Joachim Prinz: I Shall Not Be Silent
Teacher Resource Package
Prepared by: Susan Starkman, B.A., M.Ed

Synopsis

Country of Origin: United States

Release Year: 2013

Directors: Rachel Fisher and Rachel Pasternak

Runtime: 60 minutes

Themes: Holocaust, Black-Jewish Relations, Civil Rights Movement

This comprehensive documentary chronicles the life of Joachim Prinz whose commitment to social justice propelled him through five decades of civil rights activism. As a young rabbi in 1930s Berlin, Prinz endured repeated arrests after openly preaching against the Nazi regime and encouraging Jews to emigrate. Expelled from Germany in 1937, Prinz arrived in the United States where he was dismayed to see racism against African Americans. As rabbi of Temple B’nai Abraham in Newark and as President of the American Jewish Congress, Prinz was a became a leading figure in the civil rights movement, culminating in his 1963 March on Washington Speech in which he proclaimed that “America must not become a nation of onlookers! America must not remain silent!” Using historic footage, archival recordings of his ideas and interviews with his contemporaries and family, Joachim Prinz: I Shall Not Be Silent offers invaluable insight into the man who was known as a “spiritual and religious rock star.”

Curriculum Links

Joachim Prinz can be used to meet the curriculum requirements of the Media Studies component of ENG3C/U and ENG4C/U. It can also be used to meet the requirements of American History (CHA3U), World History Since 1900 (CHT30) and World History: the West and The World (CHY4U). The film is also relevant to Challenge and Change in Society (HSB4M) and World Religions: Beliefs, Issues and Religious Traditions (HRT3M).
Related Websites
Prinz Documentary
http://www.prinzdocumentary.org/about.html

Joachim Prinz
http://www.joachimprinz.com/Joachim_Prinz/Home.html

Context: Prinz’s Early Life In Berlin

The roots of Prinz’s activism can be traced to his early life in Germany. Since the philosopher Moses Mendelssohn arrived in Berlin in 1743 and began urging Jews to integrate into German society, many Jews broke away from their traditional practices and began to live a secular life more in keeping with their German neighbours. Prinz was born into a secular home where religious practice was scorned. He discovered his affinity with Jewish religion and practice after his mother died. His mentor was Rabbi Felix Goldmann and Prinz would join Goldmann on his early morning rounds in Oppeln to deliver food to the town’s poor, Jewish and non-Jewish alike. Eventually, Prinz found the Jewish life in Oppeln was too shallow and he moved to a Jewish seminary in Breslau and devoted himself the study of Jewish religion and the nascent Zionist movement. He earned both a PhD and his rabbinical ordination in Breslau. Prinz moved to Berlin at a time that was considered the Golden Age for Berlin Jewry. The city was home to 160,000 Jews and many of the city’s famous writers, artists and musicians were Jewish. Convinced that they were an integral part of German society, most German Jews believed that President Hindenburg’s appointment of Hitler as Chancellor in 1933 could not possibly threaten their standing in German society. Prinz, however, understood the threat that he posed. Indeed, after the Reichstag (Parliament) building was set on fire, Hitler convinced Hindenburg to issue a Decree for the Protection of People and State, granting Nazis sweeping powers under emergency law that would lay the foundation for a police state.

Between April and October 1933, the regime passed civil laws barring Jews from civil service jobs and university positions. Jews were also denied jobs in medical and legal professions. In 1935, the Nuremberg Laws were introduced, stripping Jews of their civil rights as German citizens and separating them from other Germans legally, socially and politically. Jews were defined as a separate race under the “Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honour”. Being Jewish was now determined by race, not
religious beliefs and practices, so even though most Jews were assimilated into mainstream German society, they were now targets of discrimination. Prinz used his pulpit at the Neue Synagogue to criticise the Nazi regime and urge his congregants to emigrate from Germany to Palestine. Publicly speaking out against the Nazi regime was a dangerous thing to do, and Prinz was arrested more than once. Facing the prospect of a death sentence for political subversion, Prinz was finally convinced to immigrate to the United States, sponsored by his friend and Patron, Rabbi Stephen S. Wise.

