

AJC Rosh Hashanah Message

NEW YORK — In a message marking Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, which begins at sundown on Friday, October 3, Theodore Ellenoff, President of the American Jewish Committee, voiced pride in the achievements of the Jewish people during the year and hope for the future.

"Occasional differences of philosophy and viewpoint are inevitable in any vital society," Mr. Ellenoff stated, "but they cannot weaken the foundations that have been built with such toil and with such love."

Mr. Ellenoff expressed gratitude that lay leaders of the four major branches of American Judaism had taken the lead in arguing that the sharp discord that has erupted in Jewish religious life be ended, and that such steps as dialogue, educational programs and communal "religious court" were suggested to heal these rifts.

There has never been a time when the Jews of the world spoke with one voice, Mr. Ellenoff added, "but this should not be taken as a sign of weakness, but of strength."

Jewish unity within diversity, the AJC leader asserted, "extends to the larger society as well. That is why we are so enthusiastic for pluralism in American life, and why we urge such manifestations of pluralism as a clear-cut separation of church and state."

Mr. Ellenoff also voiced gratification at the liberation during the year of Anatoly Shcharansky from the Soviet Union, and especially at his recent reunion with his family. He added:

"Some of us had almost despaired that this would ever come about, but we have learned once again that in the long run right triumphs over wrong, truth over falsehood. I do not think it unrealistic to believe that the Soviet Union will take further measures to let our people go when it has recognized that the respect of the rest of the world is not given to power and obduracy but to consideration and good will."

In that connection, Mr. Ellenoff said, AJC was proud of its involvement in "the historic action" taken during the year by the West German Bundestag when it unanimously adopted a resolution on behalf of Soviet Jewry.

He also took note of the improved situation of the Argentinian Jewish community, which, he said, had long been threatened by the anti-Semitism of right-wing political elements, but which now appears to be benefiting from the liberal leadership of President Raul Alfonsin.

Such changes in various parts of the world, including the recent improvement in relations between Israel and African countries," Mr. Ellenoff

stated, "indicates that often there really is light at the end of the tunnel."

A Partial Text of Mr. Ellenoff's message follows:

Many of us have been upset by expressions of hostility among some Jewish groups, and rightly so, but we must keep in mind that occasional differences of philosophy and viewpoint are inevitable in any vital society. We must pause and reflect that such differences cannot weaken the foundations that have been built with such toil and with such love.

It is deeply satisfying to me that wise lay leaders of the Orthodox, Conservative, Reform and Reconstructionist groups have demonstrated largeness of spirit and vision that is beyond any one creed or discipline. They have begun to engage in dialogue and education and even talk of recourse, when necessary, to the traditional beth din, or religious court.

There has never been a time when the Jews of the world spoke with one voice, but this should not be taken as a sign of weakness, but of strength.

Jewish unity within diversity extends to the larger society as well. That is why we are so enthusiastic for pluralism in American life, and why we urge such manifestations of pluralism as a clear-cut separation of church and state.

We at the American Jewish Committee are gratified beyond words at the wonderful event during the year when Anatoly Shcharansky was freed and, just recently, re-united with the rest of his family in Israel. Some of us almost despaired that this would ever come about, but we have learned once again that in the long run right triumphs over wrong, truth over falsehood. I do not think it unrealistic to believe that the Soviet Union will take further measures to let our people go once it recognizes that the respect of the rest of the world is not given to power and abudracy but to consideration and good will.

The American Jewish Committee is especially proud of its role in the historic action taken during the year by the West German Bundestag when it unanimously adopted a resolution in favor of Soviet Jewry. We are also delighted by the improvement of the condition of the Argentinian Jewish community now that the right-wing anti-Semitic groups there have lost much of their influence.

Such changes in various parts of the world, including the recent improvement in relations between Israel and some African countries, indicate that often there really is light at the end of the tunnel.

WJC Presents Award



This bust by Robert Berks of Justice Louis Brandeis, the great jurist and Zionist leader, was presented to Edgar M. Bronfman, president of the World Jewish Congress, at the 85th national convention of the Zionist Organization of America in Baltimore. Bronfman received the ZOA's Brandeis Award for his "extraordinary leadership of the WJC in exposing the Nazi past of former UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim."

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