



The American Jewish Committee
Advancing democracy, pluralism and mutual understanding

AJC UPDATE

SPRING 2004

President's Column



Richard S.E. Johns

One of Passover's lessons hides in a few sentences, easily passed over, with which Exodus opens: "Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation. . . . And there arose in Egypt a new king who knew not Joseph." These words move the story from one generation to the next, from peace and prosperity to slavery and release. The Torah does not tell us why the new king "knew not Joseph," nor did the question interest Rashi, who does not address it in his Commentary. For the American Jewish Committee, however, the question is profound, and the answer is clear.

Joseph was second to Pharaoh: indeed, a great man in his generation. But each generation has its own experiences, issues, and memories. Since 1906 the AJC has helped countless groups and individuals within and outside of the Jewish community. Like Joseph's generation, those who knew the successes of the early years have passed away. Those who welcomed the AJC to San Francisco Bay Area after World War II, and know of its influence in that time, are mostly gone. Was the AJC part of the civil rights movement? What was it, anyway?

We must tell and retell the story of the exodus. We must tell and retell the story of the AJC. The haggadah gives us hope for freedom. The AJC does the same. We must read the haggadah to our children. We must tell our friends about the AJC. We must tell them the what, the why, and the how of the AJC. We must draw them into our circle. We must invite them to our meetings, and encourage them to listen to the wonderful radio commentaries delivered by David A. Harris. There must not arise a generation that knows not the American Jewish Committee.

98th Annual Meeting in May

The 98th Annual Meeting is approaching. Don't miss it! This international conference will take place May 4-7th at the Capitol Hilton Hotel in Washington, D.C. Some of the speakers include Secretary of State Colin Powell; Senator Hillary Clinton; famed scholar Bernard Lewis; John Howard, Prime Minister of Australia; and Leszek Miller, Prime Minister of Poland. Just a few of the program highlights are congressional forums, advocacy training workshops, and embassy visits. For more information, contact the AJC office at 415-777-3820.

David Harris Visits San Francisco

On Thursday, March 4, National Executive Director of the American Jewish Committee David Harris visited the San Francisco Bay Area chapter.

At a special luncheon board meeting, Harris addressed the standing room only crowd of the Board of Directors and invited guests. Harris discussed the prospects for peace in the Middle East and Europe's involvement in the peace process, as well as the status and security of Jews in the United States and Europe.



Harris and ACCESS members discuss the issues.

The same evening, Harris, at his request, met with and engaged the young leaders of the chapter at a special ACCESS event. This was the first time a national director has met with the chapter's young leadership forum. At the meeting, Harris urged the ACCESS members to become involved in the Jewish community as they are the future leaders and their commitment and involvement is crucial if the Jewish people are to continue to thrive.



David Harris addresses the Board of Directors.

The American Jewish Committee

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Save the Date

March

- *31 International Relations—Israel Task Force joint committee meeting*

April

- *15 ACCESS: "Israel at Heart"*
- *20 The Heritage of the American Jewish Diaspora*
- *21 ACCESS Steering Committee meeting*

May

- *4-7 National Annual Meeting, Washington, D.C.*
- *11 Legal Committee meeting*
- *13-14 Middle East Director Eran Lerman visiting chapter*
- *23 Living Your Faith: Jews Christians and Muslims in Conversation*

June

- *2 Jewish and Chinese Links in early Shanghai*
- ***22 Chapter Annual Meeting***

EMAIL US

Thanks to all of you who have responded already but there are still many members who are not receiving important 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 right to your inbox! Email us at sanfrancisco@ajc.org and get informed!

Barbara Isackson

*We mourn the loss of our treasured friend, role model, and AJC leader **Barbara Isackson**. She will be missed forever by the American Jewish Committee and the entire Jewish community.*

Jewish-Indian Program at Stanford a Huge Success

On January 28, 2004 the chapter sponsored a program at Stanford University entitled "Global Trends that Will Defeat Terror". This program was the first in an initiative to create a student led Jewish-Indian coalition on the Stanford campus.

The event featured Dr. Jonathan Adelman and Dr. Ved Nanda, both of the University of Denver, dis-

cussing the global trends, such as democracy, human rights, women's rights, and rapid information exchange, that will ultimately bring about the defeat of terrorism. The event was a resounding success with community members and students from all over the Bay Area attending. Democracies Against Terror, a Jewish-Indian leadership forum, and South Bay Israel action committees co-sponsored the event.



From left: Indian community leader Nandini Tandon, Dr. Nanda, Dr. Adelman, and Israel activist Lisa Cohen



Panelists from the Contemporary Jewish Life Committee's February 8 luncheon and discussion "What's Jewish about the Sopranos®?" From left: Hope Alper, Dr. Murray Zucker, Rabbi Yakov Barros, committee chair Seth Skootsky, and Rebecca Weiner

Campaign Update

The San Francisco Bay Area Chapter of the American Jewish Committee continues to raise its awareness and further its development efforts in the community. With your sustained support we will continue to meet our goals and have a successful campaign but we still have a long way to go to meet our goals. The fiscal year ends on June 30th and with your financial commitment we will be able to further our mission to advance racial, ethnic and religious understanding worldwide. For more information on how you can make a donation to the AJC, contact the AJC office at 415-777-3820.