



The American Jewish Committee
Advancing democracy, pluralism and mutual understanding

AJC UPDATE

FALL 2004

President's Column



Richard S.E. Johns

It can happen where you feel so comfortable that you are not aware of your feelings, where the world is a backdrop to your daily routine, not a threat. But then it hits you, hurts you, and wakes you. Along Geary Boulevard, you see it more than twenty times: the face of a candidate for Supervisor on a poster that merchants allowed in the stores' front windows. The middle-aged smile was scarred by a swastika painted in black. For many of us and for many years, Anti-Semitism has been an infrequent something from which we were somewhat removed. But new times bring new challenges, on college campuses, in the liberal community, in the Presbyterian Church, and even in the middle of middle-class San Francisco.

For several years we have watched as college professors winked at increasing anti-Jewish activities, or waived that ugly parade into the middle of campus life. Where there were protests, and the AJC did protest, academic freedom was cited in defense of hate. One irony, of course, is that while many believed that education would end Anti-Semitism, the truth is that "You've got to be taught to hate." To address this problem, the AJC has just published *Voices of Reason*, a valuable resource guide for college students. To get high school students ready for such combat, the AJC has developed IKAR (Israel Knowledge, Advocacy and Responsibility), a program to teach thousands of Jewish students about Israeli

history and train them to speak out.

The liberal community, home to so many American Jews for so long, has not been immune from infection. In a recent meeting with representatives of the leading Jewish groups in San Francisco, Mayor Gavin Newsom listened with sympathy and obvious concern when he was told of groups that passed themselves off as legitimate charitable institutions, in one instance Women Against Rape, while becoming strongly anti-Jewish, pro-Palestinian advocates.

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) has voted to divest itself of investments in Israel. Not China (remember Tibet), nor Iran (that every day threatens nuclear holocaust, executes dissenters, denies religious freedom to Christians and Jews), nor North Korea, Libya, Russia, Sudan, Cuba, nor Belarus. Rabbi David Rosen, AJC's international director of inter-religious affairs, delivered the keynote address at the Inter-religious Conference on Religion, Peace and the Olympic Spirit. The Ecumenical Orthodox Patriarchate in Athens hosted the meeting. Meanwhile, Iran cautioned its Olympic team not to compete in events Israelis have entered. We await the Presbyterian response, if any.

Israel, with Britain, is America's most reliable ally, yet this astonishing resolution came from an *American* church. According to Alan Dershowitz, a professor of law at Harvard University, the resolution "blames the Israelis for Palestinian slaughter of civilians by asserting that the occupation is the 'root' of terrorism." He continued, "The Presbyterian resolution effectively calls for the end of Israel by insisting on 'the right of [Palestinian] refugees to return to their homeland,'" in a *Los Angeles*

Times column on August 4, 2004. "This is a well-known euphemism for turning Israel from a Jewish state into another state with a Palestinian majority. (Jordan is the other.)" There are indications that the majority of the Presbyterians do not support the resolution. But if so, that message must get from the pews to the pulpits, and from the pulpits to the principal officers of the Presbyterian Church. The church must be reminded that in 1987 it promised "never again to participate in, to contribute to, or (insofar as we are able) to allow the persecution or denigration of Jews."

It is uncertain where this particular twist on the divestment idea started. Quite possibly it started in our academic communities. Wherever it came from, there is hope. Dershowitz recalls that "The president of Harvard University, in a speech delivered in Harvard's Memorial Church in 2002, included the singling out of Israel for divestment as the sort of 'actions that are anti-Semitic in their effect, if not in their intent.'"

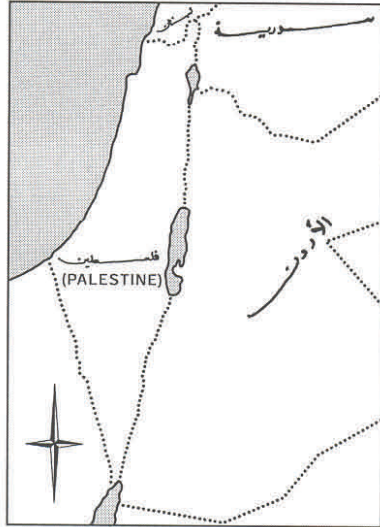
The American Jewish Committee sent a private letter to Rev. Dr. Clifton Kirkpatrick, the stated clerk of the General Assembly, protesting the resolution, and public letters to other Christian organizations. The AJC has also contacted friends within the Presbyterian Church. AJC members not familiar with the resolution should find out about it, and should then participate in efforts of the Inter-Religious Affairs Committee to raise this issue with local Presbyterian churches. We must reach out to remind Presbyterians of what they said in 1987.

