
A Call to End Silence and Injustice: Rabbi Prinz's Powerful Speech at March on Washington



In 1963, following the March on Washington, Rabbi Joachim Prinz, a prominent Jewish leader and ardent supporter of civil rights, played an important role in uniting diverse communities. Having met with President John F. Kennedy and other civil rights leaders, Prinz spoke passionately about the need to combat racial injustice. Drawing from his personal experience as a rabbi in Nazi Germany, he highlighted the perils of remaining silent in the face of oppression.

Speaking immediately after folk singer Odetta and just before Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his iconic “I Have a Dream” speech, Prinz declared, “The most urgent, the most disgraceful, the most shameful, and the most tragic problem is silence.” His powerful words underscored that inaction in the face of discrimination was itself a grave injustice.

Prinz’s speech exemplified the strong alliance between Jewish and African American communities in the struggle for equality.

His message served as a poignant reminder that the civil rights movement was a fight for justice and dignity for all people, regardless of race or religion. By working together, leaders like Prinz and Dr. King demonstrated the transformative power of unity in overcoming inequality.

