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**THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE**

**MEMORANDUM**

**date** February 8, 1984  
**to** AJC STAFF  
**from** Eugene DuBow  
**subject**

I thought you might be interested in this piece by David Gordis regarding his move to AJC from the University of Judaism.

ED/br  
Attachment

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# DIRECTION

# UJLA



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## The Move To AJC: A Personal View

By Dr. David M. Gordis

*The following is a statement by Dr. David M. Gordis regarding his decision to accept the position of Executive Vice-President of the American Jewish Committee. — Ed.*

After twelve years on the faculty and as an administrator of the University of Judaism, I have been given an exciting opportunity to work, on a wider scope, in areas which affect the overall agenda of Jewish life, both here and in Israel. I accept the opportunity with joy, tempered, of course, with a strong feeling of sadness, shared both by Felice and myself, that it entails leaving the institution which I love and with whose progress I have been so closely associated.

My decision is made easier by the knowledge that it does not represent a change in my personal agenda. While joining the American Jewish Committee represents a change in the arena in which I will operate, it also supports the kinds of things that I stand for and gives me a good opportunity to articulate and to work towards them.

These things begin with a basic belief in the capacity of human intelligence to deal with problems and to move toward their solutions. I have never rejected the notion that understanding contributes to our ability to cope with life. Knowledge and its active pursuit are not barriers to Jewish commitment; they enhance it. There is value in the thoughtful, deliberate, analytical process by which we arrive at answers to questions.

Yet, I sense that there is, in the Jewish community, a growing impatience and disenchantment with the life of the mind, and a tendency toward highly emotional and impulsive reactions to the crises that confront us. At the university, we have always believed, as the Committee believes, that we must apply the best minds to the understanding of the nature of these problems then to formulate intelligent responses to them.

Ideologically, I have also been concerned about a shift in our Jewish community from some of our traditional concerns, such as our commitment to the American agenda, confidence in the future of the United States, devotion to its principles, individual freedom and ideological pluralism, tolerance, and the building of relationships among the different groups in American society. For example, there is a break with the black community, which translates into a falling away from our traditional concerns about unemployment, poverty, equality of opportunity, the preservation of the public school system and the revitalization of American cities, all places where Jews have played a significant role. Today, partly because of our rise up the socio-economic ladder, our moving away from our allies and our willingness to live with a higher degree of insularity and not to consider the larger picture, that agenda no longer is on center stage in the Jewish community.

These expressions of concern are related to what I have been doing at the university. One example is the Lee College, with which I have been closely involved since its genesis. The philosophy of the Lee College stresses that Jewishness is not an isolated component of one's intellectual or ideological personality, but rather our instrument for

being human. We have been able, in this marvelous country, to be both a significant and respected part of the fabric of American society, and, at the same time, to maintain our identity as Jews, which has enabled us to bring a Jewish perspective to the solving of America's social problems.

We are teaching our Lee College students to be at home in Western civilization as Jews, and to see those two aspects of our lives as being not in conflict, but fully integrated. That, too, is the challenge I will be dealing with at the American Jewish Committee, that is, trying to create an agenda for American Jewry that is not fundamentalist and which places at the center of attention appropriate human and Jewish concerns. It's been stated often but needs repeating: "Everyone's freedom is reduced when anyone's freedom is denied."

Though this time is painful to me, I do not leave the University of Judaism with feelings of anxiety for its future. I am particularly pleased that major new figures are taking on roles at the institution.

Rabbi Marshall Meyer, who will join the UJ as a vice-president on July 1, 1984, is a gifted, international personality of great presence and force. Rabbi Alexander Graubart, who also will become a vice-president at the university on July 1, is an impressive leader and effective administrator who is already playing an important role at the university. Working together with Dr. Lieber and Dr. Vorspan, they both will make major contributions in shaping the future of the University.

The University of Judaism already is a wonderful educational institution. Within the next decade, I predict it will become one of the great historical centers of Jewish scholarship.

## AJ Committee Asks Gordis To Resign

In a move that caught even the most astute Jewish communal observers by surprise, the American Jewish Committee last Friday asked its top professional, executive vice president Dr. David Gordis, to resign. Gordis refused, throwing the prestigious organization into a turmoil.

Although no one is talking publicly, it appears that the issue is Gordis's relationship with the lay leadership, whose president, New York attorney Ted Ellenoff, called for the resignation.

Gordis, an ordained Conservative rabbi and former head of the Jewish Theological Seminary's West Coast branch, seemed to have consolidated his authority at the Committee during his three-year tenure. Gordis has been respected for his broad knowledge of Jewish affairs as well as his ability to raise funds. But his decision to bring in several younger staff members into key positions may have offended senior staff with more tenure, and his effort to control the organization apparently ran up against opposition from lay leaders who felt they had



Gordis: asked to step down.

insufficient input.

"It's a shame that this whole conflict is over personalities, not substantive issues," said one insider, who noted that both Gordis and Ellenoff have "substantial egos."

According to several sources, when Ellenoff informed staff members at a special meeting on Monday morning that Gordis had been "terminated," they vigorously objected and sought to keep him in his job.

While some insiders describe the situation as "fluid,"

Ellenoff told the BALTIMORE JEWISH TIMES on Tuesday that Gordis' services had indeed been "terminated" on Friday and that the issue had been resolved. He said the dispute was over long-standing policy differences, but did not elaborate.

Some say that Bert Gold, who stepped down as executive vice president of AJC several years ago, was asked to step in until a replacement for Gordis could be found and that he declined.

Compounding the chaotic situation is the fact that the annual national convention of the Committee is only two weeks away and if the Gordis issue is not resolved prior to the convention, it is sure to be played out there. In addition, the Committee, once seen as the class of national Jewish organizations, has had more than its share of turnover in the last few years. Don Feldstein, who replaced Gold, was asked to leave only a year after he became executive vice president. Bill Trostin, who served as acting executive vice president, was passed over in favor of Gordis. One worried staffer summed up the thoughts of many at the Committee when he noted, "Five top execs in five years won't say much for our stability." —G.R.

Address by David M. Gordis  
AJC's National Executive Council  
November 2, 1984

FOUR MONTHS AGO, AS YOU KNOW, I BECAME EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE. FOR A NUMBER OF MONTHS BEFORE THAT, WHILE DIS-ENGAGING FROM MY FORMER RESPONSIBILITIES, I SPENT PART OF MY TIME LEARNING ABOUT THE IMPRESSIVE HISTORY AND CRITICAL OPERATIONS OF THIS COMPLEX AGENCY, AND GETTING TO KNOW THE EXTRAORDINARY GROUP OF LAY AND PROFESSIONAL MEN AND WOMEN ASSOCIATED WITH IT.

TODAY I WANT TO SHARE WITH YOU SOME PRELIMINARY THOUGHTS ABOUT THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE'S ROLE IN JEWISH AND AMERICAN LIFE -- AS IT SEEMS TO SOMEONE APPROACHING THE QUESTION WITH A FRESH SET OF EYES -- AND TO INVITE YOU TO JOIN WITH ME IN INITIATING A SERIOUS EVALUATION OF OUR VARIOUS PROGRAMS IN THIS COUNTRY AND ABROAD.

LET ME START WITH WHAT MAY BE A CONTROVERSIAL OBSERVATION: WE JEWS ARE NO LONGER POWERLESS, IN THIS COUNTRY OR ELSEWHERE. OUR FATE IS NO LONGER SOLELY IN THE HANDS OF OTHERS, AND WE ARE NO LONGER MERE PAWNS ON AN INTERNATIONAL CHESSBOARD. THE STATE OF ISRAEL IS, THANK GOD, STRONG, SOVEREIGN AND ABLE TO DEFEND ITSELF. ITS ECONOMIC PROBLEMS, SEVERE AS THEY ARE, ARE NOT INTRACTABLE. AND, THE RANTINGS AT THE UNITED NATIONS NOTWITHSTANDING, THERE IS NO SERIOUS CHALLENGE IN THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA OF ITS RIGHT TO EXIST, WITHIN SAFE AND SECURE BOUNDARIES. IN THIS COUNTRY, JEWS OCCUPY A PROMINENT POSITION IN AMERICAN POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC LIFE. OUR VOICES ARE HEARD IN THE CORRIDORS OF POWER, NATIONALLY AND LOCALLY, AND WE ARE COURTED BY BOTH MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES.

PLEASE DON'T MISUNDERSTAND ME. I DO NOT STAND HERE ASSERTING A JEWISH TRIUMPHALISM. IT WOULD BE ABSURD TO SUGGEST THAT ANTI-SEMITISM IS NO LONGER

A REALITY, OR THAT JEWS HAVE BECOME INVINCIBLE. I DO NOT FORGET FOR ONE MOMENT THE OVERT ANTI-SEMITISM THAT SURFACED IN THIS PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN, OR THE JEWS IN THE SOVIET UNION, ARAB LANDS AND ELSEWHERE, WHOSE FREEDOM -- AND PERHAPS LIVES -- DEPEND ON OUR CONTINUED VIGILANCE. NOR DO I SUGGEST THAT JEWS IN ISRAEL, THE UNITED STATES, OR THE WORLD OVER CAN GO IT ALONE. EVEN THE TWO MOST POWERFUL NATIONS IN THE WORLD TODAY BOTH KNOW THEY ARE NOT STRONG ENOUGH TO DO WITHOUT ALLIES.

BUT I DO BELIEVE THERE IS A TIME LAG THAT DISTORTS OUR SELF-PERCEPTION; AND THAT DESPITE THE OBVIOUS CHANGES IN THE JEWISH CONDITION HERE AND ABROAD, MANY OF US CONTINUE TO SEE THE JEW PRIMARILY AS "VICTIM," AND THE WORLDWIDE JEWISH AGENDA AS PRIMARILY DEFENSIVE. AND I SUGGEST THE TIME HAS COME TO SEE OURSELVES MORE REALISTICALLY -- TO RECOGNIZE NOT ONLY OUR VULNERABILITIES BUT ALSO OUR ABILITY TO AFFECT OUR PRESENT AND INFLUENCE OUR FUTURE.

IT IS THIS VIEW OF THE JEWISH REALITY THAT, FOR ME, SUGGESTS THE DIRECTION IN WHICH THE AJC SHOULD BE MOVING -- IN ITS DOMESTIC PROGRAM, IN ISRAEL, AND IN ITS INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS. LET ME TOUCH BRIEFLY ON EACH OF THESE AREAS.

WE ARE AMERICA'S LEADING HUMAN-RELATIONS AGENCY, WITH A PROUD RECORD OF ADVANCING INTERGROUP AND INTERRELIGIOUS UNDERSTANDING. OVER THE YEARS WE HAVE PLAYED A VITAL ROLE IN REDUCING RACIAL AND RELIGIOUS PREJUDICE IN THIS COUNTRY AND ELIMINATING MANY OF THE DISCRIMINATORY BARRIERS THAT HAVE STOOD IN THE WAY OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR MANY AMERICANS. TODAY, WE ARE ENGAGED IN EXTENSIVE EFFORTS TO BUILD NEW ALLIANCES WITH BLACKS AND WITH AMERICANS OF HISPANIC, ASIAN, POLISH, GREEK, ITALIAN, JAPANESE AND OTHER ANCESTRIES. BUT THERE IS, IN SOME JEWISH QUARTERS, CONSIDERABLE DISENCHANTMENT WITH

INTERGROUP RELATIONS.

THE ANTI-SEMITIC OUTBURSTS OF JESSE JACKSON AND LOUIS FARRAKHAN HAVE CAUSED MANY TO QUESTION THE VALIDITY OF EARLIER BLACK-JEWISH TIES, AND OF SIMILAR OUTREACH TO GROUPS THAT DO NOT ALWAYS SEE OUR ISSUES OUR WAY. I BELIEVE THESE DOUBTERS HAVE TOO LIMITED A VIEW OF WHAT DIALOGUE AND COALITION ARE ABOUT. CERTAINLY IT IS OUR CLEAR RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTEST MANIFESTATIONS OF BLACK ANTI-SEMITISM DIRECTLY AND UNMISTAKABLY. -- AND WE HAVE DONE SO. AT THE SAME TIME, WE HAVE INITIATED HIGH-LEVEL CONVERSATIONS, SHIELDED FROM THE PUBLIC EYE, DESIGNED TO EXPLORE WHAT SENSIBLE JEWISH AND BLACK LEADERS AGREE IS A SERIOUS PROBLEM BETWEEN OUR TWO COMMUNITIES. BUT WE CAN NEITHER EXPECT NOR DEMAND, EITHER FROM BLACKS, OR FROM THE OTHER GROUPS TO WHOM WE REACH OUT IN DIALOGUE AND EXPLORATION, SIMPLE QUID-PRO-QUO RESPONSES TO OUR CONCERNS. THERE ARE LEGITIMATE DIFFERENCES IN SELF-INTEREST WHICH CANNOT BE HIDDEN, AND HOSTILITIES WHICH MUST BE ACKNOWLEDGED AND OVER-COME.

