



## Introduction

This Haggadah -- a word that means literally 'the telling' -- is born at the meeting-point of Jewish tradition, labor movement realities, and our own lives. It takes Jewish symbols and stories seriously, keeping them ever-relevant by relating them to the challenges facing real working people and working people's organizations today. It takes today's labor movement seriously, sharing its ups and downs while offering spiritual support to a crucial cause. And it takes our own lives and stories seriously, inviting each of us to bring our whole selves to this sacred table.

Tonight, we -- a group of trade unionists, Jewish activists and others -- use this Haggadah, this liturgy, to create community and to further our shared efforts toward economic justice. And beyond this evening, at anytime and any place, each of us can use elements of this Haggadah to enrich our own lives, our own *seders*, our own organizations and our own movements. As we join together across faiths, may we learn to channel our religious and spiritual beliefs into the pursuit of holy justice (Deut. 16:20), and to take the timeless message of liberation to the next level, in ourselves and in our world.

*Remarks: Shelley Moskowitz, Jews United For Justice  
Carolyn Jacobson, Greater Washington Jewish Labor Committee*

### The Order (*Seder*)

Welcome

Opening Blessings

The First Cup of Wine: 350 Years of Jewish American Labor History

The Second Cup of Wine: Current Struggles

The Seder Plate: The Symbols of Our Struggle and Liberation

Ten Plagues Workers and their Families Face Today

The Third Cup of Wine: Partial Victories

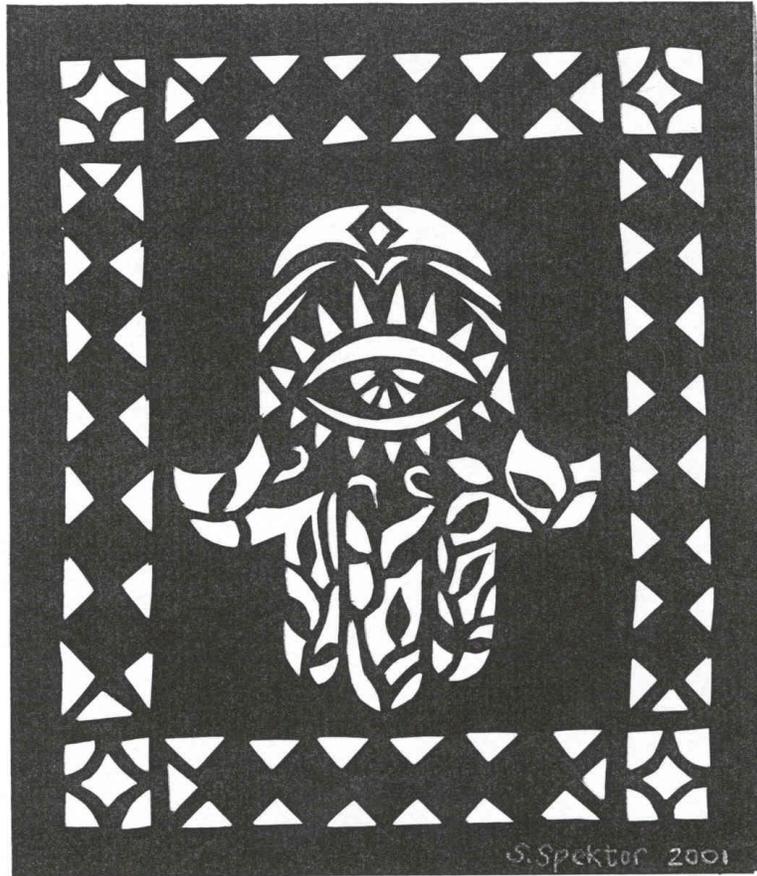
The Fourth Cup of Wine: Action and Commitment

Afikomen: Our Ongoing Commitment

Closing Blessings

## Welcome

*Rabbi Fred Scherlinder Dobb*



*Papercut by Shoshi Spector Yaari*

### Opening Blessing: Shehecheyanu

*Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Ruach ha-olam  
shehecheyanu vekiyemanu vehigianu lazman hazeh.*

Blessed are You, Source of All Life, Spirit of the Universe, who gives us life,  
and keeps us strong, and has brought us to this time.

**The First Cup of Wine:  
350 Years of Jewish American Labor History  
WHERE DO WE COME FROM?**

In this 350th anniversary year of permanent Jewish settlement in America, what models and resources in ours and our ancestors' collective pasts can help us revitalize the present, and shape the future?

**Union Maid**

**Lyrics by Woody Guthrie**  
*Led by Cantor Charlie Bernhardt*

There once was a union maid  
Who never was afraid  
Of goons and ginks and company finks  
And deputy sheriffs who made the raids  
She went to the union hall  
When a meeting it was called,  
And when the Legion boys came 'round  
She always stood her ground.