Related Activity
There are a number of factors that contributed to Hitler’s rise to power. Divide students into five research groups, assigning each one a specific circumstance that was a factor in Hitler’s rise to power:

1. The Great Depression in Germany  
2. Hitler’s appeal to German citizens  
3. Hitler’s effective use of scapegoats  
4. Weakness of the Weimar Republic  
5. Treaty of Versailles

Relevant Websites

North Dakota State University  
http://www2.dsu.nodak.edu/users/dmeier/Holocaust/hitler.html

Johndclare  
http://www.johndclare.net/Weimar7.htm

BBC  
http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/history/mwh/germany/hitlerpowerrev1.shtml

Calvin College German Propaganda Archive  
http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum  
http://www.ushmm.org/propaganda/
Prinz’s first impressions of the United States were negative. Before immigrating there permanently in 1937, Prinz visited the country and found it to be run down and ugly. He was angered by the pervasive racism against Blacks and he complained about American complacency in the face of the Nazi threat. The one place that did impress him on his trip was Harlem:
“I remember being particularly interested in Harlem…It was that time that I heard for the first time what is now commonplace, namely speeches about Black Nationalism. Upon my return to Germany I wrote an article that was entitled ‘Zionism in Black’". (http://www.tabletmag.com/jewish-news-and-politics/59863/the-plot-for-america?all=1). Prinz’s understanding of Jewish identity was primarily national rather than religious and thus he felt an instant affinity with black Americans who were experiencing a kind of racism that felt all-too familiar to a man who had just escaped Nazi persecution in Germany. It was Prinz’s experience in Berlin that emboldened him to speak out against racism in the United States and put himself at the forefront of the budding civil rights movement. Prinz was the first rabbi to reach out to Martin Luther King Jr. and when Prinz was installed as the President of the American Jewish Congress, he insisted that King be the keynote speaker at the 1958 Congress convention in Miami. It was the first time that King addressed an audience south of the Mason-Dixon line.

*Joachim Prinz: I Shall Not Be Silent* can be used as a springboard from which to introduce students to the American Civil Rights Movement. There are hundreds of resources and lesson plans available to teachers on this topic. Listed below are a few examples to get teachers started.

**Civil Rights Movement Lesson Plan Resources**

**PBS**
This lesson plans looks at the role that religion played in the civil rights movement.

**National Endowment for the Humanities**
This lesson focuses on the individual men and women who embraced King’s message and advanced the Civil Rights Movement on a local level.

National Endowment for the Humanities
http://edsitement.neh.gov/lesson-plan/kennedy-administration-and-civil-rights-movement
This unit examines the Freedom Riders, the Birmingham Movement of 1963 and the 1963 March on Washington.

National Endowment for the Humanities
This lesson plan examines King’s essay in defense of nonviolent protest along with two significant criticisms of his direct action campaign. Students assess various alternatives for securing civil rights for black Americans.

Facing History and Ourselves
https://www.facinghistory.org/for-educators/educator-resources/lessons-and-units/pivotal-moment-civil-rights-movement
This unit of work explores the murder of Emmet Till and the significance it had on the civil rights movement

Facing History and Ourselves
https://www.facinghistory.org/for-educators/educator-resources/lessons-and-units/nonviolence-tool-change
This unit help students learn about voting rights and nonviolent protest and provides an opportunity to review concepts related to the structure of the United States government.

Learning to Give
http://www.learningtogive.org/lessons/unit137/lesson1.html
This is a lesson based on Rosa Parks and the pivotal role she played in the civil rights movement

Discovery Education
http://www.discoveryeducation.com/teachers/free-lesson-plans/civil-rights-an-investigation.cfm
This unit explores concepts of civil rights and civil liberties and evaluates the roles played by President Lyndon B. Johnson, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and J. Edgar Hoover during the American civil rights movement.
**Extension Activity**

There are many parallels between the discrimination Jews faced under the Nazi regime and the racism experienced by blacks in the United States. Students should compare and contrast Germany in the early 1930s with the American South in the 1950s. Students should examine discriminatory laws as well as different types of cultural discrimination such as negative depictions of Jews and black in Germany and the United States respectively. Students should also compare and contrast the Ku Klux Klan with the Nazi party. What goals did they have in common? What techniques did they adopt to achieve their goals? How did they use propaganda to their advantage?