BUT THERE ARE VAST AREAS OF COMMON CONCERN. WE ALL WANT A SOCIETY THAT PROVIDES DECENT HOUSING, GOOD SCHOOLS FOR ALL OUR CHILDREN, JOBS AT DECENT WAGES FOR ALL WHO WANT TO WORK, RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL PLURALISM, A SAFER, MORE PEACEFUL WORLD. THAT COMMON AGENDA IS TOO PRECIOUS TO BE DISCARDED BECAUSE OF TEMPORARY SETBACKS AND DISAPPOINTMENTS.

BUT I WANT TO SUGGEST TO YOU THAT THERE IS MORE TO COALITION-BUILDING THAN THE PURSUIT OF MUTUAL SELF-INTEREST. SUCH MUTUAL SELF-INTEREST IS SURELY THE CRUCIBLE OF COALITIONS; BUT IF THEY ARE TRULY TO SUCCEED, THEY MUST BE ROOTED IN EMPATHY, AND NOT JUST SYMPATHY. AND THEIR PARTICIPANTS MUST BE WILLING, AT TIMES TO TRANSCEND THEIR SELF-INTERESTS -- AGREEING TO

DISAGREE ON SOME ISSUES, COMPROMISING WHERE COMPROMISE IS POSSIBLE, BUT WORKING TOGETHER TO FURTHER OUR JOINT VISION OF WHAT THIS COUNTRY CAN BE. I BELIEVE AMERICAN JEWS TODAY ARE SAFE ENOUGH AND SECURE ENOUGH TO EMBRACE THIS BROADER VIEW.

ON THE WORLD SCENE, TOO, WE ARE NO LONGER MERELY PLEADERS ON BEHALF OF AN OPPRESSED JEWRY. AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE LEADERS ARE SOUGHT OUT BY HEADS OF STATE AND OTHER HIGH OFFICIALS IN FRANCE, GERMANY, GREAT BRITAIN, CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA. WE ARE RECOGNIZED AS REPRESENTATIVES OF A STRONG AND INFLUENTIAL COMMUNITY, AND ACCORDED THE DIGNITY AND RESPECT SUCH A POSITION ENTITLES US TO. WHETHER WE DISCUSS SOVIET JEWRY, RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL, HUMAN RIGHTS OR INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM, OUR VIEWS ARE TAKEN SERIOUSLY; AND WE ARE ALSO SEEN AS POTENTIAL ALLIES WHO CAN HELP PROMOTE VIEWPOINTS AND THAT INTERESTS/THEY HAVE, IF WE ARE PERSUADED THEY ARE MORAL AND PROPER.

WITHOUT DELUDING OURSELVES WITH INFLATED NOTIONS OF OUR INFLUENCE IN THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA, WE WELCOME THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE ACTIVE IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, BOTH OUT OF CONCERN FOR OUR PARTICULAR JEWISH AGENDA, AND OUT OF A DEEP COMMITMENT TO INTERNATIONAL HARMONY AND WORLD PEACE. NOR NEED WE BE EMBARRASSED OR APOLOGETIC ABOUT PURSUING THE BROAD CONCERNS WE HAVE AS AMERICANS AND AS HUMAN BEINGS, ALONG WITH OUR SPECIAL JEWISH CONCERNS. NOT ONLY DOES OUR IMPROVED JEWISH CONDITION MAKE THIS POSSIBLE; OUR TRADITIONAL JEWISH VALUES MAKE IT MANDATORY FOR US TO DO SO.

WE ALSO NEED, I BELIEVE, A SUBSTANTIVE REVIEW OF THE AJC'S ROLE WITH RESPECT TO ISRAEL. WE HAVE ALREADY BEGUN TO DEAL WITH A NUMBER OF TECHNICAL AND PROGRAMMATIC ISSUES; BUT THERE ARE MORE FUNDAMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS THAT I SHOULD LIKE TO RAISE WITH YOU, EVEN THOUGH THERE ISN'T TIME ENOUGH TO DISCUSS THEM IN DETAIL.



A NEW ROUND OF DISCUSSIONS IS CURRENTLY UNDER WAY, HERE AND IN ISRAEL, REGARDING THAT AGE-OLD QUESTION, THE DEFINITION OF ZIONISM. AS STRUCTURED, I FIND THAT DEBATE UNINTERESTING, AND NEEDLESSLY DIVISIVE. IT WOULD SEEM TO ME A PYRRHIC VICTORY IF, BECAUSE THE ENVISIONED IN-GATHERING HAS NOT WORKED ACCORDING TO BLUEPRINT, CERTAIN ELEMENTS WERE TO SUCCEED IN DEFINING OUT OF THE ZIONIST FOLD ALL THOSE ARDENT SUPPORTERS OF ISRAEL WHO ASSERT ITS CENTRALITY IN JEWISH LIFE BUT DO NOT PLAN TO SETTLE IN ISRAEL. WHAT I DO CONSIDER VITAL, HOWEVER, IS THE NEED FOR THE JEWISH PEOPLE TO REEVALUATE THE ROLE OF ISRAEL, AND OF JEWISH NATIONALISM, IN THE PRESENT REALITY OF JEWISH LIFE. TO ARRIVE AT THIS UNDERSTANDING IT IS NECESSARY, I THINK, TO REEXAMINE AND RECAST FOUR ELEMENTS OF CLASSICAL ZIONIST THOUGHT.

FOR EXAMPLE: CLASSICAL ZIONISM POSITED THAT WITH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL THE DIASPORA WOULD WITHER AWAY. IT IS NOW CLEAR THAT THIS WILL NOT HAPPEN; THAT MUCH AS WE MAY ENCOURAGE ALIYAH, THERE WILL BE NO MASS SHIFTS OF JEWISH POPULATION TO ISRAEL, EXCEPT FROM COUNTRIES WHERE JEWS FACE GRAVE DANGER OR SEVERE AND ONGOING DISCRIMINATION.

FURTHERMORE, CLASSICAL ZIONISM SAW DIASPORA JUDAISM AS, AT BEST, HISTORICALLY IRRELEVANT, AND AT WORST, A DESTRUCTIVE ABERRATION. THERE ARE MANY IN ISRAEL, AND SOME IN THIS COUNTRY AS WELL, WHO STILL BELIEVE THIS; BUT THERE ARE MANY ALL OVER THE WORLD WHO CHALLENGE THIS ASSUMPTION, AND JEWS TODAY ARE STRONG ENOUGH, AND SECURE ENOUGH, NOT TO IMPOSE AN APPARENT UNANIMITY WHERE NONE EXISTS. THE TIME HAS COME, I WOULD ARGUE, FOR THE AJC TO ASSERT, WITHOUT GUILT, THAT WE ARE PART OF A PROUD AND SELF-CONFIDENT JEWISH COMMUNITY THAT CAN, AND WILL, SURVIVE CREATIVELY IN THIS COUNTRY, IN A CONSTRUCTIVE AND MUTUALLY ENHANCING PARTNERSHIP WITH ISRAEL. WE MAY ACCEPT A CENTRAL ROLE FOR ISRAEL IN JEWISH LIFE; BUT WE REJECT TOTALLY THE PRINCIPLE

THAT BECAUSE WE DO NOT LIVE IN ISRAEL WE ARE ONLY PERIPHERAL TO JEWISH LIFE. OUR EXCHANGES, EXPLORATIONS AND EDUCATIONAL, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL CONTACTS MUST BE BASED ON A MUTUALLY RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OUR TWO COMMUNITIES. WE WILL CONTINUE TO FEEL STRONGLY AND PERSONALLY ISRAEL'S ANGUISH AND TRIMPHS. BUT THIS IS OUR HOME. ISRAEL MAY SAFELY PREDICATE ITS VIABILITY AND ITS FUTURE ON AMERICAN JEWRY'S STRONG AND CONTINUED SUPPORT, BUT NOT ON THE DISINTEGRATION OF AMERICAN JEWISH LIFE. ISRAEL MUST NOT BE BUILT ON THE RUINS OF AMERICAN JEWRY.

THE EQUAL PARTNERSHIP I PROPOSE IS PARTICULARLY SIGNIFICANT IN RELATION TO TWO OTHER CLASSICAL ZIONIST ASSUMPTIONS WHICH, IN MY VIEW, REQUIRE RETHINKING: THE EXPECTATION THAT THE CREATION OF A JEWISH STATE WOULD BRING ABOUT A "NORMALIZATION" OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE; AND THE ANTICIPATION THAT ESTABLISHMENT OF THE STATE WOULD NATURALLY AND EASILY USHER IN AN IDEAL SOCIETY. I, MYSELF, HAVE SERIOUS DOUBTS THAT THERE IS SUCH A THING AS A "NORMAL PEOPLE." BUT EVEN IF THERE IS, I'M QUITE SURE WE JEWS DO NOT FIT THE BILL. WE DEFY ALL THE USUAL SOCIOLOGICAL CHARACTERIZATIONS: WE ARE A UNIVERSAL PEOPLE AND A NATIONALITY; WE ARE A FAITH AND AN ETHNIC COMMUNITY; AND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE STATE OF ISRAEL AND WORLD JEWRY IS AN ESSENTIAL ELEMENT OF JEWISH UNIQUENESS AND, IF YOU WILL, OUR ABNORMALITY. GIVEN ALL OF THESE "ABERRATIONS," I SEE NO NORMALIZATION IN SIGHT, NOR DO I CRAVE IT.

BUT THE CHALLENGE TO CREATE IN THE LAND OF ISRAEL THE IDEAL SOCIETY OF THE ZIONIST DREAM IS ONE THAT INSPIRES JEWS EVERYWHERE. IT WILL NOT BE ACCOMPLISHED QUICKLY OR EASILY; IT CANNOT BE ACHIEVED BY ISRAEL ALONE. IT REQUIRES THE CREATIVE INTERACTION BETWEEN ISRAEL AND WORLD JEWRY -- NOT ONLY FINANCIAL AND POLITICAL SUPPORT FROM THE DIASPORA, BUT A SHARING OF INFORMATION, PERCEPTIONS, ANALYSES AND JUDGMENTS, AND AN OPENNESS TO ADVICE AND

CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM. WE NEED TO ENHANCE MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING. WE NEED TO ENSURE A COMMON VOCABULARY BETWEEN AMERICAN JEW AND ISRAELI, AND THIS CAN ONLY BE DONE BY INCREASING THE KNOWLEDGE EACH COMMUNITY HAS ABOUT THE OTHER. THE AJC HAS LONG RECOGNIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS TASK. OUR PUBLICATIONS IN HEBREW AND ENGLISH, OUR MAGAZINE, TEFUTSOT ISRAEL, AND OUR NEW HEBREW-LANGUAGE NEWSLETTER ON AMERICAN JEWRY, PUBLISHED BY THE INSTITUTE ON AMERICAN JEWISH-ISRAELI RELATIONS, ALL HAVE A WIDE READERSHIP IN GOVERNMENT, ACADEMIC AND OTHER CENTERS OF INFLUENCE IN ISRAEL. EXCHANGE PROGRAMS AND CONFERENCES, RESEARCH PROJECTS AND INTERGROUP RELATIONS PROGRAMS IN ISRAEL, PLANNED IN CONSULTATION WITH ISRAELI COUNTERPARTS, DO MUCH TO STRENGTHEN THE BONDS BETWEEN OUR TWO COMMUNITIES. BUT WE MUST COMMIT OURSELVES ANEW TO SUCH EFFORTS AND SEARCH OUT INNOVATIVE APPROACHES IN BOTH COMMUNITIES TO ACCOMPLISH THAT GOAL. <sup>4</sup> THERE IS ONE OTHER ISSUE IN OUR RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL THAT I WANT TO TOUCH ON, AND THAT TOO HAS BECOME A MATTER OF DEFINITION. I AM TALKING ABOUT THE DETERMINED EFFORT OF A SMALL MINORITY IN ISRAEL -- AND AN EVEN SMALLER MINORITY OF WORLD JEWRY -- TO DECIDE FOR ALL OF US WHO IS A JEW. IN THE RECENT NEGOTIATIONS THAT PRECEDED THE FORMATION OF A UNITY GOVERNMENT IN ISRAEL, SOME MINORITY PARTIES BLATANTLY OFFERED TO THROW THEIR SUPPORT TO A MAJOR PARTY ON CONDITION THAT THE LAW OF RETURN WOULD BE REVISED TO APPLY ONLY TO JEWS CONVERTED BY ORTHODOX RABBIS.

