogues Should Support Sanctuary, Says Rabbi

BY HENRY SREBRNIK

"Know ye the heart of the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt," Rabbi Joseph Weizenbaum last Sunday reminded a gathering at Temple Sinai. They had come to hear about his efforts, in Tucson, on behalf of Central American refugees seeking shelter in the U.S.

His synagogue, Temple Emanuel, was the first in this country to declare itself a "sanctuary" aiding illegal immigrants from countries such as El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua, which are caught up in the throes of civil war.

Weizenbaum is on a national tour, partly funded by New Jewish Agenda, publicizing the work of the Sanctuary movement, which has been especially active in the southwest. He hopes to convince more Jewish congregations to participate. The Union of American Hebrew Congregations and Central Conference of American Rabbis—the umbrella organizations of Reform Judaism—and the Rabbinical Assembly of America, the Conservative body, have passed resolutions in support.

At present, 17 synagogues in the U.S. have declared themselves sanctuaries; others are providing legal, medical and employment assistance to illegal aliens. In the Washington area—where some estimates put the number of Guatemalan and Salvadorian refugees at about 70,000—Fabraingen and Temple Sinai are debating whether to become involved.

Sanctuary should be a Jewish issue, Weizenbaum insisted. "Jewish sources give us all the answers we need about saving non-Jewish lives. Judaism demands you do something when people are dying—saving a human life overrules all other commandments. If you don't have *ahavat olam*, love for people, the rest is nonsense. Prayer that does not lead to action isn't prayer—just *davening* isn't enough."

Like Exodus and Holocaust:

The Tucson rabbi sees the current drama being played out in Central America through the prism of two seminal Jewish events: the Exodus and the Holocaust.

He related a recent visit to the Mexican border at dawn. "There



Rabbi Joseph Weizenbaum

were hoofprints in the sand, from the INS [Immigration and Naturalization] people on horses tracking refugees. I saw a torn piece from a dress, a child's shoe—they had been left behind by people in a hurry." The parallel, for Weizenbaum, was with the Jewish people fleeing Egypt. "And I hate to say it," he added, "but our government is Pharaoh."

He also responds to those Jews who worry about the legalities of providing sanctuary to undocumented refugees by recalling that it was against the law to shelter Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe. "The evil that generated the Holocaust is the same evil now oppressing these people," he stated. "But today, we're not the victims anymore. Today's 'Jews' are Guatemalans and Salvadorians."

"These people are the victims of horror. Many have been tortured—I could tell you such stories that you wouldn't be able to eat tonight. If we don't do what we are doing, they will be deported and shot. We're dealing with life and death—and I would go to jail to save their lives."

The Tucson Story

Weizenbaum described the process whereby his own temple joined the Sanctuary movement. "In the spring of 1984, clergy from about 11 Tucson area churches, plus myself, decided to sign a covenant committing ourselves to it. But—even though the covenant drew stren-

from the Holocaust experience—at my temple it lost by 12 votes. I was never so mortified and embarrassed in my life.

"I let things cool in the summer, but when *Kol Nidre* came around, I eyeballed 1,500 people, laid it all out, and announced we'd have a meeting in November. Over 300 people came, and the pros and cons went at it. At the end, it passed 2-1. It was the high moment of my being a rabbi."

Temple Emanu-El has become something of a showpiece since then. In January 1985 it was the site of an international conference on Sanctuary. Folksinger Joan Baez has performed there. And this past Purim, the Megillah was read in two languages, English and Spanish, for the benefit of Guatemalan and Salvadorian children whose parents are being sheltered by members of the congregation.

Tucson itself is currently the site of a trial, which began last November, in which the federal government has charged 11 people—including a Catholic nun and a Presbyterian minister—with conspiracy to smuggle and transport aliens into the U.S. It will soon go before the jury, so "the eyes of the world are on Tucson," declared Weizenbaum.

The rabbi told his listeners that the federal government—which, according to Sanctuary spokespeople, sends back about 300-400 people per month—is not observing its own laws when it comes to refugees. "The Refugee Act of 1980 says that any individual who fears for his life may come here. But the administration can't accept this. How can an individual need to flee from a country we consider good? So it calls the Guatemalans and Salvadorians economic refugees just out to make a buck, rather than political escapees, and considers them ineligible for entry.

"But we are dealing with people whose wives have been raped and whose children have been tossed on bayonets. And those deported back are usually killed. We are not breaking the law, but just running counter to what the administration says the law is. I say unequivocally and publicly that President Re-

of priorities. So the Sanctuary movement is a stumbling block to American foreign policy."

Weizenbaum pointed to "one of the side effects" of joining the Sanctuary movement. "A Sanctuary congregation works in coalition with Christian groups, and that elevates interfaith activities to a higher level. It becomes human beings—not Christians and Jews—working together to save the lives of other human beings. And together, the world becomes a little better place."

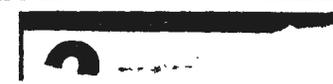
Shcharansky Urges Activism

JERUSALEM (JTA)—Quiet diplomacy will never open the gates for Soviet Jews unless it is accompanied by "all forms of public protest," Anatoly Shcharansky told a rally of some 2,000 students here last Saturday night.

The rally was sponsored by the World Union of Jewish Students and marked the first public appearance by the former Prisoner of Zion since the press conference he held a day after his arrival in Israel last Feb. 11.

Quiet diplomacy "has absolutely no chance of success if it is not conducted against a background of very strong public activity," he said in reply to a question. He insisted that even if negotiations should begin between Israel and the Soviet Union to renew diplomatic relations, it is "very important" that Israel does not agree to stop activity in support of Russian Jews who wish to emigrate. "Without open doors for the Jews, (Soviet leader Mikhail) Gorbachev must not be trusted," Shcharansky said.

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The Sanctuary Movement and the Jews

RAEL JEAN and ERICH ISAAC

In January, 1985, Temple Emanu-el in Tucson played host to a conference of 1,500 activists from the sanctuary movement. At this writing approximately 250 churches have declared themselves "sanctuaries," publicly defying U.S. immigration law to shelter illegal immigrants from El Salvador and Guatemala on the grounds that the government routinely refuses to grant these people political asylum although they are fleeing torture and death in their homelands.

