



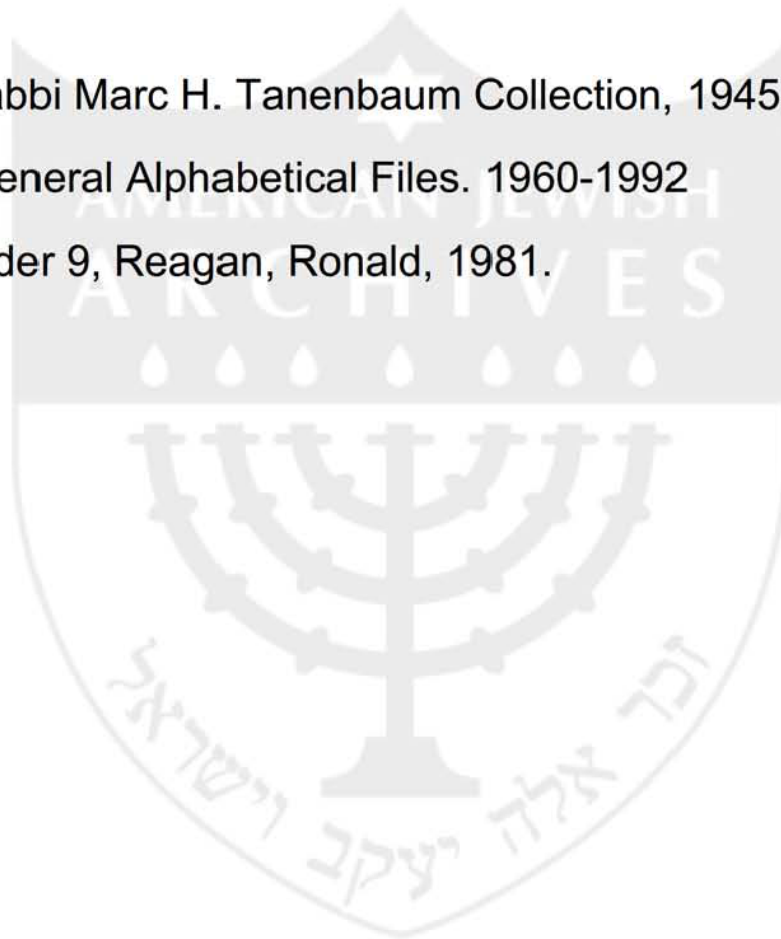
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MS-603: Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum Collection, 1945-1992.

Series E: General Alphabetical Files. 1960-1992

Box 89, Folder 9, Reagan, Ronald, 1981.



THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

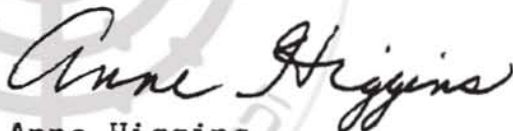
August 17, 1981

Dear Rabbi Tanenbaum:

President Reagan recognizes the need for talented and dedicated public servants to assist his Administration's efforts. He greatly appreciates your message conveying your support for the people whom he has chosen to help bring about the national renewal that all Americans seek.

With the President's best wishes,

Sincerely,



Anne Higgins

Anne Higgins
Director of Correspondence

Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum
The American Jewish Committee
Institute of Human Relations
165 East 56th Street
New York, NY 10022

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March 17, 1981

Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum
Director of Interreligious Affairs
American Jewish Committee
165 East 56th Street
New York, N.Y. 10022

Dear Marc:

Enclosed is a draft of a proposed open letter to President Reagan on the subject of debt slavery and peonage of thousands of undocumented alien workers throughout the nation, together with a copy of the first of a series of articles in the New York Times on that subject.

The Workers Defense League, with your assistance, hopes to conduct a vigorous campaign to end that debt slavery and peonage. We should deeply appreciate your willingness to help start off the campaign by being one of a small group of prominent initiating signers of this letter.

The letter will then be sent for signatures to hundreds of civil rights, religious, union, and human rights supporters, and then to President Reagan.

The campaign will continue with other activities planned for the period following the sending of the letter.

Your support will be important to the success of this campaign. We look forward to hearing from you promptly.

Cordially,

Harry Fleischman
Chairman of Executive Committee

P.S. Please write your signature on the enclosed card, so that we may use it with the letter.

PPS- We'll also want your suggestions for Jewish leaders, clerical and secular, we should approach.

DRAFT OF PROPOSED OPEN LETTER TO PRESIDENT RONALD REAGAN

Dear Mr. President:

Americans have widely varying views on how to resolve the complex problems of undocumented aliens in the United States and, indeed, of our entire immigration program. But all Americans are united in our firm opposition to slavery and peonage. These are not only a direct violation of the United States Constitution; they are also abhorrent to our ideals of justice, decency, and morality.

Mr. President, with your great victory at the polls, you are in a unique position to wield your enormous power to correct a blight on American justice. We refer to the slavery and peonage of thousands of undocumented alien workers throughout the nation. Last October, a series of articles in the New York Times revealed that "uncounted thousands of Spanish-speaking aliens who flee to this country each year to escape the crushing poverty of their homelands are being virtually enslaved, bought and sold on sophisticated underground labor exchanges. They are trucked around the country in consignments by self-described labor contractors who deliver them to farmers and growers for hundreds of dollars a head."

