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Rabbi David Z. Ben-Ami, third from left, was among ecumenical leaders participating in the Inauguration service for President Ronald Reagan at the National City Christian Church in Washington.

Christians, Jews show solidarity with Israel

By Joseph Polakoff
Special to *The Jewish Week*

Two important developments affecting relations between evangelical Christians and Jewry and the impact on Israel emerged within five days in Washington and New York.

The first was the second national prayer breakfast in honor of Israel conducted in Washington by evangelical Christians at which some 60 Jews were among about 400 others present. The Jews came from the three main branches of Jewry and about doubled the number at the breakfast a year ago.

The other was an extensive front-page report in *The New York Times* that emphasized "Evangelicals Strengthening Bonds with Jews." It noted differences between rabbis in their views toward "a surge of support from a wide range of conservative Christians, including fundamentalists" and between Christians in their outlook toward Israel and her opponents.

The breakfast in the Shoreham Hotel was sponsored by The Roundtable, a conservative religious group founded in 1979. It is now reported to have 150,000 members in 200 chapters across America. The National Religious Broadcasters cooperated in arranging the event.

Addressing the breakfast, the Rev. Jerry Falwell said in interviews with media in Dallas, Tyler and other cities just before coming from Texas, the first question asked of him was why does he support Israel "and particularly Menachem Begin and Ariel Sharon." The Moral Majority's leader said he told the reporters: "Israel is our only true friend in the Middle East and true friends should stand together."

"Begin and Sharon did what every friend of democracy should cheer—the liberation of Israel from the tyrannical forces of Syria and the Palestine Liberation Organization," he said. "The press has been having a heyday on Israel" in blaming the havoc in Lebanon on Israel "as if Israel did it in three days," he said.

"Arafat is the leading terrorist and murderer today," Falwell said. "We stand for the survival and prosperity of Israel. We are not anti-Arab in any way. I don't look on the PLO as representative of the Palestinian people but as a terrorist organization."

Rep. Mark Siljander (R-Mich.), who preceded Falwell, opened his speech with the words "Shema Yisroel" and said to the Jews: "We are not trying to convert or change you. I'm just after your heart. We as Christians owe something to the Jewish people—a debt of love and repentance for Inquisitions, for the Holocaust and the Crusades. We as Christians accept our responsibility." Siljander, whose district has



Rev. Jerry Falwell

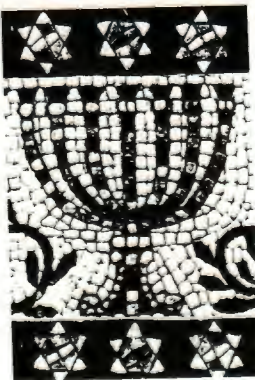
few Jews, and Sen. Don Nickles (R-Okla.) were the only congressmen present. The Reagan administration was represented by Morton Blackwell, a special assistant to the President, and Michael Gale, White House liaison to the Jewish community.

Benjamin Abileah, counsel general of the Israeli embassy, told the gathering: "This is enough to give a boost to any Israeli these days." Rabbi David Ben Ami, head of the American Forum for Christian-Jewish Relations, pointed out that "every facet of American Jewish community is attending" the breakfast.

The *New York Times* article quoted Rabbi Marc H. Tannenbaum, national inter-religious affairs director of the American Jewish Committee, as saying "the evangelical community is the largest and fastest growing block of pro-Israeli, pro-Jewish sentiment in this country." He reported that "since the 1967 war, the Jewish community has felt abandoned by Protestants, by the groups clustered around the National Council of Churches which, because of sympathy with third world causes, gave an impression of support for the PLO. There was a vacuum in public support for Israel that began to be filled by the fundamentalist and evangelical Christians."

Rabbi Joshua O. Haberman, head of the Washington Hebrew Congregation, denied a statement that the fundamentalist view "reinforces the image of the secular-minded, materialistic, unredeemed Jew who not only rejects Christ but refuses to migrate to Israel to fulfill biblical prophecy." The *Times* quoted Haberman: "There is not a shred of evidence, based on a statistically sound nationwide study, that the level of anti-Semitic bias is any higher among fundamentalists than any other religious group in America."

THE AMERICAN FORUM for JEWISH-CHRISTIAN COOPERATION



TOPICS BY JEFFREY ST. JOHN

**PRAYER BREAKFAST
IN HONOR OF ISRAEL**

Shoreham Hotel - Blue Room

Washington, D.C.

Wednesday, February 2nd, 1983

7:30 A.M.

"PROGRAM PERSONALITIES"

Mr. Harry Hurwitz, Dr. Jerry Falwell
Mr. Morton Blackwell, Mr. Ed McAteer
Congressman Mark Siljander
Rabbi Ben Ami

Cost \$11.50



Rabbi David Ben Ami (left) and the Rev. Jerry Falwell are representative of evangelicals and Jews who congregated at a recent National Prayer Breakfast in honor of Israel.

They Gather Together...

By Larry Witham
WASHINGTON TIMES STAFF

If there really is nothing new under the sun, then it was with surprise that so many who attended the National Prayer Breakfast in Honor of Israel here last week agreed that nothing like it had ever happened before — anywhere. "Under an evangelical banner, Jews of every persuasion, both religious and secular, got together," Rabbi David Ben-Ami said.

Coinciding with the meeting of the National Religious Broadcaster, the president's National Prayer Breakfast and the biennial World Jewish Congress, all in Washington, the Israel-honoring meeting was able to draw a major representation of Jewish leadership, not only together, but into the hospitality of a large group of fundamentalists and evangelicals, something unheard of.

After years of mutual suspicion between Jews and evangelicals, largely due to an assumed historical grudge between the two faiths, exacerbated by evangelical enthusiasm for conversion of Jews, they are now finding common ground. And although the Jewish community would admit to needing friends after the war in Lebanon put much of world opinion against them, their new affinity has more than just the political dimension to it.

"I have long deplored the lack of communication between Jews and Christians, especially between Bible-believing, committed Jews and Christians, Rabbi Ben-Ami who is chairman of the American Forum for Jewish Christian Cooperation, said.

"The New Testament is based on the Old Testament, and in the moral sense it is all the same teaching," he asserted. "I would say all Jews are the moral majority, because all Jews value morality above all. That is what we live by, at least Jews who know what Judaism is."

Ben-Ami's organization and The Roundtable, a conservative organization with a Christian base and which is active in anti-pornography and other moral issues, jointly sponsored the prayer meeting.

Both political and biblical reasons backed the unanimous sentiment of those who gathered, that Israel has the undeniable right to exist as a state. Calling Israel the United States' "only true friend in the Middle East," Dr. Jerry Falwell said his support for the nation came not only because of being American, but due to facts of history, humanitarian concern, and as one who

believes Israel's covenant with God is unconditional.

Despite obvious differences between Jews and Christians, which were often the rule in the past, Israeli Consul General Benjamin Abileah said of the two religions and nations that "it is easily explainable that our ultimate goal is always the same."

Although scarcely noticed by many believers, in the last year there has been an apparent turn-around in how the church is recognizing its ties to Judaism. A larger portion of the affirmation, however, seems to be given to Judaism itself, whereas not only Christians, but some Jews are ambivalent about the rights of the nation Israel. Groups like the Falwell-Ben-Ami coalition, and the more literal Bible-believing among church denominations, are the main force in support of Israel itself, along with the majority of the world's 14 million Jews.

Jews and Fundamentalists met last November at Washington Hebrew Congregation for a Sabbath service, and until the death of his wife cut short a trip to the United States in December last year, Prime minister Begin was scheduled to attend a pro-Israel rally at the First Baptist Church in Dallas.

With the conflict accelerating in Lebanon last June, the definition of Israel became a more poignant issue to many. Just before that time, however, a Jerusalem Conference was held here at Catholic University. In one presentation, Catholic theologian Rosemary Reuther, who teaches at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, contended that the Bible makes Israel's possession of its homeland contingent on its attitude toward God and the use of the homeland to work out His purpose in establishing justice and righteousness in the world.

"The gift of land was not a right; it was not a property deed," she said.

Last month the American Jewish Committee and the Council of Southwestern Theological Schools drew together both students and professors from Christian and Jewish seminaries. Considering that a new "spiritual bond" eventually may be affirmed between Judaism and Christianity, according to the Rev. Paul M. Van Buren of Temple University, "the whole theological enterprise will be at stake."

"The Jewish people are what they are because of what they are before God, and Jesus of Nazareth is what He is for us because of what He is before God," Van Buren explained at the Dallas conference.

Continued on Page 16D

Saluting Israel

Continued from Page 2D

Reuther found another way, though more abstract, to identify Israel with the Christian experience: "One might say that Israel comes to mean for Jews collectively what the Resurrection means for Christians, the affirmation of life against death."

"Despite the historical attachments to the physical Jerusalem, Christian thinking has often focused on the heavenly Jerusalem," says Rabbi A. James Rudin in his book "Israel for Christians" (Fortress Press 1982). This emphasis on what he feels is a "universal abstract and purely spiritual concept devoid of specific territory," as in Reuther's definition of the meaning of Israel, has "created a Christian ambivalence toward Jerusalem," Rudin said.

"We all see Jerusalem as the spiritual center of Judaism and the spiritual center of Christianity," Ben-Ami said to the prayer gathering. Also made known and for the first time, were plans for the Jerusalem Congress on the Bible in December. It will be a Jewish and Christian conference with Dr. Jimmy Draper, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, and Dr. Harold Lindsay, editor emeritus of Christianity Today, among those speaking.

Ben-Ami, who foresees the freedom of worship for all faiths restored in Jerusalem, founded that hope on efforts by the Interfaith Council, the Christian Embassy and professors from Hebrew University working together in Israel.

And in his own ministry he wants to do his part as well. "I tell my congregation to study the teachings of Jesus because He was a Jew and worked in the greatest tradition of the prophets."

"When the Messiah comes," he said, "we will ask Him if He has come before or whether He has come for the first time, and that is the only difference between us. Many Christians don't know that the concept of the Messiah is Jewish, and that we wrote the book."

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AMERICAN FORUM for
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ADMIT ONE ADULT

Evangelicals Strengthening Bonds With Jews

By RICHARD BERNSTEIN

After years of mutual alienation and distrust, evangelical Christians have been meeting with Jewish leaders in New York and elsewhere to offer support for Israel and to forge a new relationship with Jewish groups.

Jewish leaders are talking of a surge of support from a wide range of conservative Christians, including fundamentalists.

Jewish leaders who want to build ties with evangelicals also point to pro-Israel editorials in evangelical magazines and to theological pronouncements by Christian preachers saying they will not proselytize among Jews. There have been rallies and newspaper

advertisements supporting Israel, participation of evangelicals in synagogue services and the creation of pro-Israeli organizations among Christians.

But while many Jewish leaders have openly welcomed the evangelicals' eagerness to build ties, others say they are uneasy. They say they harbor deep doubts about the wisdom of alliances with conservative Christian groups that, they feel, want ultimately to convert the Jews and, on many political issues, often hold profoundly different, more conservative points of view.

"The evangelical community," said Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum, national interreligious affairs director of the American Jewish Committee in New

York, "is the largest and fastest growing block of pro-Israeli, pro-Jewish sentiment in this country."

"Since the 1967 war," he said, "the Jewish community has felt abandoned by Protestants, by the groups clustered around the National Council of Churches, which, because of sympathy with third world causes, gave an impression of support for the P.L.O. There was a vacuum in public support for Israel that began to be filled by the fundamentalist and evangelical Christians."

"For myself, as a result now of knowing thousands of evangelicals, I came to the conviction that Jews had to change the basic image of them as Bible

Continued on Page G1, Column 1

Jewish and Evangelical Groups Form Closer Bonds

Continued From Page 1

thumpers, as illiterate and bigoted people. We had stereotypes about evangelicals in the way that we felt Christians had stereotypes about Jews."

J. Richard Butler, director for the Middle East of the National Council of Churches, denied that his organization had abandoned Jewish groups.

"The position of the National Council of Churches since 1980 unequivocally supports Israel and its right to exist as a Jewish state," he said. "We have been critical of Israeli policies and practices, as we have been critical of some of the policies and practices of other states."

The most prominent spokesman among Jewish leaders for the more hesitant point of view toward the evangelicals is Rabbi Alexander Schindler, head of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, a reform organization.

"Why does organized American Jewry continue its flirtation with the Christian right?" he said. "We know the reasons, of course. Most Jewish leaders are willing to forgive anyone anything so long as they hear a good word about Israel."