The number of Jewish groups involved is difficult to pinpoint. The Union of American Hebrew Congregations, as of the end of February, 1986, had a list of 11 synagogues that had associated themselves with the movement, the largest of them Temple de Hirsch Sinai in Seattle with 1,500 members. Only one Conservative synagogue has joined the movement, Beth Israel Center in Madison, Wisconsin. Still, the New Jewish Agenda, the only Jewish lay organization to have endorsed the sanctuary movement, estimates that there are 20 Jewish religious groups involved: some of these are havurot and smaller congregations without buildings. (The New Jewish Agenda replaced Breira, which died in 1977, as the organization allowing Jews, specifically as Jews, to pursue a series of agendas fashionable among the secular and religious Left.)

As in the case of the peace movement, organized Jewry has been relatively late in following the path staked out by "progressive" Protestant and Catholic leadership. But within a little over two years after March, 1982, when Southside Presbyterian Church in Tucson launched the sanctuary movement with a letter to U.S. Attorney General William French Smith announcing that it would "publicly violate the Immigration Nationality Act," both the Central Conference of American Rabbis and the Rabbinical Assembly, the associations of Reform and Conservative rabbis respectively, had endorsed the movement.

Of potentially greater impact was the endorsement by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, which acts as the general assembly of the Reform movement, at its biennial convention in November, 1985, after an impassioned plea by Rabbi Joseph Weizenbaum of Tucson's Temple Emanu-el.

Hoping to expand the base of the movement among Jews, Rabbi Charles Feinberg, the sole Conservative

rabbi in the movement, Rabbi Judea Miller, and Rabbi Joseph Weizenbaum, perhaps the single most active Jewish figure associated with it, planned speaking tours under the auspices of the New Jewish Agenda.

There has been a major difference in the involvement of synagogues and churches in the sanctuary movement: churches have been far more willing to engage in illegal action. The sanctuary movement was launched, as we noted, with a letter of intent to break the law sent by Southside Presbyterian to the Justice Department. Churches have housed illegal immigrants on their premises, and ministers and priests have participated in smuggling immigrants over the Mexican border. The extent of church involvement in law-breaking has been documented in the trial of 11 sanctuary workers in Tucson, still underway at this writing. Government agents (themselves captured "coyotes" who smuggled immigrants for pay across the border) infiltrated the movement, secretly recording church meetings devoted to the mechanics of smuggling, transporting, and sheltering aliens.

Synagogues have been much more cautious in their involvement. The resolution passed by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations speaks of the "serious legal implications of some forms of sanctuary," obviously preferring to avoid them. Rabbi Richard Sternberger of the Union of American Hebrew Congregation's Washington office declared in December, 1985 that none of the Reform congregations that had declared themselves sanctuaries were actually harboring refugees. Albert Vorspan, director of the UAHC's Commission on Social Action, confirms this, saying, "I don't know of one congregation that is breaking the law." Indeed Vorspan said that the regional director of the Immigration and Naturalization Service had been invited to a meeting of the social action commission and on hearing of the activities in which Reform congregations were engaged — e.g., providing legal counsel, supporting legislation for extended voluntary departure, collecting food and clothing, providing medical and dental aid to refugees — said, "That's terrific." While a few congregations and havurot have put themselves in legal jeopardy (Charles Feinberg, for example, says his congregation could have been held legally liable for its part in arranging housing for a family that subsequently was helped to move to Canada) for

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the most part synagogues have served as a sort of "ladies' auxiliary," providing assistance but avoiding the action that lies at the heart of the sanctuary movement — civil disobedience.

It is hard to avoid the conclusion that sanctuary synagogues are pursuing what Christians would call "cheap grace." They take credit for bearing moral or "prophetic" witness, while avoiding the risks. (Indeed the situation is even worse, since a number of sanctuary synagogues say they encourage members to harbor refugees, which would put those individuals in jeopardy but not the congregation's board or its rabbi.) But if synagogues can be accused of moral posturing, it is all the more appropriate to ask what is the nature of the movement with which they are anxious to associate themselves symbolically, however marginal their actual role.

Memory of the Holocaust prompts the positive response of many Jews to the sanctuary movement. When Jews could have been saved, the United States (and the rest of the world) closed its doors. But although in its public appeals the sanctuary movement claims that Salvadorans and Guatemalans who are deported face "almost certain death," the accuracy of these emotionally powerful claims deserves examination. One must also ask to what extent the sanctuary movement is genuinely humanitarian, and to what extent its leaders manipulate humanitarian sentiments of Christians and Jews alike to pursue a political agenda. And if there is such an agenda, does it correspond to Jewish interests or indeed Jewish values?

An examination of the sanctuary movement's literature reveals that this is a movement whose target is a guerrilla victory in El Salvador and a revolutionary transformation of the United States according to the tenets of "liberation theology," which welds together Christianity and Marxism.

The coordinating body of the sanctuary movement is the Chicago Religious Task Force on Central America. This group provides the guidelines for activists seeking to make local churches (or synagogues) sanctuaries; it selects the aliens who will be given sanctuary and "matches" them to a given church; and it provides literature to churches that have become sanctuaries so as to raise the political consciousness of their members in the battle against U.S. policy in Central America.

ChailImpact, newsletter of the UAHC's Commission on Social Action, in its issue on sanctuary informs its readers that the first step a synagogue takes when it agrees to offer sanctuary is to contact the Chicago Religious Task Force on Central America, which "will inquire as to the facilities, resources, and commitments of the congregation, and will attempt to match the synagogue with a suitable refugee family." (In imitation the New Jewish Agenda set up its own Central America Task Force.)

The Chicago Religious Task Force makes no bones about its political targets. In its publication *Basta* it boasted that within a year sanctuary had been transformed into a significant national movement demanding "an end to all U.S. intervention in Central America."

Its "Statement of Faith" is above all, in fact, a statement of faith in U.S. villainy. The sanctuary movement, we are told, "seeks to uncover and name the connections between the U.S. government and the Salvadoran death squads and the connection between U.S. business interests and the denial of human and economic rights of the vast majority of people."

The Statement of Faith contains no pacifist sentiments. On the contrary, Salvadoran "theologians" who describe armed struggle as a "vehicle of holiness" are quoted. The Statement of Faith continues: "To stand in solidarity with the Central American poor struggling for freedom does not necessarily mean sending them guns. Such a way may be beyond our range of expertise and responsibility. But it does mean stopping the flow of U.S. arms that are used to massacre the people." Notice that the Chicago Religious Task Force is hesitant to dismiss outright the sending of arms to the *guerrillas* as an appropriate activity for the sanctuary movement; what is certain is that arms to the *government* must stop.