Dozens of Immigration and Naturalization Service officials told the Times that the problem is not isolated but exists on a large and growing scale. Hugh Williams, recently chief of the Border Patrol in Del Rio, Texas, told of farmers in Arkansas who bought aliens from Durward Woosley for \$400 each and withheld wages until the \$400 was paid off. "Then," added Williams, "they would sell the alien to somebody else for \$400. The alien never saw any cash. In effect, each farmer was getting free labor. There were cases where we found Mexicans who were at their third or fourth farm and hadn't made a penny the whole time they were in the U.S.--peonage, that's really what it was."

In November 1978, Connie Ray Alford, a Truxno, La., chicken farmer, pleaded guilty to chaining two of his workers in a chicken coop to keep them from running away.

In the Southwestern states, peonage is uncommon because of the proximity to the Mexican border and the availability of illegal alien labor. Rather, says the Times, "it is in the citrus and winter vegetable belts of Florida and the potato fields of Idaho and on the tobacco farms of Virginia and North Carolina that farmworkers are at a premium, so much so that the coyotes (labor contractors) who smuggle them north or east can easily command fees of \$500 a worker." The workers are often locked up at night to prevent their running away when they learn that they will receive no pay until the fee is repaid.

Such peonage and slavery are illegal, but ignorant aliens do not know the law in the United States and do not know how to protect themselves. This is not a new situation. Back in 1948, the Workers Defense League testified before the Commission of Inquiry into Forced Labor on slavery, peonage, and forced labor throughout the world. Witnesses reported on their experiences in government-operated forced-labor camps in the Soviet Union and other Communist countries as well as on forced labor in South Africa.

But witnesses also testified that the United States tolerated forced labor in defiance of the Constitution. In 1950, testifying before the United Nations Committee on Slavery, Rowland Watts of the Workers Defense League declared that peonage, or debt slavery, then operated most commonly among black cotton sharecroppers in the deep South. He told of Bill Edison, a black man repeatedly beaten and forced to work for long hours on a Mississippi plantation who was never paid the five dollars a week he was supposed to receive. Watts rescued Edison and brought him to Washington, D.C., to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, which first promised immediate legal action against the plantation owner but later maintained it did not have enough evidence to secure a conviction against the enslaver and attacker of Edison.

The same pattern applied to the Mexican "wetbacks", illegal migrants at the mercy of farm employers. John P. Swanson of the Immigration Service said that "peonage conditions under which the 'wetbacks' frequently live, eat, and sleep can only be described as horrible."

The Workers Defense League testified that anti-peonage and anti-slavery laws had been only weakly enforced and called for a "fully effective administrative agency to enforce the laws against slavery." It pointed out that, while the civil rights section of the Department of Justice had only six lawyers on its staff and no power of independent investigation, the anti-trust division had 320 lawyers and full investigative powers.

Unfortunately, as both Justice Department and Immigration Service staff concede, insufficient manpower and effort are still being assigned to the job today. We recognize the difficulty of proving cases of peonage and slavery, but that is all the more reason why we need a strengthened Civil Rights Division in the Department of Justice and enough responsible staff in the Immigration and Naturalization Service to rid our nation of this vicious system.

The philosopher, George Santayana, said: "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." You, Mr. President, can prove that we have learned from the past.

Sincerely yours,

Domestic Affairs Commission Statement on Budget Cuts*

Revitalization of America's economy is the major domestic concern in the United States today. To keep America's place in the world and faith in itself requires reduced inflation, increased productivity, a higher level of skills and more efficient and effective natural and human resource management to meet these goals.

President Reagan's Program for Economic Recovery proposes, among other measures, large cuts in the growth of government for social programs and a shift in control over other Federal funds from Federal to state and local government. (Removal of the remainder of the second paragraph) We believe the question is not whether or not there will be cuts, but where and how deep these cuts will be and what effect they may have on the commitments of AJC and the programs of the Jewish community as a whole. In addition to the proposed reduction in funds, several current programs would be consolidated into "block grants" which would eliminate targeting of federal dollars to specific populations (e.g. the elderly or handicapped) or specific areas of need (e.g. mental health, day care, or education for the handicapped). This procedure would permit federal funds to supplant rather than supplement local monies.

Our recommendations on the President's program are based on the following principles:

* This revised statement reflects recommendations made by the New York Chapter on April 22, 1981 and approved by the DAC Steering Committee on April 27, 1981.

1. Support is necessary for efforts BOTH to reinvigorate the country's economic base and, at the same time, to simplify and improve necessary and effective delivery of services to the poor and disadvantaged.
2. All areas of government, domestic and foreign, social and defense, should be scrutinized with an eye toward reducing waste, fraud and inefficiency. And further, there are many programs not considered in the President's proposal that could also be examined.
3. The burden of reducing the budget should not fall so heavily on the poor and working poor.
4. Complex, overlapping and unduly restrictive government regulations are counterproductive to providing effective and efficient service. There is, therefore, merit in giving states greater flexibility to use Federal dollars in ways most appropriate to their own particular populations and problems.
5. Proposals to consolidate health, education and social services into large block grants to the states and localities cannot be supported unless the Federal government maintains responsibility for:
 - adequate funding for necessary and effective programs.
 - development of guidelines to assure that specific needy groups and program areas are served.
 - insuring equity in the distribution of funds to the states.
6. So long as legislative and judicial mandates exist, adequate funding must be provided for implementation.

After considering the Administration's proposal to cut or eliminate over 80 programs, we have targeted our attention to areas of long standing concern to AJC:

1. Child Nutrition and Food Stamp Programs:

Hunger and malnutrition have been greatly alleviated by Federal programs that serve the working poor, children, the needy elderly as well as welfare families. Reducing eligibility is a disincentive to the working poor and could increase costs to the government in other areas. However, cuts should be directed towards ending abuses.