LET'S BE CLEAR ABOUT THIS, BECAUSE THERE IS A FAMILIAR RING TO THESE EFFORTS. THOSE WHO SEEK TO IMPOSE THEIR DEFINITION OF JEWISHNESS ON ISRAEL AND DIASPORA JEWRY COUCH THE ISSUE IN TERMS OF JEWISH LAW. BUT THE TRUE ISSUE IS THAT OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AND EQUALITY. IF WORLD JEWRY IS TO REMAIN UNITED, DESPITE OUR DIFFERENCES IN NATIONALITY AND EXPERIENCE, WE,

TOO, NEED PLURALISM IN OUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH ONE ANOTHER. THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE IS OPEN TO JEWS OF ALL IDEOLOGICAL GROUPS. WE ARE NEUTRAL ON RELIGIOUS MATTERS. BUT WE ARE NOT NEUTRAL ABOUT THE RIGHT OF INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD -- INCLUDING ISRAEL -- TO MAKE THEIR OWN RELIGIOUS CHOICES; AND WE ARE UNALTERABLY OPPOSED TO RELIGIOUS MONOPOLY AND POLITICAL BIGOTRY. IF PLURALISM MEANS ANYTHING AT ALL, IT MEANS THAT NO ONE -- NOT EVEN OTHER JEWS -- CAN TELL JEWS THE RIGHT WAY TO RELATE TO THEIR GOD.

FINALLY, I WANT TO RAISE WITH YOU AN ISSUE THAT HAS TAKEN ON A NEW SIGNIFICANCE WITH MY SELECTION AS YOUR EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, NAMELY THE ROLE OF RELIGION AT THE COMMITTEE. DOES THE FACT THAT A RABBI IS NOW THE SENIOR EXECUTIVE OF WHAT HAS ALWAYS BEEN CONSIDERED THE MOST SECULAR NATIONAL ORGANIZATION IN AMERICAN JEWISH LIFE SIGNAL A MAJOR TRANSFORMATION AT THE AJC?

THE WORD "SECULAR" IS MUCH BANDIED ABOUT THESE DAYS, AND MEANS DIFFERENT THINGS TO DIFFERENT PEOPLE. I THINK, THEREFORE, IT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE TO KNOW THE SENSE IN WHICH WE USE THE TERM. IN THE CONTEXT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, A SECULAR SOCIETY IS ONE IN WHICH AUTHORITY STEMS FROM NON-CLERICAL, RATHER THAN RELIGIOUS OR CHURCH, AUTHORITIES. THIS IS SURELY TRUE OF THE AJC, BUT IN PRACTICAL TERMS THAT DEFINITION HAS NO REAL RELEVANCE TO OUR ORGANIZATION. FROM A SOCIOLOGICAL VIEWPOINT, A SECULAR GROUP IS ONE WHOSE FOCUS IS NOT ON RELIGIOUS, RITUAL OR SACERDOTAL MATTERS, BUT RATHER ON ISSUES NOT USUALLY DEALT WITH BY RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS, AS SUCH. THIS HAS ALWAYS BEEN TRUE OF THE COMMITTEE, AND IT WILL CONTINUE TO BE TRUE IN THE FUTURE.

BUT THERE IS ANOTHER DEFINITION OF SECULAR THAT I THINK DOES NOT, AND SHOULD NOT APPLY TO THE COMMITTEE, AND THAT IS THE NOTION OF BEING IDEOLOGICALLY OPPOSED TO, AND REJECTING, THE VALUES, MODES OF THOUGHT AND APPROACHES THAT DERIVE FROM RELIGION. WE ARE NOT A RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION; BUT NEITHER ARE WE IDEOLOGICALLY OPPOSED TO RELIGIOUS LIFE. INDEED, I THINK THE ENTIRE RELIGIOUS-SECULAR DICHOTOMY IS INAPPROPRIATE WHEN APPLIED TO JEWS. OUR CIVILIZATION DEVELOPED A MODE OF DECISION-MAKING, A PATTERN OF BEHAVIOR, AN ANALYTICAL APPROACH AND A VALUE SYSTEM, WHICH IS OFTEN EMBEDDED IN A RELIGIOUS LITERATURE AND LIFESTYLE, BUT WHICH DOES NOT DISTINGUISH RELIGIOUS FROM SECULAR. JEWISH "RELIGIOUS" LAW EMBRACES NOT ONLY RITUAL OBSERVANCE, BUT INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS, BUSINESS LAW, CRIMINAL AND CIVIL LAW. I BELIEVE THE PRESENT CONDITION OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE REQUIRES US TO LOOK MORE CLOSELY AT THE TOTAL JEWISH EXPERIENCE, IN ALL OF ITS MANIFESTATIONS AND EXPRESSIONS, IN ORDER TO FULLY UNDERSTAND THE RELEVANCE OF THAT EXPERIENCE TO OUR PRESENT REALITY.

THE JUDAISM I CHERISH IS NOT OBSESSED WITH THE MECHANICS OF JEWISH LIFE. TO MY MIND SUCH AN OBSESSION RISKS REDUCING OUR TRADITION TO A MOCKERY OF ITS NOBLE SELF. TO ME, JUDAISM IS NOT JUST THE LETTER OF THE LAW, BUT THE SPIRIT AND VALUE IT BREATHES INTO OUR LIVES. WHEN WE WORK TO BRING CLARITY AND CIVILITY TO POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS; WHEN WE JOIN WITH OTHER GROUPS TO COMBAT POVERTY AND OTHER SOCIAL ILLS; WHEN WE REACH OUT TO FORM BONDS OF FRIENDSHIP AND UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN PEOPLES, WE ARE LIVING OUR JEWISH TRADITION.

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE MUST CONCERN ITSELF WITH THE ROOTS OF PREJUDICE WITH ETHNICITY, WITH INTERNATIONAL TENSIONS, NOT JUST BECAUSE JEWISH

SECURITY REQUIRES IT, BUT ALSO BECAUSE JEWISH TRADITION REQUIRES IT -- BECAUSE OUR TRADITION, AT ITS BEST, EMBRACES BOTH THE PARTICULAR AND THE UNIVERSAL. I BELIEVE PART OF OUR JOB, AS A JEWISH ORGANIZATION, IS TO MAKE SURE THAT JEWS BECOME MORE FAMILIAR WITH THAT TRADITION -- ITS UNIVERSAL HUMAN VALUES, ITS STYLE, ITS IDIOM, ITS WAY OF ANALYZING PROBLEMS. I WANT US TO ARTICULATE OUR LIFE-ENHANCING TRADITION CLEARLY, AND TO REJECT THE EFFORTS BOTH OF THOSE WHO WOULD DISTORT THAT TRADITION CYNICALLY FOR SHORT-TERM POLITICAL ADVANTAGE AND OF THOSE WHO WOULD REDUCE IT TO A CLUSTER OF MECHANICAL LEGALISMS.

AND SO, WHILE OUR NUMBER ONE CONCERN NOW AND ALWAYS, IS JEWISH SURVIVAL, SURVIVAL IS NOT OUR SOLE OBJECTIVE. JEWISH SURVIVAL IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE OF THE VALUES THAT THE JEWISH COMMUNITY HAS INTERNALIZED AND SEEKS TO CONVEY AND ARTICULATE FOR THE WORLD AT LARGE. WE MUST AVOID THE TENDENCY TO ASSOCIATE WHATEVER HAPPEN TO BE OUR OWN PARTICULAR UNDERSTANDINGS AND INCLINATIONS WITH JEWISH TRADITION. OUR APPROACH TO THE JEWISH EXPERIENCE, I BELIEVE, REQUIRES THE SAME RIGOROUS STANDARDS THAT WE DEMAND IN ALL OTHER AREAS OF OUR WORK. WE ARE NOT LIMITED BY WHAT THE JEWISH PAST TELLS US. AS MORDECAI KAPLAN PUT IT, OUR TRADITION DESERVES A VOTE, NOT A VETO. BUT THE JEWISH PAST, CAREFULLY ANALYZED AND SOBERLY UNDERSTOOD, MUST PLAY A ROLE IN SHAPING OUR PERCEPTIONS OF OURSELVES, OUR WORLD, AND OUR FUTURE. AND THAT IS WHY EXPLORING JEWISH VALUES, EXAMINING THE JEWISH CONDITION AND TRANSLATING HISTORICAL JEWISH THEMES INTO THE CONTEMPORARY IDIOM, IS AN APPROPRIATE ROLE FOR THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE.

OUR AGENDA AS A PEOPLE IS NO LONGER IMPOSED UPON US FROM OUTSIDE. IT MUST EMBRACE THE CRITICAL INTERNAL ISSUES OF JEWISH LIFE. THE NATURE OF THE JEWISHNESS WE WANT TO PASS ON TO OUR CHILDREN IS ONE SUCH CRITICAL INTERNAL

ISSUE, AND THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE MUST BE INVOLVED IN IT. AND WE MUST BE BETTER INFORMED ABOUT, AND MORE INFUSED WITH THE JEWISH EXPERIENCE IN ORDER TO VALIDATE OUR CLAIM TO ADDRESS CONTEMPORARY ISSUES OUT OF THAT EXPERIENCE.

IT HAS BEEN SUGGESTED TO ME RECENTLY THAT THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE CAN NEVER REALLY SYNTHESIZE ITS PARTICULARIST AND UNIVERSALIST AGENDA, BECAUSE OF THE POLITICAL DIVERSITY OF OUR MEMBERSHIP. THE RANGE OF VIEWS WE REPRESENT IS SO WIDE, I AM TOLD, THAT WE CANNOT SPEAK OUT EFFECTIVELY ON ISSUES, OR CONVEY THE PASSION AND COMMITMENT ESSENTIAL TO EFFECTIVENESS. I JUST DON'T BELIEVE THAT AT ALL. I DO NOT REGRET OUR DIVERSITY; I CHERISH IT; AND I REJECT, UNEQUIVOCALLY, THE NOTION THAT IT DESTINES US TO WEAKNESS. WE ARE A NON-PARTISAN ORGANIZATION: WE ENDORSE NO CANDIDATES; WE SUPPORT NO POLITICAL PARTIES. BUT THAT DOES NOT MEAN WE MUST BE POLITICALLY BLAND. I BELIEVE THAT WE MUST REASSERT OUR POSITION IN THE MODERATE CENTER OF THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM, NOT FROM A PARTISAN, BUT FROM AN ISSUE-ORIENTED, POINT OF VIEW.

I AM ADVOCATING AN ACTIVE CENTRISM, NOT ONE IN WHICH CHECKS AND BALANCES PARALYZE US. I BELIEVE THE AJC MUST ARTICULATE A VIEW OF JEWISH LIFE, OR AMERICAN SOCIETY AND OF THE NATURE OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS LOYAL TO THE VALUES OF OUR TRADITION, OUR DEVOTION TO THIS COUNTRY, AND OUR ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF HUMAN INTERDEPENDENCE. WE CANNOT BE SILENT ABOUT ANTI-SEMITISM, ABOUT THE NEEDS OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL, ABOUT CIVIL RIGHTS, RACISM, TYRANNY OR OPPRESSION. NEITHER CAN WE BE SILENT ABOUT SOCIETY'S RESPONSIBILITY TO THE UNDERPRIVILEGED AND THE DISPOSSESSED, OR ABOUT ATTEMPTS TO ERODE THE SEPARATION BETWEEN CHURCH AND STATE AND INJECT RELIGION INTO

AMERICAN POLITICS. THESE ARE NOT ISSUES OF DEMOCRAT OR REPUBLICAN, RIGHT OR LEFT; THEY ARE ISSUES OF RIGHT AND WRONG; AND WE MUST SPEAK OUT BOLDLY AND PERSUASIVELY, EVEN AT THE RISK OF SOMETIMES OFFENDING ONE GROUP OR ANOTHER. AT THE VERY LEAST, WHEN WE OURSELVES ARE NOT OF ONE MIND, WE CAN ENCOURAGE THOUGHTFUL PUBLIC DEBATE OF THE ISSUES INVOLVED. BUT ALWAYS, WE MUST ARRIVE AT OUR POLICY POSITIONS THROUGH THE CAREFUL STUDY, DELIBERATION AND DOCUMENTATION THAT IS OUR HALLMARK.

I HAVE NOT ATTEMPTED HERE TO SET OUT AN AGENDA FOR OUR ORGANIZATION. THAT AGENDA WE MUST DEVELOP TOGETHER. WHAT I HAVE TRIED TO DO IS TO SHARE WITH YOU SOME OF THE PRINCIPLES THAT UNDERLIE MY OWN THINKING. I AM AN UNASHAMED OPTIMIST ABOUT THE FUTURE OF OUR PEOPLE AND OUR COUNTRY. I AM CONVINCED THAT WE HAVE AN UNPRECEDENTED OPPORTUNITY TO SHAPE OUR FUTURE, AND TO SHARE THE VALUES THAT DERIVE FROM OUR JEWISH EXPERIENCE WITH A WORLD DESPERATELY IN NEED OF THOSE VALUES.