Political democracy gets short shrift from the religious leaders of the sanctuary movement. Renny Golden, a former nun, and Michael McConnell, a United Church of Christ minister, are founders of the Chicago Religious Task Force and in their voluminous writings on sanctuary together serve as "theologians" of the movement. (Indeed one of their articles is called "A Theology of Sanctuary.")

Dismissing the elections upon which the American public focuses, in their view, far too much attention, Golden and McConnell declare that in Central America "real democracy is when the majority (and in the case of Central America, that means the poor) are in control of their own destiny. In a democracy the majority (in Central America, the poor) have control over their own lives."

The kind of "democracy" Golden and McConnell have in mind is that of Nicaragua, to which they pay tribute in the acknowledgments to their book *Sanctuary: A New Underground Railroad*: "We acknowledge the Nicaraguan people fighting for its life even now, and the church of the people, which has lived revolutionary hope in the midst of devastation."

Similarly Angela Berryman of the American Friends Service Committee, another sanctuary leader, told the assembled activists in Temple Emanuel at the sanctuary symposium in Tucson, that "what is a nonissue in Central America is elections — contrary to what is said here in the United States. Liberation, peace, U.S. policy, violence, and injustice are the issues."

Rev. William Sloane Coffin, whose Riverside Church

in New York City played host to a Guatemalan family for 16 months, told the same conference that the real issue was not civil liberties but human rights in economic and social terms.

The perspective is strikingly similar to that of the guerrillas. A 1985 U.S. State Department report quotes Radio Venceremos, the guerrilla radio station, on the subject of the most recent elections: they were "a useless activity of no value to the people. . . . Our arms are the true guarantee for peace with justice."

Of course the very people who minimize the importance of civil rights for El Salvador and Guatemala are the most vociferous in demanding the broadest interpretation of civil rights in this country.

The passion that drives the sanctuary movement's leadership has far less to do with compassion for refugees than bitter resentment toward the United States. Dan Dale of the Chicago Religious Task Force says bluntly: "Our task as North Americans is to get the U.S. out. We do not want to simply be medics for the U.S. war on the poor and indigenous people of Central America." Philip Wheaton, the movement's coordinator in Washington, D.C., has said that sanctuary aims to advance "changes in the fundamental economic priorities of the American system," which "is sucking the world dry of its wealth and resources."

The absence of genuine humanitarianism is nowhere more evident than in the movement's treatment of illegal immigrants from Nicaragua. In the last couple of years there has been a marked increase in the number of Nicaraguans crossing the Mexican border, with the result that there are now more than double as many Nicaraguans as Salvadorans applying for political asylum.

Most of these, like the Salvadorans, are young men of military age seeking both greater economic opportunity and to avoid conscription and cannot prove they are *individual* targets of persecution. And since the Refugee Act of 1980 changed the law so as to make no distinction between those fleeing Communist and non-Communist regimes, they do not qualify for political asylum.

The sanctuary movement has found Nicaraguan immigrants an embarrassment and has been unwilling to help them. This is in dramatic contradiction to the professed humanitarian aims of the movement and an arresting confirmation that refugees are only tools in its political game. John O'Leary, whose sister and her husband were forced to flee Nicaragua in 1982 (Geraldine O'Leary was a former Maryknoll nun who married Edgard Macias, former Vice-Minister of Labor in the Sandinista government), has established an organization called New Exodus to help the illegal Central American immigrants who can obtain no help from the network of sanctuary activists. At a conference on the sanctuary movement organized by the Institute on Reli-

gion and Democracy in Washington, D.C., O'Leary reported the fate of a Nicaraguan who posed as a Salvadoran to obtain help from the movement and was sent to a church in Vermont. When he confessed his nationality, he was unceremoniously put on a plane and shipped to Washington, D.C., where he was turned over to New Exodus. (For the sanctuary movement, Nicaragua of course is the model to be followed by a "liberated" El Salvador and Guatemala.)

Yet another indication that revolutionary fervor is the primary motive force for sanctuary activists is the effort of a number of them, organized in a group called Global Justice, to stop the importation of Salvadoran and Guatemalan coffee beans by U.S. corporations. Global Justice grew out of the successful campaign to stop Western Airlines from flying deported Salvadoran refugees back to El Salvador. It can scarcely be imagined that economic boycotts will improve the welfare of the peasants of El Salvador and Guatemala; however, they might bring revolution closer, the real target of the activists.

Not surprisingly, the religious activists of the sanctuary movement have established close ties with the secular Left. CISPES, the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador, is one of the most tangible expressions of those links. Boasting by the summer of 1984 310 chapters in 48 states, CISPES works openly on behalf of the Salvadoran guerrillas, its stated target to mobilize U.S. sentiment "in solidarity with the FMLN-FDR, the legitimate representative of the Salvadoran people." EPICA, the Ecumenical Program for Inter-American Communication and Action, created and run by Philip Wheaton, who also serves as the sanctuary movement's coordinator for the Washington, D.C. area, is one of the five members of the CISPES steering committee. Indeed, according to the radical Left paper *The Guardian*, EPICA "helped set up CISPES." The other organizations that make up the CISPES steering committee are the Religious Task Force on El Salvador, the Interreligious Task Force on El Salvador (the first is chiefly Catholic, the second chiefly Protestant, but both are supportive of the sanctuary movement), the North American Council on Latin America (founded as the research arm of SDS, the organization of campus revolutionaries of the 1960s), and the U.S. Peace Council, U.S. affiliate of the Soviet Union's premier international front organization, the World Peace Council.*

The creation of CISPES was actually the handiwork

* See Soviet Covert Action: Hearings Before Sub-Committee on Oversight of Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. House of Representatives, 96th Congress 2nd Session, February 6, 19, 1980; Soviet Active Measures: Hearings Before the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, House of Representatives, 97th Congress, July 13, 14, 1982; and Ronald Radosh, "The 'Peace Council' and Peace," *The New Republic*, January 31, 1983.

of Farid Handal, a Salvadoran of Palestinian Arab descent who works closely with El Salvador's Communist Party (his brother Shafik is its General Secretary). That CISPES was founded at the instigation of a foreign Communist insurgency became public knowledge when Salvadoran soldiers, in a raid on an art gallery where guerrilla documents were stored (it was owned by a third Handal brother) found the report Handal had made on his trip to the U.S. Handal had begun his trip with a visit to the offices of the U.S. Communist Party and the U.S. Peace Council. But since Handal's purpose was to create an organization that would *not* be identified as a Communist front, Handal traveled around the country to line up sympathetic religious and "human rights" groups. In his report on his trip Handal mentions that Philip Wheaton accompanied him for part of it.

