

KARL WEINER, D.D.  
RABBI

TEMPLE JUDEA

August 21, 1967

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Dr. Herman Bloch, Chairman  
Human Relations Commission  
Village of Skokie  
9700 N. Kedvale  
Skokie, Illinois

Dear Dr. Bloch:

I regret that I shall not be able to attend the meeting of the Human Relations Commission on August 24. I shall be away from the community.

Therefore, I wish to indicate in writing that I favor the adoption of the proposal for the village "ordinance prohibiting certain practices of discrimination, etc" which I received in the mail. If, as a result of the meeting's deliberations, changes should be adopted for the purpose of furthering the intention of the ordinance to outlaw the practice of discrimination in housing, I shall be pleased to accept them.

I regret that the Village of Skokie is faced with the necessity of adopting a local ordinance in lieu of a state law. It is regrettable that the legislators of the State Of Illinois have defaulted in their obligation of leadership, passing the buck to federal and local governments.

I regret also that we cannot, at least not yet, pass an ordinance that would outlaw discriminatory practices by anyone, including the individual owner or agent. Still, there is justification in regulating the practices of all those lines of business that are engaged fulltime in real estate transactions and the financing thereof. They, at least, should be relieved of the burden of social engineering for which they have no warrant. They should be relieved also from being made the agents of the prejudice of others.

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-Page 2 -

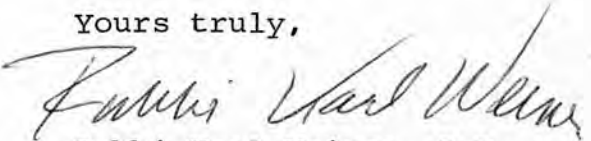
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A great deal is made, by the opponents of an ordinance, of the spirit of voluntary progress. Such plea drips with optimism. On the other hand, a great deal is made of the "will of the people" that supposedly denies this optimism. Skokie, we are told, in the forties, did not want any Jews, and now -so goes the claim- fifty percent are Jews. Incidentally, who is counting? If my memory does not betray me, real estate people then advised Jews to look somewhere else. "They would not be happy here." Preseumably, the real estate people acted as agents for the sellers. The same sellers, however, did not hesitate to sell large tracts of land to developers, even to Jewish developers. Might it be true that businessmen, in the long run, are better off if they will do what is right according to their own convictions, and will not worry about the prejudices of the "others"?

I have great pride and faith in Skokie. I cannot see our Village - when faced with a clear-cut issue of civil rights - say "no." We want to be a part of the best of America. It is not true that catering to the prejudice of the individual seller "is looking out for his best interest." The individual seller is an American at a time when his country is passing through a serious crisis. It is true that Skokie's adoption of a Fair Housing Ordinance is not going to stop the riots in the slums. There, nobody may become cognizant of it. It may, perhaps, encourage some Negroes of the middle class to come here, we hope. The socio-economic and cultural level of our community will certainly remain the same, if all the people of Skokie wish it. To say "no", at this time would be unthinkable for the people of Skokie; people who have distinguished themselves so far by their intelligence, their forward-looking aspirations and by their pride in the leadership of their community.

Yours truly,



Rabbi Karl Weiner, D.D.

KW:M  
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