IN THE MONTHS AHEAD WE WILL UNDERTAKE, TOGETHER, NEW STEPS IN THE AMERICAN JEWISH EXPERIMENT. I AM DELIGHTED TO BE JOINING YOU IN THIS GREAT ADVENTURE.



# NEWS

FROM THE

# COMMITTEE



**THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE** Institute of Human Relations, 165 E. 56 St., New York, N.Y. 10022, (212) 751-4000

The American Jewish Committee, founded in 1906, is the pioneer human-relations agency in the United States. It protects the civil and religious rights of Jews here and abroad, and advances the cause of improved human relations for all people.

MORTON YARMON, Director of Public Relations

ANNUAL MEETING  
NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL  
NOVEMBER 1-4, 1984  
HYATT REGENCY HOTEL  
151 EAST WACKER DRIVE  
CHICAGO, ILL. 60601  
(312) 565-1000

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Haina Just  
Laurie Chock

FOR RELEASE AFTER 1:00 P.M.  
FRIDAY, NOV. 2, 1984

CHICAGO, Nov. 2...The new executive head of the American Jewish Committee today called for "an equal partnership" between Israel and the American Jewish community, which he said looks upon America as its home.

"The time has come," Dr. David M. Gordis told the agency's National Executive Council, "for the American Jewish Committee to assert, without guilt, that we are part of a proud and self-confident Jewish community that can and will survive creatively in this country, in a constructive and mutually enhancing partnership with Israel."

Dr. Gordis, who became Executive Vice President in July, spoke to the annual meeting of the AJC's top policy-making body, which continues through Sunday at the Hyatt Regency Hotel here. This was his first major address to the agency.

Dr. Gordis urged the Jewish people, in all countries, to reevaluate the role of Israel and of Jewish nationalism "in the present reality of Jewish life" so that the Zionist fold would continue to include "all those ardent supporters of Israel who assert its centrality in Jewish life but do not plan to settle in Israel." In doing this, he urged that four elements of classical Zionist thought be reexamined:

1. That with the establishment of the State of Israel, the Diaspora (Dispersion) would wither away. "It is now clear that this will not happen," he pointed out, adding that mass shifts of population to Israel take place only from countries where Jews face grave danger or ongoing discrimination.
2. That Diaspora Judaism was "at best, historically irrelevant, and at worst, a destructive aberration." "There are many in Israel, and some in this country as well, who still believe this," he went on, then added that along with many Jews all over the world we would challenge this assertion.
3. That the creation of the State of Israel would bring about a "normalization" of the Jewish people. No normalization is in sight, he

Howard I. Friedman, President; Theodore Ellenoff, Chair, Board of Governors; Alfred H. Moses, Chair, National Executive Council; Robert S. Jacobs, Chair, Board of Trustees;

David M. Gordis, Executive Vice-President

Washington Office: 2027 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036 • Europe hq.: 4 Rue de la Bienfaisance, 75008 Paris, France • Israel hq.: 9 Ethiopia St., Jerusalem 95149, Israel  
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CSAE 1707

asserted, pointing to such "aberrations" as the fact that Jews are a universal people and a nationality, that they are a faith and an ethnic community, and that the relationship between the State of Israel and world Jewry is an essential element of Jewish uniqueness.

4. That establishment of the State of Israel would "naturally and easily" usher in an ideal society.

"But the challenge to create in the land of Israel the ideal society of the Zionist dream is one that inspires Jews everywhere," Dr. Gordis said, explaining that this ideal society requires "the creative interaction between Israel and world Jewry -- not only financial and political support from the Diaspora but a sharing of information, perceptions, analyses and judgments, and an openness to advice and constructive criticism."

"This is the context in which I hope the American Jewish Committee's Israel-oriented programs will function in the months and years ahead," he stated.

Dr. Gordis's comments on a new relationship between American Jews and Israel were part of a far-ranging analysis of what he called "the Jewish reality."

"We Jews are no longer powerless, in this country or elsewhere," he said. "Our fate is no longer in the hands of others, and we are no longer mere pawns on an international chessboard...In this country, Jews occupy a prominent position in American political, social and economic life. Our voices are heard in the corridors of power, nationally and locally, and we are courted by both major parties."

He quickly added, though, that he was not asserting "a Jewish triumphalism," pointing out that "it would be absurd to suggest that anti-Semitism is no longer a reality or that Jews have become invincible." He recalled "the overt anti-Semitism" of the current Presidential campaign, and that Jews in the Soviet Union, in Arab lands, and elsewhere look to "our continued vigilance" for their freedom if not their lives.

In the domestic U.S. area, Dr. Gordis explained that the American Jewish Committee was building new alliances with Blacks, and with Americans of Hispanic, Asian, Polish, Greek, Italian, Japanese, and other ancestries, adding that legitimate differences if not hostilities existed with such groups.

"But there are vast areas of common concern," he continued, listing among them decent housing, good schools, jobs at decent wages, religious and cultural pluralism, and a safer and more peaceful world. "That common agenda is too precious to be discarded because of temporary setbacks and disappointments," he asserted.

On the international scene, he said that American Jews are no longer "merely pleaders on behalf of an oppressed Jewry." AJC officials are frequently sought out by heads of state and other high officials in Europe and Latin America, he reported. We are recognized as representatives of a strong and influential community, and accorded the dignity and respect such a position entitles us to."

The American Jewish Committee is this country's pioneer human relations organization. Founded in 1906, it combats bigotry, protects the civil and religious rights of people here and abroad, and advances the cause of improved human relations for all people everywhere.

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Edwin Black

-2

An obstinate Gordis insisted on pushing the matter to a formal vote by the officers, who approved by a vote of six to one. Still unwilling to leave quietly, Gordis demanded the matter be brought before the Board of Governors, pursuant to the AJC's by-laws.

Because the conflict arose just days before the scheduled annual meeting, the demanded Governor's ratification was quickly convened on May 13 at the Grand Hyatt in Manhattan. Imbued with all the rancor and hostility of a corporate proxy battle, the five and half hour Governors' meeting, and much of the corridor banter, was filled with personal and professional attacks against the main combatants. On one side was Gordis, and a coterie of young, up and coming Governors. On the opposing side was AJC president Theodore Ellenoff, representing the majority. The issue: who would run the agency, the professionals, or the people who paid the bills?

Anticipating a further challenge, James Greilsheimer, a board governor from New York, was asked to function as official parliamentarian and ensure strict adherence to Robert's Rules of Procedure. Unbeknownst to Ellenoff, the faction allied with Gordis had hired for \$200 their own stand-by parliamentarian, Lee Demeter of Great Neck, Long Island, who waited quietly in the hallway for a procedural argument to arise.

Trouble erupted early on. Shortly after the meeting convened, the factions clashed over who would speak first,

Edwin Black

-3

Ellenoff or Gordis. Actually, Gordis had already been notified in writing by AJC counsel Robert Haines that he would not be permitted to address the body, according to Gordis. Only the intervention of several Gordis supporters, led by former president Howard I. Friedman, reversed that decision. But when Ellenoff declared from the podium that he would speak first, Gordis supporters groaned in disapproval, calling for a vote. "By an overwhelming majority," says Ellenoff, "the group voted I would speak first, but then again, most of them had already heard what Gordis had to say." Ellenoff was referring to an eight-page letter Gordis had circulated to governors to rally support. In any event, Gordis could not be present except for his brief remarks.

Ellenoff explained that the executive vice president had long been the source of "extreme tension" among the officers of the agency over the question of control. The tension reportedly peaked last summer in Jerusalem when Ellenoff and Gordis met in the King David Hotel and discussed among other business renewing Gordis' three-year contract. Ellenoff told the governors, "David said, 'I'm going to sign it provided you promise me you will not talk to staff. ...I want to be sure staff only talks to me.'" Ellenoff said he was "shocked" and urged Gordis not to sign the contract if he wasn't comfortable.

Ultimately, explains Gordis, "I signed the contract because it was acceptable." But he denies there was any

Edwin Black

-4

contract dispute over contact to staff. "That's a fabrication," insists Gordis.

However, the issue never went away and intensified during the last several months. A source familiar with Gordis' grievances explained that Gordis, "Found out that Ellenoff had begun contract negotiations with [International Director] Marc Tanenbaum, [fundraiser] Arthur <sup>Fever</sup> ~~Feuer~~ and [associate director] William Trosten. It included early retirement for Tanenbaum."

According to the source, Gordis confided "I didn't think it was right for Ellenoff to use his close relationships with these people to undermine the proper management and administration of the agency. I never asked that the lay leaders not talk to staff about policy matters - only such things as contract negotiations and administration which is the executive vice president's responsibility." Gordis refused to confirm or deny the statements for the record.

Sources in the AJC hierarchy, however, dispute Gordis' claim that he never objected to contact on policy matters. One AJC official recalled a 1986 mission to Austria to set up a symposium. The delegation, including Gordis and Tanenbaum, was chaired by Leo Nevas, who also chairs the Board of Governors. At the close of the conference, Gordis reportedly gave Austrian officials his business card and asked they communicate directly with him. This rankled Nevas, who overruled and said, according to the source, "No,

Edwin Black

-5

I'm the chairman of the delegation, you can contact me directly."

"That's how Gordis was," declared one Governor at the meeting. "he always had to be the star of the show." Another said, "He [Gordis] had to dominate and control everything, even if it meant stumbling and putting his foot in his mouth."

The conflict reached its denouement on April 24, according to insiders. "Gordis demanded a written policy statement from Ellenoff promising that he and only he would have the right to talk to staff," said one official. The demand was refused. Later that day, at 2 pm, Ellenoff and AJC secretary Robert Rifkind walked into Gordis' office with their resignation demand.

Gordis says, "That moment was the most difficult of this entire affair." He denies however that he demanded a written policy statement. Sources say instead that he blames Tanenbaum as "principally responsible." "Since I came on," Gordis is said to have told a source, "Tanenbaum has been working continuously against me with grossly dishonest behavior, invented stories, and by nurturing a few lay leaders against me."

Gordis is said to have also asserted to the source, "All that didn't work, so they began shifting to all these other fabricated charges-- inability to run the agency, arrogance. They even invented a budget deficit to show mismanagement. So somehow we began the year with a \$37,000

Edwin Black

-6

deficit, but now we are projecting a \$400,000 surplus. Membership money is up." Gordis refused to confirm or deny the statements on the record.

Sources close to Tanenbaum, however, say he dismisses Gordis' allegations as "absolute lies" and "total fabrications." Tanenbaum himself refused to reply directly to the allegations except to say, "From the very first day of Gordis' employment, I tried to include him in every major international relations program. Unfortunately, he seldom reciprocated and like Oliver North and Admiral Poindexter, he ran his own foreign relations program."

Another AJC insider said, "This is how he [Gordis] is. He says one thing and the next minute he does another."

At the Governors' meeting, Ellenoff told the group that the rivalry between Tanenbaum and Gordis is so intense, each "maintains a file on the other." Gordis refused to comment on the file he maintains on Tanenbaum and vice versa, except to say, "One always keeps files on those you work with. I don't find that practice particularly disturbing." A source who has seen Tanenbaum's file on Gordis said, "It's nothing sinister, just memos, correspondence and follow-ups with him [Gordis]." At least one board governor dismissed the whole topic of files, saying, "It's all mischegaz. It has nothing to do with the issue. And that is, who runs the show?"

When Gordis was finally permitted to address the body, he said, "I don't claim perfection" but insisted the agency was making stunning progress, and he should be permitted to

Edwin Black

-7

remain. His brief remarks elicited only scattered applause. No questions from the governors were allowed. But one board governor later remarked, "Dave made an eloquent case. I wish the majority could have seen it his way."

Not long thereafter a vote was taken. Although Gordis' dismissal was sustained by what Ellenoff termed, "a substantial majority," Gordis retorts that under the circumstances, his 22 votes reflected wide support. In many ways, Gordis explained, he knew that the die ratifying dismissal was cast even before the Governors' meeting because the AJC leadership had placed their prestige on the line. "So, the fact that thirty percent voted for me," he stresses, "is not a defeat."

Gordis is now consulting his attorney to ensure he collects on two years of his remaining \$150,000 salary. For now, Gordis remains on the payroll. Ellenoff promises the rest will be handled, "honorably." He adds, "David was not on trial. He made a number of substantial contributions to the thinking and program of the agency." The process was rather a re-affirmation of the Committee's leadership's "historic tradition of lay control," he says. An extensive search for Gordis' successor is now underway. Ellenoff has asked former executive vice president Bert Gold to function as interim executive vice president.