CISPES in turn was one of the organizations that coordinated the Mexican-U.S. Border Conference in Solidarity with El Salvador in 1982, whose focus was on the triple targets of stopping deportation of Salvadorans from the U.S., "educating" Central American refugees in the U.S. as to their revolutionary political responsibilities, and advancing the cause of the guerrillas—in the words of the Conference's resolution "to adopt as our own the proposals of the FMLN-FDR and to work to advance them." The Conference decided to create a U.S.-Mexican Commission in Defense of Central American Refugees, with one of the key organizations in the new grouping to be El Rescate, another of the groups straddling the religious community and the far Left that works closely with the sanctuary movement.

The common cause of Marxist revolution thus creates some odd bedfellows. Much of the legal support work for the movement is performed by the National Lawyers Guild, the major U.S. affiliate of the International Association of Democratic Lawyers, an international Soviet front organization.*

The Guild and the Center for Constitutional Rights, a "public interest" law firm created by Guild activists, together filed suit in May, 1985, on behalf of over 70 religious organizations seeking to end all deportations of Salvadorans and to block federal prosecution of sanctuary workers on the grounds that this violated their free exercise of religious faith. The Center for Constitutional Rights also served as counsel in a similar suit filed in January, 1986 on behalf of the Presbyterian Church and the American Lutheran Church. Both the Guild and the Center for Constitutional Rights are involved on behalf of the defense in the government's case against 11 sanctuary workers in Tucson. Presumably only a few in the courtroom familiar with the Guild's background enjoyed the irony when Ellen Yaroshevsky, the Center for Constitutional Rights staff

* See Soviet Covert Action, *ibid.*

attorney, declaimed: "There is only one leader here, and He is just beyond the reach of the Immigration and Naturalization Service."

Even this performance pales beside the Soviet Union's intervention on behalf of religious freedom in the United States. The Russian Orthodox Church in Moscow, which makes all its foreign policy pronouncements as a mouthpiece of the regime, has declared its "solidarity with those activists of U.S. churches who have unlawfully been brought to trial, to uphold their rights and freedoms and to demand an end to the prosecution of members of, and participants in, the ecumenical movement, Sanctuary."

The Chicago Religious Task Force's role in selecting refugees for participation in the movement is crucial because the refugees have an important role to play: "educating" the average American churchgoer (and others) about the evils of U.S. policy in Central America. As Golden and McConnell put it: "Sanctuary, at its best, has not been a place to hide in, but a platform to speak out from."** For the most part the selection process is carried out in Mexico. Rob Huesca, a former intern for *The Nation* who participated in the process, has described it. Huesca says that Salvadorans and Guatemalans in flight from poverty are not given help. (This by the way is a fascinating admission that some immigrants *are* simply seeking greater economic opportunity, a contention the movement vigorously disputes when it is made by U.S. government officials.) In addition, those selected must oppose U.S. policy and "express a willingness to relate their experiences publicly on arrival in the United States." For the refugee-in-sanctuary can indeed be kept busy, with a steady round of speeches before church groups and civic organizations.

Not surprisingly, the rhetoric of the refugees selected often reflects approved "progressive" principles. Felipe Excot, a Guatemalan taken into sanctuary in Weston Priory in Vermont, told the 1985 Sanctuary Symposium at Tucson's Temple Emanuel that the people's oppressors in Guatemala "are in alliance also with wealthy families from the United States and also from Israel." Another Guatemalan in sanctuary, an army deserter, told the same conference that sanctuary was a symbol of solidarity with the people of Central America in the struggle against "U.S. and Israeli imperialism."

Friendship for Israel is in short supply within the movement. Rev. Philip Zwierling, whose First Unitarian Church of Los Angeles was one of the three churches that declared itself a sanctuary simultaneously with the

** Even here the secular Left served as pioneers. In October, 1981, six months before Southside Presbyterian launched the sanctuary movement, two Salvadoran revolutionaries were picked up by the INS as they embarked on a 25-city speaking tour, sponsored by the Revolutionary Communist Brigade.

pioneering Southside Presbyterian in March, 1982, has been so outspoken in his attacks that David Lehrer, Western States counsel for the Anti-Defamation League, publicly protested. Lehrer reported that in a sermon delivered on October 20, 1985, Zwerling called Israel "a warfare state in the Middle East — a country that is under siege from its neighbors and yet is terrorizing other countries" and accused Zionists of collaborating with the Nazis.

The hostility of the American Friends Service Committee, another important element in the movement, is notorious.* The National Lawyers Guild, which has served as the movement's chief legal arm, is noteworthy for its mission to the Middle East, in part funded by the PLO, and the subsequent report charging systematic torture of Arabs by Israel. The International Association of Democratic Lawyers, to which the Guild, as noted earlier, is affiliated, in 1980 added "zionism" [sic] to the litany of evils (the others are imperialism, colonialism, neocolonialism, racism, and apartheid) it vows to extirpate.

Ultimately the sanctuary movement's leadership is less concerned about achieving revolutionary victories in Central America, important as that target is to the activists, than about bringing revolution "home" to the United States. Implausible as it may seem that a relatively small number of "refugees-in-sanctuary" could create a revolutionary situation in the United States, this is the hope that spurs many of the activists.

Perhaps Presbyterian theologian Richard Shaull's *Heralds of a New Reformation* provides the clearest account of what sanctuary activists hope to achieve. The "heralds" are the poor of both South and North America, formed into base communities. Shaull offers a glowing account of the achievements of these communities in Latin America, where "as poor people have come together to study the Bible, they have begun to dream of economic justice and have decided that this means the end of the capitalist system as they have known it."

Perceptions are not as advanced in the United States, Shaull concedes, but here too we have a "Third World" in the form of blacks and Hispanics, who can help us to appreciate the truth that "in capitalism we human beings have created an economic order that is not human." For base communities to flourish here, Shaull believes, it is essential that communities of people form to "help each other understand and deal with our own oppression." (Italics in original.)