"Even their support of Israel is intrinsically demeaning to Jews," Rabbi Schindler said, referring to the evangelical Christian belief that the Jews must be "ingathered" in Israel before there can be a Second Coming of Christ.

Prayer Breakfast Honoring Israel

"The reason I am reluctant to work with such groups as Moral Majority," he said, "is that in their domestic program the main objects of their attacks were some of our staunchest supporters among liberals in Congress. So even their support of Israel is flawed in this respect."

Much of the support of the Christian right comes from large, nationwide organizations, such as Moral Majority. Last week in Washington, another such organization, Religious Roundtable, held a National Prayer Breakfast in Honor of Israel, attended by the Rev. Jerry Falwell and representatives of the Reagan Administration.

Mr. Thomas, a spokesman for Moral Majority, said the group was giving full support for Israel not only on theological grounds, but also because it regards Israel as a reliable democratic ally.

Religious Roundtable, a conservative organization founded in 1979, says it has 150,000 members in 200 chapters across the country.

Evangelical support for Israel proceeded "along two lines," said Dr. Paige Patterson, president of the Christian Bible Institute in Dallas.

"There is a general evangelical interest in Judaism as such," he said, "and, of course, a tremendous theological interest in the State of Israel."

'Feel a Tremendous Closeness'

"Evangelicals take every word of Scripture to be true," said Dr. Patterson, who is also associate pastor of the First Baptist Church in Dallas. "Thus we feel a tremendous closeness to the Jews as the chosen people."

Some Jewish leaders, including Rabbi Tanenbaum, give credit to Billy Graham for being among the first major evangelical leaders to show strong public support for Israel.

Jewish supporters of ties with evangelicals say there is increasing grassroots support among evangelical groups and activist pro-Israeli preachers.

In San Antonio, for example, the Rev. John C. Hagee, a non-denominational preacher who heads the 3,000-member Church of Castle Hills, in 1981 organized what he called "Night to Honor Israel." It is a kind of music and prayer, evangelical-style traveling road show, complete with an orchestra and 80-voice choir that has performed in several cities in the Southwest and will go on a 10-day concert tour of Israel this June.

"Traveling in Israel in 1978," Pastor Hagee said, "I was literally moved to tears as I began to walk the streets of Jerusalem and I remembered the historical nightmare that the Jewish people were forced to live because of organized Christianity's brutality."

Shocked by the Reaction

Pastor Hagee said he was shocked five years later, in 1981, by the reaction in this country to the Israeli bombing of a nuclear reactor in Iraq. "The headlines in my city were vicious against Israel, headlines like the U.S. ought to abandon Israel, things like that. I told my wife that we're going to do something in support of Israel."

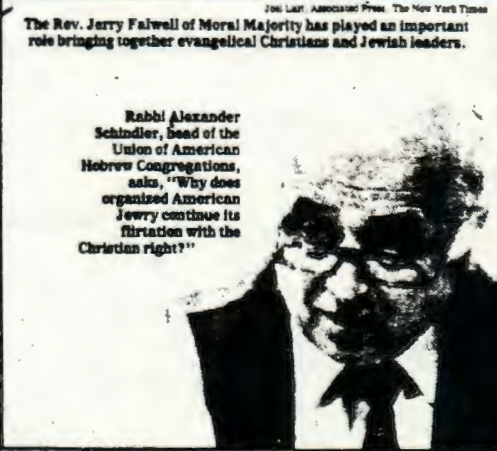
In San Antonio, in Fort Worth and Tulsa, in Houston and Phoenix, Pastor Hagee rented civic centers or symphony halls where he held "Night to Honor Israel." His choir and concert orchestra performed "Bathvah," Israel's national anthem, and other Israeli and American songs.



Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee says "The evangelical community is the largest and fastest growing block of pro-Israeli, pro-Jewish sentiment in this country."



The Rev. Jerry Falwell of Moral Majority has played an important role bringing together evangelical Christians and Jewish leaders.



Rabbi Alexander Schindler, head of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, asks, "Why does organized American Jewry continue its flirtation with the Christian right?"

In "an aggressive speech in support of Zionism," he has proclaimed the eternal covenant of God with Abraham, which, he believes, gives the Jews the right to all of biblical Israel forever. He will hold another "Night to Honor Israel" in Jones Hall in Dallas this May before going to Israel in June.

The embrace of Israel by evangelical Christians has been welcomed in Israel itself, where Prime Minister Menachem Begin has met with several conservative Christian leaders as Mr. Falwell and Jimmy Draper, president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

While on trips to this country, Mr. Begin has held meetings with delegations of evangelicals, including leaders of the First Baptist Church of Atlanta, the national Religious Broadcasters and the National Association of Evangelicals.

Until the death of his wife cut short a trip to the United States in December, Mr. Begin was scheduled to attend a pro-Israel rally at the First Baptist Church in Dallas. He has said that he will reschedule his visit this year, church officials said.

The visit to Dallas was opposed by Jewish leaders who feel uneasy about a close relationship with evangelical Christians. During meetings with some Jewish leaders in New York, Mr. Begin was urged not to accept the Dallas invitation.

The fundamentalist view, Jack R.

erwill State College in Pennsylvania, wrote in the December issue of Midstream, a Jewish monthly, "reinforces the image of the secular-minded, materialistic, unredeemed Jew who not only rejects Christ but refuses to migrate to Israel to fulfill biblical prophecy."

Professor Fischel's article prompted a reply by Rabbi Joshua O. Haberman, head of the Washington (D.C.) Hebrew Congregation. "There is not a shred of evidence," Rabbi Haberman wrote, "based on a statistically sound national study, that the level of anti-Semitic bias is any higher among fundamentalists than any other religious group in America."

Some evangelical Christians are uneasy with what they see as an uncritical view of Israel among its supporters.

"There is a fascination on the part of the evangelical right with Israel and a belief that everything Israel does must be supported, because God is on Israel's side," said Timothy Smith, a professor of theology at Johns Hopkins University and a Wesleyan evangelical.

But while interested in Israel for religious reasons, certain evangelical groups, Mr. Smith said, "are concerned about pulling Israel back from the Begin and Sharon military policies, which they feel are a violation of its ethical tradition."

One of the solidly pro-Israeli groups formed in recent years is the United States Christian Embassy, based in Mount Airy, N.C. It is a branch of the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem, a pro-Israel group claiming members from more than 50 countries.

Christian pastors and Jewish leaders," Mr. Shearer said. "They will start on the West Coast in the spring, and then go through Texas and on to the East Coast."

Last November, TAV Evangelicals sponsored a conference in Washington of some 40 evangelical leaders and 15 rabbis to discuss possible cooperative programs. The meeting was sponsored by Rabbi Haberman's Washington Hebrew Congregation.

Hebrew Singing and Dancing

"The evangelical leaders brought 300 or so of their followers who stayed in Jewish homes," Rabbi Haberman said in a telephone interview. "When we worshipped together and when hundreds of evangelicals sang the Hebrew portions of the liturgy and went into sessions of Hebrew singing and dancing that enthralled the congregation, we experienced an explosion of interreligious friendship. People who were suspicious of this sort of thing were instantly turned around."

In March, the Central Conference of American Rabbis, a national organization of reform Judaism, will hold an all-afternoon meeting with a group of "highly respected evangelical leaders," according to Rabbi Haberman. "We're going to try to sort out an agenda, to find common ground of faith and commitment," he said.

Jewish supporters of increased contacts with evangelicals, like Rabbi Haberman and Tanenbaum, argue that the pro-Israeli Christian groups are not uniformly conservative and that many of them have gradually turned away from conversion of the Jews as a primary goal.

"It's important to recognize the diversity within the evangelical community," Rabbi Tanenbaum said. "There is a mainstream evangelical community that tends to be moderate and centrist, usually to the right of the liberal Protestants."

'Divinely Ordained Plan'

"Certainly, the fundamentalists recognize the election of Israel," Rabbi Haberman said. "There's no reason why Jews cannot also recognize a divinely ordained place for Christianity in the fulfillment of God's purpose."

"We're going to be out front, yes, we want to convert you," said Dr. Patterson of the Christian Bible Institute, a participant in the November meeting in Washington. "We want to convert everybody. But a true evangelical will not coerce; he will only share as persuasively as possible."

The theological grounds for support of Israel, evangelicals say, comes from the "eternal covenant" between God and Abraham, a covenant that they argue, contrary to some Christian doctrine, was not superseded after the appearance on earth of Jesus.

"If I deny the everlasting covenant with the Jewish people," said Jim Jackson of the Christian Embassy, "how can I trust in the new covenant that is made with me through Jesus Christ?"

A Debt Owed

"The purpose of the Christian Embassy is to show in an uncompromising way support for Israel and the Jewish people worldwide," said the organization's executive director, Jim Jackson. "We have a real concern for the growing lack of awareness internationally of the great debt, especially from a Christian perspective, that we owe the Jewish people."

The American branch has set up 10 "consulates" in this country and has plans to establish 10 more. It is planning a campaign of protest on behalf of Soviet Jews called "Mordechai Outcry," after the biblical figure who helped save the Israelites from annihilation by the Assyrians.

The campaign will culminate in a demonstration in Washington and a vigil outside the Soviet Embassy in March during the Passover holiday, Mr. Jackson said.

TAV Evangelicals, a Sacramento-based organization of lay evangelical Christians, is one of the organizations formed in response to criticism of Israel after the bombing of the Iraqi nuclear reactor in 1981.

The organization's founder, Douglas Shearer, a businessman and lay preacher, said his activities were sparked by local "anti-Semitic radio broadcasts" made at that time. TAV Evangelicals—whose name derives from the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet—paid for newspaper advertisements in California and the state of Washington supporting Israel.

"We're going to be sponsoring a

* The Second National Prayer Breakfast in Washington on Feb. 2nd/83 was co-sponsored by the American Forum for Jewish-Christian Cooperation and the ROUNDTABLE with the cooperation of NRB

* NOV. '82 Events in WASH. were arranged by the AMERICAN FORUM for Jewish-Christian Cooperation

David Ben-Ami, Chairman
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(Feature Story)

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FEB. 10/83

RABBI DAVID Z. BEN-AMI, Chairman
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DOUGLAS KRIEGER, Vice-Chairman

"EVANGELICAL & JEWISH LEADERS SEND STRONG MESSAGE TO ADMINISTRATION"

Evangelical and Jewish leaders held their second "National Prayer Breakfast for Israel" in early February. The event was inserted into the 40th anniversary schedule of the National Religious Broadcasters Convention in D.C. Ironically, as World Jewish Congress leaders met with President Reagan to signal approval of the "Reagan Plan" for the West Bank, the Christian fundamentalists staunchly reinforced Israel's claim to "all the Holy Land" for biblical and strategic reasonings.

The 350 leaders who attended the breakfast included keynote speakers Dr. Jerry Falwell of Moral Majority, Rabbi David Ben-Ami of the American Forum for Jewish-Christian Cooperation (co-sponsor of the event), Congressman Mark Siljander (R-MICH) and Dr. Joseph Churba (Director, Center for International Security, D.C.). Ed McAteer of the Tennessee-based Roundtable hosted what he hopes will become a tradition during the NRB Convention. "I plan to make Israel's case known throughout America because how nations treat Israel is how God will treat them," said McAteer.

Reagan received a tumultuous reception earlier during the NAF's 4,000 standing room only reception for him. Evangelical leadership, though supportive of Reagan's vocal stance on social causes dear to conservative hearts, is, nevertheless, walking a tightrope with most evangelicals who view Israel's place among the nations with special significance.

Falwell, whose newly-found organization, Christians for Israel has launched a mass mailing campaign in support of Israel, assailed PLO chief Arafat as a "murderer" and heralded Israel's "liberation" of Lebanon.

Rabbi Ben-Ami, introduced as the "Charismatic Rabbi" of Judaism, saluted 1983 as the "Year of the Bible" and reminded his cheering audience: "Don't forget we Jews wrote the Book!" Jewish response was manifest at the breakfast; some 20 major Jewish organizations were represented along with every major branch of Judaism from Reform to Hasidic. AIFAC, ZOA, American Jewish Committee, ADL, Hadassah, Herut Part, Americans for a Safe Israel and even the Jewish War Veterans led the salute to the flag!

