

# Are we Responsible for Others?

The Movement to Free Soviet Jews

Discovering American Jewish History Through Objects

## 01 PROVERBS

—What does it mean to judge “righteously?”

Speak up, judge righteously, Champion the poor and the needy.

פתח-פיף שפט-צדק ודין עני ואביון

Proverbs 31:9

## 02 LEADING THE CHARGE

We, who condemn silence and inaction during the Nazi holocaust, dare we keep silent now? The time has come for a mass grass-roots movement— spearheaded by the student youth.

Flyer announcing the first meeting of Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry, 1964

## 03 JEWS OF SILENCE

The story they tell echoes in your mind like a horrible folk tale from days gone by.

Elie Wiesel, Holocaust survivor, *The Jews of Silence*, 1966

## 04 FINDING MY ROOTS

—Can you think of a time when knowing history helped you feel strong or courageous?

The moment I found my roots, the moment I felt that, in effect, there is a long history which is behind me, it became the first source of strength to speak my mind openly. The first time you start speaking your mind, you become free.

Natan Sharansky, interview with Harry Kreisler, 2004

When we’ve had our say with the government—and maybe the adults have gotten used to saying “it is what it is,” but if us students have learned anything, it’s that if you don’t study, you will fail. And in this

case if you actively do nothing, people continually end up dead, so it’s time to start doing something.

Emma Gonzalez, anti-gun rally in Fort Lauderdale, FL, 2018

## DANGER OF COCOONS 08

The danger of the Internet is cocooning with the like-minded online—of sending an email or twitter and confusing that with action.

Gloria Steinem, in an interview with Marianne Schnall of *Huffington Post*, 2011

## USING YOUR PLATFORM 07

I’m seeing things happen to people that don’t have a voice: people that don’t have a platform to talk and have their voices heard and affect change. I’m in the position where I can do that, and I’m going to do that for people that can’t.

Colin Kaepernick, media interview, 2016

## A FACELESS MOVEMENT 06

I didn’t know who our senators were. But we knew we had to do something and we knew we had to make their stories real because otherwise it would become a faceless movement, like the Holocaust.

Connie Smukler, interview with *The Philadelphia Citizen*, 2016

## DEFENDER OF RIGHTS? 05

The United States wants...to be making themselves out to be an active defender...of human rights, to resolve their own problems, and what they're organizing is a brain drain. We're protecting ourselves....We will never accept a condition when the people are being exhorted from outside to leave their country.

Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev, 1987



Anatoly Altman Prisoner of Conscience kit, Project of the Union of Councils of Soviet Jews, ca. 1970s National Museum of American Jewish History, 1991.51.8.2