For Shaull we are all victims of our technological society, of "self-oppression caused by internalizing current values," of "oppressive work situations" and of "the sense of political powerlessness when trying to work for

changes in society." (Shaull has certainly come up with an original form of oppression, defined as accepting — "internalizing" — the values of one's own society.) Shaull tried to develop base Christian communities in the United States, but explains that he ran into the problem that members lacked a sense of "the relation between their own experience of oppression and the overall social and economic system," a recognition that had made base communities in Latin America "the most powerful political force working for change."

Activists hope that contact with the refugees selected for sanctuary, many of whom had functioned as "Delegates of the Word" in base communities, will energize and radicalize middle-class churchgoers, particularly if the government makes an ineffective effort to crack down on the movement. According to Jim Corbett, popularly credited with being the father of the movement (and one of the 11 on trial in Tucson), sanctuary opens the way for congregations composed of "beneficiaries of violence" to become "base communities that also serve." Corbett obviously believes that the trial will be helpful to the movement for he has written that "nonviolent insurgency is certainly far superior to guerrilla insurgency because it requires no arms supply — just government reaction — in order to maintain momentum and establish the leverage needed for social jujitsu." Golden and McConnell are similarly hopeful: "Liberation theology has walked over the border, incorporated into the exile refugee community. A popular church is emerging in the United States mirroring the grassroots church that began in the wake of Vatican II in Latin America."

It is difficult to see how the sanctuary movement coincides with Jewish interests. The short-range target is installation of revolutionary regimes in Central America on the model of Sandinista Nicaragua. When the Sandinistas came to power the small community of 70 Jewish families was forced out of the country. The only synagogue was firebombed while the community was at Sabbath services and the president of the synagogue, 70-year-old Abraham Gorn was arrested and thrown in jail.

In its harassment of Jews, the Sandinista government appears to have been paying part of its debt to the PLO, which trained many of the Sandinistas, including several members of the junta, during the 1960s and 70s. The PLO now maintains a fully accredited embassy in Managua and the Sandinistas supply members of the PLO with Nicaraguan passports. The tenor of the relationship is summed up in the pledge of Interior Minister Tomas Borge (who himself received training at PLO camps) to Yasir Arafat that Nicaragua is his land and "the PLO cause is the cause of the Sandinistas."

Although the small Jewish community of El Salvador has already left as a result of the prolonged turmoil

* See, for example, "The Seduction of the Quakers" in *Midstream*, November, 1979.

there, leaving no hostages in the event of an FMLN victory (and the FMLN has a similar debt to the PLO), the security of Jews can scarcely be enhanced by the addition of another virulently anti-Israel voice at the U.N. Small Jewish communities remain in other Central American countries, including Guatemala (the other primary target of the sanctuary movement) and Costa Rica. Dr. Jaime Daremblum, a journalist and spokesman for the Costa Rican Jewish community at a White House meeting spoke of the fear among his fellow Central American Jews that the Sandinistas would carry out their "revolution without borders" making the Jews once again the first victims.

It is dubious that the sanctuary movement promotes Jewish values any better than it serves Jewish interests. We have seen the contemptuous attitude toward electoral democracy among the leadership. What is envisaged is a blend of Marxism-Leninism with communitarian Christianity expressed through a "people's church." Moreover, given the strong emphasis upon separation of church and state that has characterized the Jewish community, it is surprising to find endorsement of the proposition, central to the sanctuary movement, that religious institutions should enjoy an independent right to make immigration law.

But what of the argument that "sanctuary" is a fulfillment of Jewish religious values? Sanctuary activists claim to be drawing upon the biblical tradition of cities of refuge, and although this parallel is actually emphasized more by Christians (who may see it as a means for mobilizing conservative believers), the Union of American Hebrew Congregation's Social Action Commission, in its document advocating sanctuary, also draws upon alleged biblical warrants.

But cities of refuge were highly specialized, restricted explicitly to those who killed without intention ("if he did not do it by design, but it came about by an act of God . . ." Ex. 21:12-13). They were *not*, as Golden and McConnell claim, in their book *Sanctuary*, places where "the persecuted could seek asylum." The first mention of the city of refuge (ultimately 48 were established), in Exodus, is unambiguous in denying the right of sanctuary to the murderer ("When a man schemes against another and kills him treacherously, you shall take him from My very altar to be put to death." 21:14) What Hebrew law was doing was to transform the principle of sanctuary prevalent in the pagan world, where a morally neutral power imbued certain places with a quasi-automatic power of protection, so as to give it a moral foundation.

Moreover the city of refuge is not simply a shelter from the blood avenger. The individual is expected to atone for the death he inadvertently caused, for "blood pollutes the land" (Num. 35:33), and the spilling of innocent blood uncovers, as it were, a primal flaw in crea-

tion. He is banished to the city of refuge until the death of the high priest (Num. 35:28). The fact that the cities of refuge were levitical cities and that the function of the priests in ancient Israel was to ritually expiate the people's unintentional transgressions illuminates the atonement implicit in the banishment for the lifespan of the officiating high priest.

It requires a full measure of arrogance to find in these religious conceptions a warrant for interposing individual consciences and perceptions of morality against a legal establishment. In fact a third aspect of the biblical law shows that it embodies a drive to lodge punishment for killing, intentional or inadvertent, firmly in official institutions. The constituted authorities of the cities of refuge maintain final judgment. While the law affirms the duty of the blood avenger to kill the murderer, it denies him the decision as to whether the slaying was in fact intentional. It is a court that decides (see Num. 35 and Deut. 19), in effect making the blood avenger its agent. At the same time, a device crucial to blood vengeance systems is removed. The slayer *must* go to a city of refuge. The payment of blood money or ransom to the kin of victims (still current in areas where blood vengeance is practiced) is prohibited. According to the law (Num. 35:32) not only may one not accept ransom for a murderer but one may not "accept ransom in lieu of flight to a city of refuge, enabling one to return to live on his land before the death of the priest." Private arrangements cannot be substituted for the dual necessities of atonement and determination by the officially instituted courts.

The search for biblical warrants does not stop with cities of refuge. It is also claimed that sanctuary has roots in the commandment to befriend the stranger in one's midst. The rabbis have counted 46 places in the Torah in which the people of Israel are exhorted on the proper and loving treatment of the strangers that dwell among them.