Norris Sydnor, chairman of the Resolutions Committee of the 1982 Southern Baptist Convention and Pres. of the Booker T. Washington Foundation presented a strong evangelical pledge to Benjamin Abileah of the Israel Embassy on behalf of Israel and Ed McAteer read the "Proclamation of Blessing" passed by unanimous acclaim; to wit:

" . . . believing that Palestine belongs to the Jewish people, we support the State of Israel . . . for legal reasons dating back to 1948, and even further to the establishment of the British Mandate, we believe the land of Palestine belongs to the Jewish people "

In the mean time, Ben Armstrong, Ex. Dir. of the NRB, Jimmy Draper, Pres. of the So. Baptist Convention, along with a team of evangelical leaders is headed for Israel in mid-Feb. Major "solidarity rallies with Evangelical and Jewish leadership" are planned by many of the more than 250 pro-Israel evangelical groups which have cropped up among the 50 million American evangelicals, most within the past five years. Nearly every State in the Union seems to be affected from marches (Sacramento) to Alabama where its State legislature declared Jerusalem as the capitol of Israel. Major "solidarity rallies" have been planned for New York City and Portland, OR for this spring.

Dr. Willard Aldrich, President-Emeritus of Multnomah School of the Bible in Portland, OR and key leader within the Bible Institute Movement, along with Dr. David Hocking prominent radio voice of Biola University in So. Calif., gave enthusiastic support for the "current engagement" between the Evangelical and Jewish communities as a "sign of God's mercy and grace" on behalf of Israel. Both will join numerous evangelical and Jewish leaders in NYC this May for a "Tribute to Israel" on Jerusalem Day, May 11.

The blossoming alliance between evangelical and Jewish leadership is not without its critics on both sides. Edgar Bronfman, Pres. of the World Jewish Congress strongly warned American Jews: Do we make alliances with religiously intolerant groups, and even fanatics, for passing and transient reasons? Must we really abandon the humanist essence of Zionist ideology in the face of soulless pragmatism?

Certain fundamentalists shy away from such gatherings because, as one spokesman from Washington Bible College after a major gathering of such leadership cautioned: It sounds like we fundamentalists are saying the Jews are already saved! Notwithstanding the seeming theological differences, the Bible-believers see little difficulty in coming out strong for Israel. Aldrich and Hocking view the current alignment as inevitable and part and parcel of the "Battle for the Bible." "We're not insensitive to the needs of all Middle Eastern people," Aldrich says, "but Israel's right to the land under the Abrahamic Covenant is an unconditional commitment that puts God's integrity on the line."

The growing expression of Jewish and Evangelical solidarity continues to accelerate. Doug Krieger, one of the organizers of the event, remarked: "We who love America feel it's time American Jews and Evangelicals united in common cause . . . charges that American Jews are caught in a choice between 'Reagan or Begin' are repugnant and smack of anti-Semitism." Rabbi Alexander Schindler's recent exhortations to develop a Jewish identity apart from Israel find little support within these evangelical circles where Jewish self-consciousness demands affinity with the State of Israel. As Falwell asserts: We stand with the Jewish people and Israel, America's only true and democratic friend in the Middle East--plain and simple.

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OFFICE OF GOVERNMENT
AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

May 10, 1983

Hon. Faith Whittlesey
Assistant to the President for
Public Liaison
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Faith:

I am pleased to send you a number of sample clippings on coverage in the Jewish media of our position on nuclear freeze. I particularly want to call your attention to the story in the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, which is the central Jewish news gathering agency, which refers to the clarifications by the spokesman which, in fact, was me.

I am also pleased to enclose a series of brief papers on the various issues on our agenda in the hope that you will be able to address them in the coming weeks.

I want to take this opportunity to thank you once again for your outstanding cooperation.

Kind personal regards.

Sincerely,

Rabbi Menachem Lubinsky
Director of Government and Public Affairs

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Enc.

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Rabbi Menachem Lubinsky
Agudath Israel of America

DEFINITION OF TIME OF DEATH

BACKGROUND

Since the beginning of the Reagan Administration, we have expressed our concern over a recommendation by the President's Commission for the Study of Ethical Problems in Medicine and Biomedical and Behavioral Research, which endorsed the concept that human life ends with the cessation of brain stem activity. As part of its final report, the Commission drafted uniform legislative language for implementation by the states.

In the Spring of 1980, Agudath Israel of America testified before the Commission strongly objecting to government intervention in determining the time of death because it is so intertwined with religious and ethical considerations. Jewish law demands that all respiratory and cardiac activity cease before a patient may be pronounced dead.

When we learned that the Commission's recommendations reached the President, we recommended that he consider our position that the government should not legislate time of death. In the event that legislation is drafted by some states, we would in the very least expect that they demonstrate sensitivity towards those who because of their religious conscience cannot agree with the uniform definition.

The momentum to adopt the President's Commission definition continues. At least 32 states now have the uniform code. We have been successful in several states, but obviously because the uniform code in a way carries the approval of a President's commission, which by extension to many means the President, we are severely hampered in our efforts.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

We have suggested that the President issue a statement which would clearly point out that in accepting the President's Commission's report that there was no intention of violating the sensitivities of any religious community and that the President recommends that in formulating legislation the states should consider those people who because of their religious conscience opposed the uniform definition.

If for some reason White House officials feel that such a statement would not be proper, we would appreciate a letter addressed to us which would make those points. We would then be in a better position to press our point across the country. We understand that there may be some reluctance to intervene on a "state" matter, but our problem did after all have its genesis with a President's Commission and there is the perception that the report was accepted in its entirety by the President.

Rabbi Menachem Lubinsky
Agudath Israel of America

PRESIDENTIAL VISIT TO BORO PARK

BACKGROUND

The idea of a visit by President Reagan to Boro Park has been on our agenda since November 1981. In suggesting the visit we took into consideration the following:

1) Support for the neighborhood initiatives of the Orthodox Jewish community. Because neighborhoods is such a central concern of Orthodox Jews, we felt that the demonstration of a strong Presidential interest in the preservation of that community would go a long way in both sending a signal to the Jewish community and to other white ethnic middle class communities about the Administration's interest in strong local neighborhoods.

2) A visit would give President Reagan an opportunity to show his solidarity with one of the largest Orthodox Jewish communities outside of Israel. (See attached clipping of New York Times.) It is this community that spearheaded the Jewish defection in the 1980 elections towards Ronald Reagan. Although the primary reason for this change of voting patterns has been attributed to Jewish dissatisfaction over Carter's policies towards Israel, there was a large Orthodox Jewish vote for the President because it was the first time that the community could identify with a Presidential candidate's strong pro-family positions.

3) The highest priority of the Orthodox Jewish community remains its commitment and concern for Jewish education. There is a sense of gratitude amongst Orthodox Jews that the President kept his campaign commitment to advance a tuition tax credit proposal and most recently to promote a voucher plan. In the

Boro Park community, nearly 30,000 children attend private schools, which is an ideal opportunity for the President to express his support for Orthodox Jewish attempts to preserve their heritage through education.

4) The President's Private Sector Initiative might be yet another theme of a Presidential visit to Boro Park. This is a community where voluntarism plays an important role in the lives of its residents. Long before government dollars were available the community had developed an infrastructure which included every aspect of life. In the Boro Park area there are many unique endeavors: A "Bikur Cholim" whose volunteers visit the sick on a regular basis also extends financial assistance to those in need of medical care. "Tomchei Shabbos" (supporters of the Sabbath) distributes thousands of dollars of food for the poor and needy of the community each month in a cooperative agreement with area merchants. Another organization totally manned by trained volunteers provides first aid, rescue and ambulance service. In addition, it is a community where private investment has been the most important ingredient in neighborhood stability.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

We would, of course, like to further the plans for such a visit. We believe that the itinerary could include a visit to a housing site (where government and the private sector have collaborated), where the President might give his views on neighborhood stabilization, a visit to a Jewish day school where he can reaffirm his support for tuition tax credits and the welfare of private schools, the local hospital where voluntarism plays such an important part in health care, and a meeting of local rabbis and community leaders. Other possibilities are a visit with a large Orthodox Jewish family and a tour of the commercial strip to stress preservation and development as is embodied in the enterprize zone concept.

Orthodox Judaism Is Buoyed By a Resurgence in New York

By KENNETH A. BRIGGS

Twenty years ago, Sabel's Kasher Bakery, halfway between 45th and 46th Streets on Fort Hamilton Parkway in Brooklyn, was the only store on the block to close for the Jewish Sabbath. Now, Osher Sabel, the Hasidic proprietor of the bakery, boasts that, with the arrival of other Orthodox merchants, they all do.

It is one sign of a burst of Orthodox growth in much of Brooklyn, from Borough Park, where Mr. Sabel lives and works, south to Brighton Beach. Orthodoxy, the most conservative branch of Judaism, has staged a remarkable comeback, according to Jewish leaders.

Orthodox Jews are thriving in many areas of the metropolitan region, from the town of Monroe in Orange County to the Five Towns area in southern Nassau County and to Lakewood in Ocean County in New Jersey.

The story in Brooklyn is told in a profusion of scenes. A string of new Orthodox schools and synagogues, many with gleaming, redecorated exteriors, dot Ocean Parkway and Coney Island Avenue. Kasher-food stores have sprung up or expanded, and they have recently been alive with shoppers stocking up for Passover, which began last night.

For Orthodox Jews in the midst of the

revival, the meaning of Passover, which marks the escape by the Jews from slavery in ancient Egypt and a rebirth of religious life, is particularly poignant.

Earlier in this century, many stu-

Continued on Page B2, Column 1

Orthodox Jewry Enjoying Resurgence in New York

Continued From Page A1

dents of Jewish life looked on the small remnant of Orthodox Judaism as an anachronism that would soon fade away. They said Orthodoxy, with its strict rules for much of daily life and its attitudes toward women, would be left behind as Jews were attracted to more liberal branches of Judaism, which seemed better attuned to the modern world.

On the contrary, Jewish leaders from all branches, including Reform and Conservative, say that in the last two decades Orthodoxy has shown the greatest vitality among the major branches of Judaism, growing from within and attracting Jews seeking a clear spiritual philosophy and a total religious commitment.

Both cultural and religious factors, religion experts say, have contributed to the rise of Orthodoxy. Among the most prominent trends has been a shift to the right across a broad spectrum of American religion. The chief beneficiaries have been the most conservative Christian and Jewish groups such as Orthodoxy.

Another reason experts cite for the surge is a search for a clear set of religious and philosophical beliefs by those who feel adrift in a culture of widespread uncertainty. Orthodox Judaism is seen as a sharp alternative to this climate, offering solid meaning in an age of ambiguity.

Led by Young People and Families

In Brooklyn, the Orthodox label covers a wide spectrum of groups, from bearded Hasidic men in long black coats whose lives are almost totally involved in the religious community to those who follow secular professions and adopt modern dress.

The turn to Orthodoxy is being led by young people and large families, many of whom attend newly formed small synagogues in houses.

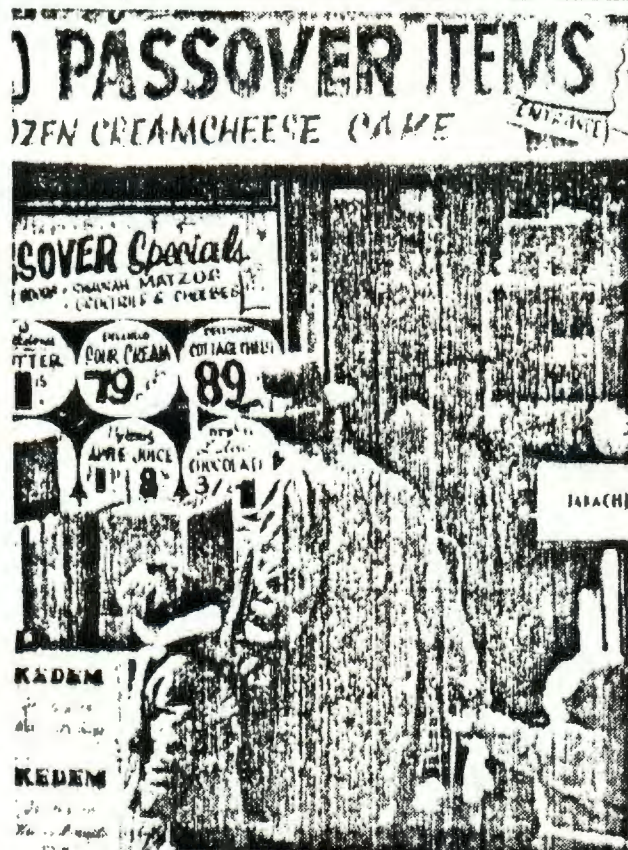
"In recent years, the vigor as well as the image of Orthodoxy has been completely revitalized," said Rabbi Walter S. Wurzbarger, president of the Synagogue Council of America and a leading Orthodox rabbi. "Gone are the predictions of the inevitable demise of what was widely dismissed as an obsolete movement that could not cope with the challenges of an 'open society.'"