This union maid was wise  
To the tricks of company spies,  
She couldn't be fooled by a company stool  
She'd always organize the guys  
She always got her way  
When she struck for better pay.  
She'd show her card to the national guard  
And this is what she'd say.

Chorus:  
Oh, you can't scare me, I'm sticking to the union,  
I'm sticking to the union, I'm sticking to the union  
Oh, you can't scare me, I'm sticking to the union,  
I'm sticking to the union till the day I die.

You gals who want to be free  
Just take a little tip from me:  
Get you a man who's a union man  
And fight together for liberty  
Married life ain't hard  
When you got a union card,  
And a union man has a happy life  
When he's got a union wife.

**Slideshow presentation on Jewish American Labor History**

***Erin Scharff and Les Trachtman***

***Written and Prepared by:***

***Mimi Garcia, Amy Goodman, Michelle Kay, Arieh Lebowitz, Erin Scharff, Eli Staub, and Les Trachtman***

**Discussion Questions**

- ☞ *Family history:* What stories related to labor, immigration, or justice struggles do you bring from your own family's past or present?
- ☞ *Personal journey:* What "Egypt"—a place of confinement, limitation, or enslavement in your life—are you leaving or trying to leave? What "Promised Land" are you heading toward?

**Blessing – Sanctification: The first cup of wine**

*Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Ruach ha-olam, borei p'ree ha'gafen.*

Blessed are you, Source of all Life, Spirit of the Universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine.

## The Second Cup of Wine: Current Struggles

### WHAT ARE OUR STRUGGLES?

Even when the Israelites finally organized themselves as the Bricklayers Union Goshen Local 1, more pain and dislocation lay ahead. What struggles continue for us, even unto this day? What are our struggles?

#### Let my People Go

*Led by Joe Glazer*

When Israel was in Egypt's land,  
Let my people go!  
Oppressed so hard they could not stand  
Let my people go!

#### **Chorus:**

Go down, Moses,  
Way down in Egypt land  
Tell old Pharaoh  
To let my people go!

Thus saith the Lord, bold Moses said  
Let my people go!  
If not, I'll smite your people dead,  
Let my people go!

#### **Chorus:**

Go down, Moses,  
Way down in Egypt land

Tell old Pharaoh  
To let my people go!

As Israel stood by the water side,  
Let my people go!  
By God's command it did divide,  
Let my people go!

#### **Chorus:**

Go down, Moses,  
Way down in Egypt land  
Tell old Pharaoh  
To let my people go!

When Moses took them from their toil,  
Let my people go!  
He lead them all to freedom's soil,  
Let my people go!

*Speakers: Joaquin Aparacio, Iron Workers Union  
Martha Garzon, UNITE HERE Local 27*

### Discussion Questions

☞ (In Hevruta, i.e. with one partner): What struggle do I face in my working life, or what struggles am I working on that other workers face?

### Blessing – Sanctification: The second cup of wine

*Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Ruach ha-olam, borei p'ree ha'gafen.*

Blessed are you, Source of all Life, Spirit of the Universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine.

## The Seder Plate: The Symbols of Struggle and Liberation

As we examine the interwoven nature of our labor justice work and the Jewish tradition, we take a moment to reflect on the symbols on the seder plate and their connection with our work.

### **Karpas (greens/parsley)**

A reminder that nature and history unfold side-by-side, and that the season of our liberation is also the season of nature's rebirth. Passover celebrates not only the Exodus but the early spring harvest. At this festival-time we remember our dependence on, and interdependence with, the natural world.

*Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Ruach ha-olam, borei p'ri ha-adamah.*

Blessed are You, Source of All Life, Spirit of the Universe, Creator of the fruit of the Earth.

*Eat the greens.*

### **Baytza (egg)**

The roundness of the egg reminds us of the cycles of life we go through, of rebirth and renewal as the winter turns to spring. This year, we rededicate ourselves to working for economic justice and begin anew our commitment to action.

### **Pesach (traditionally shankbone, now sometimes beet or mushroom)**

According to the biblical account, Jews were to sacrifice a paschal lamb and use its blood to separate Israelites from Egyptians, workers from bosses, victims from perpetrators and bystanders. This evening, because for many of us our circles of sensitivity extend to animals as well as to all people, we offer vegetables whose bloody color (beets) or meaty texture (mushrooms) symbolize the paschal sacrifice. And today, we recall the words of Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel: "In a free society, some are guilty, but all are responsible."

### **Matzah (unleavened bread)**

Fearing recriminations from the long-privileged and recently-plagued Egyptians, our oppressed ancestors fled in such haste that they didn't even have time to allow their daily bread's dough to rise. This Pesach we feel (or remind ourselves) of the hunger of those whose diets are constrained by economic adversity; this Pesach we commit to share our bread with those in need, as the Haggadah states "let all who are hungry come and eat"; this Pesach we together break the bread of affliction, the bread of freedom, the matzah.

*Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Ruach ha-olam,  
asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al achilat matzah.*

Blessed are You, Source of All Life, Spirit of the Universe, who has sanctified us through the commandments and instructed us concerning the eating of matzah.

*Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu Ruach ha-olam, ha-motzi lechem min ha-aretz.*

Blessed are You, Source of All Life, Spirit of the Universe,  
who brings forth bread from the Earth.

*Eat the matzah.*

## **Maror (bitter herbs)**

The harshness of low-wage and little or no-benefit work, of disempowerment, of being denied the right to organize, of being denied the satisfaction that comes from choosing one's work and doing it well — of slavery — cannot be overstated. These bitter herbs symbolize the bitterness and pain of all those throughout time and throughout space (like all too many workers even today) who face such harsh realities. We eat this maror with the prayer that their bitterness be turned to joy, their slavery into freedom, their oppression into rights.

*Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Ruach ha-olam, asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav (v'tzivanu) al achilat maror.*

Blessed are You, Source of All Life, Spirit of the Universe, who has sanctified us through the commandments (and instructed us) concerning the eating of maror.

*Eat the matzah and the maror together.*

## **Charoset (apples-nuts-wine-cinnamon)**

Though sweet in taste, this mixture is on our tables for its consistency and texture, its evocation of the mortar with which our ancestors were forced to build houses they would never live in, and monuments to a system which oppressed them. This Passover we consider the working conditions of all God's children, and pray that the symbols of their own injustices be turned into something sweet and satisfying.

*Eat the maror and charoset in a matzah sandwich, after the custom of Rabbi Hillel.*

*Shulchan Orekh* -- enjoy the (mini-) meal!



Photo: Jewish Labor Committee Archives

# Ten Plagues Facing Workers and their Families Today

1-2: Lou Cernak, President, Northern Virginia Central Labor Council, AFL-CIO

3-4: Peta Ikamabana, Interfaith Voices for Worker Justice, American Friends Service Committee

5-6: Fred Allen, Secretary-Treasurer, Metropolitan Washington Labor Council, AFL-CIO

7-8: Rabbi Gerry Serotta, Interfaith Voices for Worker Justice, Temple Shalom, Rabbis for Human Rights

9-10: Rev. Grayland Hagler, Interfaith Voices for Worker Justice, Plymouth Congregational Church

**1. WAGES THAT DON'T SUSTAIN OUR FAMILIES:** Our wages are not keeping up with our costs. Despite the rise in average wages during the 1990s, average hourly earnings today are still below what they were back in 1973, when adjusted for inflation. And for the poorest among us, the inflation-adjusted value of the minimum wage is 26 percent lower today than it was in 1979, making the \$5.15 an hour minimum wage worth just \$4.42.

**2. DECLINING HEALTH CARE SECURITY:** The costs of health care are crushing working families' budgets and 45 million Americans, most of them workers and their families, are without any form of health insurance.

**3. DECLINING RETIREMENT SECURITY:** Workers in this country are facing declining dignity in their later years. Dependable, defined benefit pensions are being replaced with shaky 401k plans or are being eliminated.

**4. ANTI-WORKER DOMESTIC POLICIES:** In tax policy, training policy, bankruptcy policies, occupational health and safety policies, workers' rights are marginalized by catering to the alleged interests of employers and the wealthy.

**5. ANTI-WORKER INTERNATIONAL POLICIES:** Our government's trade policies must stop allowing employers who use child labor or true sweatshop conditions to compete for the buying power of consumers in this country.

And when workers try to organize in their own self-interest....

**6. ATTACKS BY EMPLOYERS ON OUR FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION AND FREEDOM OF SPEECH:** Whether it's at a construction site, an office, university, hospital or manufacturing plant, whenever workers come together to form a union, too many employers use their power to intimidate, coerce and threaten them. Half of American employers threaten to shut down partially or completely if employees join together in a union. And in 25 per cent of organizing campaigns, private-sector employers illegally fire workers because they want to form a union.

**7. ATTACKS BY OUR GOVERNMENT ON OUR FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION AND FREEDOM OF SPEECH:** Human Rights Watch has found that "labor law enforcement efforts often fail to deter unlawful conduct...enervating delays and weak remedies invite continued violations. Any employer intent on resisting workers' self-organization efforts can..."

**8. ATTACKS ON THE FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION AND SPEECH OF WORKERS**

**AROUND THE WORLD:** Abroad, especially in those same countries where child labor and sweatshop conditions are all too prevalent, those who stand up to assert their rights to organize face a host of challenges from lockouts to harassment to smear campaigns to violence and even death. Our attempts to condition favorable trade status on respect for workers' freedoms of association and speech, and the freedom to organize unions, are defeated through powerful alliances between those employers who stand to benefit from this suppression and reactionary forces in government.