Such a "co-dwelling stranger" — *ger toshav* — has abjured his pagan beliefs (no idolatrous cults are tolerated in the Land of Israel) and has accepted the Noahite commandments. Rabbinic tradition accords such a sojourner the status of righteous Gentile — whose place in the hereafter is secure and who has a legal standing in the Land almost indistinguishable from that of the Israelite. In other words, unlike the carefully screened refugee-in-sanctuary, with his revolutionary allegiances, the *ger toshav* affirms the validity of the system in which he dwells. The rabbis have a cautious attitude toward the *ger toshav* nonetheless. He is not to be settled in Jerusalem or in border areas "so that he should not be tempted to turn the city over to the enemy."* Certainly

* Such rabbinic caution would serve current leaders well. The Swedish press now reports that Sweden has become a haven for hundreds of Soviet-trained terrorists and agents. The roots of the problem go

there is no warrant in the rules concerning the *ger toshav* for the notion that the population of a nation afflicted by civil strife has a right to migrate to the Land of Israel.

Finally the Union of American Hebrew Congregations invokes rabbinic tradition requiring protection of those fleeing from persecution. Its paper on sanctuary says: "According to the Talmud, one is obligated to help anyone in distress or fleeing for his or her life; failure to do so is accounted as bloodshed (*shfichut damim*) and a violation of the biblical commandment: 'you shall not stand idly by while your neighbor bleeds (Lev. 19:16).'"

At present, there is a remedy under U.S. immigration law for precisely this circumstance. An individual "with a well-founded fear of persecution" is entitled to political asylum. The sanctuary movement rejects the legal remedies, denying the legitimacy of the system. Participants do not encourage those taken into sanctuary to apply for political asylum (unless they are subsequently arrested by the immigration authorities).

What, finally, of the parallel to the fate of Jews in the Hitler period, and the special responsibility this imposes on Jews to help others under similar threat in an uncaring world? It is this claim that resonates most when an appeal is made to Jewish values. In fact, that parallel is spurious. Here it is first important to recognize the way the sanctuary movement misuses the analogy. Rather than drawing an analogy to U.S. indifference to the suffering caused by the evil Nazi regime, movement activists draw a direct parallel between the U.S. government and the Nazis. Robert McAfee Brown says: "To the degree that people in Germany failed to give sanctuary and hiding to Jews, to that degree the power of the Nazi government increased and became more repressive. To the degree that people in the United States failed to give sanctuary and housing to Salvadorans and Guatemalans . . . to that degree the power of our government to become increasingly repressive will be enhanced."

Richard Shaull draws the parallel in the same way: "The question raised for the Germans then and for us today is not what to do in these circumstances; it is, rather, whether or not we have the vitality of faith necessary to do what we know is right." James Corbett is even

back to 1973, when Olof Palme as Prime Minister accepted 170 Tupamaros (a particularly bloody Uruguayan terrorist group) as "refugees." Other Central American political refugees followed and many of them were spotted by police in meetings with known East bloc and Cuban agents. With Swedish passports, groups began traveling to the Soviet Union and East Germany and intelligence officials discovered that rather than attending cultural events, as claimed, they were being trained in terrorist camps. The freshly trained "refugees" then went on extended tours of Central and South America. Swedish intelligence officials have concluded that the Soviets have used Sweden's generous "refugee" policy as a means to turn Sweden into a staging area for terrorist export. See "Palme's Sweden: Haven for Terrorists," *Human Events*, March 15, 1986.

more explicit, speaking of "the Pentagon's final solution to the Third World problem" and declaring: "Sad to confess, we Anglo-Americans seem to share some of the Third Reich's moral insensitivity to technocratically organized mass murder."

Jews attracted to the movement are not guilty of such distortions, but their voices sound out of place in the cacophony of hate-America rhetoric. Elie Wiesel speaking at the 1985 sanctuary conference in Tucson said: "I must tell you that I feel nothing but gratitude to this country, the first country that offered me a home and a refuge. I can tell you, my good friends from El Salvador, from Guatemala, and other places, that I hope you will soon feel what I feel."

His was a lone voice — far more typical were tirades such as that of David Napier, who under the title "Hebraic Concepts of Sanctuary and Law" described U.S. policy in Central America as "a policy that quite obviously countenances, instructs in, and pays for indiscriminate torture, rape, mutilation, and murder of innocent folk alleged to be part of a conspiracy, a conspiracy that does not in fact exist, but the fabrication of which justifies monumental slaughter and the continuation of U.S. domination."

The claims made by the sanctuary movement concerning the fate of deportees are as distorted as the U.S.-Nazi analogy. The claim is repeatedly made that those sent back face a high probability of torture and death, but there is no evidence that this is the case.* While the absence of proof has not stopped the movement from working on the emotions of churchgoers with tales of certain death awaiting deportees, the movement has shifted ground in its efforts to persuade Congress to halt all deportations of Salvadorans. The argument is now that even if a deported Salvadoran faces no dangers greater than a person who never left El Salvador, conditions there are so dangerous as to make it unconscionable to send people back.

A basic problem with the sanctuary movement, which the shifting ground of its claims underlines, is that the situation has changed drastically in El Salvador since 1980. The movement cannot acknowledge this because its target has not changed: victory for the Communist insurgency. Death-squad activity, at a peak in 1980, has declined precipitously. Abuses now seem to be overwhelmingly the responsibility of the guerrillas. They have resorted increasingly to terrorism as their support within the population has waned in the wake of repeated democratic elections and a moderate government under President Duarte that has made a strong and successful effort to curb human-rights abuses by the military. The U.S. embassy in El Salvador estimated that of

* For a detailed analysis of this issue, see Rael Jean Isaac, "Sanctuary Scoundrels," *American Spectator*, April, 1986.

82 politically motivated killings in the first few months of 1985, 61 could be attributed to the guerrillas and 5 to death squads, with the rest uncertain. (Attribution to the guerrillas was made when Radio Venceremos and/or Radio Havana boasted of responsibility.)

There has moreover been a marked improvement in the handling by the U.S. of political asylum claims by Salvadorans. When death squads were at their height in 1980 and 1981 the U.S. granted virtually no political asylum claims from Salvadorans. Today, even though human-rights abuses are a tiny fraction of what they were at that time, the U.S. grants several hundred Salvadoran claims a year.

But far from admitting this simultaneous improvement, the sanctuary movement has grown *more* strident, its rhetoric and organizing activities escalating as it has reached out to persuade city councils and universities—even states—to declare themselves “sanctuaries.” (While this is a purely symbolic act in most cases, it does serve to encourage would-be migrants from Central America who now believe that if they can reach such declared sanctuary cities as Seattle, Duluth, or Cambridge they are safe from the immigration authorities.)