Because Orthodox Judaism requires the observance of special dietary laws and prohibits travel by car on the Sabbath, it fosters a largely self-sufficient religious society. Traditionally, men alone study the Talmud, the collection of writings constituting Jewish civil and religious law, women serve as wives and mothers, and the sexes are separated in the synagogue. However, these practices are meeting increasing challenges.

Some Orthodox women are demanding more rights in such areas as marriage and divorce. In some cases, women are preparing for secular professions and are even being taught the Talmud.

The Buoyancy and Anguish

Nowhere is the revival more striking than in Brooklyn, home of more than half the Orthodox Jews in the New York



Miller's market on 15th Avenue in Brooklyn. A proliferation of Orthodox merchants in the area points up the comeback of that branch of Judaism.

movement. The borough exhibits both the buoyancy and anguish of emerging Orthodoxy.

"Orthodoxy is very vibrant here these days," said Rabbi Shlomo Klein, principal of Yeshiva Rabbi Chaim Berlin in the Midwood section, one of the areas of rapid Orthodox growth. "Twenty years ago, it was difficult to be an Orthodox Jew in Midwood. You couldn't find a store to buy kosher food, and there were no Orthodox synagogues. Now it is very easy."

Percentage of Population

Near the school, on Coney Island Avenue and on Avenues J and M, Orthodox needs are increasingly served by butchers, clothing stores, delicatessens and markets. Orthodox merchants are running kosher pizza parlors and dairy restaurants, and wig salons for Orthodox women who follow the custom of covering their hair.

Much of the leadership in the Orthodox drive has come from the growing number of rigorous and prestigious rabbinical schools for advanced Talmudic learning. Four of the largest rabbinical academies in the United States are in Brooklyn.

Of the total number of Jews in Brooklyn, 27 percent, or 128,000 people, are Orthodox, according to a recent study of the Jewish population in the New York

Philanthropies. The study is the first major population survey by a Jewish organization, and fills a gap left by the United States Census, which does not collect information about religion.

Of the Jewish total in the region, the five boroughs and Westchester, Nassau and Suffolk Counties, 13 percent, or 230,000 people, are Orthodox.

In Borough Park, 58 percent of the Jewish population is Orthodox, giving the neighborhood the highest Orthodox density in Brooklyn. Flatbush is next, with 26 percent, and Brighton Beach, the home of many retired Orthodox Jews, is third, with 18 percent.

From Williamsburg to Canarsie, the surge of Orthodoxy has changed the face of many neighborhoods and raised the self-esteem of many followers who once felt they were going against the religious tide, Jewish leaders say. In the last few years, the wave has moved most dramatically from Borough Park into such areas as Flatbush and Midwood, where younger families are buying homes and expanding Orthodox influence.

Spiritual View of Life

Gordon Kraus-Friedberg, a 29-year-old employee of the City Human Resource Administration, has moved his family from Queens into Midwood. He said he decided to relocate because the

vide better choices for Jewish day-school education for his children.

Orthodoxy reflects a highly spiritual view of all aspects of daily life. The abiding faith in God's transcendence and continued creativity is affirmed in prayer, song and family ritual. The Torah is understood as a divine gift from God to Moses. Many Orthodox Jews express a profoundly mystical outlook and regard the study of the Torah and the Talmud as the supreme form of worship.

Although the groupings within Orthodoxy agree on many basics, they also differ on many issues. They are often sharply at odds over what Jewish law requires, the degree of involvement in the wider world and support for Israel.

Although the majority of Orthodox Jews support the Jewish state, many Hasidim and those sharing a similar theology loudly dissent. They reject the secular Government of Israel, arguing that a Jewish Government must await the coming of the Messiah. Even among Israel's supporters, there are debates about the occupation of Arab territory and the pursuit of peace.

Tensions over the issues have increased as the influence of Orthodox Jews has grown. Many leaders point to the strains as a serious threat to the growth of the Orthodox movement.

Jewish education is very highly valued; a religious education in a yeshiva through high school is the rule. But the groups disagree over whether to send their children to college.

Familiar Portrait of Hasidim

The Orthodox can generally be divided into three large categories — the Hasidic sects, the groups known as the strictly Orthodox and those known as the modern Orthodox.

Several large Hasidic sects, including Satmar, Babov and Lubavitch, provide a familiar portrait of long beards and black coats. They often have large families because they do not practice birth control. The Hasidim conform most assiduously to a total way of life.

From enclaves established in Brooklyn after World War II, they have blossomed into strong communities, retaining almost total separation from the surrounding culture and a strongly conservative religious outlook that other Orthodox Jews consider to be right wing.

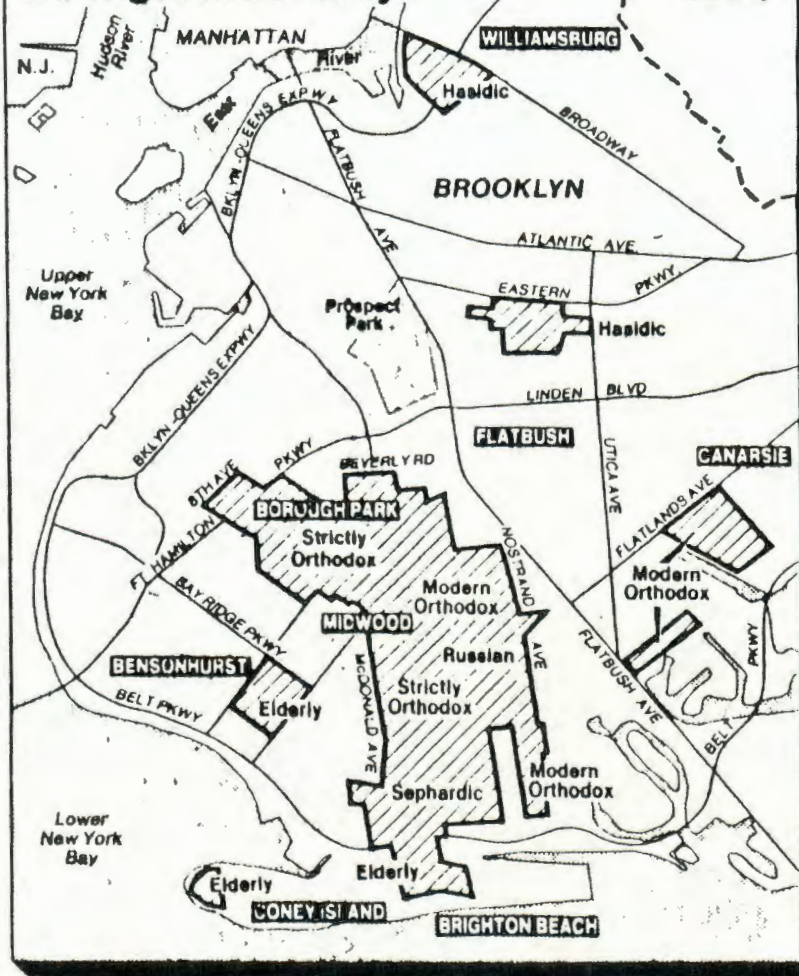
Less obviously identified, but with similar views, are those who are known as "strictly" Orthodox, basically as uncompromisingly conservative, but non-Hasidic. They usually adopt Western dress and permit men to be clean-shaven. Jewish education is the prime focus.

The modern Orthodox are more likely to send their children to college than the other groups, and they have been the most successful in the secular professions.

One modern Orthodox rabbi described their philosophy as believing it was possible "to pray fervently on the Sabbath" and, at the end of the observance at sundown, "enjoy the opera on Saturday night."

They reject many of the views of the Orthodox right and are struggling to hold their ground against the more liberal Reform and Conservative branches, on the one hand, and critics on the right who attack their relatively

Areas of Orthodox Strength in Brooklyn



The New York Times / March 20, 1983

The turn to Orthodox Judaism is led by young people and large families.

broad involvement in the wider society.

The strictly Orthodox have had the largest impact in recent years, as their schools and synagogues have flourished.

Rabbi Klein's all-boy school, Yeshiva Rabbi Chaim Berlin, moved to Avenue I in Midwood seven years ago, taking over a building that had once been the Hebrew school of a Conservative synagogue. The school, which began with 140 students, is filled to its 450-student capacity.

Devotion to the Talmud

Rabbi Klein said he expected half of his students, who study both Hebrew and Yiddish, to go to college. Others will continue to study at the 60 advanced Talmudic training schools around the country, he said.

By 5:30 on a recent morning, 12 men had gathered around tables in Congregation Chizak Hadas, a house synagogue in the downstairs portion of a two-family brick building on Avenue O in Midwood. The congregation has 60 families, mostly professionals in their 20's and 30's.

Led by Rabbi Yisroel Gornish, the men pored over the Aramaic and Hebrew texts for an hour, as they do seven days a week. Most were dressed in business suits. The group included a lawyer, a doctor, a computer specialist, a biochemist and a college professor.

After closing their books, they donned phylacteries, or tefillin, the small boxes inscribed with Scripture passages that are attached to the head and arm with leather straps.

After morning prayers, several men who often stay to discuss the Talmud spoke to a visitor of the need to foster Orthodox practice. One of their concerns is the extent to which they and their children should be exposed to outside influences such as television, movies and secular education.

Rabbi Gornish said he favored total avoidance, but some of his congregants disagreed. Many said their goal was to build a firm religious foundation in their families that could survive outside influences.

From another vantage point, Joshua Weingarten is facing the pressures of the secular world in his first year as an undergraduate at Brooklyn College after 16 years in an Orthodox yeshiva. At the suggestion of his supervising rabbi, he entered college to pursue studies in medicine rather than continue full-time religious studies to become a rabbi.

"When I came here, I was out of my league," said Mr. Weingarten, who began dressing casually for the first time on campus. "It was almost totally different." Casual dating is discouraged in the yeshiva, so mingling with women at college was a new experience, he said.

Mr. Weingarten said he hoped to return someday to what he described as his Orthodox "clan," to work as a pediatrician. He said he considered his education a necessary break, and he thinks he can sustain his faith.

"My foundation is strong enough," he said, "but it is not for some other students."

Rabbi Menachem Lubinsky
Agudath Israel of America

NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVATION

BACKGROUND

Our Southern Brooklyn Community Organization has over the years made several suggestions for promoting a "neighborhood initiative" by the Reagan Administration. Attached is a memorandum from Rabbi Shmuel Lefkowitz, the Executive Director of SBCO, on a possible Administration initiative, which also includes a Presidential neighborhood visit, an award ceremony, a White House Conference on Neighborhoods and a radio show.

March 31, 1983

MEMORANDUM

FROM: Rabbi Shmuel Lefkowitz
Executive Director

SUBJECT: Reagan Administration Program to Promote
Neighborhood Preservation

Neighborhood self-help organizations are suffering, not only because funds are limited, but also because the issue is not being promoted. This is hurting the neighborhood self-help organizations in their efforts to obtain grants from foundations, corporations and local governments and the local community. It is no secret that funding sources look to the White House for direction. Therefore, it is very important that some kind of White House Policy be developed.

In March of 1978, President Elect Ronald Reagan was quoted as saying: "We all know the importance of preserving strong urban neighborhoods. For millions of city residents their neighborhood is far more than just a location of a home or apartment. The neighborhood scale is a human scale - a place where the real spirit of the community can develop. Many neighborhoods are steeped in tradition and memories. Neighborhoods can provide a sense of roots. It is the home of the fraternal lodge, the church, the deli, the corner pub, the street festival, the Fourth of July celebration. What America's neighborhoods need is not a massive "delivery of service from government, but a massive rebirth of opportunity."

A person who lives in a good neighborhood usually has peer pressure to find a job, and will fix up his home with minimal government subsidy. It is the place where the family values are strongly respected and therefore the children are brought up properly and it is the place that provides structure and meaning to life.



Southern Brooklyn Community Organization

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Neighborhood self-help organizations play a very key role in preserving neighborhoods. The Republican plank states that it is "committed to nurturing the spirit of self-help and cooperation through which so many neighborhoods have revitalized themselves and served their residents."

Promoting "neighborhood" values is the first step towards developing an overall neighborhood policy. In order to promote neighborhood values, I am recommending the following:

1. The President visit neighborhoods - The idea here is for the President to visit two neighborhoods where he will identify with the values the neighborhood residents are promoting and encourage the work of self-help organizations (mediating structures) who are involved in housing and economic development.

2. An awards ceremony for outstanding neighborhood groups of various ethnic backgrounds be held at the White House - By giving recognition to these organizations, the President would again identify with the value of neighborhood preservation. At the same time, this would give a very strong message to foundations and corporations that the White House considers this a very important activity.