2. Education

In the process of considering cuts and reviewing existing mandates, we should encourage the creation of mechanisms to assure that the disadvantaged, handicapped and educationally handicapped youngsters have access to quality education.

3. Health and Social Services:

Funding for the four block grants to the states, consolidating about 40 categorical programs into a Social Services Block Grant, Energy and Emergency Assistance Block Grant, Preventive Health Block Grant, and Health Services Block Grant, would be reduced by 25%. These proposed cuts will severely strain the capacity of Jewish Federation agencies to deliver essential services to Jewish and non-Jewish families. We should support the efforts of Jewish Federation agencies to minimize cuts and to assist in using this issue to create intergroup coalitions for that purpose.

4. Housing and Community Development:

Proposed cuts in government assisted housing and rental subsidy programs, when added to the cuts being proposed in food stamps, school lunches, energy assistance, and medicaid would cause hardship for many poor families and the needy elderly. These proposed cuts would affect many Jewish communities which have used these programs to house and provide congregate and other services to their elderly and would also curtail an effective program that combines government incentive to stimulate private sector activity. We should join with other agencies to protest cuts in government assisted housing and rent subsidies for the poor and the needy elderly.

5. Employment and Training Programs:

Unemployment rates for minority youth continue to far exceed those of any other group. Publicly supported job training programs must be maintained and supplemented by efforts to expand private sector training programs.

6. Medicaid:

The proposed cap on medicaid funding for the states would seriously strain already overburdened state budgets, forcing some states to withdraw or curtail services and resulting in higher rates charged to private-pay patients in nursing homes. In addition, there would be a loss of important support services such as prescription drugs, dental services, ambulance transportation and optometrists. Under these circumstances, Jewish Federation agencies and other private, voluntary service agencies will be faced with additional demands for funds and services. Those who stand to lose many basic health care services are those who need them most -- the poor, elderly and disabled. We should support cost containment requirements which would be a more

effective way to cut medicaid costs without cutting basic essential services needed by people who have no other alternatives.

7. Legal Services:

President Reagan proposes complete elimination of the Legal services programs. Last year, legal services attorneys handled approximately one million civil legal matters typically involving family disputes, landlord tenant matters such as blocking illegal evictions and obtaining heat and hot water. Legal services clients, the poor, elderly, and physically and mentally handicapped, would have severely limited access to the courts without the program. AJC should join with bar associations throughout the country to retain this program.

* * * * *

The President has emphasized the urgency of restoring faith in our economy and in the reduction of inflation. We agree. However, economic stability alone would be a hollow and short-lived accomplishment if the nation turns its back on these Americans still in need. As we noted in our 1978 Board of Governors statement, we believe that, "while the fight against inflation is everybody's business, not all people suffer equally from the effects of inflation and not all people should be expected to make comparable sacrifices in fighting it. The poor, the elderly and the disadvantaged are disproportionately suffering the consequences of inflation. They must not now be asked to pay disproportionately for the fight against it."

We believe that our recommendations remain faithful to this view while balancing it with our recognition of the need for fiscal sobriety *(on the needs)*

EB/MB/ea

81-625-15

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

date May 6, 1981
to Members, Domestic Affairs Commission
from Seymour Samet
subject Reagan Statement on Budget Cuts

At the March 24 meeting of the Domestic Affairs Commission (minutes attached) major consideration was given to a proposed AJC statement on the Reagan Administration's economic recovery plan (attached 4/9 Statement on Budget Cuts) as it affected social programs. Approval was given to the statement with instructions to staff to edit along lines recommended during the discussion and to our chairman to present it to the National Executive Committee strongly urging its adoption.

Time did not permit for a discussion of the proposed Program Plan for the DAC. Since the National Executive Committee had asked for its presentation to them at their 4/30 meeting a special meeting of the DAC Steering Committee was called for 4/27 to consider the Plan and to review the edited statement on Federal budget cuts. The Steering Committee, composed of DAC committee chairpersons, unanimously adopted the Program Plan (attached pink sheets).

At its meeting the Steering Committee considered a New York chapter approved Statement on Budget Cuts (attached 4/22 green sheets) which was its edited version of the DAC approved statement plus a paragraph supporting funds for mass transit. This N.Y. statement, with some further editorial changes, was approved without the reference to mass transit since that had not been discussed at the 3/24 DAC meeting (4/27 yellow sheets). However, the Steering Committee asked that the Executive Committee be informed that the Steering Committee favored inclusion of this item in a final AJC statement.

At its 4/30 meeting the National Executive Committee debated the desirability of adopting the DAC statement. The prevailing view was that we should not do so since the Reagan economic package merited either support or neutrality by AJC. However, because of its importance it was asked that the issue be brought to the annual meeting for debate at a plenary session to be held Friday, May 15, at 2:30 P.M. Staff was instructed to rewrite the statement and to omit references to any of the specific programs that will be affected by the proposed Administration budget cuts.

(It promises to be a fascinating debate).

SS:og
Attachments
81/600/42

Seymour Samet

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE
165 E. 56th Street
New York, NY 10022

DOMESTIC AFFAIRS COMMISSION MEETING
Institute Building
New York, NY

March 24, 1981

I. Task Force Report

Sholom Comay greeted everyone and announced that the report of the Urban-Suburban Task Force on the 80's will be ready at the Annual Meeting. Jane Wallerstein indicated her concern for the report's inadequate reference to the issue of school prayers noting that it was a "hot issue." She was informed that another task force on Education was dealing with this issue. Her request for AJC action on new developments was referred to Marilyn Braveman and Frank Goldsmith for further action. Mr. Conroy noted that one issue identified by Prof. Frieden was the large percentage of Jews who expressed a desire to relocate to the Sun Belt. The report raises the question as to whether Jewish communities should facilitate this choice. An alternative is neighborhood stabilization activity with an emphasis on the needs of the Jewish poor and aged populations and preservation of Jewish institutional capital investment.