And, when you drive on Geary Boulevard, or Geary Street if you are downtown, remember that it can happen here, and that we can stop it.

Richard S.E. Johns

How can there be peace in the Middle East if Israel isn't even on the map today?

Syrian
5th grade schoolbook
Geography of Syria



Palestinian Authority
schoolbook
Atlas of Palestine



Lebanon Ministry
of Tourism map



Saudi Arabian
6th grade schoolbook
Geography



The American Jewish Committee

Harold Tanner
President

David A. Harris
Executive Director

Gershon Kekst
Chair, Ad Campaign

To join us in supporting Israel's quest for peace and security please visit our website or email us at info@ajc.org

www.ajc.org

Teisch Honored at 59th Annual Meeting



Teisch receives award from Johns (left) and

also featured the election of **Steven Kornetsky**, as Senior Vice President, and his fellow officers: President **Richard S.E. Johns**, Vice Presidents **Myra Berkowitz**, **Andrew M. Colvin**, **William D. Epstein**, **Samuel A. Fishman**, **Milton Jacobs**, **Harry Kirsch**, **Robert S. Stein** and **Daniel L. Weiner**, Treasurer **Vincent B. Feher** Secretary **Rachel E. Teisch**, and Chair of the Executive Committee **Susan Osher Epstein**. The chapter also welcomed new members of the board **Anna Levine**, **Mark Miller**, **Robert A. Saltzberg**, and **John Selig. John Frank**, the former San Francisco 49er tight end who co-founded the Olympic contending Israeli Bobsled team, was the guest speaker.

Congratulations to Richard J. Sideman



Richard Sideman

The chapter congratulates Richard J. Sideman on his election as Chairman of the Board of Governors at the National Annual Meeting held in Washington, DC in May. Sideman has been involved with the American Jewish Committee both locally and nationally for over 25 years. He served as president of this chapter from 1990-1994 and chaired the National Task Force on Anti-Semitism. Sideman, a Chicago native, is a founder of Sideman & Bancroft law firm in San Francisco. He is a graduate of the University of Michigan and Harvard Law School and served as a former Assistant United States Attorney. Sideman helped found the Close-Up Foundation which is dedicated to citizenship education for young students and served as its chairman for 25 years. Sideman, a world class mountain climber, and his wife Jill live in Tiburon and have two children.

AJC Mourns the Loss of Mimi Epstein and Jerry Grenley



Mimi Epstein

The chapter mourns with deep sadness the loss of two extraordinary friends and chapter leaders: Miriam "Mimi" Epstein and Jerome W. Grenley.

Mimi Epstein, who passed away on May 20, was the mother of Vice-President Bill Epstein and mother-in-law of Bill's wife, past president Susan Osher Epstein. Mimi Epstein was a long-time active member and exceptionally generous contributor to the AJC and particularly to the Bay Area Chapter. More than 28 years ago, Mimi offered her talents and dedication to serve as the director of the speakers bureau. Mimi was, as always, a warm, gracious and effective leader whose objective was to strengthen and improve the visibility of the organization throughout the Bay Area. Mimi Epstein was that rare person who never seeks the limelight but genuinely deserves it as a constant reflection of her unique commitment. She will be deeply missed by her family, her friends, the organizations and institutions in the Jewish community which she so willingly helped and certainly her colleagues and friends in the AJC.

Jerry Grenley, cherished friend and past chapter president, passed away on July 19. In the early 1970s, when he served as chairman of the then Oakland Chapter and then as co-chairman and president of the combined San Francisco



Jerry Grenley

Bay Area Chapter, Jerry was a unique resource for AJC's programs to build relationships with the various ethnic and religious leadership groups, especially in Oakland and the East Bay. Over the decades, Jerry maintained a constant level of leadership with the chapter and was, in untold ways, a mentor to the staff, successive chapter presidents, board members and community figures. His portrait is of a man of never-failing courage, generous impulses and rich good-humor. Jerry held aloft his principles and brought clarity to his judgments. We mourn with Jerry's wife Bobby, the family and all friends and colleagues the loss of Jerry Grenley, a remarkable and talented leader and warm-hearted friend.