3. A White House Conference on Neighborhoods be convened. Such a meeting would be held together with banks, foundations (such as Ford Foundation and Rockefeller Foundation) corporations (such as Exxon, Metropolitan Life Insurance, etc.) and some local government officials. Again, this would clearly indicate the White House commitment to neighborhood preservation and their desire to see the foundations, corporations, and local governments get involved in these activities.

4. In the President's presentation to the media, such as his talk show on radio or his interviews, he should mention neighborhood values.

At the same time, various governmental policies would be implemented. My recommendations are the following:

1. A directive from the White House to HUD letting them know that the President is interested in neighborhood preservation and that in the allocation of funds that are available, those projects that have the involvement of self-help neighborhood development corporations should receive priority. In addition, the President's Task Force on Private Initiatives should have a neighborhood component. Also if a Commission dealing with housing or economic development is created, a neighborhood component should be included.

2. In preparation for the block grant concept to states, to the extent that the Administration will direct the use of these funds, neighborhood preservation activities should be given priority. In the introduction to the bill, it should be clearly stated that a portion of funds should go to neighborhood preservation of activities.

3. A small amount of money, even 15 million from HUD's discretionary funds should be allocated for neighborhood preservation activities. If every year, 10-20 projects could be funded, it would show some kind of commitment. The Administration did approve a very large grant to the South Bronx which is going towards rebuilding a neighborhood. Some money should be going to the other groups who are trying to prevent a crisis. It is quite clear that the President is very much in favor of preserving neighborhoods and is not really looking to encourage the rebuilding of bombed out areas which require very heavy subsidies.

Rabbi Menachem Lubinsky
Agudath Israel of America

VISIT TO A JEWISH SCHOOL

BACKGROUND

In at least two separate occasions, the President visited Catholic schools. While the first occasion was linked with his address to Catholic educators about tuition tax credits, the second visit was an opportunity for students to question the President about some of the Administration's policies.

We felt very strongly that a Presidential visit to a Jewish school, a "yeshiva", would accomplish both of these objectives, but would also send a strong message to the Jewish community about the President's sensitivity and understanding of the community's needs. Because the school term is rapidly coming to a close, I feel that it is important to move ahead with any plans.

The visit would also help take some of the focus out of tuition tax credits as a Catholic issue and put it more in its proper perspective of being for parents of private schools.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

We feel that it would most convenient for the President to visit the Ner Israel Rabbinical College, which is located at 400 Mt. Wilson Lane, Baltimore, Maryland. Ner Israel, consisting of more than 500 students, is one of the most distinguished talmudical schools in the world. It includes both a high school and an institute for advanced learning. Its students combine a program of high scholarship and involvement in the current American scene.

Ner Israel was founded in 1933 by its dean, Rabbi Yaakov Ruderman, who is a member of the Council of Torah Sages, the highest governing body of Agudath Israel of America. The school is located on a sprawling 67 acre campus in Bal-

timore County. (Incidentally, the terrain of the campus affords easy landing for a helicopter.)

While at Ner Israel, the President could conduct a question and answer session with the students about foreign and domestic policy. The school also contains a monument to commemorate the Holocaust, which could add an emotional touch to the entire visit. The Vice President of the school and its administrator, Rabbi Herman Neuberger, is one of the most prominent Jewish educational leaders in the country. He has been particularly active as the Orthodox Jewish spokesman in opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment. For this task he was nominated by the Agudath Israel movement to represent the viewpoint of the community.

In addition to the exchange with the students, there is a possibility of convening Jewish community leaders from the Baltimore area since the school enjoys broad support from the community. The school has ample space for a large assembly and because of its secluded surroundings, might even be able to take place in the outdoors.

We believe that a visit to Ner Israel would be an important psychological boost for the entire American Jewish community.

Rabbi Menachem Lubinsky
Agudath Israel of America

IRANIAN JEWS

BACKGROUND

In 1981 we were expressing our deep concern about the process of granting political asylum to Iranian Jews, particularly since they were asked to "demonstrate" religious persecution. As a result of our efforts, as well as by many others, Elliott Abrams, the Assistant Secretary of State, issued new guidelines easing the restrictions on Iranian Jews.

Since then we have brought numerous hardship cases to the attention of the Department and some of them have been acted on positively. The problem that we are currently faced with is the delay in the processing of political asylum applications. Many of the hardship cases that we have brought include the inability of some to enroll in colleges or vocational schools, but even more tragic is relatives that are stuck in Europe because their families in this country have not yet been granted political asylum.

The delay has also had a psychological impact on the news that has been filtering back to Iran, which has led many Jews there to draw their own conclusions about the possibilities of ever reaching the United States. Many Iranians who reach Europe are faced with long delays in the processing of their applications for entry into the United States.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

We feel that the entire issue of the status of Iranian Jews in this country needs to be reviewed at the highest levels. We would suggest that the White House initiate an interagency conference between the State Department and the Immigration and Naturalization Service to review all of the issues that are in-

volved in the status of Iranian Jews. We would certainly be delighted to assist you, the Department of State and the INS in working out this vexing problem.

JTA daily news bulletin

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No. 54

U.S. STARTS 'HIGH LEVEL' TALKS WITH ISRAEL TO PREVENT FURTHER IDF-U.S. MARINE CLASHES IN LEBANON

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, March 17 (JTA) -- The Reagan Administration said today that the United States has started "high level" talks with Israel to prevent a continuation of clashes between Israeli forces and U.S. marines in the Beirut area.

But the Israel Embassy here said the incidents would not occur if there was a "direct liaison" between the Israel Defense Force and the U.S. marines as there was between the IDF and the other contingents of the multinational force (MNF) in Beirut, consisting of French, British and Italian units.

The Administration and the Embassy were referring to charges by Gen. Robert Barrow, Commandant of the Marine Corps, that Israeli troops are deliberately threatening the lives of American military personnel in Lebanon for "political purposes."

U.S. General Urges 'Strong Action'

The charges were contained in a classified letter from Barrow to Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger in which Barrow urged that "firm and strong action" must be taken by the U.S. to end the confrontations. The letter was released to the press today after it was obtained yesterday by the Knight-Ridder newspaper chain. There was no immediate comment from Jerusalem.

The Pentagon said today that it had no comment on Barrow's charges because "the letter speaks for itself." State Department spokesman John Hughes said he did not know the details of the recent clashes but that the issue has been raised with Israel and that both Israel and the U.S. are "concerned" and want to take steps to resolve the problem.

Statements By Israel Embassy

The Israel Embassy issued a statement stressing that "Israel views itself as an ally of the U.S." and "wishes to have the fullest cooperation" with the marine contingent in the Beirut area. The statement said: "Israel has repeatedly expressed the desire for a liaison with the U.S. marines."

"We have such a liaison with the French, British and Italian MNF and we have had no incidents whatsoever... Regrettably, the U.S. decided not to permit a similar direct liaison between the IDF and the marines and this has resulted in numerous misunderstandings and incidents concerning the demarcation of responsibilities."

The Embassy statement noted that "furthermore and most disturbingly, the U.S. issued instructions to the marines 'not to fraternize' with the IDF." The statement concluded by declaring that "Israel shares with the U.S. a strong desire for peaceful conditions in Lebanon and therefore it fervently hopes that the U.S. lifts its restrictions on direct liaison in order to avoid further misunderstandings between the IDF and the U.S. marines."

Barrow, in his letter to Weinberger, cited repeated incidents in recent months in which he said American officers were threatened by Israeli

forces. He said on January 31, an Israeli tank opened fire with a 50 calibre machinegun directly in front of an American patrol, forcing it to turn around.

In another incident, according to the letter and classified documents accompanying it, a marine Major was threatened on three separate occasions by Israeli soldiers and Israelis in civilian clothes who pointed guns at him.

Barrow said two incidents over the last weekend had prompted his letter. But there was apparently no connection between those incidents and the attacks this week by unknown assailants which wounded five marines and 11 Italian soldiers in the Beirut area.

The incidents reported by Barrow were undisclosed at the time they occurred. But a highly publicized confrontation occurred last February 2 when a marine Captain brandished his pistol to turn away three Israeli tanks which allegedly attempted to break through marine lines on the outskirts of Beirut. The Israelis contended at the time that the tanks were patrolling in an Israel-held area and that the marine officer had overreacted.

Barrow stated in his letter, "It is evident to me that the incidents between the marines and the IDF are timed, orchestrated and executed for obtuse Israeli political purposes." He did not elaborate.

FOCUS ON ISSUES

JEWISH RELIGIOUS LEADERS DENOUNCE REAGAN'S USE OF SCRIPTURE AND JESUS TO OPPOSE A NUCLEAR FREEZE

By Ben Gallob

NEW YORK, March 17 (JTA) -- President Reagan's recent assertion that belief in God should make Americans solidly back his opposition to a nuclear freeze and support his program for a massive military buildup came under stinging denunciation from leaders of the three branches of Judaism.

The Jewish religious leaders, in response to a Jewish Telegraphic Agency survey, said that the use by the President of moral absolutes "in the name of Jesus" was morally offensive and possibly a violation of his constitutional obligations; that castigation of the Soviet Union as the "focus of evil" might unwittingly bring about the "catastrophe" of a nuclear holocaust; that it implied an attempt to silence opposition to the President's policies, including his strong support of prayer in the public schools; and threatened the nation's religious pluralism.

Cites Violation Of Constitutional Obligation

Rabbi Alexander Schindler, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the association of Reform synagogues, said that "the invoking of moral absolutes in the name of Jesus" were "offensive when they are voiced by the President of the United States." He added that they were "in fact, a violation of his constitutional obligation to be President of all Americans, regardless of religious persuasion."

Schindler added that "all religious people will find the invocation of the divine as favoring a political point of view as distasteful, if not blasphemous." He declared that this also "injures the democratic process, for it forecloses genuine political debate by labelling all dissenters as sinners and followers of Satan."

The President made his remarks in a speech on March 7 in Orlando to the National Association of Evangelicals, an organization of conservative churches and agencies.

The President told the Orlando gathering that there is sin and evil in the world and we are enjoined by Scripture and the Lord Jesus to oppose it with all our might. He said Soviet Communism is the focus of evil in the modern world and that those favoring a mutual freeze on nuclear weapons were ignoring "the aggressive instincts of the evil empire."

Leaders of Christian church organizations were similarly critical of the President's resort to theological concepts in his appeals for support of his policies and in his criticisms of foes of those policies.

Radical Evil of Nuclear War

Rabbi Herman Schaalman, outgoing president of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the umbrella agency of American Reform Rabbis, and Rabbi Joseph Glaser, CCAR executive vice president, declared they joined with Protestant and Catholic leaders in "raising our voices against the radical evil of nuclear war." They said "we deplore tendencies to articulate the relationship between the United States and the USSR in terms of irreconcilable evil and good, and Satan and God."

Schaalman and Glaser pledged to "continue to raise our voices and make efforts to change" the "noxious" policies and actions of the Soviet Union, but they declared that "no good is served by distorting our vision of the Soviet Union in apocalyptic theological terms." The two rabbis warned that merely to speak in terms of ultimate confrontation will freeze us in a posture of irresponsibility whose only outcome will be the ultimate war.

They urged the President, in negotiations with the Soviet Union, to make certain that "his words and deeds will be in the true spirit of our shared religious commitment to the unrelenting pursuit of peace."

We Will Not Be Silenced

Rabbi Arnold Goodman, president of the Rabbinical Assembly, the international association of Conservative rabbis, said the nuclear freeze issue stemmed from "a deep concern that the world may be heading for a holocaust of its own making," and that the Jewish tradition, "with its concern for life, obviously has a contribution to make to the global deliberations" on that overriding issue.

Goodman asserted "we will not be silenced and we will join with our fellow clergy here and throughout the free world in continuing to sensitize our society and our political leaders to moral concerns."

He said he agreed with the President that all Americans must oppose "sin and evil" in the world, a duty "mandated by our Torah and our teachings."

He declared he found it "regrettable" that the President, "who represents all the people," had chosen to "limit his sources of inspiration" for his fight to battle sin and evil "to Christian doctrine."

The Serious Abuse of Religion

Marshall Wolke, president of the United Synagogue of America, the central agency for Conservative congregations, and Rabbi Benjamin Kreitman, executive vice president, condemned the President, asserting that his opposition to a nuclear freeze was based on a true interpretation of Christianity and for his attack on "the liberal religious community, Christian and Jewish, who differed with his

point of view on the nuclear proliferation treaties and procedures." They said "the assumption of authority for the only authentic interpretation of the religious message," which they described as historically "one of the most serious abuses of religion," was an abuse "that strikes at the heart of religious pluralism on which our nation was founded."

