

JCRC PRESS RELEASE

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JCRC ISSUES FALSE DOOMSDAY PROPHECY

52% of the New York Jewish Community _will not_ vanish in Y2K

Jewish Women Watching Serving the Community by Getting the Word Out

3 Heshvan 5760 -- The Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) gave the Jewish community quite a scare this last week. Invitations to its "Changing Realities: The New York Community in the 21st Century" conference failed to include even one woman participant, leading many to believe that women would cease to exist in the coming millennium.

"There was no other way to interpret it," said a member of Jewish Women Watching, the renegade group of concerned women that caused a stir this Yom Kippur with newspaper ads and New Year's cards that admonished the community for sins committed against Jewish women. "When a well respected organization such as JCRC plans a day-long conference for the sake of gaining insight into the multi-faceted New York Jewish community, and every presenter is a man – and a middle-aged man at that – you have to wonder what they really mean by 'Changing Realities.'"

"It was the only reasonable explanation." Added another member, who like all, insisted upon anonymity. "That a panel could be planned and publicized without a single woman on the dais would be too ludicrous and shameful. We know that we have a way to go before women are seen as full and equal members of the Jewish community, but we were unable to believe that such appalling and invidious sexism could be at play here..."

It was only after pressure from prominent Jewish women that the JCRC acknowledged that the end of the world was not nigh, and at the last moment added four women to its roster. It is unclear in what capacity these women will participate, however.

As a service to the New York Jewish community, and the greater New York community as well, seven members of Jewish Women Watching were on hand to greet conference participants this morning outside the UJA Federation building at 130 East 59 Street, where the conference was held. From 8:15 to 8:40, with identities concealed by black robes, _shmattes_ and masks with mouths symbolically taped shut, the women passed out neon stickers that read "JCRC: GET REAL" and "REALITY CHECK" and flyers that read "JCRC warns of imminent doom!! 52 PERCENT OF NEW YORK JEWS TO VANISH BY Y2K" and featured an archival photo of a room crowded with men studying with the caption, "Is this the Jewish community of the 21st century?"

The reverse side of the flyer set the record straight:

"REALITY CHECK

There was not one woman on the original program of today's conference: Changing Realities: The New York Jewish Community in the 21st Century.

Only after pressure from prominent Jewish women did the Jewish Community Relations Council add four women participants.

GET REAL.

Women are not an afterthought."

The women remained silent throughout the half-hour "consciousness raising."

When asked whether this action was a success, the women issued an empathetic "yes." "We feel honored that we could play a small part in quelling any unnecessary Y2K hysteria while at the same time sending a clear and powerful message to the Jewish Community that Jewish Women are Watching."

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