II. Reagan Budget Cuts

The DAC then began consideration of Marilyn Braveman and Evan Bayer's analysis of the president's proposed budget cuts. Howard Greenberger supported the proposed statement (attached) and was particularly glad to see food stamps included because it is a particularly cost effective program.

Evan Bayer noted that NJCRAC and the CJF in their statement emphasized the same six programs contained in her report. Carol Stix wished to include a statement supporting "equal access" to education and affirmative action. Marilyn Braveman was concerned about the administration move from categorical to block grants. She urged that, if block grants were to be utilized they should be monitored for equitable distribution. Frank Goldsmith was concerned that the block grants would dilute the main goal: aid to the needy.

Jenne Britell said we should not react to Stockman but should look instead for alternatives to accomplish the same goal. David Lissy feared that the statement looked like we were opposed to all budget cuts. He argued that if that is what we wanted we should state that explicitly. AJC could not have it both ways at once by advocating restitution of six extremely costly programs. Ethel Greenburg, on the other hand, wanted to add a program which would train the poor in money management.

Werner Boehm wanted education as a high priority and was troubled by our attempt to curry favor with Washington by "hiding our faces." He also noted that the "safety net" concept was not working. Seymour Samuels, in agreeing with Lissy's view that we should focus on a fewer number of targets, wanted the number of priorities cut to three or four.

Sam Sadin was concerned because the aged, who, under the "safety net" theory, were not supposed to suffer because of these cuts, would suffer greatly. He was also concerned about the potential for intergroup conflict as a result of competition for allocations from block grants. He urged that the Executive Board make the budget cuts a high priority. Arthur Kimmelfield agreed with this view and urged us to state it forthrightly even if it represented an adversary position with the administration.

Mike Steinig was concerned about inflation. He wanted indexing of programs to be illegal. David Goldrich agreed with Arthur Kimmelfield that we should support our traditional social justice principles even if we are in the minority. Fran Levenson thought the proposed statement was excellent and that we should argue for cuts in different areas as a means of achieving fiscal balance. Such cuts should be equitable and not impact more on those who can afford it least. Burt Elliott and David Lissy also agreed that if we opposed administration cuts we should propose alternative cuts.

Peter Strauss was concerned about fairness of local distributions of block grants and the problem of accommodating mandated services and budget cuts. He and Jesse Margolin also urged inclusion of special emphasis on legal services. George Berlstein and Frank Goldsmith wanted us to be more specific about sub-programs within categories and include specific dollar amounts.

Marilyn Brafman thought it was important to take a stand, no matter what the result -- she wanted education, food stamps and child nutrition emphasized.

The members voted, a) to accept the general concept of budget cuts, but with equity; b) to keep the six priorities; c) to urge the National Executive Committee to make this issue a high priority; d) to add the issue of Legal Services.

Staff was instructed to redraft the proposed statement to reflect the DAC discussion. It is to be presented to the National Executive Committee by Sholom Comay on April 30.

III. Scientific Creationism

After a brief discussion of program priorities the members of the

Commission voted in support of the attached Statement on "Scientific Creationism" with the editorial changes proposed by Robert Jacobs which stressed the inherently religious nature of "Scientific Creationism."

Attendance

George Berlstein	L. H. Grunebaum
Werner Boehm	Arthur Kimmelfield
Marilyn Brafman	Jean Kraemer
Jenne Britell	Ruth Lane
George Cooper	David Lissy
Burton Elliott	Jesse Margolin
Natalie Fielding	Miriam T. Miller
Marion B. Fox	Samuel Sadin
Edith Gann	Seymour Samuels
David Goldrich	Nanette Scofield
Frank Goldsmith	Michael Steinig
Joan Goldweitz	Peter Strauss
Howard Greenberger	Jane Wallerstein
Ethel Greenburg	

Guests

Faith Schwarz
Robin Huwes-Jones

Staff

S. Samet
E. Bayer
M. Braveman
H. Lazere
B. Reiser
A. Simms
J. Slawson
R. Wolf

Minutes prepared by Robert Wolf

RW:df
81-600-39
4/29/81

American Jewish Committee
165 East 56th Street
New York, N.Y. 10022

DRAFT 4/9/81

Domestic Affairs Department

Domestic Affairs Commission Statement on Budget Cuts

Revitalization of America's economy is the major domestic concern in the United States today. To keep America's place in the world and faith in itself requires reduced inflation, increased productivity, a higher level of skills and more efficient and effective natural and human resource management to meet these goals.

Towards these ends, President Reagan's Program for Economic Recovery includes, among other measures, large cuts in the growth of government for social programs and the shift in control over remaining monies from federal to state and local government. We have reviewed those recommendations within the framework of the need to strengthen the economy and AJC's belief, expressed in the AJC Statement on the Poorest Among us (68th Annual Meeting, May 18, 1974), that "the existence of poverty in an affluent society is morally indefensible, breeds hostility and community tension, and alienates one group from another. The best bulwark against poverty, we contend, is a prosperous nation that provides work opportunity for all, and adequate financial aid to those who cannot work." Economic stability alone would be a hollow and short-lived accomplishment if the nation turns its back on those Americans still in need.