Wolke and Kreitman declared that the President "had no right to intrude his religious point of view into a discussion of a politically sensitive matter, nor to usurp for himself divine approval of that point of view." They said that, as President of all the people "and of all religious points of view," President Reagan "must respect the authenticity of that diversity."

Concerned Over Use Of Religious Content

Julius Berman, president of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations, said that "while we also recognize the evils represented by the actions of the Soviet Union, we are very concerned when any government official, including the President, expresses that opposition purely in religious terms, especially when they are not shared by everyone in our pluralistic society."

The Orthodox lay leader also expressed concern over the suggestion by Reagan "that opposition to the introduction of prayer in our public schools springs from an anti-religious attitude. While we strongly believe that religion should play a predominant role in each individual's life, we also maintain our opposition to prayer in the public schools, because it violates the doctrine of separation of church and state, which is the rock upon which this pluralistic republic was established."

Warns Of Possible Polarization

Rabbi Gilbert Klaperman, president of the Rabbinical Council of America, a major Orthodox rabbinical association, declared it was "wrong and dangerous" for Reagan "to inject an affirmative sectarian note into a political issue that does not take into account our pluralistic society," a statement Klaperman warned "may polarize different religious elements in America."

To the President's comment suggesting that all Christians who do support a nuclear freeze "are not loyal Christians," Klaperman retorted that "there are many devout Christians who are deeply committed to a nuclear freeze" and that the President, in impugning their Christian loyalty, "is superimposing dogmatic principles on a political issue."

Citing the church-state separation principle as basic to the American pluralistic society, the Orthodox rabbinical leader said "those who do not agree with the policy of their nation should not be attacked on religious grounds."

Criticizes Attempt To Stigmatize

Rabbi Walter Wurzbarger, president of the Synagogue Council of America, declared that the President "has every right to oppose a nuclear freeze but he has no right to stigmatize those who disagree with his brand of 'civil religion' as having succumbed to 'the temptation of pride' and as seeking not the reality but 'the illusion of peace.'"

He called "equally distressing" the President's attempt to preach "civil religion" by advocating an amendment to permit prayer in public schools. He asserted that "non-denominational" prayer would be an exercise in "religious takenism" rather than a genuine contribution towards the enhancement of religious values.

Whole

JEWISH PRESS
BROOKLYN, N. Y.
- 150,000

MAR-25-83

Agudath Israel Rejects "Misuse Of Jewish Tradition" In Nuclear Freeze Debate

A sharp rebuke against the misuse of "Jewish tradition" in the raging debate over the nuclear freeze issue was released by Agudath Israel of America, in a policy statement adopted by its national officers at a meeting on Monday. The national Orthodox Jewish coalition movement, commenting on the position taken by many Jewish organizations, stated that it is "an oversimplification of Jewish tradition to interpret reverence for life as an argument for a nuclear freeze."

The Agudath Israel statement pointed out that although it believes that "no stone should be left unturned in an effort to put a halt to the frightening nuclear arms race and to achieve genuine peace," nevertheless, while peace is a religious imperative, so is a strong national defense.

The following is the full text of the Agudath Israel

statement:

"We deplore the reports that various Jewish groups have injected Jewish tradition as a basis for their call for a nuclear freeze. Like all segments of society, we view with alarm the constantly mounting nuclear arms buildup, and we believe that no stone should be left unturned in an effort to put a halt to this frightening race and to achieve genuine peace. It is, however, an oversimplification of Jewish tradition to interpret reverence for life as an argument for a nuclear freeze. Peace is a religious imperative; so is a strong national defense. The hallowed Jewish concern for life extends to deterrence of a grave death threat.

In democratic countries we have traditionally depended upon the governmental process for decisions relating to military and security issues. It is inappropriate to introduce Jewish tradition as an issue in the current pragmatic debate regarding nuclear freeze and the negotiating

stance of the superpowers. At stake is now to genuinely preserve world peace and ultimately reduce the world's nuclear arsenal. A complex decision of this kind must be left in the expert hands of those in whom we entrust the reins of government, who are thoroughly familiar with all the intricate facts.

Judaism seeks the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy of total disarmament when the nations of the world 'shall beat their swords into plowshares'. Realistically, however, the route to reach a goal of this nature cannot be charted by religious statements; it must be hammered out in the normal democratic process which is the hallmark of our blessed government. Our tradition tells us: 'The hearts of kings and rulers are in the hands of G-d.'"

APR TODAY
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APR 1 1983

Letters To The Editor

Misuse of Tradition

Dear Editor:

A sharp rebuke against the mis-

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Agudath Israel of America
New York, N.Y.

SENTINEL
CHICAGO, ILL.
15,000

MAR 31 1983

Misusing Jewish tradition in nuclear freeze debate'

SPECIAL TO THE SENTINEL

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JEWISH CHRONICLE
DAYTON, OHIO
W-1,000

MAR 31 1983

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JTA daily news bulletin

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Vol. LXI - 66th Year

Wednesday, April 20, 1983

No. 75

AGUDATH ISRAEL REJECTS 'MISUSE OF JEWISH TRADITION' IN NUCLEAR FREEZE DEBATE

NEW YORK, April 19 (JTA) -- A sharp rebuke against the "misuse of Jewish tradition" in the debate over the nuclear freeze issue was released by Agudath Israel of America in a policy statement adopted by its national officers recently. The national Orthodox Jewish coalition movement, commenting on the position taken by many Jewish organizations, stated that it is "an oversimplification of Jewish tradition to interpret reverence for life as an argument for a nuclear freeze."

The Agudath Israel statement pointed out that although it believes that "no stone should be left unturned in an effort to put a halt to the frightening nuclear arms race and to achieve genuine peace," nevertheless, while "peace is a religious imperative, so is a strong national defense."

A spokesman for Agudath Israel explained that many Jewish organizations who adopted positions in favor of a nuclear freeze accused the Reagan Administration of supporting a nuclear arms buildup which is detrimental to peace without giving credence to the belief that peace can also be secured through strength and deterrence.

He said that the Administration's arguments that bilateral negotiations were not possible unless the defenses of the United States were bolstered were plausible and that it was to be assumed that the government was speaking out of factual knowledge of the current military balance of the superpowers.

The Agudath Israel statement added: "A complex decision of this kind must be left in the expert hands of those to whom we entrust the reins of government who are thoroughly familiar with all the intricate facts."

The spokesman for the Orthodox organization said that while many Jewish groups were convinced that the road to peace could only be achieved through a nuclear freeze, there was reason to believe that no negotiations with the Soviets could hope to be successful at a time when America's nuclear arsenal is found wanting.

He added: "To the extent that the quest for peace was the only proper basis for introducing Jewish tradition into the debate for a nuclear freeze, the argument was one-sided and out of context. Who is to say whether more nuclear arms or disarmament is the

ultimate solution to peace?"

JEWISH WEEK-
AMERICAN EXAMINER
NEW YORK, N. Y.
W-35,000

APR-22-83

Nuclear opponents 'misuse' tradition, Agudah charges

A sharp rebuke to the "misuse of Jewish tradition" in the debate over the nuclear freeze issue was released by Agudath Israel of America in a policy statement adopted by its national officers.

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"To the extent that the quest for peace was the only proper basis for introducing Jewish tradition into the debate for a nuclear freeze, the argument was one-sided and out of context," he added. "Who is to say whether more nuclear arms or disarmament is the ultimate vehicle to peace?"

APR-28-83

✓ Agudath Israel rejects

'Misuse of Jewish Tradition' in nuclear freeze debate

NEW YORK (JTA) - A sharp rebuke against the "misuse of Jewish tradition" in the debate over the nuclear freeze issue was released by Agudath Israel of America in a policy statement adopted by its national officers recently. The national Orthodox Jewish coalition movement, commenting on the position taken by many Jewish organizations, stated that it is "an oversimplification of Jewish tradition to interpret reverence for life as an argument for a nuclear freeze."

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APR-29-83

Tradition

Agudath Rejects Nuclear Freeze/Jewish Tradition Tie In

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JEWISH REVIEW
BUFFALO, N. Y.
W-7,500

APR-29-83

'Freeze' talk called misuse of tradition

NEW YORK (JTA) — Agudath Israel of America in a policy statement adopted by its officers, says it is a "misuse" and "an oversimplification of Jewish tradition to interpret reverence for life as an argument for a nuclear freeze."

The Orthodox Jewish movement said that although it believes that "no stone should be left unturned in an effort to put a halt to the frightening nuclear arms race and to achieve genuine peace," nevertheless, while "peace is a religious imperative, so is a strong national defense."

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JEWISH TIMES
BALTIMORE, MD.
W-25,000

APR-29-83

'MISUSE OF TRADITION'

New York (JTA) — A sharp rebuke against the "misuse of Jewish tradition" in the debate over the nuclear freeze issue was released by Agudath Israel of America in a policy statement adopted by its national officers recently. The national Orthodox Jewish coalition movement, commenting on the position taken by many Jewish organizations, stated that it is "an oversimplification of Jewish tradition to interpret reverence for life as an argument for a nuclear freeze."

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From the desk of.....

RABBI MENACHEM LUBINSKY

July 13, 1983

Mr. Morton Blackwell
Special Assistant to the President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

*file
School
prayer*

Dear Morton:

As per our recent conversation, I have sent
Senator Thurmond our position on school prayers.

I know that this position is not fully in tune
with the Administration's view, but I am sure that
you can appreciate our concern.

Keep well.

Respect!

Sincerely,

[Handwritten signature of Rabbi Menachem Lubinsky]

Rabbi Menachem Lubinsky
Director of Government and
Public Affairs

ML:d1
Enc.

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באמריקה

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OFFICE OF GOVERNMENT
AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

July 13, 1983

Hon. Strom Thurmond
Chairman
Senate Judiciary Committee
218 Russell Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Thurmond:

I am writing to follow up on the recent hearings in the Senate Judiciary Committee on school prayer in public schools.

Agudath Israel of America, founded in 1922, is the broadest-based Orthodox Jewish movement in the nation. Its leadership consists of the foremost deans of rabbinical seminaries in the country. It represents grassroots Orthodox Jews in 30 states and provides a broad gamut of services to the community.

As one of the chief legislative advocates for the Orthodox Jewish community, I am certain that you will be interested in our concerns about the various proposals now before the U.S. Senate on school prayer.

We have in the past opposed school prayer bills which would have deprived the United States Supreme Court and the United States District Courts of jurisdiction over any case involving a dispute arising out of a state statute relating to the recital of voluntary prayers in public schools and public buildings. While we are generally favorably disposed to the reinstatement of the recital of prayers in public schools, these bills would accomplish such a result in a way that threatens to undermine the finely tuned balance of power between the three branches of government.

The supremacy of the Supreme Court is the ultimate interpreter of the constitution as a long accepted principle of American law and should not be changed by legislation. The issue here should not be viewed as one of school prayer, but it is an attempt to weaken the authority of the highest court in the United States and the lower federal courts. Although we may at times take issue with some of the decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court, we treasure its role in safeguarding civil liberties in this country.

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DIVISIONS: National Youth Commission; Zeirei Agudath Israel; Bnos Agudath Israel; Pirchei Agudath Israel; Bachurei Agudath Israel/Agudist Women's Organization; N'shei Agudath Israel/Camp Agudah/Camp Bnos/ The Jewish Observer/Dos Yiddishe Vort/Commission on Legislation and Civic Action/Commission on Israel/ Commission on Overseas Rescue and Relief/Commission on Social Services/Commission on Senior Citizens/ Project COPE (Career Opportunities and Preparation for Employment)/COPE Vocational Institute/Commission on Latin American Jewry/National Commission on Jewish Ethnic Affairs (Judaiscope, Southern Brooklyn Community Organization)/Commission on Branch Service and Development/ Commission on Adult Torah Education: Daf Yomi/ Jewish Education Program (JEP)/Torah Education Network (Reshet Shiurei Torah)/Torah Action Program (TAP) /Project RISE (Russian Immigrant Services and Education) /Russian Immigrant

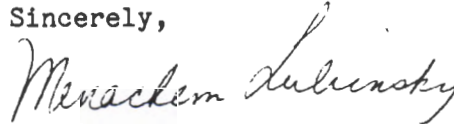
Hon. Strom Thurmond
July 13, 1983
Page 2

We have viewed with extreme interest the proposal of the Administration. We strongly support the Administration's emphasis on the return to traditional values in the family, in the community and in society at large. Permitting prayer in schools is consistent with these values. However, the proposed constitutional amendment fails to define the type of "prayer" advocated, and this ambiguity could lead to unacceptable interpretations. We reserve judgment on this issue until the measure under consideration clearly spells out the form and text of the prayer to be recited in schools.