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**1963 March On Washington**

The culmination of Prinz’s activist work was his address to a group of 250,000 at the March on Washington on August 28, 1963. This peaceful demonstration was gathered to promote civil rights and economic equality for African Americans. The march was initiated by A. Philip Randolph, President of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and President of the Negro American Labour Council. The march was sponsored by five of the largest civil rights organizations in the United States: The National Urban League (NUL), the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP), the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) headed by Martin Luther King Junior.

Below is the text for Rabbi Prinz’s speech at the March on Washington. Students should read it and answer the accompanying questions.

**Prinz’s March on Washington Speech**

I speak to you as an American Jew.

As Americans we share the profound concern of millions of people about the shame and disgrace of inequality and injustice which make a mockery of the great American idea.

As Jews we bring to this great demonstration, in which thousands of us proudly participate, a two-fold experience -- one of the spirit and one of our history.
In the realm of the spirit, our fathers taught us thousands of years ago that when God created man, he created him as everybody's neighbor. Neighbor is not a geographic term. It is a moral concept. It means our collective responsibility for the preservation of man's dignity and integrity.

From our Jewish historic experience of three and a half thousand years we say:

Our ancient history began with slavery and the yearning for freedom. During the Middle Ages my people lived for a thousand years in the ghettos of Europe. Our modern history begins with a proclamation of emancipation.

It is for these reasons that it is not merely sympathy and compassion for the black people of America that motivates us. It is above all and beyond all such sympathies and emotions a sense of complete identification and solidarity born of our own painful historic experience.

When I was the rabbi of the Jewish community in Berlin under the Hitler regime, I learned many things. The most important thing that I learned under those tragic circumstances was that bigotry and hatred are not the most urgent problem. The most urgent, the most disgraceful, the most shameful and the most tragic problem is silence. A great people which had created a great civilization had become a nation of silent onlookers. They remained silent in the face of hate, in the face of brutality and in the face of mass murder.

America must not become a nation of onlookers. America must not remain silent. Not merely black America, but all of America. It must speak up and act, from the President down to the humblest of us, and not for the sake of the Negro, not for the sake of the black community but for the sake of the image, the idea and the aspiration of America itself.

Our children, yours and mine in every school across the land, each morning pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States and to the republic for which it stands. They, the children, speak fervently and innocently of this land as the land of "liberty and justice for all."

The time, I believe, has come to work together - for it is not enough to hope together, and it is not enough to pray together, to work together that this children's oath, pronounced every morning from Maine to California, from North to South, may become a glorious, unshakeable reality in a morally renewed and united America.
Questions:
1. What does Rabbi Prinz say about collective responsibility?
2. What connections does Prinz draw between Jewish history and the African American experience?
3. What does Rabbi Prinz say is “the most urgent, the most tragic” problem in the world? Do you agree with him? Why/why not?
4. What does Prinz suggest as the solution to this problem?
5. Rabbi Prinz’s approach to civil rights was typical of the universalism that characterized community politics in the early days of the civil rights movement. What is universalism? Cite three examples of it from his speech.

While the film does not show King’s famous “I Have A Dream” speech, teachers could have students listen to the speech at http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkihaveadream.htm or read the transcript below and answer the accompanying questions.

I Have A Dream Speech (Source: http://www.usconstitution.net/dream.html)

I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation.

Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of their captivity.

But one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the Negro is still languishing in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land. So we have come here today to dramatize a shameful condition.

In a sense we have come to our nation's capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration
of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men, yes, black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check which has come back marked "insufficient funds." But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. So we have come to cash this check — a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice. We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of now. This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism. Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy. Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice. Now is the time to lift our nation from the quick sands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood. Now is the time to make justice a reality for all of God's children.