"I think it's tragic that it had to come to this. But it's over now," assert Tanenbaum, "but from here, we have to resume the agency's important business." Gordis' final



Edwin Black

-8

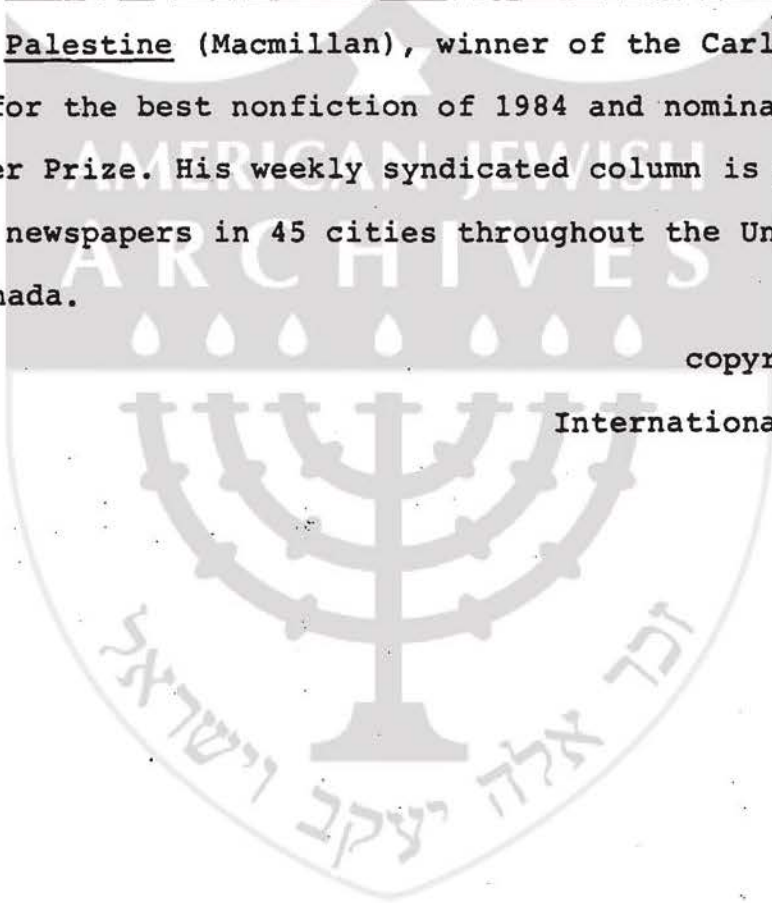
comment echoed that sentiment. "It's over for me, and over the Committee. It's time for both of us to move on."

# # #

Edwin Black is the author of The Transfer Agreement: The Untold Story of the Secret Pact Between the Third Reich and Jewish Palestine (Macmillan), winner of the Carl Sandburg Award for the best nonfiction of 1984 and nominated for the Pulitzer Prize. His weekly syndicated column is published by Jewish newspapers in 45 cities throughout the United States and Canada.

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International Features



The source said the IDF's views are based on a study of future land, sea and air battle requirements. One item which may have to be shelved is a new missile developed by the IDF that allegedly could "determine the outcome of battle." The Air Force would need 1,000 such missiles but funds are available for only 200-300 over the next few years, according to the source. Another missile, produced by Rafael, the IDF's weapons development authority, is being manufactured at only 40 percent of capacity because of a dearth of orders due to lack of funds, the source said.

Air Force Commander Gen. Amos Lapidot told the Cabinet last week that while the Lavi is an excellent aircraft, its capabilities are similar to those of the American F-16C and it costs 50 percent more than the U.S. plane.

The ground forces and the Navy want funds from the Lavi switched to the improvement of tanks and the construction of more missile boats, respectively.

The IDF source also ridiculed claims that halting the Lavi project would result in widespread unemployment among IAI engineers, scientists and workers. According to the source, funds diverted from the Lavi would provide jobs for most of the 5,000 workers currently employed on it. The remaining 15,000 IAI employees are not involved with the Lavi project.

The final decision rests with the Cabinet, which has not completed its deliberation of the matter.

**ISRAELIS SAY THEY APPROVE OF UNITY GOVERNMENT DESPITE POLICY COMPLAINTS**  
By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, May 26 (JTA) -- A substantial majority of Israelis want the national unity coalition government to serve out the remainder of its term despite widespread dissatisfaction with its handling of the peace issue and major domestic problems apart from the economy, according to the latest opinion poll published Tuesday.

The poll was conducted last week by the Hanoch and Rafi Smith Research Center among 1,135 Jewish adults. It was commissioned by the Jeane Kirkpatrick Forum for Public Leadership and Public Policy, which will meet here from May 31-June 2 on the topic of national unity governments where power is shared by parties of opposing political and ideological views.

The poll found that 29 percent of the respondents believe the Labor-Likud unity government is functioning well while 44 percent said it was operating "reasonably" well. Of the respondents, 38 percent felt the government should finish its term and 20 percent thought it should continue as long as the two major parties cooperated.

A minority of 36 percent favored termination of the coalition regime in the near future.

**Good Grade On Economic Matters**

Nearly two-thirds of the respondents gave the unity government high marks for managing the economy and the situation in Lebanon, but only a quarter were satisfied with the way it dealt with West Bank affairs and the country's social and religious-secular problems.

No more than 34 percent thought the government was doing a good job with the peace process; 57 percent expressed dissatisfaction and nine percent had no opinion. On the question of whether Israel should be governed by a national

coalition in the future, after the next elections, nine percent replied in the affirmative and 20 percent were favorably disposed but with reservations. Another 23 percent would accept a national government only if there was no other choice and 42 percent were definitely opposed. The Kirkpatrick Forum, named for the former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, will consider the proposition: "The power-sharing politics of national unity governments -- cure or predicament?"

The discussants will include Israeli Cabinet Ministers and politicians and guests from abroad including U.S. Secretary of Labor William Brock; the Defense Minister and former Deputy Prime Minister of Portugal, Dr. Rui Machete; Dr. Bernardino Gomes, executive assistant to President Mario Soares of Portugal; Michael Lingens, editor of Austrian news weekly Profil; and Prof. Felix Ermacora of the University of Vienna.

They will consider the effects of national unity governments on the political establishments, on the decision-making processes, on parliamentary, social and economic processes and on political ideologies.

**FORMER EXECUTIVE GOLD HEADING AJCOMMITTEE AS SEARCH TAKES PLACE FOR NEW EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT**  
By Margie Olster

NEW YORK, May 26 (JTA) -- The American Jewish Committee has appointed Bertram Gold as interim director while it searches for a replacement for executive vice president David Gordis, who was fired last month.

Gold served as executive vice president of AJCommittee from 1967-82 and subsequently as director of AJCommittee's Institute on American-Israeli Jewish Relations.

Gordis' termination, which was finalized at a meeting of the AJCommittee's Board of Governors here on May 13, has sparked controversy within AJCommittee, the human relations agency founded in 1906 and one of the country's preeminent Jewish organizations. Gordis fought his termination to the end.

Committee President Theodore Ellenoff said the Board voted 58-22 in favor of the decision to fire Gordis. With this vote, months and perhaps years of tension between Gordis, senior staff officers and lay people drew to a close.

Ellenoff said the major reason for the termination which he and six other officers decided on in April, was personality conflicts between senior staff members and Gordis.

Gordis could not be reached for comment and has not returned repeated phone calls from JTA.

Two months prior to the decision to fire Gordis, Ellenoff said three senior staff members who worked directly under Gordis informed the AJCommittee of their intentions to resign. He declined to name them.

"Dr. Gordis had well-known problems with the three," Ellenoff said. When officers learned of the staffers' decisions, the final determination to fire Gordis was made, he said.

**Asked To Resign**

Ellenoff asked Gordis to resign on April 24. When he refused, Ellenoff fired him. Gordis asked the officers to vote on the decision. Six vote fire him, one against. Gordis then asked the matter be taken to the full board of gov.

move which Ellenoff said was not at all unusual. The larger issue, though, according to Ellenoff, was that Gordis wanted complete control over the organization, its staff, administration and policies.

Ellenoff claimed that Gordis once asked for a written policy statement which would in effect give the executive vice president complete control over the staff and administration. This was during the time the three staff members announced their resignations. All three chose to remain because Gordis was fired, Ellenoff said.

Ellenoff told JTA on May 18 that "Dr. Gordis was responsible for innovative programs during his almost three years at the American Jewish Committee" and the agency will benefit from them for a long time to come."

Gordis, 46, a Conservative rabbi, served almost three years as executive vice president. He was the highest paid professional at AJCommittee with a reported salary of \$150,000 annually.

#### SIX WITNESSES IDENTIFY BARBIE, WHO WAS ORDERED BACK TO COURT

By Edwin Eytan

LYON, May 26 (JTA) -- Klaus Barbie was returned to court here under protest Tuesday to be formally identified by six witnesses who recalled in horrifying detail their arrest, torture and deportation more than 40 years ago at the hands of the former Gestapo chief known as "the butcher of Lyon."

After each recital Barbie, almost a bizarre caricature of the unrepentant, defiant Nazi, stated "Ich habe nichts zu Sagen, Herr President" (I have nothing to say, Mr. President) when asked by court President Andre Cerdini if he had any comments.

Barbie, on trial for crimes against humanity, took advantage of French law which allows a defendant to be absent from court when, on May 13, the second day of his trial, he demanded to be returned to St. Joseph Prison for the trial's duration. But the law also allows the court to order his return, by force if necessary. In this instance, Barbie's presence was required to permit a confrontation with former victims, who were not present at the pre-trial hearings, to identify him officially.

#### Left Cell Only When Ordered

Although the 73-year-old Barbie offered no physical resistance, he refused to voluntarily leave the cell in the court basement where he was held while Cerdini read the order for his appearance. Repeatedly, the court clerk returned from the cell to tell the three-judge panel, "the defendant still refuses." Finally Cerdini ordered Barbie brought to the prisoner's dock.

The first witness, Lucien Margaine, a former resistance fighter who shuddered as he remembered being tortured by Barbie and his cohorts for six consecutive nights, pointed to the accused. "I formally recognize him. Not only his face and traits, but the smile, this sort of rictus on his lips which he still has . . . a face like his, a smile like his, are unique. They can never be forgotten," Margaine said.

The next witness, Mario Blardone, described not only his torture but Barbie's cruelty. He told the court he had seen the defendant try to have a young girl raped by a huge Alsatian dog. Blardone, too, recoiled at the sight of Barbie. "This face . . . I want to look at his eyes, those icy eyes. Yes, Mr. President, he is the man I testified

about," Blardone said. Again Barbie offered his ritual "I have nothing to say."

A 66-year-old witness, Mrs. Raymonde Guyon, whose husband was executed and who herself was deported, cried out: "This takes me back 43 years. Without his black SS uniform, his boots and whip he might appear like any other human being, but I just have to look at him to remember what he did."

Barbie, unblinking, repeated his litany: "I am held here illegally and I am in court because I was forced to come. Legally I consider myself absent. I shall not answer any question and make no comment."

#### Next Focus: Children's Deportation

On Wednesday the court is scheduled to hear testimony about the arrest and deportation of 44 Jewish children sheltered in the village of Izieu, near Lyon, on Barbie's orders in April 1944.

Among lawyers for the many plaintiffs there are mixed feelings over whether Barbie should be forced to attend the trial. Some insist that he be made to face his victims. But others fear he might become an object of public sympathy. Barbie reportedly suffers from high blood pressure and inflammation of the spinal cord which makes it difficult to stand or to sit erect for long periods.

#### BRANDEIS TO DIVEST OF FINAL HOLDINGS IN BUSINESSES IN SOUTH AFRICA

WALTHAM, Mass., May 26 (JTA) -- The Brandeis University board of trustees has voted to divest of all stock in companies doing business in South Africa, except those providing medical goods and humanitarian services or reporting the news.

Brandeis is the only secular Jewish-sponsored university in the United States.

The university reported that its holdings in relevant companies had a market value of \$1.6 million as of March 31 out of an overall endowment of approximately \$130 million.

The divestment vote came at the board's meeting May 16, concluding deliberations that began in 1973 when the trustees committed the university to a policy of socially responsible investment.

The new divestment policy requires that the university move in "an expeditious and timely manner" in selling the relevant stock. A spokesman had no clarification of the divestment timetable.

The board established the Advisory Committee on Shareholder Responsibility in 1977--including faculty, students, alumni and staff -- to advise on portfolio policy and proxy votes affecting issues of shareholder responsibility. At the same time, Brandeis adopted the Sullivan principles for governing South Africa-related investments, and divested of companies doing business with the South African government or military.

The board adopted additional restrictions last May, leading to the sale of more than \$700,000 worth of investments in the fall.

#### DEATH REGISTRATION CHANGED

TEL AVIV, May 26 (JTA) -- Jews who die in the West Bank or Gaza district will be registered as having died in Israel, according to a policy adopted by the Interior Ministry, reported.

# AJCommittee vice president fired in power row

By J.J. GOLDBERG

The American Jewish Committee fired its executive vice president, David Gordis, at the end of April, less than three years after he was hired.