The movement also focuses more attention now on the impact of the war, particularly aerial bombardment, on sections of the country still controlled by the guerrillas. Conditions have grown so severe there that only civilians strongly sympathetic to the guerrillas remain. The war has caused massive displacement of population, involving half a million people, or one-tenth of the population, many of them in camps within El Salvador. But the movement puts no blame on the guerrillas for causing this displacement and makes no effort to raise money to ease the admittedly difficult life of those dependent on government and voluntary aid in the camps. It could certainly be argued that the best aid that can be given to the people of El Salvador is the military aid that could eliminate the increasingly unpopular insurgency and allow the displaced population to return to their homes and normal life.

If the sanctuary movement remains fixed in the time warp of 1980, the Catholic Church in El Salvador has grown increasingly impatient with American activists who claim to follow its lead. The Salvadoran archdiocesan newspaper *Orientacion* in an editorial on December 8, 1985 itself protested against a protest by a group of U.S. Christians in front of the U.S. embassy in El Salvador calling for an end to all U.S. aid to the government. The editorial noted that the guerrillas were in an ideological battle to force their political-economic system on the country. U.S. Christians, said the editorial, need to be aware that much has changed in El

Salvador since 1982, when Archbishop Romero was assassinated. Between that period and the present “the guerrillas lost their cause and evidently their popular support.”

What is clearly not in Jewish interests is to destroy the very concept of political asylum, for there is no group that historically has had as much need of it as Jews. Yet this is what the sanctuary movement does with its refusal to admit any distinction between political refugees and economic migrants. The sanctuary movement's strategy in this matter is dictated by its political targets, in which refugees are merely pawns. But if everyone is a political refugee, no one is a political refugee.

In the case of El Salvador, of over 500,000 illegal immigrants estimated to be in the U.S., as many as 350,000 may have come before 1979, when the war began. Traditionally El Salvador has been second only to Mexico as a source of illegal immigrants to this country. Wages in El Salvador, whose economy has been badly battered by the guerrilla insurgency, are a mere 5 percent of what they are in the United States and unemployment there stands at 40 percent.

What the sanctuary movement really represents is a new stage in the radicalization of the mainline churches. As Kerry Ptacek and Laura Ingraham point out in an article in *This World*: “Up until now radical denominational leaders left the local church up to the members as long as they would ignore or acquiesce in radical policies at the national level.” But now denominational boards are encouraging local congregations to confront government authority directly. Nor is sanctuary the only form of civil disobedience being urged upon church members. A “Pledge of Resistance” is being circulated through the churches. Those who sign promise to disrupt government offices and military installations at the prompting of a “signal group” in the event “the United States invades, bombs, sends combat troops, or otherwise significantly escalates its intervention in Nicaragua or El Salvador.” A test mobilization of part of the network in June, 1985 resulted in arrests of 2,000 people engaged in blockades and sit-ins at federal buildings, air force bases, and National Guard installations from Little Rock to Cape Cod.

Apart from the New Jewish Agenda, Jewish groups involved in the sanctuary movement do not share the New Left enthusiasms that have found a congenial habitat in the bureaucracies of the mainline churches. But by lending their support to the sanctuary movement they are promoting goals that are not their own. ■

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Anatoly (Natan) Sharansky is a free man, but human rights for the Jews he left behind in the Soviet Union must be vigorously pursued. "Sharansky: The Struggle Continues" is a 12-minute videotape showing the ongoing struggle that Sharansky represents. It was produced by and is available from National United Jewish Appeal, 99 Park Avenue, New York 10016.

Rabbis Get Involved In Sanctuary Drive

By KEVIN FREEMAN
 NEW YORK — (JTA) — "I am the son of an undocumented alien," declared Rabbi Joseph Weizenbaum to a small group of reporters and sanctuary movement activists during a recent visit to the Stephen Wise Free Synagogue.

The Tucson, Ariz., rabbi, sometimes referred to warmly as the "mother of the movement," repeats his oft-told story of how his father arrived in the United States from Europe in 1918 as a stowaway and was nearly deported.

"The slaves who fled north in our country and the Jews who attempted to flee Nazi Germany found no refuge," he continued. "We believe that communities of faith are now being called again to obey God by providing sanctuary to the refugees among us."

WITH THE much-publicized federal trial of the two Roman Catholic priests, a nun, a Presbyterian minister and church lay workers accused of smuggling aliens into the U.S. beginning to wind down in Tucson, Weizenbaum has begun to travel throughout the East Coast as part of a national tour of rabbis active in the sanctuary movement.

The tour is sponsored by the New Jewish Agenda. It includes Rabbis Charles Feinberg of Madison, Wisconsin and Judea Miller of Rochester, New York. Participating at the recent meeting in New York were such prominent New York rabbis as Marshall Meyer of Congregation B'nai Jeshurun, and Balfour Brickner, the spiritual head of the Stephen Wise Synagogue.

Supporters of providing sanctuary for Central American refugees are going directly against Reagan Administration policy, as interpreted through the 1980 Refugee Act. It provides U.S. asylum to anyone with a "well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a par-

ticular social group or political opinion" if returned to their homeland.

The Reagan Administration maintains that the vast majority of refugees who are entering the country illegally from Central America are not fleeing war or oppression but are seeking a better life here and may be competing with U.S. citizens for jobs.

Precise figures of the number of Central American refugees in the United States illegally are not available, but experts place the number at 500,000 to 600,000, most of them Salvadorans and Guatemalans.

ACCORDING to the New Jewish Agenda (NJA), less than three percent of the Salvadorans who have applied have been granted asylum. By contrast, the NJA contends that the figure for refugees from Communist coun-



Albert Vorspan

tries is 80 percent. Sanctuary supporters are asking for more. Continued on Page 9-A

U.S. Rabbis Get Involved

In 'Refugee' Sanctuary Movement

Continued from Page 1-A

ing that Central American refugees be granted "extended voluntary departure" status, which would give them the right to live and work in the United States until it is safe to return to their homelands. The NJA noted that similar status has been extended to refugees from many countries, including Poland and Afghanistan.

Until recently, the sanctuary movement had been primarily based in the Catholic Church and among Protestant denominations, but the organized Jewish community has become more involved with the issue.