It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment. This sweltering summer of the Negro's legitimate discontent will not pass until there is an invigorating autumn of freedom and equality. Nineteen sixty-three is not an end, but a beginning. Those who hope that the Negro needed to blow off steam and will now be content will have a rude awakening if the nation returns to business as usual. There will be neither rest nor tranquility in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights. The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges.

But there is something that I must say to my people who stand on the warm threshold which leads into the palace of justice. In the process of gaining our rightful place we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred.

We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force. The marvelous new militancy which has engulfed the Negro community must not lead us to a distrust of all white people, for many of our white brothers, as evidenced by their presence here today, have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our
destiny. They have come to realize that their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom. We cannot walk alone.

As we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall always march ahead. We cannot turn back. There are those who are asking the devotees of civil rights, "When will you be satisfied?" We can never be satisfied as long as the Negro is the victim of the unspeakable horrors of police brutality. We can never be satisfied, as long as our bodies, heavy with the fatigue of travel, cannot gain lodging in the motels of the highways and the hotels of the cities. We cannot be satisfied as long as the Negro's basic mobility is from a smaller ghetto to a larger one. We can never be satisfied as long as our children are stripped of their selfhood and robbed of their dignity by signs stating "For Whites Only". We cannot be satisfied as long as a Negro in Mississippi cannot vote and a Negro in New York believes he has nothing for which to vote. No, no, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.

I am not unmindful that some of you have come here out of great trials and tribulations. Some of you have come fresh from narrow jail cells. Some of you have come from areas where your quest for freedom left you battered by the storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality. You have been the veterans of creative suffering. Continue to work with the faith that unearned suffering is redemptive.

Go back to Mississippi, go back to Alabama, go back to South Carolina, go back to Georgia, go back to Louisiana, go back to the slums and ghettos of our northern cities, knowing that somehow this situation can and will be changed. Let us not wallow in the valley of despair.

I say to you today, my friends, so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream. I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal."
I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.
I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day, down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of interposition and nullification; one day right there in Alabama, little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.

I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.

This is our hope. This is the faith that I go back to the South with. With this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

This will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with a new meaning, "My country, 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing. Land where my fathers died, land of the pilgrim's pride, from every mountainside, let freedom ring."

And if America is to be a great nation this must become true. So let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire. Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York. Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania!

Let freedom ring from the snowcapped Rockies of Colorado!

Let freedom ring from the curvaceous slopes of California!

But not only that; let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia!

Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee!
Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi. From every mountainside, let freedom ring.

And when this happens, when we allow freedom to ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, "Free at last! free at last! thank God Almighty, we are free at last!"

Questions
1. What famous speech by another American president influenced “I Have A Dream”? Cite specific examples from that speech that resonate in King’s speech.
2. King refers to the place where the marchers have gathered as a “hallowed spot”. What historical event is King referring to and in what ways does the march echo that event?
3. King refers to the “promises of democracy” not being met in the United States. What were those promises and how were they not being fulfilled?
4. The speech begins and ends by emphasizing freedom. What does King mean by freedom and in what sense does he regard African Americans as “still not free”? Provide specific examples from the speech to support your response.
5. What does King have to say about the concept of justice? Use examples from the text and your knowledge of the era to support your response.
6. In addition to freedom and justice, King speaks about brotherhood and sisterhood. What does he mean by these terms?
7. What, according to King, is the connection between justice and freedom? Might increasing justice for some require limiting freedom of others?
8. What are some of the rhetorical devices that King employs? Find examples of the following elements of speech: figurative language, imagery, symbols, alliteration, consonance, assonance, and rhythm.

Websites Relating to March on Washington

Listed below are some websites that can help students learn more about the March on Washington.
Extension Activity

Last August marked the fifty-year anniversary of the March on Washington. Numerous cities across the United States held commemorative marches, including one in Washington that culminated with President Obama addressing the crowd in the same spot that Martin Luther King gave his historic speech. Students should compare the two marches and discuss the changes that have taken place in the United States since the passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964. Listed below are some websites dedicated to the fifty-year anniversary.