"He was asked to resign, and he refused to do so, and he was terminated," said AJCommittee President Theodore Ellenoff, a Manhattan attorney.

Gordis was the third person in five years to hold the top staff position at the agency many consider the nation's most prestigious and affluent Jewish community relations organization.

The dismissal, which came only two weeks before the organization's annual meeting, followed months of tension between Gordis and the organization's lay leadership. Observers said disagreements centered on the executive director's role in making administrative decisions, including management of other top staff officials.

"The American Jewish Committee has been a lay organization since its founding 80 years ago," Ellenoff said. "Its officers have delegated responsibility for staff and administration to an executive vice president, but have the power to withdraw that delegation in matters that are serious. Conceptually, Dr. Gordis disagreed with that conception, and he felt that his control in these matters had to be total."

Gordis was unavailable for comment. He declined to return several telephone calls.

Gordis, 46, is a Conservative rabbi and a Judaic scholar of note. Before coming to AJCommittee in 1984, he served as vice president



David Gordis

and professor of Talmud at the University of Judaism, Los Angeles affiliate of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America.

Senior staff members at AJCommittee refused to discuss the issue and referred all questions to Ellenoff. Lower-ranking staff members, however, professed bewilderment and surprise at the move.

"It's like reading the tea leaves at the Kremlin," said one employee. "We're all waiting for the agenda of the annual meeting to come out to see who speaks on the program and when."

Early press reports of the dismissal suggested that the action resulted from budgetary disagreements, but Ellenoff rejected those contentions. A source on the AJCommittee staff with close ties to both sides in the dispute confirmed that there had been no shortfall in the organization's fund-raising.

One close observer of the organization noted that Gordis came from "a different culture."

"He comes from a culture of being a rabbi and an academic, where there's a tradition of independence and freedom of speech," said Steven M. Cohen, a sociologist who has worked closely with AJCommittee. "When he came to [the] committee, he probably misunderstood the corporate culture where lay leadership dominates."

"I don't see how he could have misunderstood," said Ellenoff. "The role of lay leadership in the formulation of policy is one of the elements of American Jewish Committee culture celebrated at almost every annual meeting."

The AJCommittee, founded in 1906 and originally structured as a closed group of influential American Jews of German background, is legendary for its independent and strong-willed membership. It has remained aloof from every historic attempt to create an umbrella body of American Jewry, from the World War I era American Jewish Congress movement to the current Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, in which the AJCommittee maintains only advisory status.

Nonetheless, the committee has attracted some of the best-known figures in American Jewish life to its presidency, including Louis Marshall in the 1920s, Jacob Blaustein in the 1940s and 1950s, and more recently Morris Abram, current chairman of the Conference of Presidents who continues to serve as honorary president of the AJCommittee.

Several observers expressed concern that the organization would have difficulty in attracting a qualified replacement for Gordis in the \$150,000-a-year vice presiden-

cy, noting that Gordis' predecessor, Donald Feldstein, had been dismissed in 1983 after only a year on the job. Feldstein succeeded Bertram Gold, who retired after serving a decade and a half.

"It's beginning to look like they chew people up and spit them out," said one community relations activist, who asked not to be identified.

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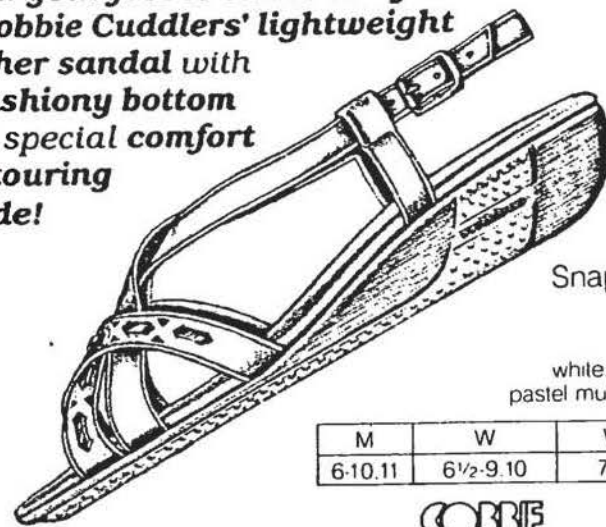


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**YUGOSLAVIAN COURT POSTPONES  
THE EXECUTION OF ARTUKOVIC**

PARIS, May 6 (JTA) -- The execution in Yugoslavia of convicted war criminal Andrija Artukovic has been postponed indefinitely for reasons of poor health, according to the official Tanjug News Agency in Belgrade. It said a court in Zagreb, which last year sentenced him to death for crimes he committed in World War II, decided to postpone carrying out the sentence. It now seems likely that Artukovic will die a natural death in prison, according to legal sources in Yugoslavia.

Artukovic, 87, was extradited from the United States last year after more than 30 years, numerous legal proceedings and two formal extradition requests. He had lived in California since entering the U.S. in 1948 through the use of fraudulent documents, according to the U.S. Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations.

He had been accused by the Justice Department of the wartime persecution or murder of 700,000 Serbians, 40,000 Gypsies and 28,000 Jews while he was Interior Minister of the Nazi puppet state of Croatia. The mass killings and persecution was an official policy of the Croatian "Ustasha" fascist regime, set up in 1941 in collaboration with the Germans and Italians.

In sentencing Artukovic, Zagreb District Judge Milko Gajski said "This trial, for which we have all waited for such a long time, is a victory for justice. He (Artukovic) was the master of life and death for the whole people." Artukovic, who was known as the "butcher of the Balkans," denied any knowledge of the killings that took place in the Croatian camps.

**EFFORTS MOUNTING IN CONGRESS  
TO CLOSE PLO OFFICES IN THE U.S.**

By Judith Colp

WASHINGTON, May 6 (JTA) -- Efforts are mounting in Congress to close the offices of the Palestine Liberation Organization based in the United States.

Rep. Jack Kemp (R. NY) has introduced legislation that would make it a felony to aid the PLO. He said the purpose of his bill, which is pending in the House Judiciary Committee, is to "establish unequivocal statutory authority" to shut down PLO offices in the United States.

Kemp said the offices are in violation of the Racketeer Influenced Corrupt Organization Act (RICO) which makes it unlawful for an organization to engage in criminal activities and the UN Charter which prohibits the threat or use of force against any state.

But a Justice Department spokesman said there is no legal basis for shutting the PLO offices under the RICO Act because they are not in the purpose of making money. There is also no evidence that the PLO ordered the killing of any Americans, said the spokesman.

"I remain unconvinced that present law does not provide ample basis to end PLO activities in the United States. But at a minimum, my bill should clear that up," said Kemp, who has been

pressing the State Department for over a year to close the PLO offices.

"Ostensibly they have a right to be here, if they're engaged in legal activity," said a spokesperson for the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), "but not if they're involved in . . . facilitating liaisons between terrorists."

The PLO have two offices in the U.S. -- an information office based in downtown Washington and an Observer Mission in the United Nations headquarters in New York established as a consequence of General Assembly Resolution 3237 in 1974 which invited the PLO to participate as an observer in the session and work at the General Assembly.

"The United States has accorded the PLO every opportunity and incentive to moderate its views and its actions. Unfortunately, recent events have reaffirmed the extremism of the PLO and its adherence to terrorism," Kemp said.

"By making it a criminal offense to support PLO actions, we will be declaring our intolerance of any who would offer aid and comfort to international terrorists," he said.

**At The WJCongress In Budapest:  
BRONFMAN EXPRESSES CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM  
ON THE FUTURE OF SOVIET JEWRY**

By Edwin Eytan

BUDAPEST, May 6 (JTA) -- World Jewish Congress President Edgar Bronfman expressed "cautious optimism" on the future of Soviet Jewry as he opened the enlarged WJC Executive meeting here Wednesday. He said the Soviet Union leaders with whom he met during his recent trip to Moscow have promised to examine in a favorable spirit requests for shipments of Jewish books and religious material to Russia.

A WJC spokesman later said that a first list of such books and items has already been handed over to the Soviet authorities and that additional lists of requested books will be submitted in the near future.

Bronfman also told the 92 delegates from 26 countries that he has started to feel a "better climate" which, he said, he hoped would lead to a relaxation of East-West tensions and an overall improved atmosphere which would have beneficial consequences for Soviet Jewry.

The WJC president did not specify what he would consider a significant change. He mentioned, however, as encouraging, the figure of close to 800 Jews who were allowed to leave the Soviet Union last month. "This figure could and should be increased to 900 and then to 1,200 per month," Bronfman said.

**Conference Congratulates Meese**

The conference opened with a unanimous vote of congratulations addressed to U.S. Attorney General Edwin Meese and the U.S. government "for having put Kurt Waldheim on the 'Watch List' and barring his entry into the United States."

The resolution, which was voted by a show of hands, was seconded by the president of the Federation of Jewish Communities in West Germany, Nahman Werner, who had earlier expressed

his disagreement with an overly harsh condemnation of the former U.S. Secretary General "unless some of the evidence on which the decision was based is made public."

**Panel To Probe Waldheim's Activities Urged**

Werner and several of the Austrian delegates continued to lobby for setting up an international commission of investigation to study the documents pertaining to Waldheim's wartime activities.

Werner told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, "If he was a war criminal, barring him from entering the United States is far from enough. If he is innocent, however, this is too harsh. An international commission should study all the pertinent facts and inform public opinion." Werner said he had no opinion on who should appoint the commission nor on how it should proceed. "This is up to the governments concerned," he said.

The conference also heard reports on Catholic-Jewish relations, the result of the negotiations with the Polish church and other Catholic dignitaries on the Carmelite convent at Auschwitz, and the future of Catholic-Jewish ties.

The rapporteur, Dr. Gerhard Riegner, stressed that Catholic-Jewish relations "will be further improved when the Vatican will recognize the State of Israel and establish full, normal diplomatic relations with it."

Bronfman called on Hungarian Foreign Minister Peter Varkonyi Wednesday morning and was scheduled to meet later in the day with the President. Other delegates met with a number of Ministers with whom they discussed East-West relations, the Middle East situation and the situation of Soviet Jewry. A spokesman for Bronfman later said that the WJC president had told the Hungarians that he is in favor of an international peace conference on the Middle East.

Addressing a press conference later, Bronfman said that he and the WJC were opposed to the lifting of the Most Favored Nation status from Rumania. He described the Rumanian regime as "the most repressive one we know" but added that on the other hand the country's remaining 23,000 Jews enjoy a certain number of privileges and that their overwhelming majority had been allowed to emigrate to Israel.

**Bronfman Says Waldheim 'Case Is Now Closed'**

Bronfman also said that as far as he is concerned "the Waldheim case is now closed." He added "our task should now be to work towards a reconciliation between the Austrian people and the Jews." The WJC president said that he hoped he will meet the Austrian chancellor, Franz Vranitzky, who is due to visit the U.S. later this month. "I know that he wants to see me and I want to see him," Bronfman said.

Told that Waldheim is planning to sue him, Bronfman said "being denied entry into the United States, he can not sue me in America, but to make it easier for him I am prepared to go to Vienna so that he can sue me there."

Bronfman plans to visit the Soviet Union next month but refused to say whom he plans to meet and what issues he plans to raise during his meetings there.

**RETIRED AIR FORCE GENERAL DESCRIBES IRAN-ISRAELI ARMS DEALERS CONNECTION**  
By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, May 6 (JTA) -- The incorrect assumption that the "improved" in the name of the I-Hawk missile meant it flew higher than the older Hawks resulted in Iran rejecting a shipment of the missiles from Israel in November 1985, according to retired Air Force Gen. Richard Secord.

Secord, testifying on the opening day of the Senate-House select committee's hearing on the Iran/Contra affair Tuesday, said that the Iranians wanted high altitude missiles to meet the threat of "high flying" reconnaissance planes and bombers.

But when the shipment of 18 missiles arrived in Teheran, the first of 80 I-Hawks promised Iran, the Iranians became "furious" when they realized the missiles had no higher altitude capacity than the medium altitude Hawks they already had, Secord said.

He said the people involved in the sale of missiles to Iran, the Israeli arms dealers, Al Schwimmer and Yaacov Nimrodi; their Iranian go-between, Manucher Ghorbanifar, and the Iranian officials involved, were a "group of civilians who didn't have any expertise in air defense."

"They had somehow thought that the 'I' meant improved beyond the original concept," Secord said. He said when he discussed the problem with Israeli military officials they immediately understood what had happened.

**Involvement In Iranian Initiative**

Secord said he became involved in the Iranian initiative in November 1985, when Marine Lt. Col. Oliver North, then an official of the National Security Council, asked him to go to Lisbon to help overcome Portugal's reluctance to allow Israel to store and then fly the I-Hawks to Iran in non-Israeli planes. At the time, Secord, also at North's request, was conducting an airlift to the Contras supported by volunteer funds.