We would appreciate if you would include our views on this subject in your official record of the hearings.

Thank you for this opportunity to make our views known.

Sincerely,



Rabbi Menachem Lubinsky
Director of Government and Public Affairs

ML:d1



Jerusalem Congress on the Bible

Jerusalem, Israel December 26, 1983 - January 3, 1984

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P.O. Box 86508
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Signal Mountain, TN 37377
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July 27, 1983

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Rochunga Pudaite, LL.D.
President, Bibles for the World

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James C. Hefley, Ph.D.

Director of Communications

Wallace Henley

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Ron and Mary Jane Wells

Director of Tours

Jimmy Parrish

Speakers

Dr. Jimmy Draper
President, Southern
Baptist Convention

Dr. Harold Lindsell
Editor Emeritus,
Christianity Today

Dr. Rochunga Pudaite
President, Bibles for the World

Dr. David Seamands
Pastor, Author,
Conference Speaker

Dr. John Warwick Montgomery
Theologian, Author

Dr. Anis Shorosh
Native of Nazareth, Evangelist

TO: STAFF AND MAJOR PROGRAM PERSONNEL.

FROM: JAMES C. HEFLEY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.

RE: INVITATION TO PRESIDENT REAGAN TO SPEAK ON THE INFLUENCE OF THE BIBLE. INFORMATION WHICH YOU MIGHT USE IN WRITING THE PRESIDENT, URGING ACCEPTANCE.

History: Dr. Pudaite extended the invitation in April. Frederick J. Ryan, Jr., Director, Presidential Appointments and Scheduling, replied May 3, suggesting "you . . . renew your invitation nearer the date--I suggest around ten to twelve weeks ahead, [when] we should be better able to give you a definite answer."

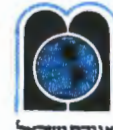
Rationale: Mr. Reagan proclaimed the "Year of the Bible" in Feb. at the National Prayer Breakfast. It is fitting for the President to "close" the Year of the Bible in Jerusalem, the city most central to the history and message of Scripture. An appropriate time would be the evening of December 31, when will recount the impact of the Year of the Bible. However, another date during the Congress period would be acceptable.

Audience: Two to three thousand, mostly American evangelicals, but also including Catholics and Jews. Somewhat broader than audiences at the National Religious Broadcasters and the National Association of Evangelicals, addressed by the President this year. Auditorium (National Convention Center of Israel) capacity 3,300.

Perceptions: The address by the President would be greatly appreciated by American Protestants and Catholics, as well as by both American and Israeli Jews. The address would be non-political and non-partisan, while at the same time affording opportunity to promote peace and reconciliation among those who reverence the Bible.

Suggestions: We should not give any assurances that the President will accept the invitation. Only the possibility exists. However, in our letters, we should stress the advantages and the impact which the President's address could have.

ב"ה



אגודת ישראל
ESTABLISHED 1922

AGUDATH ISRAEL
OF AMERICA הסתדרות
אגודת ישראל
באמריקה

OFFICE OF GOVERNMENT
AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

FIVE BEEKMAN STREET
PHONE: (212) 791-1800

NEW YORK, N.Y. 10038
CABLE: AGUDOHNEWYORK

June 10, 1983

Hon. Morton Blackwell
Special Assistant to the President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Morton:

What a treat it was to read your "Reviving the Winning Coalition," which is so much in line with my own thinking. I particularly enjoyed reading your recommendations on education.

I noted that in the appendix in the examples of coalitions, that you omitted the tuition tax credit coalition, which, as I indicated to you, can really be used for many of the issues that you address in your paper. You probably recall the broad representation at the Roosevelt Room meeting on June 22, 1982.

I enjoyed very much chatting with you the other day, and we really need to touch base with one another more often. I tried to follow up with Michael Castine of the Private Sector Initiative about having Rabbi Morris Sherer placed on the new Advisory Council, but I received no commitment. I hope you will have an opportunity to follow up on some of the other items on the agenda which I had sent to Mrs. Faith Ryan Whittlesey.

Let's stay in touch.

Kind regards.

Sincerely,

Rabbi Menachem Lubinsky
Director of Government and
Public Affairs

ML:dl

ב"ה



אגודת ישראל
ESTABLISHED 1922

AGUDATH ISRAEL
OF AMERICA

הסתדרות
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באמריקה

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OFFICE OF GOVERNMENT
AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

April 20, 1983

Mr. Morton Blackwell
Special Assistant to the President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. ^{Morton} Blackwell:

I am pleased to enclose a copy of a legislative agenda for the first session of the 98th Congress, which was compiled by the Office of Government and Public Affairs of Agudath Israel of America.

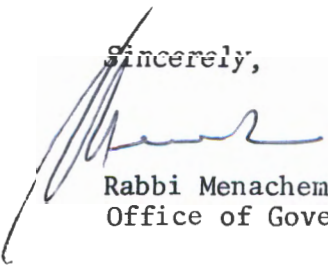
Agudath Israel of America is a broadly based Orthodox Jewish movement with chapters in major communities throughout the United States and Canada. It sponsors a wide range of constructive projects in the field of religion, education, children's welfare, and social action affecting the lives of young and old in far-flung parts of the Americas, Israel and Russia. The organization's leaders include the nation's most respected rabbinic scholars, and its constituents consist of a comprehensive coalition of Orthodox Jews from every walk of life.

The purpose of this agenda is to give members of Congress and other interested parties an opportunity to understand some of the concerns of the Orthodox Jewish community.

Please feel free to call me or Steven Prager, the general counsel of our Commission on Legislation and Civic Action, at (212) 791-1828.

Kind regards.

Sincerely,


Rabbi Menachem Lubinsky
Office of Government and Public Affairs

ML:dj
Enc.
cc: Rabbi Morris Sherer

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Commission on Legislation & Civic Action

a division of



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LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

for the

98th CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

1983

Commission on Legislation & Civic Action



AGUDATH ISRAEL OF AMERICA

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AGUDATH ISRAEL OF AMERICA

INTRODUCTION

The Office of Government and Public Affairs of Agudath Israel of America and its Commission on Legislation and Civic Action have for many years taken positions on various public policy issues before the United States Congress. The purpose of this legislative agenda is to give the members of Congress, agencies of government, and other interested parties an opportunity to become more familiar with some of the matters that are of particular interest to the broad-based Orthodox Jewish community in the United States.

Agudath Israel will continue to comment on legislation introduced in the 98th Congress at appropriate times during the course of the year.

PLEASE NOTE: Unless otherwise indicated, bills are identified by the numbers assigned in the 97th Congress.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Abortion.....page 5
 2. Asbestos.....page 5
 3. Computer Equipment Contributions.....page 6
 4. Daylight Saving Time.....page 7
 5. Department of Education.....page 7
 6. Employment Practices.....page 8
 7. Equal Rights Amendment.....page 8
 8. Gay Rights.....page 9
 9. Immigration Reform.....page 10
 10. Math and Science Act.....page 11
 11. Quotas.....page 11
 12. School Prayer.....page 12
 13. Time of Death.....page 13
 14. Truth-In-Testing.....page 13
 15. Tuition Tax Credits.....page 14
 16. Vandalizing a House of Worship.....page 15
 17. Voluntarism.....page 15
 18. Constitutional Convention.....page 16

ABORTION

Position - Jewish law teaches that all human life is sacred. The life of a fetus has status and dignity under Torah dictates. The continuation or termination of pregnancy is not a matter of free choice within the province of the mother. In those cases when elimination of the fetus is warranted, such as when the mother's life is endangered, such decision must be made only upon consultation with medical and rabbinical authorities.

The prohibition against the taking of human life is a fundamental moral principle binding upon all mankind, regardless of denominational affiliation. Society cannot accept the right of any of its citizens to take the life of another human being, whether born or unborn. Fetal life is thus entitled to significant protection.

Any legislation dealing with this area will be measured against the twin goals of recognizing the dignity of fetal life and protecting the free exercise of religion guaranteed under the First Amendment.

ASBESTOS

On May 27, 1982, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency published a final rule which requires, among other things, public and nonpublic elementary and secondary schools by June 27, 1983 to inspect for friable asbestos containing building materials, notify school employees of the location of the friable materials which contain asbestos, and notify the school's parent-teacher association (or the parents themselves if there is no PTA) of the inspection results.

Position - With the Asbestos School Hazard Detection and Control Act of 1980 (P.L. 96-270; 20 U.S.C. 3601), the Congress established a program to provide loans to schools to contain or remove hazardous asbestos materials from schools. The Act provides for a two-tiered program of federal assistance -- first, through grants to local educational agencies, state educational agencies, and schools to detect potential hazards in schools, and second, through interest-free loans to school districts and

nonpublic schools to control detected hazards. Both the federal grants (for detection) and the federal loans (for abatement) can be used to pay for up to 50 percent of the costs of the particular project, except that the Secretary of Education may increase the Federal allocation up to 100 percent of the costs for districts and nonpublic schools with limited financial resources.

Unfortunately, Congress never appropriated funds to implement the program established by the Asbestos School Hazard Detection and Control Act of 1980.

We urge the Congress to appropriate funds for the implementation of the Asbestos School Hazard Detection and Control Act of 1980 so that schools are financially able to comply with the EPA rule (i.e. inspect for friable asbestos) and contain or remove hazardous asbestos in school buildings, thus protecting the health of their students.

COMPUTER EQUIPMENT CONTRIBUTIONS

H.R. 701 (Introduced in the 98th Congress) - This bill would allow a tax deduction to companies that donate computers to public and nonpublic elementary and secondary schools for the education of students. The deduction is for the cost of the equipment, plus one half of the difference between the cost of the computers and their fair market value. This rule is substantially similar to a provision set forth in the Internal Revenue Code for assessing donations of scientific equipment to colleges and universities for research purposes. Any company donating the equipment would be required to have a written plan assuring economic and geographic diversity in its donation program.

Position - Agudath Israel supports this bill.

Budget limitations prevent many public and nonpublic schools from providing students with computers and related equipment needed to develop the skills required in the job markets of the future.

This legislation would encourage manufacturers to

donate computers for use in classrooms throughout the country to enable schoolchildren to be trained in new technology.

Status - A similar bill passed the House of Representatives on September 22, 1982.

DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME

S. 879 and S. 49/S. 1151/S. 2510 - These bills would expand daylight saving time from the current six months to seven months and eight months respectively by amending the Uniform Time Act of 1966 to advance the start of daylight saving time from the last Sunday in April to the last Sunday in March in the case of S. 879, and to the first Sunday in March in the case of S. 49, S. 1151, and S. 2510.

Position - Agudath Israel opposes the latter three bills. According to Jewish religious law, the earliest time that morning prayers may be recited is approximately one hour before sunrise. Orthodox Jews do not leave for work until they complete these prayers. Establishing daylight saving time in early March would cause sunrise to be relatively late in the day. This would adversely affect the daily schedules of many Orthodox Jews, particularly those who live in areas of the United States where the sun already rises relatively late in the day.

Agudath Israel fully supports the efforts of those who wish to expand daylight saving time. We are cognizant of the need to reduce our country's dependence on foreign oil and to lower crime and traffic accident rates. However, because of the serious problem described above, we can only support S. 879 which would establish daylight saving time at the end of March when the sun rises earlier in the day.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

H.R. 1779, H.R. 1904, H.R. 2289, and S. 1821 - These bills would disband the recently established U.S. Department of Education and would authorize a different administrative structure or structures for federal education program administration.

Position - Irrespective of the proposals outlined in the bills with regard to the future of the Department of Education, Agudath Israel urges the Congress to adopt legislation establishing an Office of Non-Governmental Education to monitor laws and regulations governing educational programs, both existing and proposed, in order to guarantee the equitable participation of nonpublic school students in these programs.

EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

H.R. 254 - Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended requires employers to reasonably accommodate the religious practices of an employee of prospective employee, unless such accommodation would create undue hardship for the employer. This bill would provide increased protection for the religious observances and practices of employees and prospective employees by amending the law to require employers to accommodate employees' religious observances and practices unless the employer would suffer "severe pecuniary or other material loss" because of such accommodation.

Position - Agudath Israel supports this bill.