We believe the question is not whether or not there will be cuts, but where and how deep these cuts will be and what effect they may have on the commitments of AJC and the programs of the Jewish community as a whole. In addition to reduction in funds, proposed programs would be consolidated into "block grants" which would eliminate targeting of federal dollars to specific populations (e.g. the elderly or handicapped) or specific areas of need (e.g. mental health, day care, or education for the handicapped). This procedure would permit federal funds to supplant rather than supplement local monies.

Our recommendations on the President's program are based on the following assumptions:

1. Our goals are both to support efforts to reinvigorate the country's economic base and to simplify and improve necessary and effective delivery of services to the poor and disadvantaged.
2. All areas of government operations should be subject to vigorous scrutiny by the administration with an eye towards reducing waste, fraud and inefficiency. There are many programs not included in the President's proposal that should also be examined so that the burden of reducing the budget does not fall so heavily on the poor and working poor.
3. We have always objected to complex, overlapping and unduly restrictive government regulations for its programs whether mandated or voluntary. Therefore, we see merit in giving states greater flexibility to use federal dollars in ways most appropriate to their own particular populations and problems. But, there is also reason for concern. Without categorical requirements, states will have to mediate the myriad competing claims for funds from all segments of the population and special interest groups, including Jewish institutions. Predictably this will exacerbate intergroup tensions. Some provisions should be made to develop and enforce broad, general guidelines to the states so that Federal dollars will be directed equitably into effective services.

After considering the Administration's proposal to cut or eliminate over 80 programs, we have targeted our attention to cuts only in those areas of long standing concern to AJC:

1. Child Nutrition and Food Stamp Programs:

These programs have been responsible for greatly alleviating hunger in the U.S. and serve the working poor, children, the poor elderly as well as welfare families. Cuts should be directed towards ending abuses rather than decreasing eligibility or eliminating subsidies that keep a program viable.

2. Education

Our focus need not be on fighting the cuts. Rather, we should encourage the creation of mechanisms to assure that federal funds transferred to state and local control are not diverted from programs for the disadvantaged, handicapped and educationally handicapped youngsters.

3. Health and Social Services:

Funding for the four block grants to the states, consolidating about 40 categorical programs into a Social Services Block Grant, Energy and Emergency Assistance Block Grant, Preventive Health Block Grant, and Health Services Block Grant, would be reduced by 25%. Federal funds in these areas provide an important resource for the services of Jewish Federation agencies which, if cut, would put a severe strain on the Jewish philanthropic dollar as well as the institution's ability to provide needed services to Jewish families. We should support the efforts of Jewish Federation agencies to minimize cuts and to assist in using this issue to create intergroup coalitions for that purpose.

4. Housing and Community Development:

Cuts in public housing and rental assistance programs, when added to the cuts being proposed in food stamps, school lunches, energy assistance, and medicaid would cause hardship for many poor families and the needy elderly. In addition the elimination of the Congregate Housing Services Program, could force large numbers of

elderly to seek premature institutionalization, at a cost far exceeding that of the program. These cuts would affect many Jewish communities which have used these programs to house and provide services to their elderly and would curtail an effective program that combines government incentive to stimulate private sector activity. We should join with other agencies to protest cuts in public housing and rent subsidies for the poor and the elderly, and the elimination of the Congregate Housing Services Program.

5. Employment and Training Programs:

The elimination of CETA's Public Service Employees (PSE) programs by September 1981 and the reduction and consolidation of training programs could increase unemployment figures by 1/2 a percent and cost the government (in lost tax revenue and the cost of welfare and other direct assistance) \$15 billion. Many people formerly on the welfare rolls will be forced to return and valuable community services now performed by PSE's will be discontinued. The program should be retained and supplemented by efforts to expand training programs by the private sector.

6. Medicaid:

The cap on medicaid funding for the states would seriously strain already overburdened state budgets, forcing some states to withdraw or curtail services and resulting in higher rates charged to private-pay patients in nursing homes. In addition there would be a loss of important support services such as prescription drugs, dental services, ambulance transportation and optometrists. Under these circumstances Jewish Federation agencies and other private, voluntary service agencies will be faced with additional demands for funds and services. Those who stand to lose many basic health care services are those who need them most -- the poor, elderly and disabled. We should support cost containment requirements which would be a more effective way to cut medicaid costs without cutting needed services.

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President Reagan proposes complete elimination of the Legal Services programs. Last year, legal services attorneys handled approximately one million civil legal matters typically involving family disputes, landlord tenant matters such as blocking illegal evictions and obtaining heat and hot water. Legal Services clients, the poor, elderly, and physically and mentally handicapped, would have severely limited access to the courts without the program. AJC should join with bar associations throughout the country to retain this program.

* * * * *

The President has emphasized the urgency of restoring faith in our economy and in the reduction of inflation. We agree. However, as we noted in our 1978 Board of Governors statement, we believe that, "while the fight against inflation is everybody's business, not all people suffer equally from the effects of inflation and not all people should be expected to make comparable sacrifices in fighting it. The poor, the elderly and the disadvantaged are disproportionately suffering the consequences of inflation. They must not now be asked to pay disproportionately for the fight against it."

We believe that our recommendations remain faithful to this view while balancing it with our recognition of the need for fiscal sobriety.

