SAYING NO TO HATE:  
OVERCOMING ANTISEMITISM IN AMERICA

“Thirty-Six Turning Points”

Book: Norman H. Finkelstein (JPS, 2024)
Syllabus: Rabbi Barry L. Schwartz

Saying No to Hate is a highly readable account of both the history of antisemitism in America, and the efforts to overcome it. The book will engage teens and adults alike. With an abundance of primary sources it may be used as a textbook in public and private schools, religious schools, and adult education.

The following syllabus takes the approach of telling the story of antisemitism in America through thirty-six episodes recounted in the book, that go from being flashpoints to turning points when the community says no to hate and fights back.

Teachers are encouraged to read the stories with their students. Basic discussion questions regarding each story may be found at the end of this Syllabus. Developing additional, specific questions around each episode will enhance the learning experience.

By knowing the past we can confidently face the future and have the informed conversations about antisemitism in America that are so urgently needed.

1. New Amsterdam: Sept. 1654 pp.15-17 The Recife 23
2. New Amsterdam: July, 1655 pp.17-19 Asser Levy
4. Philadelphia: June, 1788 pp.24-25 The Constitution(s)
15. New York: July, 1902 pp.76-79 Rabbi Jacob Joseph Funeral
17. Atlanta: Aug., 1915 pp.87-93 Leo Frank
25. Washington, DC., Dec.,1943 pp. 141-143 Dubois and the WRB
27. Washington, DC., July, 1964 pp.172-177 Summer of ‘64
29. Skokie: June, 1978 pp.210 Skokie March
31. New York, July 2005 pp.198-204 BDS
33. Pittsburgh: Oct., 2018 pp.218-220 Tree of Life Massacre
34. Washington, DC, Jan. 6,2021 pp.223-225 Insurrection
35. Colleyville, TX, Jan. 2022 pp.231-233 Standoff
Basic Discussion Questions:

1. What was the incident?
2. Who were the instigators and what was their motive?
3. What were the larger historical circumstances?
4. How did Jews demonstrate resilience to overcome the situation?
5. How was the greater community involved?
6. To what extent were they successful and how did they fall short?
7. What turns this episode from a flashpoint to a turning point?
8. To what extent does this kind of antisemitism still exist?
9. How do we best combat it now?
10. What other lessons can we draw from this episode?