When Portugal refused, Secord said he was asked to find private planes to pick up the Israeli shipments which would carry 18 missiles at a time. He said this was difficult because the owners of the planes could not get insurance to fly to Teheran. He eventually was able to find a company in Frankfurt, West Germany, which agreed to fly the missiles to Iran.

Schwimmer then deposited \$1 million to cover the cost of transportation with Lake Resources, the Swiss firm set up by Secord and his partner, Albert Hakim, which handled the funds for the Contras.

The first shipment cost about \$200,000 and when Israel did not ask for the unspent \$800,000 back it was used to aid the Contras, Secord said.

The 18 Hawks were returned to Israel in February 1985, on the return flight of the plane that had carried 500 TOW anti-tank missiles to Iran from the U.S. via Israel.

Secord said Wednesday that after Iran rejected the missiles, he discussed the problem in Israel where he learned of the misunderstanding. He then met with Ghorbanifar, first in Paris and

then in London in December 1985. Robert McFarlane, then the National Security Advisor, was at the London meeting at which Ghorbanifar asked for highly sophisticated weapons in return for the freedom of the American hostages held in Lebanon.

McFarlane rejected this, and after the flight home Secord said he assumed the initiative was over. He said in January he was called to the White House by McFarlane's successor, Rear Adm. John Poindexter, and told a new initiative was being started.

While in Israel in November 1985, Secord said he learned that the Israelis had shipped 508 TOW missiles to Iran the previous August and September. He later learned from McFarlane that President Reagan had approved this.

The Israelis told Secord that the U.S. had promised to replenish the TOWs free of charge. Secord said he doubted this because from his military experience he knew the Department of Defense could not legally do this.

Secord said he later learned from North that this promise had been made. When the U.S. decided to ship TOWs to Iran in February 1986, it was decided to include the cost of the 508 shipped by Israel earlier, so that the Israeli TOW stock could be replenished as promised.

**AMERICANS INVOLVED IN ARMS SHIPMENT TO IRAN SAID TO HAVE USED ISRAEL AS A 'COVER' THAT WOULD TAKE THE 'HIT' IF THE PLAN WAS DISCOVERED**  
By Judith Colp

WASHINGTON, May 6 (JTA) -- The Americans involved in the covert arms shipments to Iran used Israel as a "cover" that would take the "hit" if the plan was discovered, according to retired Air Force Gen. Richard Secord.

Secord, testifying for the second day of the Senate-House select committee's hearing on the Iran/Contra affair Wednesday, described a February meeting he attended in the White House to discuss ways of legally transporting U.S. weapons to Iran. The meeting included lawyers from the Central Intelligence Agency, National Security Advisor Rear Adm. John Poindexter and Marine Lt. Col. Oliver North, a National Security Council aide.

Secord said it was decided that the weapons were to be sold from the United States to him in his role as a "commercial cutout" that was not part of the government. He said the "commercial cutout" was an attempt to "mirror" the way in which Israel had secretly transported an earlier arms shipment to Iran.

The weapons were then to be transported to Israel which would then ship the weapons to Iran. Secord called the arms shipment a U.S./Israeli "joint venture" in which Israel was to provide a "cover."

**Effort To Conceal The Operation**

Asked by John Nields, the House committee's chief counsel, if those involved in the arms sales were trying to conceal the operation from Congress, Secord said they were concerned only with concealing the operation from the Iranians.

Secord went on to reveal the intricacies of the weapons transport which included Amiram Nir, an advisor to then Premier Shimon Peres, Iranian arms dealer Manucher Ghorbanifar, North and Robert McFarlane, former National Security Advisor.

In an attempt to account for the huge sums of money needed for the arms sales operation, he noted that the Israelis demanded an insurance of \$2 million on each plane that was sent out.

On February 15-16, the first delivery of 500 missiles was transported from Israel to Iran, and the I-Hawks that had been previously delivered by Israel and rejected were picked up. A second delivery was made after a meeting in Frankfurt.

But Secord testified that the plan to deliver additional spare parts was delayed when the Iranians refused to release the American hostages.

McFarlane, who had then retired from his post as National Security Advisor, went to Teheran in late May and was unable to resolve the conflict.

Nir, said Secord, "was bitterly disappointed. He thought the Americans should have stayed longer. . . and should have given the Iranians more time."

**AJ COMMITTEE 'TERMINATED' EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT GORDIS APRIL 24**  
By Andrew Muchin

NEW YORK, May 6 (JTA) -- Dr. David Gordis' nearly three-year stint as executive vice president of the American Jewish Committee was "terminated" on April 24, the human relations agency's lay president, Theodore Ellenoff of New York, confirmed to the Jewish Telegraphic Agency Tuesday.

"There were policy differences between Dr. Gordis' view and the lay officers' view upon the ultimate control of the agency, particularly in connection with staff and administration," Ellenoff explained. He indicated that he had tried to resolve the conflicts for several months, but declined to elaborate on them. Gordis, 46, and a Conservative rabbi, could not be reached by telephone, and his secretary at AJCommittee here said "he was not speaking to the press at this time."

Ellenoff was asked if Gordis' rumored desire for reinstatement would be addressed at the agency's 81st annual meeting here May 13-17. "I think so," he replied. He said that a search committee would be formed "shortly after the annual meeting" to seek Gordis' successor.

In the meantime, AJCommittee's half dozen senior staffers are running the agency. Ellenoff said "they're well trained," will work collegially and know what must be done. Under these circumstances, does Ellenoff feel extra pressure? "With the departure of the executive vice president there is the need to reassure a very good professional staff that the Committee's work moves in its prescribed rhythm and to reassure the lay group that the agency, which has a number of good programs in place, will do them," he replied.

**ISRAELI JETS ATTACK TERRORIST TARGETS**  
By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, May 6 (JTA) -- Israel Air Force jets carried out a pre-dawn attack on terrorist targets southeast of Sidon in south Lebanon Wednesday. Reports from the area said a building housing local El Fatah headquarters was demolished and others that served as bases for the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine were severely damaged. The raid was the second since last Friday when Israeli planes bombed a terrorist base at the Mia Mia refugee camp south of Sidon.



## SPECIAL TO THE JTA BONES FROM AUSCHWITZ BURIED IN N.J.

By Gail Milgram Beitman

(Editor's note: Gail Milgram Beitman is editor of the Jewish Chronicle of Cumberland County and executive director of the Jewish Federation in that community.)

VINELAND, NJ, May 6 (JTA) -- "We saw our parents, our children -- their only funeral was the moments we saw their ashes and smoke rise over the crematoria. Today, finally, we bring them to rest in this holy Jewish ground."

With these words, Rabbi Murray Kohn, survivor of Auschwitz, raised a spade to bury the human bone fragments and ash found beside the site of the ovens at Auschwitz. The day of the burial was Yom Hashoah last month, the place was the historic Alliance Cemetery in Norma, New Jersey.

The bones had been found by participants of a Jewish community mission to Poland and Israel. "Perhaps because we had with us a survivor of Auschwitz, Magda Hafter, we were particularly attuned to where we were," explained Cy Baltus, mission participant and past president of the Jewish Federation of Cumberland County (NJ). "We thought, like so many tourists, to bring home a piece of that place for our community's Holocaust Archive. We reached into a pile of debris beside the crematorium and were shocked to find a mound filled with fragments of bone and ash."

Baltus said "It was evident from the placement of the mound that this was material that had been shoveled out of the building. Behind the building was a recessed area that the local guide referred to as a pit for incompletely burned body fragments. Had we looked longer, I'm sure we would have found more. In fact, there are shots in the film Shoah of the precise building and mound where we found the fragments."

### Community Is Traumatized

The arrival of the bones in the community proved very traumatic. "In Cumberland County we have one of the largest per capita groups of survivors in the country. Many of their children and grandchildren continue to reside here," said Ron Macon, president of the Jewish Federation. "The presence of these bones became a troubling issue needing resolution for all of us."

Then Murray Hafter, Magda's husband, had the idea of a formal burial in the Jewish cemetery. "Murray went to get permission from Rabbi Kohn, who was quite shocked about the bone fragments, as was everyone. But this time we could see that this event had unearthed terrible pain for many of the survivors," explained Baltus.

During discussions at the cemetery it became quite apparent that bringing the fragments back was quite a controversial issue. There were those who felt strongly it had been wrong to bring the fragments back, and those who wished in retrospect it had not been done, due to the strong reaction. There were also some who doubted the halachic propriety of the burial.

Kohn's response was that regardless of these reactions, the remains were present in the community and had to be dealt with: "Here they are before us, we must handle the matter with dignity and love." Murray Hafter expressed the consensus of the community: "We now know these bones will

finally rest in peace in a Jewish cemetery. We did what we did in love. We feel we have the holiest of the holy among us."

A tiny hand-fashioned casket was made in accordance with tradition by Larry Benson, a member of the community. Hafter consulted with the local rabbis on details of cloth for the lining. "When it came to a covering, this became a very important symbolic matter. We covered it with a gray and white striped cloth, reminiscent of the concentration camp uniforms emblazoned with the yellow Star of David."

Kohn focused his ceremony on first consecrating the ground in front of the community's Holocaust Memorial Monument, which is in the shape of a truncated tree with its branches hewn off. This area within the Jewish Alliance Cemetery had not previously been sanctified as burial ground, but now it became a separate sanctified area.

### An Emotion-Laden Talk

Kohn incorporated Ezekiel's Vision of the Dry Bones into the powerful, emotion-laden talk he gave after the traditional ceremony. He declared those present to be the appearance of the flesh on the bones in the vision and charged them to "live the lives of which those who perished were robbed . . . lives of tzedakah, love, creativity and Yiddishkeit." He then called upon each person who had lost family in the death camps to fulfill the mitzvah of burial by placing a handful of earth into the grave.

Community members were also divided over whether it would be appropriate for subsequent mission groups visiting Auschwitz to also bring back fragments to their communities for burial. Some suggested a Beth Din be gathered to deal with the matter.

Murray Hafter expressed the sentiments of many: "Perhaps it would be an exceptional act if each community gathered some of these ashes of our people and brought them home."

## PERES ON SEVEN-DAY U.S. VISIT

By Yitzhak Rabi

NEW YORK, May 6 (JTA) -- Israel's Foreign Minister Shimon Peres is scheduled to arrive in New York next week, for a seven-day U.S. visit.

After three days in New York, Peres will go to Washington to meet with top Administration officials, including Secretary of State George Shultz, and discuss his proposal for an international conference for Middle East peace.

According to a spokesman for the Israeli Consulate here, the Foreign Minister will arrive in New York on May 14. The highlight of his agenda in New York will include an address at a dinner sponsored by the David Ben Gurion Centennial Committee honoring Shultz, who will be presented with the Ben Gurion Peace Award. The event will be held at the Parker Meridien Hotel on Saturday night, May 16.

Peres also will take part in meetings organized by the United Jewish Appeal, Israel Bond Organization, American Jewish Committee, The Economic Task Force for Israel, and members of the business community on Wall Street.

Before leaving for Washington, Sunday May 17, Peres will fly to Pittsburgh to receive an honorary doctorate from Carnegie Mellon University.



DR. ROBERT GORDIS  
150 WEST END AVENUE (APT. 24M)  
NEW YORK, N. Y. 10023

September 6, 1985

Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum  
45 East 89 Street  
New York, N. Y. 10128

Dear Marc:

Your most welcome letter, dated June 5th reached us at our home this past weekend, establishing something of a record for efficiency for the various agencies involved.

Fannie was deeply moved as was I to read your warmhearted note with its wishes for her recovery. We have had a rather rocky road this summer, including a five day return to the hospital after the initial surgery visit in June. Thank God, the last few days have shown a measure of improvement for which we are thankful. Her vivacity and courage are extraordinary, so that people who see her without knowing the background, cannot believe that she is less than completely well.

We, too, remember your visit with us at Chautauqua, and join in your hope that our paths may cross at happier hours in the days ahead.

Please extend our cordial regards to Georgette. We both join in wishing you both a ketivah vahatimah tovah in 5746.