EB/MB/ea
80-625-11

American Jewish Committee
New York Chapter
165 East 56th Street
New York, N.Y. 10022

DRAFT - 4-22-81

Domestic Affairs Commission Statement on Budget Cuts
As Revised by New York Chapter

Revitalization of America's economy is the major domestic concern in the United States today. To keep America's place in the world and faith in itself requires reduced inflation, increased productivity, a higher level of skills and more efficient and effective natural and human resource management to meet these goals.

(Removal of second paragraph)

Towards these ends, President Reagan's Program for Economic Recovery proposes among other measures, large cuts in the growth of government for social programs and the shift in control over remaining monies from federal to state and local government. We believe the question is not whether or not there will be cuts, but where and how deep these cuts will be and what effect they may have on the commitments of AJC and the programs of the Jewish community as a whole. In addition to the proposed reduction in funds, several current programs would be consolidated into "block grants" which would eliminate targeting of federal dollars to specific populations (e.g. the elderly or handicapped) or specific areas of need (e.g. mental health, day care, or education for the handicapped). This procedure would permit federal funds to supplant rather than supplement local monies.

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1. Support is necessary for efforts BOTH to reinvigorate the country's economic base and, at the same time, to simplify and improve necessary and effective delivery of services to the poor and disadvantaged.
2. All areas of government, domestic and foreign, social and defense, should be scrutinized with an eye toward reducing waste, fraud and inefficiency. And further, there are many programs not considered in the President's proposal that could also be examined.
3. The burden of reducing the budget should not fall so heavily on the poor and working poor.
4. Complex, overlapping and unduly restrictive government regulations are counterproductive to providing effective and efficient service. There is, therefore, merit in giving states greater flexibility to use Federal dollars in ways most appropriate to their own particular populations and problems.
5. Proposals to consolidate health, education and social services into large block grants to the states and localities cannot be supported unless the Federal government maintains responsibility for:
 - adequate funding for necessary and effective programs.
 - development of guidelines to assure that specific needy groups and program areas are served.
 - insuring equity in the distribution of funds to the states.
6. So long as legislative and judicial mandates exist, adequate funding must be provided for implementation.

After considering the Administration's proposal to cut or eliminate over 80 programs, we have targeted our attention to areas of long standing concern to AJC:

1. Child Nutrition and Food Stamp Programs:

Hunger and malnutrition have been greatly alleviated by Federal programs that serve the working poor, children, the needy elderly as well as welfare families. Reducing eligibility is a disincentive to the working poor and could increase costs to the government in other areas. However, cuts should be directed towards ending abuses.

2. Education

In the process of considering cuts and reviewing existing mandates, we should encourage the creation of mechanisms to assure that the disadvantaged, handicapped and educationally handicapped youngsters have access to quality education.

3. Health and Social Services:

Funding for the four block grants to the states, consolidating about 40 categorical programs into a Social Services Block Grant, Energy and Emergency Assistance Block Grant, Preventive Health Block Grant, and Health Services Block Grant, would be reduced by 25%. These proposed cuts will severely strain the capacity of Jewish Federation agencies to deliver essential services to Jewish and non-Jewish families. We should support the efforts of Jewish Federation agencies to minimize cuts and to assist in using this issue to create intergroup coalitions for that purpose.

4. Housing and Community Development:

Proposed cuts in public housing and rental assistance programs; when added to the cuts being proposed in food stamps, school lunches, energy assistance, and medicaid would cause hardship for many poor families and the needy elderly. These proposed cuts would affect many Jewish communities which have used these programs to house and provide congregate and other services to their elderly and would also curtail an effective program that combines government incentive to stimulate private sector activity. We should join with other agencies to protest cuts in public housing and rent subsidies for the poor and the elderly.

5. Employment and Training Programs:

Unemployment rates for minority youth continue to far exceed those of any other group. Publicly supported job training programs must be maintained and supplemented by efforts to expand training programs by the private sector.

6. Medicaid:

The proposed cap on medicaid funding for the states would seriously strain already overburdened state budgets, forcing some states to withdraw or curtail services and resulting in higher rates charged to private-pay patients in nursing homes. In addition there would be a loss of important support services such as prescription drugs, dental services, ambulance transportation and optometrists. Under these circumstances Jewish Federation agencies and other private, voluntary service agencies will be faced with additional demands for funds and services. Those who stand to lose many basic health care services are those who need them most --the poor, elderly and disabled. We should support cost containment requirements which would be a more

effective way to cut medicaid costs without cutting basic essential services needed by people who have no other alternatives.

7. Legal Services:

President Reagan proposes complete elimination of the Legal Services programs. Last year, legal services attorneys handled approximately one million civil legal matters typically involving family disputes, landlord tenant matters such as blocking illegal evictions and obtaining heat and hot water. Legal Services clients, the poor, elderly, and physically and mentally handicapped, would have severely limited access to the courts without the program. AJC should join with bar associations throughout the country to retain this program.

8. Mass Transportation

Adequate support for the operational cost of mass transit is necessary to maintain economic vitality and quality of life in urban and suburban areas. It also is the only means by which the poor and working poor can reach jobs, schools and health care without suffering financial hardships.

* * * * *

The President has emphasized the urgency of restoring faith in our economy and in the reduction of inflation. We agree. However, as we noted in our 1978 Board of Governors statement, we believe that, "while the fight against inflation is everybody's business, not all people suffer equally from the effects of inflation and not all people should be expected to make comparable sacrifices in fighting it. The poor, the elderly and the disadvantaged are disproportionately suffering the consequences of inflation. They must not now be asked to pay disproportionately for the fight against it."

We believe that our recommendations remain faithful to this view while balancing it with our recognition of the need for fiscal sobriety.