AJC Radio Spots Go National

AJC's bi-weekly radio commentaries delivered by National Executive Director David Harris are now being heard on over 400 CBS radio affiliates across the nation. Harris' address can be heard every other week on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday mornings directly before the Osgood File on KCBS 740 am. To view transcripts of the commentaries, visit the Newsroom section of the AJC website at www.ajc.org.

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**We're on the
Web
www.ajc.org**

• *Save the Date*

- *September*
 - *8 Business Mixer with Hispanic Chamber of Commerce*
 - *28 Understanding Jewish History class "What Every Jew Needs to Know about Jesus and the Origins of Christianity"*
- *October*
 - *5 Latino Jewish Election Forum*
 - *21 Shaken Mosaic program*
 - *28 Learned Hand Award dinner honoring San Francisco City Attorney Dennis Herrera*
- *November*
 - *11 Business and Technology Committee program with Ken Rosen*
 - *18 Human Relations Award Dinner honoring Union Bank President and CEO Norimichi Kanari*
- *December*
 - *8 Distinguished Leadership Award Dinner honoring Tad Taube*

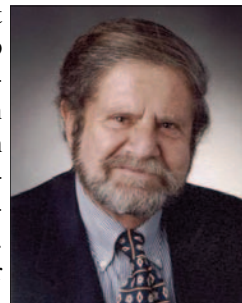
EMAIL US

Thanks to all of you who have responded already but there are still many members who are not receiving critical AJC communications. Don't miss out any longer!

Send us your email and start receiving important information about world events, the AJC Journal, AJC activities, and more to your inbox! Email us at sanfrancisco@ajc.org and get informed!

AJC to Honor Tad Taube

The chapter is pleased to announce it will present Tad Taube with its Distinguished Leadership Award for his long time commitment to the community, and specifically the Jewish community, on Wednesday, December 8, 2004. Taube, chairman and founder of the Woodmont Companies, a diversified real estate investment and management organization, is president of the Koret Foundation. Among his many leadership roles, he is governor of the Hebrew University, a past trustee of the College of Notre Dame and of University of San Francisco, and is chairman of the advisory board for the Taube Center for Jewish Studies at Stanford University. Tad is also on the executive committee of the Hoover Institution and Stanford Athletic Board and was a founder and past chairman of the advisory board for Stanford's Institute of Economic Policy Research.



Tad Taube

Learned Hand and Human Relations Award Recipients Announced

The chapter is pleased to announce that San Francisco City Attorney Dennis Herrera will be this year's recipient of the prestigious Learned Hand Award. The award will be presented to Herrera by Mayor Gavin Newsom on October 28 at the St. Francis Hotel. Chapter Vice President Robert S. Stein of Stein and Lubin LLP is serving as the dinner chair.

On November 18, the chapter will have the honor of presenting AJC's esteemed Human Relations Award to President and CEO of Union Bank of California Norimichi Kanari at the Four Seasons Hotel. Robert T. Parry, retired President and CEO of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco will serve as the dinner chairman.

What Every Jew Needs To Know About Jesus And The Origins Of Christianity

American Jews live in a society that is predominantly Christian in its religiosity. Thus, events like Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* are consuming issues of public discourse, and, each year, mainstream magazines like *Time* and *Newsweek* devote cover-stories to Jesus' birth and death.

In this class, veteran AJC teacher Ken Cohen will explore the Jewish environment in which Jesus lived and died, and the complex Jewish and Roman worlds in which his gospel was spread.

We will look at these questions, whose answers are of crucial importance as we (and our children and grandchildren) relate to our neighbors and understand the challenges in the society in which we all live:

- Where did Jesus fit in his contemporary Judaism?
- Why is he presented in the New Testament as a man in conflict with Jewish authorities?
- What were his essential teachings?
- Why was he largely rejected (or ignored) by his fellow Jews?
- Who killed Jesus?
- How did his church become an engine of anti-Jewish bigotry in the ancient (and modern!) world?

Join AJC and Lehrhaus Judaica for an exciting exploration of these and other questions, To enroll, please contact the AJC office.