H.R. 1188 - This bill would require the Postal Service to issue regulations allowing Postal Service officers and employees "whose personal religious beliefs require the abstention from work during certain periods of time" to "engage in overtime work for time lost meeting those religious requirements."

Position - Agudath Israel supports this bill.

H.R. 1188 merely requires the Postal Service to work within the framework of Title IV of the Federal Employees Flexible and Compressed Work Schedules Act of 1978 which permits similar compensatory time off for religious observance for other Federal employees.

EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT

S.J.R. 10/H.J.R. 1, H.J.R. 37, H.J.R. 38 - (Introduced in the 98th Congress) - This resolution proposes

an amendment to the Constitution of the United States to provide that "equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex."

Position - Agudath Israel is strongly opposed to the Equal Rights Amendment.

While we fully support equal opportunities for women in every phase of life, we strongly oppose the E.R.A. because the potential effects of this legislation could threaten our ability to live in accordance with our traditional lifestyle and religious beliefs. We are particularly concerned about the effects of the Equal Rights Amendment on the fiber of family life which is essential to a stable and democratic society. Furthermore, attempting to achieve equality of the sexes by amending the Constitution is in our opinion unnecessary because a vast array of state and federal laws and court decisions already protect women against discrimination.

The proposed amendment is additionally objectionable and would establish a dangerous precedent in that no ratification deadline is included.

The people of the United States, through their state legislatures, have already demonstrated their opposition to E.R.A. We, therefore, urge Congress to follow the dictates of the people and not initiate a new E.R.A. ratification process.

GAY RIGHTS

S. 430 - (Introduced in the 98th Congress) - This bill would prohibit discrimination on the basis of affectional or sexual orientation.

Position - Agudath Israel is strongly opposed to this bill.

We vigorously oppose discrimination of any kind against any individual or group, whether it be based on race, creed, religion, or any other factor. However, the issue of "gay rights" generally and the purpose of this legislation in particular is not simply to protect the

civil rights of homosexuals. Rather, it is an attempt to obtain official government sanction for a "lifestyle" that goes against the social and moral fabric of society and which may have a detrimental effect upon schoolchildren, families, and the community in general.

IMMIGRATION REFORM

S. 529/H.R. 1510 - (Introduced in the 98th Congress) - These bills would revise and reform the Immigration and Nationality Act in several ways. To control illegal immigration, the bills establish civil and criminal penalties for employers who hire illegal aliens. Employers would have to verify that job applicants are either citizens or aliens authorized to work in the United States. In addition, the bills are designed to expedite the review of aliens' claims for asylum and to facilitate the admission to the United States of temporary foreign workers in limited numbers. Finally, the bills grant amnesty to illegal aliens who have lived continuously in the United States for a specified period of time. These aliens would qualify for permanent resident status.

Position - We support efforts to reform our immigration laws to make them more equitable and responsive to human needs. We recognize the need to establish control over our nation's borders and, at the same time, reaffirm our commitment to immigration.

We urge retention of the family reunification (Fifth Preference) category in its present form which provides that U.S. citizens may petition for their alien siblings and their families to come to the United States. Family reunification is an expression of our nation's belief in the vital role that healthy and stable family lives and family values play in the creation of a free, productive and humanitarian society such as ours.

We oppose additional numerical limitations on immigration. We also oppose the elimination of judicial review of applications for political asylum in the United States. A full opportunity for a fair hearing should not be eliminated in order to expedite the review of aliens' claims for asylum. Finally, for the reasons stated above, we oppose restricting the Second Preference category so that permanent residents in the United States would no

longer be able to petition for their unmarried children over the age of twenty-one.

Status - A bill similar to S. 529 passed the Senate in August 1982. A bill similar to H.R. 1510 passed the House Judiciary Committee in September 1982.

MATH AND SCIENCE ACT

H.R. 30 - Emergency Mathematics and Science Education Act - (Introduced in the 98th Congress) - This bill would amend the National Defense Education Act to improve the quality of mathematics and science education in the country.

The legislation would create a grant program for state and local school districts. Most of the money would be used for in-service courses to improve the skills and knowledge of current teachers. Funds could also be used to improve libraries, purchase computers and otherwise bolster the teaching capacity of a school system. Other funds would be earmarked over the next two years for establishing 15,000 scholarships for students who agree to teach science or mathematics for at least two years. Thirty percent of the aid would be reserved for teachers who are already in the classroom. A five-year program, spending \$100 million a year, would establish an Engineering and Science Personnel Fund administered by the National Science Foundation.

Position - Agudath Israel supports this bill.

A national study by the National Assessment of Educational Progress pointed to significant declines in the ability of many elementary and secondary school students in the fields of mathematics and science.

Status - H.R. 30 passed the House of Representatives on March 2, 1983.

QUOTAS

H.R. 3466 - This bill would prohibit governmental imposition of quotas with respect to the hiring or

promotion policies of an individual or entity, or the contracting policies of an individual or entity.

Position - Agudath Israel strongly supports this bill.

We believe that selection, promotion, hiring, and entrance decisions should be based solely on merit, without taking into consideration irrelevant and discriminatory factors such as race, sex, and ethnicity.

SCHOOL PRAYER

S. 481, S. 1742, H.R. 72, H.R. 326, H.R. 2347 - These and other bills introduced in the 97th Congress would deprive the United States Supreme Court and the United States district courts of jurisdiction over any case involving a dispute arising out of a state statute relating to the recital of voluntary prayers in public schools and public buildings.

Position - Agudath Israel opposes these bills because they would establish a dangerous precedent.

While as noted below, we are generally favorably disposed to the reinstatement of the recital of prayers in public schools, these bills would accomplish such a result in a way that threatens to undermine the finely tuned balance of power between the three branches of government. The supremacy of the Supreme Court as the ultimate interpreter of the Constitution is a long accepted principle of American law and should not be changed by legislation. The issue here should not be viewed as one of school prayer but as an attempt to weaken the authority of the highest court in the United States and the lower federal courts. Although we may at times take issue with some of the decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court, we treasure its role in safeguarding civil liberties in this country.

S.J. Res. 199/H.J. Res. 493 - This Joint Resolution proposes an amendment to the Constitution of the United States permitting individual or group prayer in public schools and other public institutions.

Position - Agudath Israel strongly supports the Reagan Administration's emphasis on the return to traditional values in the family, in the community and in society at large. Permitting prayer in schools is consistent with these values. However, the proposed constitutional amendment fails to define the type of "prayer" advocated, and this ambiguity could lead to unacceptable interpretations. We reserve judgment on this issue until the measure under consideration clearly spells out the form and text of the prayer to be recited in schools.

TIME OF DEATH

The President's Commission for the Study of Ethical Problems in Medicine and Biomedical and Behavioral Research recommended in 1981 that the Uniform Determination of Death Act should be enacted into law in all fifty states. The Act would authorize determinations of death based upon the cessation of brain activity.

Position - Agudath Israel strongly opposes the adoption of the Uniform Determination of Death Act.

The definition of death involves ethical, legal, religious, and medical considerations and should therefore not be the subject of legislation. Moreover, according to both Jewish law and the common law death does not occur when the brain stops functioning; it occurs only upon the total cessation of respiratory and cardiac activity. A "brain death" statute would therefore violate the First Amendment's guarantee of religious freedom.

In those states where time of death statutes have already been enacted and where chances of overturning the law are minimal, we support an amendment to such statutes to allow for an "exemption clause" which would permit the next-of-kin to object to a determination of death that is contrary to the basic tenets of a patient's religion.

TRUTH-IN-TESTING

H.R. 1312 and H.R. 1662 - These bills would require all educational and occupational admissions testing

services to provide examinees with sufficient notice of test subject matter and test results.

At the time New York State passed a truth-in-testing law in 1979, testing companies immediately announced that they would eliminate three out of four special test administrations for Sabbath observers, who for religious reasons, cannot take examinations on Saturday. This would have created serious difficulties for Sabbath observers who would have had only one chance per year for a make-up examination. The law was subsequently amended to require an equal number of special administrations for Sabbath observers. Studies have shown that companies have not experienced any hardship as a result of this legislation.

Position - Agudath Israel urges the Congress to incorporate in this legislation a further provision similar to the one adopted in New York requiring that the number of special test administrations for Sabbath observers equal the number of regular Saturday test administrations.

TUITION TAX CREDITS

S. 528/H.R. 1730 - (Introduced in the 98th Congress) - These bills provide for a credit for 50 percent of tuition expenses paid by a taxpayer for his children attending nonpublic elementary and secondary schools. The maximum credit would be \$100 in the first year after the bill is enacted, \$200 in the second year, and \$300 in the third and subsequent years. The maximum credit amount is phased down for taxpayers with adjusted gross incomes of greater than \$40,000 and no credit is allowed for taxpayers with adjusted gross incomes of \$60,000 or more. To be eligible for the credit, the student must be attending a nonpublic school which does not discriminate on the basis of race.

Position - Agudath Israel strongly supports this legislation for a number of reasons. Indeed, passage of tuition tax credit legislation remains a priority for Agudath Israel.

Parents of nonpublic school students pay rapidly rising tuition while their tax dollars support the public school system. For many working parents, this dual

financial burden is just too great, preventing them from exercising their constitutional right to send their children to the school of their choice.

More importantly, nonpublic schools bring diversity and richness to our educational system, thereby benefiting all our citizens. By educating a significant percentage of American youth, nonpublic schools fulfill an important function in alleviating the burden on the public schools.

Tuition tax credits would help to maintain educational diversity, promote intellectual liberty, and enable parents of a wide socio-economic range to instill in their children the moral and cultural values that they believe are best for their children.

VANDALIZING A HOUSE OF WORSHIP

S. 822, H.R. 1376 and H.R. 2085 - These bills would amend Title 18 of the U.S. Code to make it a federal crime to vandalize a consecrated cemetery, religious school, house of worship, or any other real property used for religious purposes, or any religious article contained therein.

Position - Agudath Israel strongly supports this bill.

Acts of vandalism against religious institutions have increased dramatically in the past few years. Local law enforcement agencies are unable to deal effectively with this problem. Declaring such acts federal crimes would hopefully provide additional manpower and resources to apprehend perpetrators and thereby create a forceful deterrent against would-be vandals.

VOLUNTARISM

H.R. 976 and H.R. 358 - (Introduced in the 98th Congress) - These bills would amend the Internal Revenue Code to provide that the amount of the charitable deduction allowable for expenses incurred in the operation of a motor vehicle be determined in the same manner that government employees determine reimbursement for use of

their vehicles on government business (H.R. 976) or at the standard mileage rate used in computing the business expense deduction (H.R. 358).

Position - Agudath Israel supports these bills.

Volunteers may currently deduct nine cents per mile. Both the business expense deduction and the rate at which government employees are reimbursed are twenty cents per mile. Enactment of the legislation would result in more than doubling the amount that volunteers could deduct for use of their passenger automobiles in carrying out volunteer activities.

Although voluntarism remains strong, the rising cost of operating and maintaining a car, the demands upon a volunteer's time, and the need for additional income, prevent many from engaging in activities often only performed by volunteers. These two pieces of legislation would encourage individuals to dedicate a portion of their time to voluntary activities which enhance the quality of life in these United States.

CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

Position - Major efforts are currently underway in many states in connection with the proposal to convene a constitutional convention for the purpose of adopting an amendment to the United States Constitution which would require a balanced budget for the federal government. While Agudath Israel of America naturally supports the efforts of those who are attempting to strengthen our economy, it is concerned that because of the lack of guidance in the Constitution regarding the structure of the convention, attempts may be made to broaden the deliberations at the convention to include matters that have no bearing on economic issues. Delegates to the convention, for instance, could attempt to rewrite the Bill of Rights, other portions of the Constitution, or even the entire document. Such a "run-away" convention could well threaten our basic liberties and our ability to live in accordance with our traditional lifestyle and religious beliefs.

Due to the uncertain nature of the constitutional convention process, Agudath Israel of America strongly urges that steps be taken by the appropriate governmental authorities in preparing for such a convention to ensure that any convention which may be convened be required to focus its attention solely on economic issues and that all citizens of the United States be equally and effectively informed of and represented at any and all of its deliberations.

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**Commission on Legislation
and Civic Action**
of
Agudath Israel of America

Agudath Israel of America, founded in 1922, is a broadly based Orthodox Jewish movement with chapters in major communities throughout the United States and Canada. It sponsors a wide range of constructive projects in the field of religion, education, children's welfare, and social action affecting the lives of young and old in far-flung parts of the Americas, Israel and Russia. The organization's leaders include the nation's most respected rabbinic scholars and its constituents consist of a comprehensive coalition of Orthodox Jews from every walk of life.