Draft IV -- 4/10/81

Domestic Affairs Department
Proposed Program Plan: 1981 - 82

Major changes in America's political orientation and economic health necessitate important decisions in program and policy in the coming year. Two fundamental changes, the emergence of the New Right and the call for the sudden and drastic curtailment of many of the last decade's social programs give an immediacy and urgency to AJC's Domestic Affairs agenda.

I. DISCRIMINATION DIVISION

- A. Anti-Semitism: During the past year there has been growing anxiety in Jewish communities as a result of seemingly increased acts of overt anti-Semitism and anti-Jewish vandalism. The Domestic Affairs Department, with the assistance of our chapters, will monitor these activities and develop counteractions cooperatively with other ethnic, religious and racial groups that have suffered similar attacks. Special workshops on extremism will be conducted in major cities and chapters will be asked to work with local public officials and the news media to urge that appropriate responses are made.
- B. The New Right: The emergence of a new alliance among some Fundamentalist preachers and ultra-conservative politicians has caused widespread concern. The Domestic Affairs Department will direct the monitoring efforts of local chapters and review their findings for possible threats to civil liberties and violations of law. Specific religious and political trends will be analyzed in special reports.
- C. Executive Suite and Social Discrimination: Economic decline and increased unemployment have made it increasingly difficult for many groups to achieve the full participation in the mainstream of American

life that was seemingly promised to them in the last two decades. The Executive Suite program, while continuing to monitor the employment of Jewish executives, will also continue its commitment to eliminating social club discrimination against Jews, women and racial and religious minorities. Major corporations will be urged to stop the practice of payment of dues for their employees in discriminatory clubs.

- D. Civil Rights and Civil Liberties: In the past few years we have seen new groups demanding that their rights be recognized, new civil liberties challenges made, and the appearance of intergroup problems where fundamental concepts of civil rights are in conflict. The Domestic Affairs Department will provide guidance to the Jewish community on these issues. In addition we will be addressing the problems raised by the deregulation of the electronic media and the growing use of the media for the expressions of bigotry. The intergroup challenge to our criminal justice system of uncontrolled crime requires our renewed efforts. The DAD will develop an innovative weekly radio program on legal developments in the fields of civil rights and civil liberties.

II. URBAN-SUBURBAN AFFAIRS

- A. Economic Issues: The potential for change in America's economic health provides opportunities and problems for consideration by the Domestic Affairs Department. One problem being studied is the community and social impact of industrial plant closings. A demonstration conference on this was held in Pittsburgh and will be replicated in other cities. As a result of increased national interest now being shown in work-sharing we will convene a national conference to develop further understanding and support. Other economic issues such as reindustrialization, tax reform and the intergroup relations implications of efforts to restore the nation's fiscal health will be given greater programmatic

attention. In particular the proposed reduction in funds for food stamps, education, social services, housing and community development, employment, medicaid and legal services have serious implications for both the Jewish and non-Jewish poor.

- B. Families: Last year, the 1980 White House Conference on Families issued human relations recommendations which provide the Commission with important new opportunities for coalitional activities.
- C. Education: Attempts by some religious groups to impose sectarian views upon public education are increasing at an alarming rate. New efforts to permit prayer in public schools, require teaching of "scientific creationism," and to obtain government financial support for private and parochial schools necessitate response by AJC. The Department will also emphasize support for quality public education through the National Coalition for Public Education which AJC recently created in cooperation with the Institute for Educational Leadership and the Council for Basic Education.
- D. Women Issues: The DAD will be developing both local and national strategies to implement AJC's commitment to "reproductive freedom" with special sensitivity given to those with differing views within and outside of the Jewish community. Efforts to eliminate sex-based discrimination include a major conference on the wage gap, pay equity, job segregation and equal pay for equal work as well as legislative efforts including the passage of the ERA.
- E. Aging: A new national committee on aging and ageism will focus on the special problems of discrimination facing the aged.
- F. Neighborhoods: AJC's commitment to neighborhood revitalization will be fostered on two levels. Special attention will be given to Jewish

neighborhood problems through the production of a guide and a national consultation on "How to Revitalize Your Jewish Neighborhood." The Department, together with a new consortium of national organizations, will continue to promote housing and neighborhood stabilization.

- G. Hispanics: A number of important policy issues affect the relationship between the Jewish and Hispanic communities. The DAD will co-sponsor national conferences on immigration and the image of Hispanics in the media. Additional attention will be paid to education issues, including our continuing support of bilingual education, despite renewed and legislative threats.

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The American Jewish Committee
165 East 56 Street
New York, New York 10022

ELECTION IMPLICATIONS FOR THE UNFINISHED CIVIL RIGHTS AGENDA

January 8, 1981

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE:

Arthur Barnes
Algernon Black
Paul Brock
Manuel Bustello
Nathan Dershowitz
Susan Glass
Norm Hill
Jim McNamera
Michael Meyers
Alan Reitman
Phyllis Segal
Margerite Smith
Antonio Stevens-Arroyo
Charles Wang
Napoleon Williams

Hyman Bookbinder
Marilyn Braveman
Alisa Kesten
Haskell Lazere
Sam Rabinove
Seymour Samet



I. Introductory Remarks

Sam Rabinove opened the meeting with a series of questions designed to get those groups represented at the meeting to discuss actions they are contemplating and to air any changes in future programming.