Cordially,



Robert Gordis

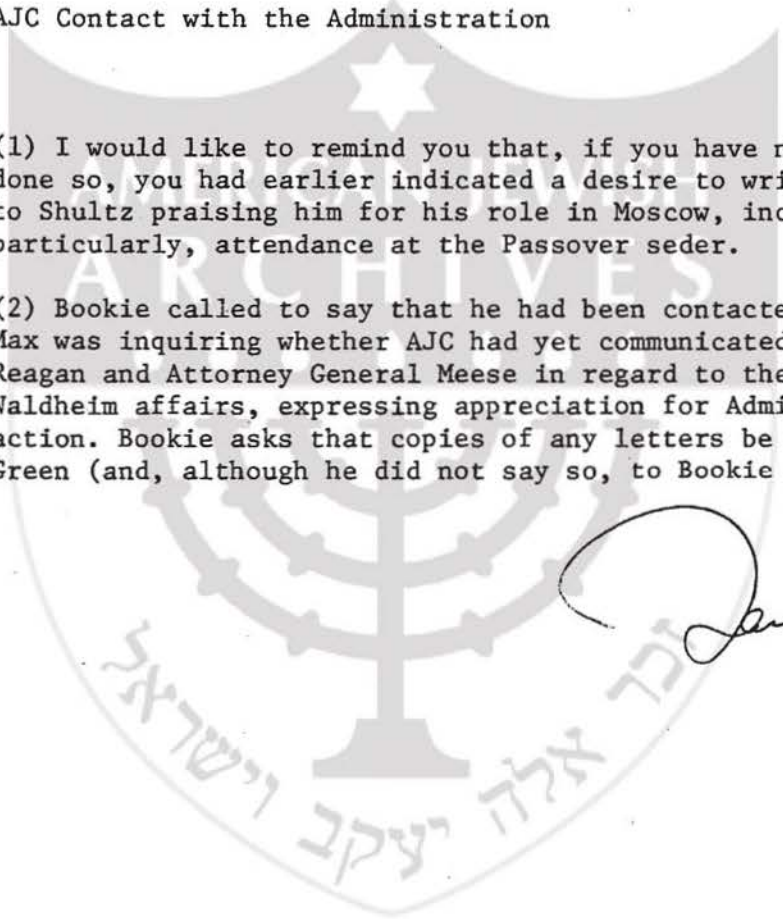
RG:brs

**THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE**

**date** April 30, 1987  
**to** Marc Tanenbaum  
**from** David Harris  
**subject** AJC Contact with the Administration

(1) I would like to remind you that, if you have not already done so, you had earlier indicated a desire to write a letter to Shultz praising him for his role in Moscow, including, particularly, attendance at the Passover seder.

(2) Bookie called to say that he had been contacted by Max Green. Max was inquiring whether AJC had yet communicated with President Reagan and Attorney General Meese in regard to the Linnas and Waldheim affairs, expressing appreciation for Administration action. Bookie asks that copies of any letters be sent to Max Green (and, although he did not say so, to Bookie as well).



05-08-87

5766

## **Top executive of Jewish Committee fired in 'policy dispute'**

**By Darrell Turner  
RNS Associate Editor**

NEW YORK (RNS) — Dr. David Gordis was fired as executive vice president of the American Jewish Committee on April 24, according to Theodore Ellenoff, the organization's president.

The removal of the Conservative rabbi as the top executive of the prestigious organization came as the committee prepared for its 81st annual meeting, which opens at New York's Grand Hyatt Hotel May 14. It was the second high-level firing at the committee in four months.

Mr. Ellenoff told RNS that Dr. Gordis was fired after three years in the post because "there was a difference of policy with regard to administration of staff and administrative matters." He said the committee is "lay controlled," but that Dr. Gordis wanted to have "final determinations" on major decisions.

Dr. Gordis' secretary said May 8 he was "not available for comment to the press at this time."

A report in the May 1 Baltimore Jewish Times said that Dr. Gordis' "decision to bring in several younger staff members into key positions may have offended senior staff with more tenure, and his effort to control the organization apparently ran up against opposition from lay leaders who felt they had insufficient input."

Dr. Gordis is the second prominent American Jewish Committee staffer to be fired this year. In late January, M. J. Rosenberg was dismissed as the organization's Washington representative after less than a year on the job after he had disagreements with Dr. Gordis and other committee leaders on matters relating to Israel.

At that time, Mr. Rosenberg said Dr. Gordis had censored an article he wrote for the committee's newsletter supporting controversial Israeli policies on the West Bank. He also charged that Dr. Gordis had tried to pressure him into withdrawing an article he wrote for the New York Times charging that the United States was scapegoating Israel for its role in the Iran arms scandal.

Dr. Gordis told RNS at the time that Mr. Rosenberg "was not able to competently fill out the other responsibilities which were attendant upon the Washington representative," but declined to give details.

Mr. Ellenoff told RNS that the Rosenberg controversy had "nothing to do" with the firing of Dr. Gordis. He said the dismissal of the executive vice president would probably be discussed in a closed-door session at the committee's upcoming annual meeting.

05-08-87

5762

## **U. Methodist bishop: make it easier to fire incompetent ministers**

**By Religious News Service**

NEW YORK (RNS) — The procedural obstacles to removing United Methodist ministers for incompetence constitute "a kind of scandal in our church," according to a bishop who has written a 16-page paper on the issue.

"The tragedy of this, in terms of local churches damaged and sometimes ruined, is incalculable," said Bishop Jack Tuell of the denomination's California-Pacific Area, who researched the matter during a two-month sabbatical last summer at Drew University in Madison, N.J. He said he plans to propose new rules that would simplify procedures for firing ministers deemed incompetent.

Selma G Hirsh

11/8/89

Marc Tanenbaum

For your files, I thought you should have both of these letters.

David's letter went to the entire Board. I will be in touch.

*we'll discuss further -*

*Love*

A large, stylized handwritten signature, possibly reading 'S', written in black ink.

May 5, 1987

To: Members of the Board of Governors  
of The American Jewish Committee

We want you to share the enclosed letter  
which David prepared at our request.

Enc.

Meta Berger  
Howard Friedman  
Arnold Gardner  
Bob Goodkind  
Chuckie Holstein  
Richie Maass  
Al Moses  
George Szabad  
Shirley Szabad

# NEWS

FROM THE

# COMMITTEE



**THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE** Institute of Human Relations, 165 E. 56 St., New York, N.Y. 10022, (212) 751-4000

The American Jewish Committee, founded in 1906, is the pioneer human-relations agency in the United States. It protects the civil and religious rights of Jews here and abroad, and advances the cause of improved human relations for all people.

*MORTON YARMON, Director of Public Relations*

**79th ANNUAL MEETING  
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**FOR RELEASE AFTER 10 A.M.  
FRIDAY, MAY 3, 1985**

NEW YORK, May 3 ... The executive head of the American Jewish Committee explained today that "marginality is the norm" in the United States, with Jews resembling many other groups -- among them Protestants, Catholics and Evangelicals, Blacks and Asiatics, Polish, Greek and Hispanic Americans -- in that they have chosen to maintain their uniqueness and distinctiveness while they participate fully in American society.

And this, Dr. David M. Gordis, Executive Vice President, told the agency's 79th Annual Meeting, which continues through Sunday at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel here, is the answer to the argument often given that Jewish existence outside Israel is marginal -- "that anywhere outside of a Jewish state, Jews exist on the periphery of society."

"For marginality means many things, many but not all of them pejorative," Dr. Gordis continued. "Certainly when Jews are barred from participation in social, political and economic life, marginality facilitates exclusion, oppression, and persecution. Even a neophyte student of Jewish history and Jewish life can cite examples of this kind of marginality in our past, and even today, in such places as the Soviet Union, Syria, and Ethiopia."

He added that there is "another kind of marginality, less threatening to Jews as individuals, but fully as dangerous in the long run to Jews as a group, and to the survival of Jewish culture and civilization." This threat is represented, he asserted, by the offer made to West European Jewry by enlightened Christians on the threshold of Jewish Emancipation: full participation of Jews, but only if they are willing to relinquish their Jewish identity. Many

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Howard I. Friedman, President; Theodore Eltenoff, Chair, Board of Governors; Alfred H. Moses, Chair, National Executive Council; Robert S. Jacobs, Chair, Board of Trustees;

David M. Gordis, Executive Vice-President

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European Jews settled for this kind of marginality, and were lost forever to the fold, he said, adding that "acceptance of this offer also continues to characterize many Jews today, throughout the Diaspora."

"Jews have special reason to give thanks for the uniqueness of America" in this year of commemoration of the end of World War II and of the liberation of the death camps 40 years ago, Dr. Gordis went on. He listed U.S. friendship for Israel, its championing of the cause of Soviet Jewry, and its role in the rescue of Ethiopian Jews as "only a few of the many reasons American Jews count their blessings in this wonderful land."

"But the greatest miracle of America for Jews," he asserted, "has been the very role open to us in American society. We participate in the larger society not only as Americans but as Jews. And America welcomes our full participation as Jews, and recognizes us and respects us as full-fledged Americans. And we have responded by participating fully in the political, intellectual, and economic life of the country while at the same time creating the institutional structure of a living Jewish community."

Dr. Gordis pointed out that when American Jews choose for themselves and their children a future outside of Israel, "they opt nevertheless for a Jewish future, with deep ties to Jewish roots, traditions and values; an unyielding commitment to the safety and well-being of Jews the world over, and a special bond of involvement, love, history and destiny with the land and the people of Israel."

But it is also an American future, he stressed, "one that can help shape and transform that special vision of responsibility and commitment that stems from our own values and history." This, he went on, is in the spirit of the "creative interaction" of Jews with every civilization with which they have come in contact, in Biblical times, the Talmudic period, the Middle Ages, and in the modern world following the Enlightenment.

"The Jewish past has much to contribute to America's present and future," Dr. Gordis continued. "Our long-range perspective as a universal people, our transcendence over parochialism, and our commitment to social and ethical values far more abiding than shifting ideologies of left and right enable us to examine and respond to complex national and international problems without being readily co-opted by competing political forces. That is our great strength."

He stressed to the AJC members that both the American Jewish community and the American Jewish Committee were broadly represented along the entire political spectrum. He added: "We are a non-partisan community and this agency must be a non-partisan agency. This means we must reject the easy cliches and engage the fundamental questions facing our society."

The American Jewish Committee is this country's pioneer human relations organization. Founded in 1906, it combats bigotry, protects the civil and religious rights of Jews here and abroad, and advances the cause of improved human relations for all people everywhere.

## 'Home' to Israel? U.S. Jews say no

By George W. Cornell  
Associated Press

"Next year, in Jerusalem."

It's an old dream of the scattered faithful of Judaism, that someday, in bright fulfillment, they all would be gathered again in their spiritual homeland of Israel. But the goal has altered for many in America.

The change often is pondered in Jewish circles, discussed and debated, but rarely voiced explicitly and publicly — something that Rabbi David M. Gordis of the American Jewish Committee has put in forthright terms.

"THIS IS our home," he told the organization's recent executive council meeting in Chicago, adding that American Jewry now should also be seen as an enduring center of the faith in "equal partnership" with Israel.

He said "the time has come" to assert "that we are part of a proud and self-confident Jewish community that can, and will, survive creatively in this country, in a constructive and mutually enhancing partnership with Israel."

This runs counter to the classical idea of Zionism that with the establishment of Israel, the "diaspora" — the Jews dispersed around the world — would gradually all return to Israel, he noted, adding:

"It is now clear that this will not happen."

WHILE AMERICAN Jews may encourage *aliya*, or return, he said they need to recognize that it's not a widespread aspiration in this country, nor a broadly realistic expectation.

"There will be no mass shifts of Jewish population to Israel, except from countries where Jews face grave

danger or severe and ongoing discrimination," he said, emphasizing that this is not the case in America.

Other Jewish scholars also say a growing reassessment of Zionism has gone on in American Jewish thought, a shift in attitudes about it, despite continued strong emotional ties to the biblical homeland.

"Ideology has undergone a transformation, a fundamental change," says Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, the committee's international affairs director. Instead of the classical ideal of an "ingathering of the exiles," he said, "we've come to see America as our home, a land of liberty, justice and fulfillment."

HE SAID this has meant for a kind of "polycentric view" of Jewish nationhood, despite continued "strong emotional ties to the biblical homeland."

The United States has about six million Jews, compared to about four million in Israel.

Rabbi Gordis, a Talmudic scholar, former vice-president of the Jewish Seminary in Los Angeles and recently named the committee's executive vice-president, said:

"We may accept a central role for Israel in Jewish life, but we reject totally the principle that because we do not live in Israel we are only peripheral to Jewish life."

CITING "MUTUALLY respectful" exchanges in educational, cultural and political life, he said:

"Israel may safely predicate its viability and its future on American Jewry's strong and continued support, but not on the disintegration of American Jewish life. Israel must not be built on the ruins of American Jewry."

Classical Zionism sees "diaspora Judaism" — the scattered flock — as "historically irrelevant" at best, and "at worst, a destructive aberration," Rabbi Gordis said.

"There are many all over the world who challenge this assumption. We will continue to feel strongly and personally Israel's anguish and triumphs. But this is our home."

IN REGARD to Judaism's firm and permanent establishment in the United States, he said, "Jews occupy a prominent position in American political, social and economic life. Our voices are heard in the corridors of power, nationally and locally."

While pockets of anti-Semitism persist, he said, "We Jews are no longer powerless, in this country or elsewhere."

F. Y. I.  
M. Tanenbaum  
Woods