**9. THE DECLINING POWER OF UNIONS:** As a result of the attacks on workers' rights of association and speech, as well as because of unions' own failures to prioritize the recruitment and organization of new members, less than 14% of working people in this country enjoy the added power and influence of union membership and representation. That decline in union power is both a cause, and an effect of, these other plagues.

And in order to deal with these others, we must first remedy this 10<sup>th</sup> plague:

**10. APATHY AND LACK OF SOLIDARITY:** We sometimes do not see that the rights of workers everywhere to organize and advocate on their own behalf is worthy of our energy and commitment. We sometimes do not see that the struggles of workers everywhere--both here and abroad--are one and the same. We sometimes do not take the extra step to stand in solidarity with these workers and all others who are leading the fight for dignity and economic justice, even right here in our cities, in our neighborhoods, and in our everyday lives.



Photo: [www.nyu.edu/library](http://www.nyu.edu/library)

## The Third Cup of Wine: Partial Victories

### WHAT VICTORIES SPUR US ON?

The parting of the Sea of Reeds marked a huge step toward justice and freedom, even as further challenges awaited the Israelites on the other side. What partial victories can we claim today, and how do they sustain us as we keep on marching together?

### Avadim Hayinu

*Led by Cantor Marge Auerbach*

Once we were slaves  
Today we are free people

### AVADIM HAYINU

*S. Postolsky*



A-va-dim ha-yi - nu, ha - yi - nu a - tah b' - nei ho-rin, b' -  
nei ho - rin. A - va - dim ha - yi-nu, a - tah a - tah b' - nei ho-rin. —  
A - va - dim ha - vi - nu. a - tah a-tah b' - nei ho-rin. b' - nei ho-rin.

*Speakers: Dolores Peoples, UNITE HERE Local 25  
Aaron Shneyer, Hunger striker, Georgetown Living Wage Campaign*

### Discussion Questions

- ☞ What successes or “highs” have you been part of in a labor struggle or another pursuit of justice? What resources do you draw upon when victories seem discouragingly far?

### Blessing – Sanctification: The third cup of wine

*Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Ruach ha-olam, borei p'ree ha'gafen.*

Blessed are you, Source of all Life, Spirit of the Universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine.

## The Fourth Cup of Wine: Action and Commitment

### WHAT WILL WE DO TO REACH THE “PROMISED LAND”?

In the midst of the original Exodus, we were told how to take the message forward into the future; the traditional Haggadah includes in its narrative tales of organizing against injustice, *as when it talks of five rabbis -- all known to oppose the Roman occupation of their land -- staying up all night in B'nai B'rak, to talk about liberation.* Where do we go from here, today, in order to extend liberation and righteousness still further?

### Step by Step by John McCutcheon

Step by step the longest march can be won, can be won  
Many stones can form an arch, singly none, singly none  
And by union what we will can be accomplished still  
Drops of water turn a mill, singly none singly none

*Speakers: Andy Levin, Greater Washington Jewish Labor Committee  
Avi Rosenblit, Jews United for Justice*

### Discussion Questions

☞ Our fourth question is not for discussion, but for our own introspection, and our own promises. What will we commit to doing, in order to bring about greater justice and liberation for workers, between now and next Passover?

### Blessing – Sanctification: The fourth cup of wine

*Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Ruach ha-olam, borei p'ree ha'gafen.*

Blessed are you, Source of all Life, Spirit of the Universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine.



Photo: Jewish Publication Society

## Afikomen: Our Ongoing Commitment

At the conclusion of our seder, just as the children of our families might search for the broken dessert matzah or *afikomen*, we search within ourselves for ways we can continue the work we have come together tonight to honor.

*Please list 3 ways you will continue to work for economic justice in the coming year.*

1.

2.

3.

### Bread and Roses

*Led by Joe Glazer, and Cantors Marge Auerbach and Charlie Bernhardt*

As we come marching, marching in the beauty of the day,  
A million darkened kitchens, a thousand mill lofts gray,  
Are touched with all the radiance that a sudden sun discloses,  
For the people hear us singing: "Bread and roses! Bread and roses!"

As we come marching, marching, we battle too for men,  
For they are women's children, and we mother them again.  
Our lives shall not be sweated from birth until life closes;  
Hearts starve as well as bodies; give us bread, but give us roses!

As we come marching, marching, unnumbered women dead  
Go crying through our singing their ancient cry for bread.  
Small art and love and beauty their drudging spirits knew.  
Yes, it is bread we fight for – but we fight for roses, too!

As we come marching, marching, we bring the greater days.  
The rising of the women means the rising of the race.  
No more the drudge and idler – ten that toil where one reposes,  
But a sharing of life's glories: Bread and roses! Bread and roses!

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