II. Update on the Reagan Administration

Hyman Bookbinder said that, generally speaking, there has been an easing of anti-social rhetoric from the Republican Party since the November 4 elections; nevertheless there are ominous things of which we should be aware. Certain aspects of the conservative right movement will not progress if the economic health of the country declines. There may be significant reductions in those programs related to our concerns (welfare, food stamps and CETA programs) because of a budget squeeze. In opposition to such issues as abortion, affirmative action, busing and in support of prayer in public schools and limits on federal spending, the conservative right is suggesting constitutional amendments to achieve results. The Republicans may oppose certain legislative action we support such as fair housing, extension on voting rights, busing to achieve racial balance and affirmative action. In addition, the new Congressional leadership itself is worrisome.

III. Open Discussion

Susan Glass described education issues we may face including the danger of tuition tax credits to public education. UFT is currently doing a cost-benefit analysis on tax credits. Particularly discomfoting is a Heritage Foundation recommendation which would halve funding for Title I and dispense funds directly to parents. This would result in approximate \$5 billion cut for public education.

Michael Meyers felt that in emphasizing fiscal problems we are renegeing on areas of societal problems. The "trickle-down" ideas of "free enterprise zones" and the like will not answer problems. We must address the fears stemming from anti-Black and anti-Semitic activities. The NAACP is going through a period of reflection but it is not conceding any ground. The tasks ahead include maximizing resources and educating the public.

Algernon Black said government is weak because people are voting according to their prejudices and pocketbooks. He asked if the coalition, as represented by those groups in attendance at this meeting, could become permanent. Specific activities might include establishing task forces, assuming a firm offensive stand in the field of public education and sponsoring workshops on particular areas of concern. The youth of our country are particularly exposed under the conservative movement.

Norm Hill said we must start by being self-critical. Defensively, we must concentrate on maintenance of our traditional goals. Offensively, we must concentrate on development of new goals. We should hold elected officials to what they said they could produce thereby making them publicly accountable. In New York City, we must fight the trend to make this a tourist center without a place for minority groups. In the past, many officials just played lip service to minorities which contributed to social meanness. Our immediate battle is that of reapportionment on the state level.

Nathan Dershowitz asked if Strom Thurmond, Orrin Hatch and Jake Garn are the power brokers we should be worried about? Hyman Bookbinder said yes, even though the Democrats still are a majority in the House. The question that is yet to be answered is whether a Congressperson will stop and ask, "what will NCPAC, Moral Majority and Christian Voice think?" before casting a vote.

Marilyn Braveman returned to a point made earlier by Susan Glass and suggested that, on the issue of tax credits, the UFT should expand its coalition. Susan Glass replied that this is already taking place and it is beginning to set up the legal framework to get the issue before this Court.

Arthur Barnes described the problems facing us as political in nature and most have very political solutions. One solution is to resurrect coalition-style politics. We must strive for political education and participation on the local level.

Antonio Stevens-Arroyo defined entropy by saying that "when something runs down, it begins to move in a different direction." If our government is exhibiting entropy new and varied strategies must be devised. Nationalism has become a rallying cry as embodied by Moral Majority. The Latin American population in the U.S. may be forced to create its own nationalism to combat the New Right.

Charles Wang felt we should concentrate on the dollars spent on social services versus waste in defense spending.

Margerite Smith suggested we promote an educational process and revive the historical concept of the American Dream.

Paul Brock said incoming elected officials sincerely believe they represent a majority of Americans. Our educational push will indicate to them the feelings of the real majority.

Alan Reitman expressed the need to return to basic education on basic freedoms. Our efforts should be geared to the local level as we did several decades ago, recognizing the changing situation and needs of the eighties.

Napoleon Williams said the conservative administration, the conservative population and the liberal community no longer agree on what will work. Although he had no ideas on the last two sets, he did think that at some time Reagan will have to deliver. We have the ability to deny him the legal victories he needs thereby undermining his efforts.

Nathan Dershowitz said the outcome of the 1980 elections was due to the lack of answers on the part of liberals. For the future, we must revive the liberal coalition with different agenda items.

Seymour Samet expressed the view that we must discuss those agenda items among ourselves first. Some areas of interest he suggested were reindustrialization, environmental issues, the McGill Report, crime (and the rights of victims) and immigration.

Susan Glass felt that the AFL-CIO failed in its elections endeavors because it did not address the concerns of union members. She added that there may be some things worth dismantling.

Antonio Stevens-Arroyo offered the issue of militarism for the group's consideration. He felt the U.S. should not intervene in El Salvador and should close down that option.

Norm Hill stated that no one ever questioned U.S. capabilities before within civil rights discussions. He supported the suggestion to continue this discussion on issues.

Hyman Bookbinder expressed concern that the group was getting too involved in global issues and not addressing immediate practical problems we have been handed. There will be serious competition once we start adding to the civil rights agenda. We have to mobilize a more effective voice to the administration with the firm conviction that there should not be a moratorium on trying to do more for those Americans who have the least.

Arthur Barnes reiterated a previous statement and emphasized the need to educate individuals in the "how to's" and importance of political involvement. This is the only way to establish the necessary strong base of support and power.

Phyllis Segal suggested that we must "plug our fingers in the dike" and not go on with business as usual. We cannot allow the right to monopolize slogans of fear; it is not so much a conservative populace as a fearful populace.

Sam Rabinove said we can begin to work together on the issues of voting and housing rights. He asked who would favor setting up a task force.

Algernon Black felt that the danger of a police state calls for the establishment of a "watchdog" group.

Napoleon Williams suggested setting up another meeting, propose specific agenda items and bring in experts to address the groups on topics like reindustrialization and free enterprise zones.

AK:mp

Minutes prepared by Alisa H. Kesten
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