



Interviewed: Stephen Pincus

Oral History Title Clip: Values – A Common Thread

Theme: Jewish Life in Southern Africa

Interviewer: Jessica Parker

Date: 26 Apr. 2015

Oral History Number: AC 415

(Interviewer)

This is jumping a head a bit, but I'm wondering about a transition for you from being involved in a Zionist and socialist youth movement and the kibbutz movement, and then ending up in business and corporate law.

(Stephen)

Right. A good question. So, I've made a number of journeys in my life, and what I think is sort of the common thread is really having an open mind, being a curious person, and attacking whatever I do with a passion. So, yes, it is, on the face of it, an ideological shift. But I think a lot of the goals and a lot of the skills frankly are transportable. So, what do I mean by that? So, one of the things that is very important to me in my legal practice and the way I approach legal practice and trying to get my colleagues and the people who work with me to do is to take an innovative approach. And what we've been doing, sort of the last twenty-five or thirty years, is providing solutions that will deal with needs in the market, needs that clients have, needs that investors have, and we'll talk a little bit more about, you know, how that is applied in different things that I do. But what's common through it all is that you are trying to solve problems. They might be economic goals, they might be socioeconomic goals, and, you know, a lot of the skills that you learn in the youth movement and how to work with people and how to create win-win solutions are transportable. So yes, it's a different ideology. I've actually shifted, I think, in a number of respects in my view of economic values, social values, religious values. I've, I think, made in some senses a little bit of a full circle. I'm not a socialist, but I feel that if you had this discussion with me fifteen, twenty years ago [I] probably would have given you a more univocal, capitalistic view quite opposed to my previous socialistic view of things. Today I would be much closer to coming back to the basic communal values that I had in my twenties. And I think it's, you know, just part of the evolution of life and one's experiences. I do think there is common thread, you know, common values. We saw, you know, kibbutz movement, for example, in the '70s; we saw it as something that would go on forever. You know? Today the kibbutz movement is essentially a capitalist movement. So even, you know, in the sort of the heart of socialism in Israel, the kibbutzim are businesses and today in the vast majority of them, people are paid based on the value that they create, not necessarily based on their needs, as Karl Marx would have said. But you know. The institutions have shifted as well, but I think some of the values of, you know, trying to create situations that are good outcomes for the society in which you live, trying

OJASALP.ORG



to take care of people who are less fortunate and underprivileged, and, you know, trying to be open to others who may be different or may be, you know, challenged in some way. Those things are values that run through, whether you grapple with them through socialism or capitalism.

OJASALP.ORG