THE PRINCIPLE of sanctuary for Central American refugees has been endorsed by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (Reform), the Rabbinical Assembly of America (Conservative), the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association, and the Central Conference of American Rabbis (Reform).

All together, about 270 Jewish, Protestant and Catholic congregations around the country offer sanctuary to Central Americans, all in defiance of U.S. government policy. Temple Emanu-El, Rabbi Weizenbaum's synagogue, is one of more than 20 Jewish congregations and organizations to offer sanctuary and pledge support to Central American refugees.

Albert Vorspan, senior vice president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC) and director of its social action committee, also addressed the sanctuary issue at the Stephen Wise Synagogue. He emphasized that the Jewish community is "behind us" in support of the sanctuary movement.

ACCORDING TO Vorspan, the UAHC resolution in support of sanctuary to Central American

refugees was overwhelmingly endorsed by some 3,000 delegates from across the country and Canada at the UAHC's biennial general assembly last November in Los Angeles. "The people are behind us and ready to take action," he said.

The UAHC resolution called on its 791 synagogues to furnish material and financial aid to Central American refugees and to join legal efforts to overturn the Administration's policy of deporting them. The resolution urged its member synagogues to do this despite "serious legal implications."

The 53-year-old Weizenbaum was asked how he responds to people who ask about the illegal nature of the sanctuary movement, risking arrest and possible jail sentences for their activities. He said he would ask those people to pretend it is 1942 and it is a Christian family seeking to give sanctuary to a Jewish family during the Holocaust.

"If you as a Jew can look me in the eye and tell me you would advise the Christian family to not give sanctuary to a Jewish family during the war because it was illegal," he said, then he could not argue with that person. But, he added, "It is an ethical decision."

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BEHIND THE SANCTUARY MOVEMENT

Max Green

Amidst extensive coverage in the Jewish press, rabbis belonging to the Sanctuary Movement have been touring the country's synagogues. Already, members of Reform Jewry's Union of American Hebrew Congregations and the Central Conference of American Rabbis, as well as the Conservative Rabbinical Assembly of America, have passed resolutions in support of the Movement. Now, the rabbis are hoping to persuade the nation's synagogues to declare themselves "sanctuaries" for illegal aliens from Central America.

Leaders of the Sanctuary Movement, both Jewish and non-Jewish, carry a seemingly-powerful message. Their speeches to synagogues and churches are replete with references to the Holocaust, including comparisons between Nazis and right-wing death-squads, and between Jews and Salvadoran refugees. Indeed, speakers often define the Movement's purpose as saving Central American refugees from the fate of the Six Million Jews.

But, away from the houses of worship, these leaders reveal a more far-reaching goal: the defeat of what they refer to as the "fascist" or "imperialist" U.S. intervention in Central America. By this they mean American support for the region's democratically-elected governments, particularly that of El Salvador.

To the naifs attracted to the Movement by its declared humanitarian goal, the Chicago Religious Task Force, the

coordinating body for the Movement as a whole, has this to say: "Some churches have declared themselves sanctuaries and have done almost nothing to oppose U.S. military aid to Central America. We wonder whether this is adequate. What is the value of a sanctuary church that continues its support (by silence, by vote or whatever) for U.S. policies in Central America." (emphasis added)

The Movement's radical objective explains its leaders' blindness to both the decline in human-rights abuses in the Central American democracies, and the increased brutality of the Nicaragua's Sandinista government and the anti-government rebel group in El Salvador. It also explains why it refuses to help refugees from Nicaragua, or even those EL Salvador, unless they first agree to denounce U.S. policy in Central America.

The Sanctutary Movement arose at a time when right-wing death-squads roamed almost at will in EL Salvador. But the political landscape of the country has changed since Jose Napoleon Duarte's election to the presidency. In 1981, there were 9000 violent civilian deaths, many attributable to far-right para-military units. But in 1984, the year of Duarte's election, the number declined to 774, and to half that in 1985.

Acknowledging the progress made by the Salvadoran government in the area of human rights would put the Sanctuary Movement out of business. So, instead, it continues to behave as if 1986 were 1980 and Napoleon Duarte were Roberto D'Aubisson, the right-wing politician often closely linked to the death-squads.

The Movement also focuses increasingly on the fate that

awaits Salvadorans who are deported from the United States. Such deportations, one leader alleges, is just like putting "Jews on boxcars bound for Dachua." Numerous studies, however, indicate that such hyperbole is all but baseless. The Intergovernmental Commission on Migration, which monitors such matters, has not reported a single case of a deportee coming to harm. Even in the much-worse days of 1983, the American Civil Liberties Union failed to identify conclusively a single deportee who had suffered a human-rights violation.

The Movement also charges the United States government with mercilessly violating the rights of Salvadoran illegals. The facts belie this allegation as well. There are a total of 500,000 Salvadoran illegals in the United States of whom x
^{FEWER THAN}
~~-----~~ ^{3,000} will be returned to their home country this year. Of the relatively few that immigration authorities catch up with, many request political asylum, which is granted if they can demonstrate a "well-founded fear of persecution if forced to return home." But, as Assistant Secretary of State, Elliott Abrams, has explained, "under our laws, generalized conditions of poverty and civil unrest do not entitle people to leave their homeland and settle here. If this were our test, one half of the one hundred million people living between the Rio Grand and the Panama Canal would meet it..." As it is, the United States takes in more legal immigrants and refugees (of whom the fourth-largest group is Salvadoran) than the rest of the world combined.

As the threat of persecution in EL Salvador recedes, fewer Salvadorans are meeting the political-asylum test. As a result,

fully 70 percent of Salvadorans caught by the INS return voluntarily, rather than under "deportation orders," while the majority of the remaining 30 percent do not list fear of political persecution as a reason for being allowed to stay. Moreover, those who are deported have had every opportunity to appeal to administrative panels and the federal courts, guaranteeing due process of law.

The facts relating to the situation in El Salvador and to illegal Salvadoran immigrants to the United States appear to have passed the Sanctuary Movement by. Nevertheless, the Movement's leaders continue to raise the spectre of the Holocaust as they speak of "horrors" being committed with U.S. acquiescence.

This parrallel between the Holocaust and the rapidly-improving human-rights situation in El Salvador does more than merely insult the memory of the six million Jews who perished under Hitler's tyranny. It belies a lack of concern for the truth, both past and present, that deserves our strongest rebuke.

Max Green is associate director of the White House Office of Public Liaison