Fiftieth Anniversary of March on Washington
http://50thanniversarymarchonwashington.com/

General Discussion Questions/Activities

• Prinz claimed that he could not “morally say justice to the Jews unless we also say justice to the black. It is indivisible.” What does he mean by this?
When Prinz became rabbi at Temple B’nei Abraham in Newark, there was a large Jewish population in that area. Gradually, Jews moved to the suburbs. Students should research “white flight” and the rise of racial tensions in areas like Newark. How did racism in the North differ from racism in the South?

Both Prinz and Martin Luther King took a nonviolent approach to their civil rights activism but there were many people who believed that this approach would not work and that a more aggressive campaign was needed to secure rights for blacks. Students should research the black power movement and leaders of that movement such as Malcolm X and Stokely Carmichael. How did their approach to civil rights differ from that of King? Which do you think was ultimately more effective? Why?

The film refers to the Montgomery Bus Boycott. What was that? What other kinds of nonviolent forms of resistance were adopted by civil rights activists in the South?

Who were the Freedom Riders? What did they do? Students should research the Freedom Rider movement and its impact on the civil rights movement.

Interviewed for the film, Clement Pace from Rutgers University refers to the way Prinz “got in the way” and made “necessary trouble.” What does he mean by this? How can trouble be necessary?

Students should research the music that was borne out of the civil rights movement. What are some of the songs that have become synonymous with the March on Washington?

President Kennedy introduced the civil rights legislation but the Civil Rights Act was not passed until 1964. Students should research the history of the bill from its inception to its passing. Who supported it? Who was against it? What are the contents of the bill?

Prinz claimed that “you cannot be a rabbi unless you love people. You don’t have to like them but you have to love all of them.” What did he mean by this? Do you agree? Why/why not?

Prinz argued that he was “sick and tired of Sunday and Sabbath religion” and that Americans needed “religion for our daily living”? What does he mean by these terms? Provide examples./

Prinz was a Zionist and believed in the creation of the State of Israel. Despite his support for the country, Prinz began to criticize the Israeli policy of building settlements in the West Bank after Israel captured the area in the 1967 Six Day War. In Prinz’s opinion, “war will prove to be destructive not merely to the defeated nation, the vanquished, but also to the victors.” What did he mean by this? Do you agree? Why/why not?
References
(All websites sited are from April, 2014)

Prinz Documentary
http://www.prinzdocumentary.org/about.html

Joachim Prinz
http://www.joachimprinz.com/Joachim_Prinz/Home.html

North Dakota State University
http://www2.dsu.nodak.edu/users/dmeier/Holocaust/hitler.html

Johndclare
http://www.johndclare.net/Weimar7.htm

BBC
http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/history/mwh/germany/hitlerpowerrev1.shtml

Calvin College German Propaganda Archive
http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
http://www.ushmm.org/propaganda/

Tablet Magazine
(http://www.tabletmag.com/jewish-news-and-politics/59863/the-plot-for-america?all=1

PBS

National Endowment for the Humanities

National Endowment for the Humanities
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Facing History and Ourselves
https://www.facinghistory.org/for-educators/educator-resources/lessons-and-units/nonviolence-tool-change

Learning to Give
http://www.learningtogive.org/lessons/unit137/lesson1.html

Discovery Education
http://www.discoveryeducation.com/teachers/free.lesson.plans/civil.rights.an-investigation.cfm

Jewish Women’s Archive
http://jwa.org/media/rabbi-joachim-prinz-speech-at-march-on-washington

American Rhetoric
http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkihaveadream.htm

U.S. Constitution
http://www.usconstitution.net/dream.html

National Museum of American History

Civil Rights Digital Diary
http://crdl.usg.edu/events/march_on_washington/?Welcome

History Channel
http://www.history.com/topics/black-history/march-on-washington

NPR
http://www.npr.org/news/specials/march40th/
PBS
http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/2013/08/8-resources-for-teaching-the-50th-anniversary-of-the-march-on-washington/

Fiftieth Anniversary of March on Washington
http://50thanniversarymarchonwashington.com/

National Action Network
http://nationalactionnetwork.net/mow/

Washington Post
http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/special%20reports/march-on-washington/